

University of North Texas, College of Visual Arts and Design, Spring 2020  
AEAH 5825-Secs 001/791

## Contemporary Art Between the Present and the Past in MENASA

Tuesday 5:00-7:50 pm  
ART280

### Dr. Shabout

**Office: Art 215**

**Office Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 2:30-3:30 pm**

**E-mail: [nada.shabout@unt.edu](mailto:nada.shabout@unt.edu)**

Do like AEAH Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/untaeah> for posting of related information and opportunities.

AND for your own good, you should create a profile on [www.Linkedin.com](http://www.Linkedin.com).

### Course Description:

Contemporary art from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA) has fared much better in terms of recognition in comparison to 20<sup>th</sup> century modern or pre-modern (Islamic) art. It is, nevertheless, received with much ambiguity in the “West.” While it has been celebrated for its creativity, it is almost always connected to regional events, including wars, conflicts and recently the Arab uprisings, which necessarily detracts from an aesthetic appreciation. This notion assumes a direct correlation in the production of this art to politics, war and terrorism. Meanwhile the new discourse is rethinking contemporary art during what it perceives as a global crisis considering recent geopolitical crises and their impact on visual culture and artistic practice.

While investigating relationships between culture, power, and politics, drawing on specific comparative cases, this course explores contemporary art in the MENASA region and its diasporas. It examines the different theories and practices of making art within discourses of identity, nationality and globalism in relation to constructed narratives and faced challenges caused by the shift from an understanding of an Umma under the umbrella of the Islamic civilization to secularized cultures of the modern nation-states and Islam as nationalism. The vast region negotiated their inherited heritage and new crisis of representation in different ways. This course will explore several examples from different countries. Students will be introduced to the problems, possibilities and choices that inform the cultural and artistic practices, including case studies of cultural policy, national ideology, historical patrimony and the political role of the arts in a transnational context through the work of specific artists. Much of the discussion will be informed by Orientalism and its critique as a methodology for unpacking the reception of the work and the politics of its exhibition.

### Required Text:

All required readings are on Canvas.

### Useful Resources:

**Aramco World:** We produce *AramcoWorld* to increase cross-cultural understanding by broadening knowledge of the histories, cultures and geography of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their global interconnections, past and present. In print, *AramcoWorld* is distributed six times a year, without charge, to a limited number of interested readers; online, it is published on this site and available in tablet and mobile editions using the *AramcoWorld* app. Back issues from 1960 are searchable, and texts are available in full; photographs from archival articles are online from 2004 to the present.

**Artsy:** features the world's leading galleries, museum collections, foundations, artist estates, art fairs, and benefit auctions, all in one place. Our growing database of 800,000 images of art, architecture, and design by 70,000 artists spans historical, modern, and contemporary works, and includes the largest online database of contemporary art. Artsy is used by art lovers, museum-goers, patrons, collectors, students, and educators to discover, learn about, and collect art.

<https://www.artsy.net/artists>.

**CULTURUNNERS:** an independent arts organisation which supports artists journeys and production across physical and ideological borders: <http://culturrunners.com/#>

**e-flux:** Announcements about contemporary art exhibitions, events, and publications: [www.eflux.com](http://www.eflux.com).

**Hyperallergic:** a daily online art publication on art and the art world: <http://hyperallergic.com>

**Ibraaz:** Initiated by the [Kamel Lazaar Foundation](#) in 2011, *Ibraaz* is the leading critical forum on visual culture in North Africa and the Middle East. We publish an annual online platform – consisting of essays, interviews, artists' projects, and platform responses – that focuses on research questions conceived through a network of editorial contributors based in the Middle East and beyond. Our key editorial aim is to publish, alongside work by internationally renowned writers, academics, curators, activists, and filmmakers, emerging writers and artists: <https://www.ibraaz.org>.

**The Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modernism and the Arab World:** The bilingual Mathaf Encyclopedia is a free online scholarly resource providing basic facts and in depth information on modern art of the Arab world: <http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/Pages/default.aspx>

**Nafas Art Magazine:** Nafas was developed by [Universes in Universe - Worlds of Art \(UiU\)](#) commissioned by the ifa, and published since March 2003 as one of the first online magazines for contemporary art from the Maghreb to the Middle East, from Central to Southeast Asia: <http://u-in-u.com/nafas/>.

**Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism:** An accessible and intuitive online platform, Routledge Encyclopedia of Modernism brings together a wealth of interdisciplinary content about the Modernist period, and is the ideal starting point for any research in modernism. Access through UNT Library: <https://libproxy.library.unt.edu:4199>

**Selections:** a bi-monthly magazine with high quality content on all subjects related to Art, Culture, Design, and Style: <http://www.selectionsarts.com/category/art/>

### **Course Objectives:**

1. Further develop your critical thinking, speaking, writing and research skills.
2. To develop and practice the skills needed to think critically about exhibitions and the interface between objects and visual materials, concepts and content, and visitor experience.
3. Examine and discuss current trends used by museums for the production of knowledge.
4. Identify the cultural practices that define exhibitions of and about the Middle East.
5. Assess conceptual frameworks and exhibit narratives.

## Course Structure and Evaluation:

This is a course that meets for 3 hours every week. The format includes lectures, discussions, presentations, field trips, and short writing assignments. Class will meet on campus, as well as occasionally off campus at museums in Dallas.

Class time will be dedicated primarily to discussion. It includes a number of class activities, done in groups and individually, designed to improve your abilities as an exhibition developer and a final project that requires you to analyze one real or virtual exhibit in depth.

You will be evaluated on your preparedness for each class. Do bring your readings, notes, and questions to class. You will also be evaluated on the organization, thoughtfulness, and resourcefulness of your writing assignments. Every student is expected to fully participate in class discussions.

## Grading System:

Class Component	Weight of Grade
Class Participation and Attendance	10%
Assignments	50%
Final Project	40%

You will submit **weekly class assignments as prompted in the course outline below**. You are also required to **attend 3 out of class lectures or community events**—lectures and events are prompted in the course schedule but you should search for others on your own and get them approved by me before attending.

**Out of class lectures or community events:** For each lecture or event, submit a paragraph that states your name, the lecture's/event's title, date, location and the topic it covered/its main argument.

**Final Project and Presentations:** You have the option to choose from the below. Initial ideas will be discussed in class on March 5<sup>th</sup> and final abstracts and bibliographies due on April 9<sup>th</sup>

- 1. Art History Paper:** (10-15 pages): In this paper, you will explore one of the themes of the course through a case study in its historical, cultural, and personal contexts. Papers should be typed, double spaced, with 12 point font and 1" margins.
- 2. Exhibition Projects:** (5 pages): You may choose to complete an exhibition project in lieu of the Research Paper. You will still have to submit an abstract by the dates listed above. You could choose to work with a partner. You are to curate an exhibition of art from the MENASA region. You will need to include at least 15 works of art in your exhibition and develop accompanying "label/wall text"—name of artist, date, media, dimensions, etc. In some cases, and for certain works, you might need to provide extended labels contextualizing the work. You will also submit a 5-7 page paper outlining the premise of your exhibition, its major themes, its historical context/s, a list of its included artworks, and its value to the art historical community. You will need to include bios of your artists and reasons why you chose them, You will then present your exhibition in class. How you chose to organize the exhibition and the presentation is up to you as long as it is coherent and well communicated. **Be creative!**
- 3. Studio Project:** (5-7 pages): MFA students may choose to complete a studio project in lieu of the Research Paper. You will still have to choose and provide an abstract by the

dates listed above. For the studio project you will investigate the course topic by producing a work of art that explores an aspect of a chosen theme. This can be interpreted in many different ways and you are encouraged to be creative. You will then write a 5-page paper outlining the arguments and motivations behind your created work. Check class schedule for dates and deadlines.

### **Policy on Quality of Written Work:**

Translating visual signs into verbal language is not an easy task. Thus, in the visual and subjective realm of art history, clarity of presented ideas is vital. Therefore, your written work will be evaluated in terms of proper grammar, syntax, and spelling, as well as the clear and logical presentation of ideas and argument. If you make errors in any of these areas consistently, your grade will be lowered. Any student needing or desiring certain kinds of assistance or general support in matters of writing should visit the University Writing Center.

