



Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices

EUME



Workshop

Writing Histories of Now:

Modern and Contemporary Middle East Art and Architecture

Berlin, July 6-7, 2015

Participants

Sabih Ahmed is Senior Researcher at Asia Art Archive. Stationed in New Delhi, he has overseen numerous projects, programs and research initiatives in India which include digitisation projects of the personal archives of Geeta Kapur, Vivan Sundaram, K.G. Subramanyan and Gulammohammed Sheikh among others. He has also spearheaded AAA's ongoing projects on multi-lingual art histories in the subcontinent having recently launched an online Bibliography that charts the history of art-writing in 13 Indian languages. Ahmed's research interests include institutional histories of art, and in particular the shaping of the art field through second half of 20th century with changes in infrastructures, technologies, and shifting centers of authority.

Saleem Al-Bahloly has completed a PhD in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley. He has an A.B., also in Anthropology, from the University of Chicago. With a focus on the Middle East, his research concerns the other histories of modern art outside the context of its formation in Europe between the fifteenth and nineteenth centuries. He is in particular interested in the relation between those other histories and the histories of political violence. His dissertation, "The Freedom of Despair: Art and Violence in the Middle East, 1941-1979," examined the establishment of a practice of modern art in Baghdad, in the context of both the public sphere, that had emerged with the new Iraqi state, and a wider cultural revival across the former Arabic-speaking provinces of the Ottoman Empire. It traced the development of a particular form of critique in this practice of art as that public sphere was collapsing in the sixties and seventies, a critique that responded to a new kind of violence that was appearing not only in Iraq but across the Arab world.

Michael Allan is an Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Studies of Comparative Literature at the University of Oregon, where he is also on the Program Faculty for Cinema Studies and Arabic. He recently completed his first book, *In the Shadow of World Literature: Sites of Reading in Colonial Egypt* (Princeton 2016), and is at work on his second, *Picturing the World: The Global Routes of Early Cinema*. He was a EUME Fellow in 2011-2012.

Amin Alsaden is a PhD Candidate at Harvard University whose work focuses on global exchanges of ideas and expertise across cultural boundaries. His research interests include modern architecture, especially in the Muslim and Arab worlds; governance and space in conflict zones; formal and cognitive attributes of interiors; sociopolitical and professional

motives behind cultural institutions and districts; and questions of monumentality in contemporary art and architecture. Amin's dissertation investigates a crucible moment in post-WWII Baghdad, when a host of global and regional factors produced an unprecedented architectural movement, later exported to a modernizing Middle East; the narrative's protagonists are taken to demonstrate the role of the creative class in shaping a grassroots cosmopolitan ethos manifested in intellectual output and built works. Amin holds a Master of Arts from Harvard University, a Post-Professional Master in Architecture from Princeton University, and a Bachelor in Architecture and a Minor in Interior Design from the American University of Sharjah. He practiced at various firms in Europe and the Middle East, most recently OMA and MVRDV in the Netherlands.

Omar Berrada is a writer and translator, and the director of Dar al-Ma'mûn, a library and residency center for artists, scholars and translators located on the outskirts of Marrakech. In 2014 he was on the artistic steering committee of the Marrakech Biennale, and a co-director of Dubai's Global Art Forum. He edited, with Erik Bullof, *Expanded Translation – A Treason Treatise*, a book of verbal and visual betrayals; and, with Yto Barrada, *Album – Cinémathèque de Tanger*, a multilingual book about film in Tangier and Tangier on film. He co-translated books by Jalal Toufic and Stanley Cavell into French, and recently co-curated the Temporary Center for Translation at The New Museum. He is currently a visiting scholar at NYU.

Ralph Bodenstein holds an M.A. in Islamic Studies, Town Planning, and History of Islamic Art from Bonn University, an advanced postgraduate degree in Building Archaeology and Conservation Studies from the Berlin Institute of Technology (TU Berlin), and a doctoral degree in Architecture History/Historical Building Research equally from TU Berlin.

Between 1997 and 2006 he worked as an affiliated researcher at the German Orient Institute Beirut (OIB). In 2007, he was a postdoctoral fellow at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in Cairo, Egypt, and a visiting postdoctoral fellow of the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at MIT in Cambridge, MA. From 2008 to 2014, he worked in Egypt as a DAAD special lecturer, both as a Visiting Professor in Islamic Architecture at the Faculty of Archaeology, Cairo University, and as a research fellow at the DAI in Cairo. Moving to Berlin in September 2014, he taught at TU Berlin and worked for the Syrian Heritage Archive Project (a joint project of the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin and the DAI). At present, he works at the Berlin Head Office of the DAI, coordinating projects in the field of cultural and archaeological heritage.

