

Barjeel Art Foundation and the Creation of an Independent Public Museum of Modern Arab Art  
By Patrick Kane Ph.D., Sharjah Higher Colleges of Technology, for Barjeel Art Foundation ©2018

Abstract:

The Barjeel Art Foundation offers a bold paradigm for modern and contemporary Arab art through its regional and international exhibitions and a new permanent wing for its collection at the Sharjah Art Museum. Based in Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates, Barjeel is unique among public or private art institutions; it remains independent from government or commercial influence, and upholds a philosophy and commitment to present a dynamic, public oriented venue into the historical context of Arab art and intellectuals. Through its many programs and exhibitions, Barjeel invites the viewer as a participant in this discourse. Barjeel achieved this in less than a decade, beginning with a simple exhibition at its gallery space at the Maraya Art Center in Sharjah in 2010, to its many international exhibitions, and its culmination in a long-term installation at the Sharjah Art Museum, which opened in May 2018. Barjeel is also distinguished by the prominence of women curators, notably Suheyla Takesh, Mandy Mezerban, and at Sharjah Art Musuem, Alia Al Mualla. This introduction seeks to offer an interpretive guide to a comprehensive listing of Barjeel’s published monographs and exhibition catalogues, public forums and multi-media, and sponsorship of literary prizes.<sup>1</sup> These continue to foster amid plans for its own museum of modern Arab art in Sharjah, and the opening in 2023 of new exhibitions in Berlin and London.

---

<sup>1</sup> This survey was possible through the invitation and support of Barjeel’s founder, Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi and curators, Mandy Merzaban, Suheyla Takesh, and Karim Sultan, and editor, Anna Seaman. I also thank Charles Pocock of the Meem Gallery for sharing insights on the history of Meem and Barjeel. See the bibliography for a listing of key catalogues and essays by each of Barjeel’s curators.

## Contents

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Barjeel Art Foundation and the Creation of an Independent Public Museum of Modern Arab Art ..... | 1  |
| Abstract: .....  | 1  |
| The Barjeel Art Foundation .....   | 3  |
| The Socio-Historical Paradigms for a Public Collection of Art .....                              | 6  |
| Ethnographic, Tribal and Orientalist Paradigms and the “Unwanted” Artist .....                   | 6  |
| Egyptian Modern Art and its Museum Problem: the shadow of Orientalism .....                      | 9  |
| Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan: Art beyond the State.....                                  | 12 |
| Of Manifestos, Martyrs and Murals: Barjeel’s Collection of Iraqi Art .....                       | 14 |
| The Barjeel Exhibitions .....  | 17 |
| Women Artists and Gender Hegemony .....  | 18 |
| Etel Adnan, Saloua Choucair and Mona Hatoum: the Voice and Agency of Lebanese Women Artists      | 19 |
| Egyptian Women Artists Portray Women’s Work .....  | 21 |
| Romantic Artists and the Realities of Law 96. ....   | 22 |
| Mona Saudi and Adonis.....   | 23 |
| Marwan, Boullata, Azzawi and the De-nationalized Community of Exile .....                        | 25 |
| Art Teaching and the Practice of Art .....   | 28 |
| Of Artists, Art Markets and Museums in the Gulf Region .....                                     | 29 |
| Barjeel’s New Praxis for a Museum of Modern Arab Art .....                                       | 30 |
| Continuing Exhibitions and Venues beyond Borders .....   | 34 |
| <b>Bibliography</b> .....  | 36 |

