

Workshop

Writing Histories of Now:

Modern and Contemporary Middle East Art and Architecture

Berlin, July 6-7, 2015

A major shift is underway internationally with regards to the place of so-called modern and contemporary art of the Middle East within the museum, the academy and the art market. At the same time, increasing numbers of independent and (post-)graduate-level research projects focused on twentieth-century artistic and architectural practices in the region are redefining the field: linking histories of the modern to both the “pre-modern” and the “contemporary” and questioning the geopolitical, ethnic, or religious frames of reference with which they are variously associated.

This workshop brings together eighteen researchers from a wide variety of positions related to the study of modern and contemporary art and architecture in the Middle East and beyond. Two intensive laboratory sessions will allow for the sharing of research agendas, discussions addressing terminologies, existing narratives, institutional frameworks and the evolving interests in artistic practice from the region. These sessions are bookended by two events mapping the field of current research for a broader audience.

This workshop intends to inaugurate a series of conversations that will foster collective, critical, and sustained reflection on the state of the field and the place of the researchers within it.

The workshop is convened by Clare Davies (Irmgard Conix Prize Fellow 2014/15) and Mohamed Elshahed (Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellow 2014/15), as well as the research programs “Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices” and “Europe in the Middle East –The Middle East in Europe (EUME)” of the Forum Transregionale Studien.

Monday, 6 July

Modern and Contemporary Middle East Art and Architecture: Mapping the Field

Location Forum Transregionale Studien, Wallotstraße 14

3:30-3:45 Welcoming remarks:
Hannah Baader and Georges Khalil
Clare Davies and Mohamed Elshahed

Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices

EUME


Europe in The Middle East
The Middle East in Europe

3:50-4:10 **Between Lands? Some reflections on the Mediterranean as an open discourse-scape for modern and contemporary aesthetic practices in the Middle East.**
Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz

4:45-5:00 Break

5:00-7:00 **Mapping the Field**
Presentations by Sabih Ahmed, Michael Allan, Amin Alsaden, Saleem El Bahloly, Omar Berrada, Ralph Bodenstein, Clare Davies, Chad Elias, Mohamed Elshahed, Layal Ftouni, Atreyee Gupta, Laura Hindelang, Kristine Khouri, Morad Montazami, Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi, Combiz Mousavi-Aghdam, Hanan Toukan

8:00pm Dinner, [TBD]

Tuesday, 7 July

Location Department of Art and Visual History (IKB), Humboldt University,
Georgenstrasse 47, Room 3.16

9:30-9:45 Welcoming remarks, Charlotte Klonk, Department of Art and Visual
History (IKB), Humboldt University

10:00-12:30 **Session 1: The Field**
(RSVP required for attendance by non-participants)
Chairs: Mohamed Elshahed and Atreyee Gupta

In this session we will discuss methodological shifts in current scholarship, terminologies, sources and disciplinary limits.

12:30–2:00 Lunch, TBD

2:00-4:30 **Session 2: Market, Museum and Conflict**
(RSVP required for attendance by non-participants)
Chairs: Clare Davies and Chad Elias

In this session we will discuss the backdrop against which emerging scholarship is being written: the volatile political context of the Middle East, institutional developments such as

new museum departments for modern and contemporary “Arab” art, and the fast evolving art market.

6:00–8:00

**Writing Histories of Now, Modern and Contemporary
Middle East Art and Architecture: A Conversation.**

Location

Department of Art and Visual History (IKB), Humboldt University,
Georgenstr. 47, Room 0.12

6:00-6:10

Welcoming remarks, Hannah Baader and Georges Khalil

6:15-6:35

Why now? Writing art history in the Middle East today.
Clare Davies and Mohamed Elshahed

6:35-6:50

Michael Allan, University of Oregon
Topic: Main questions and themes raised in the laboratory sessions

6:50-7:10

Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi, Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah
Topic: Collecting practices and museum infrastructure
in the Middle East

7:10-8:00

Discussion

Participants

Sabih Ahmed, Senior Researcher at Asia Art Archive, New Delhi

Michael Allan, Assistant Professor and Director of Graduate Studies of Comparative Literature,
University of Oregon

Amin Alsaden, Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University

Saleem Al Bahloly, EUME Fellow 2014/15, Forum Transregionale Studien

Omar Berrada, Writer and translator, and director of Dar al-Ma'mûn, Marrakech

Ralph Bodenstein, Program Coordinator, Cultural Heritage, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut,
Berlin

Clare Davies, Irmgard Coninx Fellow 2014/15, Forum Transregionale Studien

Chad Elias, Assistant Professor in Art History, Dartmouth College

Mohamed Elshahed, Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellow 2014/15, Forum Transregionale Studien

Layal Ftouni, Senior teaching fellow at SOAS, University of London and doctoral candidate at the University of Westminster (CREAM), London

Atreyee Gupta, Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellow 2014/15, Forum Transregionale Studien

Laura Hindelang, Ph.D candidate, History of Art and Architecture, Institute of Art History, University of Zurich

Kristine Khouri, Independent researcher, writer and photographer, Beirut

Morad Montazami, Adjunct Research Curator for the Middle East and North Africa, Tate Modern

Combiz Mousavi-Aghdam, Researcher at the Education Committee, Association of Iranian Painters and Lecturer at the Art University in Tehran and KHI Fellow/ Affiliated Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Fellow 2015, Forum Transregionale Studien

Sultan Sooud al-Qassemi, Founder, Barjeel Art Foundation, UAE and MIT Media Labs Director's Fellow

Hanan Toukan, Postdoctoral researcher at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO)

Eva-Maria Troelenberg, Head of the Max Planck Research Group "Objects in the Contact Zone: The Cross-Cultural Life of Things", Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (KHI)

From the Forum Transregionale Studien:

Hannah Baader, Academic program director of "Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices" / Senior Research Fellow, Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz (KHI)

Georges Khalil, Forum Transregionale Studien, Academic Coordinator EUME