Some warnings and guidelines: Be sure and proofread for spelling and grammar errors! If you have problems with your writing, feel free to seek out help from the University Writing Center. The Writing Center is located in Rm 105 of the Auditorium Building. The services are open to all students, free of charge. M-F 8am to 5pm. 565-2563. [www.unt.edu/writinglab/](http://www.unt.edu/writinglab/).

Papers must be formatted in 12-point font with 1” margins.

Save all work. That means save soft on your computer and on a back-up of your choice. Also, save hard copies. We will not accept excuses for lost work, printers out of cartridges or computers crash. Always plan for the worst and hope for the best when it comes to your technology. Always save your paper on a disc, and save often!! That way, if you have a problem with a hard drive or printer, you can go immediately to another computer to finish your work.

Not all computers are created equal. To guarantee success, use computers in the computer lab in the Art Building and not in your dorm, the library, Student Center, or even your own at home unless you are sure of its capability.

### **Attendance Policy:**

You are expected to attend every class and be on time. You have 1 free absence, use it wisely. Thereafter, each absence will result in lowering your final grade ten points. In the case of emergency please alert me by email and provide me with proof of absence as soon as possible.

### **Cheating and Plagiarism Policy:**

Cheating and plagiarism are serious offenses and violate UNT’s Code of Student Conduct. Any suspected act of dishonesty will result in a grade of “F” in the course. Further, the professor will write a letter to the Dean of the School of Visual Arts and the Dean of Students, who will pursue disciplinary actions at their discretion. Cheating includes looking at another student’s test for any reason.

According to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” ([www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)). Copying material from any source without providing a citation (footnote or endnote) is a form of plagiarism. Likewise, if you paraphrase another author’s words or ideas, you must credit that person with a citation. While most incidents of plagiarism at the graduate level are unintentional, it is your responsibility to ensure that you accurately indicate which words and ideas are those of others.

Suspected plagiarized papers and essays will be uploaded and checked on <http://www.turnitin.com>

According to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities, plagiarism is defined as “the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas, words or statements of another person as one’s own without acknowledgement” ([www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr)). Copying material from any source without providing a citation (footnote or endnote) is a form of plagiarism. Likewise, if you paraphrase another author’s words or ideas, you must credit that person with a citation. While most incidents of plagiarism at the graduate level are unintentional, it is your responsibility to ensure that you accurately indicate which words and ideas are those of others.

### **Acceptable Student Behavior:**

Student behavior that interferes with an instructor’s ability to conduct a class or other students' opportunity to learn is unacceptable and disruptive and will not be tolerated in any instructional forum at UNT. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior will be directed to leave the classroom and the instructor may refer the student to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities to consider whether the student's conduct violated the Code of Student Conduct. The university's expectations for student conduct apply to all instructional forums, including university and electronic classroom, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc. The Code of Student Conduct can be found at [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr).

### **Sexual Discrimination, Harassment, Assault**

UNT is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or experiences any of these acts of aggression, please know that you are not alone. The federal Title IX law makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses. UNT has staff members trained to support you in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more.

### **American Disabilities Act:**

The College of Visual Arts and Design is committed to full academic access for all qualified students, including those with disabilities. In keeping with this commitment and in order to facilitate equality of educational access, faculty members in the College will make reasonable accommodations for qualified students with a disability, such as appropriate adjustments to the classroom environment and the teaching, testing, or learning methodologies when doing so does not fundamentally alter the course.

If you have a disability, it is your responsibility to obtain verifying information from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) and to inform me of your need for an accommodation. Requests for accommodation must be given to me no later than the first week of classes for students registered with the ODA as of the beginning of the current semester. If you register with the ODA after the first week of classes, your accommodation requests will be considered after this deadline.

Grades assigned before an accommodation is provided will not be changed. Information about how to obtain academic accommodations can be found in UNT Policy 18.1.14, at [www.unt.edu/oda](http://www.unt.edu/oda), and by visiting the ODA in Room 321 of the University Union. You also may call the ODA at 940.565.4323.

### **Course Risk Factor:**

According to University Policy, this course is classified as a category one course. Students enrolled in this course will not be exposed to any significant hazards and are not likely to suffer any bodily injury. Students will be informed of any potential health hazards or potential bodily injury connected with the use of any materials and/or processes and will be instructed how to proceed without danger to themselves and others.