His research focuses on architecture and urban history in the Middle East – especially Lebanon and Egypt – in the 19th and 20th centuries, with a particular interest in the built environment as a material source for social and cultural history. He has worked and published on domestic architecture and culture, processes of urban formation and transformation, and industrial architecture in Egypt.

Clare Davies received a PhD from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University in 2014 for a dissertation titled “Modern Egyptian Art: Site, Commodity, Archive, 1891-1948”. She is the recipient of the inaugural Irmgard Coninx Prize in Transregional Studies 2014/2015, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin. In Fall 2015, she will join the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York as Assistant Curator, Modern and Contemporary Art, Middle East, North Africa, and Turkey.

Chad Elias is an Assistant Professor in Art History at Dartmouth College. His research focuses on contemporary art practices and visual cultures of the Middle East. Chad is currently writing a book that examines the mnemonic functions of documentary video, archival photography and performance art in post-civil war Lebanon. A graduate of the Whitney Museum's Independent Study Program, Chad's scholarship also engages with art historical debates on the aesthetics of protest, the activation of public space, the politics of representation and the legacies of institutional critique.

Mohamed Elshahed is an Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices fellow. He recently completed his PhD at the Middle East Studies Department at New York University (NYU). His dissertation is titled “Revolutionary Modernism? Architecture and the Politics of Transition in Egypt, 1936-1967.” Elshahed's research interests are twentieth-century architectural history, urban history, urban geography and visual culture with emphasis on the Middle East and Africa. His research has been supported by the Social Science Research Council and the American Research Center in Egypt. He also holds a MA in Architecture Studies from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and a Bachelor of Architecture from the New Jersey Institute of Technology. Elshahed is the founder and editor of the architecture and urbanism blog Cairoobserver.com.

Layal Ftouni is a senior teaching fellow at SOAS, University of London and doctoral candidate at the University of Westminster (CREAM) where she was awarded a fully funded scholarship. She is currently writing up her thesis titled “Dismantling or Reproducing the Orientalist Canon? Neo-Orientalism in Contemporary Visual Arts.” Layal is a co-founder of Arab Cultural Studies Group and is currently working on a book with Tarik Sabry titled *Arab Subcultures: Transformations in Theory and Practice* (I.B. Tauris 2016).

Atreyee Gupta holds a PhD from the University of Minnesota (2011) and a BA from the Faculty of Fine Arts, Baroda, which, as the first postcolonial art institution in India, played a key role in framing Art History from the Global South. Her interest in global aesthetic flows arose from her training in India and in the US, shaping her current project on abstraction in postwar India and its multimodal transregional vectors. Her research has been supported by the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), New York, the Getty Research Institute, and, more recently, by the Haus der Kunst, Munich.

Her publications include chapters in Partha Mitter et al. eds. *Twentieth-Century Indian Art*, Thomas Kaufmann, ed. *Bibliographies in Art History*, and James Elkins, ed. *Is Art History Global?*, and essays in *Yishu* and *Art Journal*, among others. In 2014-2015, she will complete her monograph and coedit *Postwar - Art between the Pacific and the Atlantic, 1945-1965* (with Okwui Enwezor and Ulrich Wilmes), which emerges from an international conference she co-

convened at the Haus der Kunst. Gupta has taught at the University of Minnesota, Duluth (tenure track Assistant Professor, resigned) and the University of California, Berkeley (Visiting Lecturer). More at www.atreyegupta.com.

Laura Hindelang is a PhD candidate in History of Art and Architecture at the Institute of Art History, University of Zurich. She is a member of the research group “Holy Spaces in Modernity” funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and supervised by Prof. Dr. Anna Minta. Her current research focuses on architectural development and urban planning in the Arabic oil states Iraq, Kuwait and Qatar in the second half of the 20th century, with a particular interest in the interlinkage of nation building, oil modernity and built environment. Hindelang holds an M.A. from the University of Bern and a BA from the University of Hamburg, both in the History of Art and Sociology. She has received scholarships from the Sutor Foundation Hamburg (2013-2014) and the German National Academic Foundation (Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes) (2008-2014).