### **Center for Students Rights and Responsibilities:**

Each student at UNT is entitled to certain rights associated with higher education institutions. See [www.unt.edu/csrr](http://www.unt.edu/csrr) for further information.

### **Evacuation Plan:**

In case of emergency (alarm will sound), please follow **the building** evacuation plans posted on each floor of your building and proceed to the nearest parking lot. In case of tornado (campus sirens will sound) or other weather related threat, please go to the nearest hallway or room on your floor without exterior windows and remain there until an all clear signal is sounded. Follow the instructions of your teachers and act accordingly.

### *A Final Disclaimer:*

*The professors reserve the right to alter this syllabus if and when necessary*

### **Course Outline:**

For the latest news on culture and politics always consult

<http://www.merip.org>

<http://www.jadaliyya.com>

**1- January 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Understanding MENASA**

### **Review of Syllabus and Introduction to topic**

*In Class Assignment 1:* Each student will give a ten-minute presentation on this first day. Students should use the first 5 minutes describing their area of interest, including how you got interested in this topic, what you already know, what questions about representation of the region you are hoping to explore, and how you hope this course may help you reach your goals.

**Questions to consider:** Who are the Muslims? What is the Muslim World? Countries? How are they different than the Arabs? The Middle East? North Africa? South Asia? Think of 5 specific issues of interest or concern in relation to these questions and be prepared to present and discuss them in class.

**In class Film:** *Oum Kalthoum a Voice like Egypt*



### Class will meet at the Modern in Fort Worth @ 6pm

*Tuesday Evenings at the Modern Special Presentation*

January 21, 7 pm

Hrair Sarkissian: Syria, Belonging Not Longing

Syrian artist Hrair Sarkissian discusses his art in conjunction with his first major solo exhibition in the United States, *FOCUS: Hrair Sarkissian*, on view January 24 to March 15. His work explores the hidden tensions that engulf humanity in an era of global crisis, addressing memory, trauma, and landscape and the complexities of capturing these through photography, especially analog photography in a digital age. The artist is joined by exhibition curator Dr. Omar Kholeif for a Q&A following the presentation.

Hrair Sarkissian, born in Damascus and currently living in London and The Hague, earned a BFA in photography at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie, Amsterdam, in 2010. His work has been featured in solo exhibitions around the world, including at the Davis Museum, Wellesley College, Massachusetts; Sursock Museum, Beirut; KADIST, San Francisco; Fondazione Carispezia, La Spezia, Italy; SALT Beyoğlu, Istanbul; and the Museum of Photography Thessaloniki, Greece. He has been in group shows at Tate Modern, London; New Museum, New York; Darat Al Funun, Amman; Mori Art Museum, Tokyo; Sharjah Biennial; Istanbul Biennial; and Asia Pacific Triennial, Brisbane; among others. Sarkissian won the Abraaj Group Art Prize in 2013.

Dr. Omar Kholeif, FRSA, is a writer and curator who has organized more than 100 exhibitions, special projects, and commissions globally. He is currently Director of Collections and Senior Curator at the Sharjah Art Foundation.

## 3 – January 28<sup>th</sup>

## Nation Building and Postcoloniality

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” in Hobsbawm and Ranger eds. *The Invention of Tradition*: 1-14.

**Team 2:** Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*: 1-7 & 83-111.

**Team 3:** Homi Bhabha, “Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse.”

**Team 4:** R. Radhakrishnan, “Post modernism and the rest of the world,” in Afzal-Khan, Fawzia and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, *The pre-occupation of postcolonial studies*. (Durham, [NC]: Duke University Press, 2000).

**Team 5:** Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice,” in *Marxism & the Interpretation of Culture*. Eds. Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (1988). 271-313.

**Team 6:** Homi Bhabha, editor, *Narrating the Nation*: 291-322.

**Assignment 2:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of

the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective Goal:** understand how nation and national identity are constructed in the postcolonial period. What are the motivations, policies and the role of the visual in this construction. Think of and bring regional visuals that would help explain your assigned reading.

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**Approved Event: Jan 31<sup>st</sup>-Feb 1<sup>st</sup>**

**Broken Lens 2020: 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Israel/Palestine Film Festival-Free and open to the public at Trinity Presbyterian Church, 2200 N Bell, Denton, TX**

**Friday Jan 31s, 7 pm: “Voices from Across the Divide”--followed by discussion via video conference with Director Alice Rothchild**

**Sat Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 3 pm: “Gaza Fights for Freedom”—followed by discussion, Debke Folk Dancing, food and music**

**Sat Feb 1<sup>st</sup>, 7 pm: “Pressure Points” -- followed by discussion via video conference with Executive Director of FOSNA Tarek Abuata  
Photo Exhibition by Hanan Awad**

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## 4 –February 4<sup>th</sup>

## Orientalism

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Edward Said, Orientalism, “Introduction,” 1978. pp1-26 (on Canvas) or [http://www.odsg.org/Said\\_Edward\(1977\)\\_Orientalism.pdf](http://www.odsg.org/Said_Edward(1977)_Orientalism.pdf).

**Team 2:** Edward Said, “Shattered Myths” (89-103); “Arab, Islam and the Dogmas of the West” (104-105); “My Thesis” (106-107), in Alexander L Macfie, Orientalism, A Reader, NYU Press, 2000.

**Team 3:** Edward Said, “Orientalism Reconsidered” *Cultural Critique* No 1 (Autumn 1985): 89-107.

**Team 4:** Linda Nochlin, “The Imaginary Orient,” in *The Poetics of Vision: Essays on Nineteenth Century Art and Society*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1989.

**Team 5:** Timothy Mitchell, “Chapter I: Egypt at the Exhibition,” in *Colonising Egypt* (1988; 1991): 1-33.

**Team 6:** Zeynep Çelik, “Colonialism, Orientalism, and the Canon” *The Art Bulletin* 78, no. 2 (June 1996): 202-205.

**Assignment 3** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text. Additionally, bring your own example of what you perceive as Orientalism in art, film, song, TV, or literature.

**Collective Goal:** How is Orientalism defined? What is the relationship between constructing tradition in the postcolonial age and Orientalism? Drawing on the readings, discuss the ways in



which contemporary engagements with Orientalism represent both strategies of resistance and further consolidations of non-western otherness.

The Age of the Neo-Orientalists: <http://www.reorientmag.com/2012/08/the-age-of-the-neo-orientalists/>

## 5 – February 11<sup>th</sup>

## Islamic Art

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Oleg Grabar, Ch. 8: “The Formation of Islamic Art” 195-213, in *The formation of Islamic Art*, Yale University Press; Rev Enl edition, 1987.

**Team 2:** Grabar, Ch 3, “On the Universality of Art History”; Ch 8, “Islamic Ornament and Western Abstraction” in *Islamic Art and Beyond: Constructing the Study of Islamic Art*, Volume III, Ashgate, 2006.

**Team 3:** Grabar, Ch 18, “What Makes Islamic Art Islamic”; and Ch 23, “The Aesthetics of Islamic Art” in *Islamic Art and Beyond*.

**Team 4:** Necipoglu, Gulru, “The Concept of Islamic Art: Inherited Discourses and New Approaches,” in *Journal of Art Historiography* Number 6 June 2012.

**Team 5:** Fatma Sinem Eryilmaz, Ch 6 “Writing History from Adam to Suleyman” in *Writing History at the Ottoman Court*.

**Team 6:** Nasser Rabbat, “What is Islamic architecture anyway?” in the *Journal of Art Historiography* Number 6 June 2012.

**Assignment 4:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective Goal:** we need to reach an understanding of what is Islamic art and aesthetics. Bring art examples from the text to discuss.

## 6 – February 18<sup>th</sup>

## Into Modernism

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Finbarr Barry Flood, *Picasso the Muslim: Or, How the Bilderverbot became modern* (Part 1)

**Team 2:** Finbarr Barry Flood, *Picasso the Muslim: Or, How the Bilderverbot became modern* (Part 2)

**Team 3:** Mitchell, Timothy, ed. *Questions of Modernity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, c2000.

**Team 4:** Zainab Bahrani, “Conjuring Mesopotamia: Imaginative Geography and a world Past,” in Lynn Meskell, *Archaeology under fire: nationalism, politics and heritage in the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East*, 1998.