Kristine Khouri is an independent researcher, writer and photographer based in Beirut, Lebanon. She is a co-founder with Rasha Salti of the History of Arab Modernities in the Visual Arts Study Group, a research platform focused around the social history of art in the Arab world. Together they co-curated Past Disquiet: Narratives and Ghosts from the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, Beirut 1978, an archival and documentary exhibition, at the Museu d'Art Contemporani de Barcelona (MACBA), February 20-June 1, 2015. Independently, Khouri is researching the history of the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait as part of an exploration of Pan-Arab sites and events of the 1970s. She is curator of The Founding Years (1969-1973): A Selection of Works from the Sultan Gallery Archives (2012) the Sultan Gallery, Kuwait.

Morad Montazami is Adjunct Research Curator for the Middle East and North Africa at the Tate Modern supported by Iran Heritage Foundation. He is also the Editor in Chief of the Francophone journal, Zamân: zaman-paper.com

Combiz Moussavi-Aghdam is a Researcher at the Education Committee, Association of Iranian Painters and Lecturer at the Art University in Tehran. He received his PhD in Art History and Visual Studies at the University of Manchester in 2009. His thesis, titled “Entropy: Between Artistic Form and Formlessness; With Special Reference to Contemporary Iranian Art,” is about the ways in which the concept of entropy could be applied to modern and contemporary art, particularly in Iranian context. Since the end of his PhD, Moussavi-Aghdam has continued to work on the modern narratives of art history and aesthetics in Iran and the ways they have been adopted, reinterpreted and transformed in their new context. His articles on the above topics, have been published in the British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies and the Arab Studies Journal. In the last two years, he held presentations in Universities in Beirut, Tehran, New York, Bonn and Yerevan.

Sultan Suood Al-Qassimi is a columnist and Twitter commentator on Arab affairs. His columns on the Middle East have appeared in The Financial Times, The New York Times, Foreign Policy and Open Democracy. Rising in prominence during the Arab Spring, Sultan's tweets became a



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major news source, rivaling the major news networks at the time, until Time magazine listed him in the '140 Best Twitter Feeds of 2011'.

Sultan is also the founder of the Barjeel Art Foundation, an independent initiative established to contribute to the intellectual development of the art scene in the Arab region by providing a prominent and publicly accessible art collection in the United Arab Emirates. Apart from exhibitions within the UAE and the region, Barjeel Art Foundation has managed to showcase the Arab art scene as far as Europe, Japan and more recently Singapore, the first time an exhibition dedicated to artists from the Arab world has ever been hosted in South East Asia. Sultan is an MIT Media Labs Director's Fellow. In 2014, Arabian Business placed Sultan in its list of World's 100 Most Powerful Arabs under the Thinkers category.

Hanan Toukan was a EUME Fellow in 2012/2013. She completed her PhD at SOAS, University of London in 2011. Her thesis, "Art, Aid, Affect: Locating the Political in Post-Civil War Lebanon's Contemporary Cultural Practices" won the 2012 Middle East Studies Association of North American (MESA) Malcom H. Kerr Middle East Studies Association (MESA) award for best PhD in the Social Sciences. The thesis looked at the role of international cultural funding institutions, "global" and "local" discourses on culture and the arts and travelling theoretical conceptions and enactments of what "the political" holds in visual artistic production. She is currently completing a book manuscript based on her PhD titled "Global Encounters: The Politics and Poetics of Post-War Art in Lebanon". From 2009-2012 she taught at SOAS in the Department of Politics and International Studies and the Center for Media and Film Studies. She has also guest-lectured at Goldsmiths, University of London and was a CBRL Post-Doctoral Visiting Research Fellow at the Kenyon Institute in East Jerusalem and Amman in 2012. As a EUME Affiliate Fellow in 2013-2014, Toukan continued her post-doctoral work on visual representations of resistance in Palestine under the title of "Cultural Politics and the Aestheticization of Protest in Contemporary Levantine Production".

Eva Troelenberg studied art history, history and communications at Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich and Venice International University. 2007: Research Assistant / Doctoral Candidate at the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. 2007-2009: Postgraduate Fellow of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation. 2010: Completed dissertation on the Munich "Exhibition of Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art" (LMU Munich). 2010-2011: Postdoc Fellow of the KHI project "Connecting Art Histories in the Museum. The Mediterranean and Asia 400-1650" (in cooperation with the State Museums in Berlin / Museum of Islamic Art). Since September 2011: Head of the Max Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone: The Cross-Cultural Life of Things" at Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florence. During the 2013 summer semester: substitute professor for the history of Islamic art, LMU Munich. Teaching assignments at LMU Munich, University of Vienna and at the Cluster of Excellence Europe and Asia, Heidelberg.