**Team 5:** Iftikhar Dadi, Ch 1 Abdur Rahman Chughtai,” and Ch. 2, “Mid-century Modernism,” in *Modernism and the Art of Muslim South Asia*.

**Team 6:** Mitter, Partha. “Interventions: *Decentering Modernism: Art History and Avant-Garde from the Periphery*,” *Art Bulletin* 90, no. 4 (December 2008): 531-548.

**Assignment 5:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective goal:** understand the transformation into modernism and its challenges. Bring visual examples to demonstrate your argument.

## 7 – February 25<sup>th</sup>

## Modern Art

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Nada Shabout, in *Modern Arab Art: Formation of Arab Aesthetics*: 1-57.

**Team 2:** Nada Shabout, “A Dream We Call Baghdad” in *Modernism and Iraq*. New York: Columbia University, 2009.

**Team 3:** Hamid Keshmirshakan, “Neo-Traditionalism and Modern Iranian Painting: The Saqqa-khaneb School in the 1960s,” in *The International Society for Iranian Studies*, studies, volume 38, number 4, December 2005.

**Team 4:** Aneka Lenssen, “Abstraction of the Many? Finding Plenitude in Arab Painting,” in Suheyla Takesh and Lynn Grumpet, *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s-1980s*.

**Team 5:** S. Santhosh, “What Was Modernism (in Indian Art)?,” in *Social Scientist*, Vol. 40, No. 5/6 (May-June 2012), pp. 59-75.

**Team 6:** Olga Nefedova, “Art and Artists Crossing Borders: Untold Stories of the First Iraqi Art Exhibition in the USSR,” in *Stedelijk Studies*, 2019.

**Assignment 6:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective Goal:** understand the various elements that went into the formation of modern movements and styles. Include images of works of art to support your argument.

**Final papers/projects topic discussion in class****Readings:**

**Team 1:** Opinion: Sultan Sooud Al-Qassebi, “How the CIA Secretly Funded Arab Art To Fight Communism,” <http://www.newsweek.com/how-cia-funded-arab-art-help-win-cold-war-587218>

But a Storm Is Blowing from Paradise: Contemporary Art of the Middle East and North Africa: <https://www.guggenheim.org/exhibition/but-a-storm-is-blowing-from-paradise-contemporary-art-of-the-middle-east-and-north-africa>

**Team 2:** Anthony Downey, “Where to Now: Shifting Regional Dynamics and Cultural Production in North Africa and the Middle East, Platform 010 Editorial,” <http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/178>

Islamic Art Now: Contemporary Art of the Middle East: <http://www.lacma.org/art/exhibition/islamic-art-now-contemporary-art-middle-east>

**Team 3:** Anneka Lenssen, “Surviving Fascism? “Art and Liberty” in Egypt, 1938-1948,” <https://modernismmodernity.org/forums/posts/surviving-fascism-art-et-liberte>

Modern art from the Middle East on view in gallery exhibition: <https://news.yale.edu/2017/03/03/modern-art-middle-east-view-gallery-exhibition>

**Team 4:** Till Fellrath, “Contemporary Arab Art: A Case of Identity Theft?” in *Told, Untold, Retold*, 55-69

Choucair at Tate Modern - The Pioneer of Abstract Art in the Middle East: <https://theculturetrip.com/middle-east/lebanon/articles/choucair-at-tate-modern-the-pioneer-of-abstract-art-in-the-middle-east/>

**Team 5:** Nadia Bou Ali, “Collecting the Nation: Lexicography and National Pedagogy in al-nahda al-‘arabiyya,” in Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja, and Schwartz, John Pedro, eds., *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, 1st Edition, Routledge, 2012.

Whitechapel Gallery in London Brings Modern Arab Art to the World: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/06/arts/international/whitechapel-gallery-in-london-brings-modern-arab-art-to-the-world.html>

**Team 6:** Nadia von Maltzahn, “Ministry of Culture or No Ministry of Culture? Lebanese Cultural Players and Authority,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, Vol. 38, No. 2, 2018.

Fahrelnissa Zeid: <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/fahrelnissa-zeid>

Fahrelnissa Zeid in the Mega-Museum: Mega-museums and modern artists from the Middle East: <http://www.ibraaz.org/essays/161>

**Assignment 7:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author’s key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective Goal:** develop a further understanding of the meaning of national art and collections, and the politics of display within the nation and at major museums around the world. What is the state of contemporary art from MENASA exhibitions at major museums? What narratives are presented? What are the politics of display? How is identity negotiated by the artists and by the curator? Are they in conflict?

**9 – March 10<sup>th</sup>**

**Spring Break**

**10 – March 17<sup>th</sup>**

**The Kier Collection**

**No class meeting-Dallas Museum of Art**

**Assignment 8:** write a detailed review of the Kier Collection Islamic Gallery at the Dallas Museum of Art. The profile should analyze all significant elements such as clarity of key points/main messages, potential learning outcomes, ease of information accessibility, use of interactivity, as well as a discussion about overall aesthetics of display. Do not forget to discuss who the target audience appears to be and what the opportunities, as well as the weaknesses, to successfully communicate with this group are given the selected format. How does the graphic design choices and over all structure help or hinder visitors in reaching the desired learning outcomes? What did you learn from it? How is Islamic art presented? Due in class on April 7<sup>th</sup>.

A Global Guide to Islamic Art:

<http://archive.aramcoworld.com/issue/200901/a.global.guide.to.islamic.art.htm>

**11 – March 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Theater of Operations**

**Guest Speaker via Zoom. Co-curator, Ruba Katrib. Come prepared to ask questions.**

**Readings:**

Peter Schjeldahl, The Art of War in “Theater of Operations”: *Can an exhibition about the Gulf wars provide new ways of seeing such dismal subject matter?* November 25, 2019:

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2019/12/02/the-art-of-war-in-theater-of-operations>.

Fanar Haddad, “Hip hop, poetry and Shia iconography: How Tahrir Square gave birth to a new Iraq,” 9 December 2019, <https://www.middleeasteye.net/opinion/iraq-new-political-awareness-and-culture-have-been-formed?>

Neil MacFarquhar, “Mourning Iraq’s Destruction, a Native Son Creates: Dia al-Azzawi, a Baghdad-born artist, weaves antiquity, poetry and messages of resistance at MoMA PS1,”

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/12/31/arts/design/dia-al-azzawi-moma-ps1.html>.

Iraq protests: The women rising up on Baghdad's walls: [https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50756004?](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-50756004)

Graffiti Art in Tahrir Square, Baghdad: <https://www.independentarabia.com/node/78101/-ثقافة/رسوم-غرافتي-في-ساحة-التحرير-اللون-ينتصر-على-خراب-بغداد>

Saleem al-Bahloly, "The Presence of the Image: Dhakira Hurra in Dia Azzawi's Drawings on the Massacre of Tel al-Zaatar." In *ArtMargins*, Volume 2 issue 7 (MIT Press 2013)

**Assignment 9:** based on the readings and the discussion with the co-curator, how would you evaluate the exhibition? In relation to the US cultural understanding of the Gulf Wars? In relation to Iraq and Iraqi art? How were the Iraqi artists represented, along with the non-Iraqi artists?

## 12 – March 31<sup>st</sup>

## Museums

### Readings:

**Team 1:** Tony Bennett, "The Political Rationality of the Museum," in *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics*, NY, NY: Routledge, 1995, pp. 89-105.

Mukoma Wa Ngugi, "What *Decolonizing the Mind* Means Today," 2018, <https://lithub.com/mukoma-wa-ngugi-what-decolonizing-the-mind-means-today/>.

**Team 2:** Walter D. Mignolo, "Museums in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity: Fred Wilson's *Mining the Museum*," in *Globalization and Contemporary Art*, Jonathan Harris, ed. West Sussex, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012.

Casper Andersen, "Decolonizing the mind," 2018, <http://projectechoes.eu/decolonizing/>.

**Team 3:** Kavita Singh, "Universal Museums: The View from Below," *The Art Newspaper* 192 (2008).

Alina Cohen, "How Art Museums Can Remain Relevant in the 21st Century," 2018, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-art-museums-remain-relevant-21st-century>.

**Team 4:** Carol Duncan, "Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship," in *Exhibiting Culture*, pp. 88-103.

Holland Cotter, "Toward a Museum of the 21st Century," 2015, <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/01/arts/design/toward-a-museum-of-the-21st-century.html>.

**Team 5:** Svetlana Alpers, "The Museum as a Way of Seeing," in *Exhibiting Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display*, Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991, pp. 25-32.

What does it mean to decolonize a museum? <https://www.museumnext.com/article/what-does-it-mean-to-decolonize-a-museum/>.

**Team 6:** Eric Davis, "The Museum and the Politics of Social Control in Modern Iraq," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press.

Sarah Jilani, "How to decolonize a museum," <https://www.the-tls.co.uk/articles/how-decolonize-museum/>.

**Assignment 12:** present a 5-minute summary and major points and then facilitate a 10-minute critical discussion on your assigned reading. Your 15 minute presentation should include a brief summary of the main topic including the author's key points, questions that the reading raises for you, specific terminology used and how the reading connects to your growing understanding of the region. You are to facilitate a class discussion on one or more of the key issues raised by the text.

**Collective Goal:** understand the role and transformation of the museum as a public institution? What is its role in facilitating a better understanding of modern and contemporary art from outside the Euro-American sphere? How does it affect the writing of art history? What is decolonizing the museum mean?

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*Approved Event: Nasher Sculpture Graduate Symposium, details TBA*

*April 2<sup>nd</sup>*

*Talk: Nasher Prize Dialogues: Michael Rakowitz*

*April 3, 1 p.m.*

<https://www.nashersculpturecenter.org/programs-events/nasher-prize/laureates/laureate/id/159>

<https://www.nashersculpturecenter.org/programs-events/nasher-prize/programs>

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**13 – April 7<sup>th</sup>**

**On Curating**

**Kier Collection Gallery Exhibition Review Due**

**Final paper/project abstract due**

**Readings:**

ART REVIEW: Holland Cotter, High-Flying Art for a Wall-Building Time,

<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/07/19/arts/design/middle-east-art-bard-college-emirates-barjeel.html>?

Selections, On the Importance of Context, <http://www.selectionsarts.com/2017/08/on-the-importance-of-context/>

Jason Farago, MoMA Protests Trump Entry Ban by Rehanging Work by Artists from Muslim Nation,

[https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/03/arts/design/moma-protests-trump-entry-ban-with-work-by-artists-from-muslim-nations.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2017/02/03/arts/design/moma-protests-trump-entry-ban-with-work-by-artists-from-muslim-nations.html?_r=0)

Porter, Venetia. “Collecting and Exhibiting Arab Art at the British Museum,” in *New Vision: Arab Contemporary Art in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, 30-35.

**Assignment 11:** Surprise Conference. In class assignment.

**13 – April 13<sup>th</sup>**

**On Gender**

**Guest Speaker**

**Dr. Nadjé al-Ali, “Reflections on the Politics of Gender in the Middle East”  
At UNT Details TBA**

Nadjé al-Ali, “Feminist dilemmas: How to talk about gendered violence in the Middle East.”



**14 – April 14<sup>th</sup>**

**Contemporary Art**

**Readings:**

Nadeem Omar Tarar, “Framing of a National Tradition” in *Third Text*, Vol 25, Issue 5 Sep 2011, 577-593.

Nat Muller, “Contemporary Art in the Middle East,” in *Contemporary Art in the Middle East*, 12-25.

Sarah Rogers, “Imagined Geographies: Diaspora and Contemporary Arab Art,” 36-45.

Shiva Balaghi, “Only for My Shadow: Figuration in Contemporary Iranian Art,” in *The Image Debate: Figural Representation in Islam and Across the World*.

Shabout, “Contemporary Trajectories: Iraqi Art in Context,” in Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, eds., *Islamic Art: Past, Present and Future*, Yale University Press, 2019.

Salwa Mikdadi, TBA

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*Dallas Art Fair: April 16-19<sup>th</sup>*

*1807 Ross Avenue*

*Dallas, TX 75201*

*Write a review of the fair and attend one of the scheduled talks*

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**15 – April 21<sup>th</sup>\***

**Working Day**

**16 – April 28<sup>th</sup>**

**Final Project-Class Presentations**

**17 – May 5<sup>th</sup>:**

**Final Project-Class Presentations**