## The Barjeel Art Foundation

Formed in 2010, the Barjeel Art Foundation is the first public non-governmental institution and museum collection dedicated to modern and contemporary Arab arts<sup>2</sup>. The collections were accrued through its close collaboration with the Meem Gallery in Dubai, co-founded in 2005, with Mishal Hamed Kanoo and Charles Pocock, and which began its first exhibitions in 2007. Through the vision and philosophy of its director and founder Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi, and its curators, Barjeel created a public venue for the arts and a forum for intellectuals in the Arab world. Barjeel's exhibitions serve as bridge between artists and a wider regional and increasingly international audience. Through more than a decade of acquisitions, public forums and exhibitions of Arab, North African and Western Asian arts, it has replaced the older paradigm of national history and culture. Barjeel has advanced a contextual theory of art that peers beyond the glass walls of the global commercial art world in which it coexists. Through its expansive art collection and exhibitions, it elicits in its audience a de-nationalized history and intellectual response. This also reflects the experience of many of the key artists of the Arab world whose experience with the everyday, war, imprisonment, dislocation, refugee, emigrant and exiled status resonates through their biographies and their art.

The inspiration and driving force for the Barjeel Art Foundation's collection and exhibitions is its founder, Al Qassemi, who grew up as the son of one of Sharjah's early construction and real estate developers, the late Saud bin Khalid Al Qasimi (1939-2005)<sup>3</sup>. His mother Nama bint Majid bin Saqr Al Qasimi was distinguished as of the first women teachers in Sharjah. Thus, Barjeel, the foundation's name, derives from the traditional venting tower that was a part of his parents' first home. For its first decade, Barjeel's administrative offices occupied the original 1970s building from which his father and the family business drew up contracts and plans and commissioned architects for new buildings in a fast-growing city. Many architects were from Palestine and other Arab countries and were respected and welcomed into the making of a new Sharjah. After completing his undergraduate studies at the American University of Paris in the mid-1990s, Al Qassemi gained practical experience working in his father's business and a deep appreciation for Sharjah's architecture and city planning. The Barjeel Art Foundation has sponsored occasional architectural walks on the history and design of the city from the 1970s to the present. Al Qassemi's *Building Sharjah*, (2021) is a history of Sharjah's architecture resulting from his extensive personal knowledge and the research of the Barjeel Art Foundation and its affiliated architects and architectural history scholars.

Among the Arab Gulf cities, Sharjah is distinguished for its emphasis on culture and education, and hosts the Sharjah Biennial as well as an annual Festival of Lights, that recalls the dual function of Paris, as a city of art, and as 'La Ville Lumière' or the City of Lights, references to a

---

<sup>2</sup> While the Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art in Doha arose from the personal collection of Hassan bin Mohamed bin Ali Al Thani, and now has over 9,000 pieces in its collection, it is co-owned by two government entities, Qatar Museums and Qatar Foundation. See, (Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art 2018)

<sup>3</sup> See the short memoir by Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi, "The Longest Nights with Joy are Short," in Al Qassemi and Reisz (Eds.) *Building Sharjah*. Berlin: Birkhäuser. pp. 29-34.

shared age of Enlightenment. These connections resonated with Barjeel's 2017 exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris, *Les chef-oeuvres d'art moderne et contemporain*, recognized the role of Paris as a center for modern Arab intellectuals<sup>4</sup>. These included the Egyptian artists Georges Henein, Ramses Younan, and Marguerite Nakhla who spent formative periods in Paris in the 1930s and 1940s and participated in major European art exhibitions<sup>5</sup>. Other Arab artists had brief but formative experiences and contacts in Paris, including Inji Efflatoun, who as a recent graduate of Cairo's Lycée, became one of Egypt's delegates to a postwar international conference on women. Each of these intellectuals returned to their home country determined to promote comparative knowledge and advance social causes. For Efflatoun in the late 1940s it was to promote the cause of feminism and resist the British occupation of Egypt and where she blossomed as a major artist from 1952 until her death in 1989. Nakhla returned for a brief period to exhibit her work, and Younan returned in 1956 to Egypt to resume his career as a painter, and a columnist on art and philosophy.

Over the next half century, Paris continued to be a meeting ground for artists and writers from various Arab countries. When in the late 1990s, Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi returned from his studies in Paris to Sharjah, he yearned to extend cultural programs and activity in his home country. After an introduction by his father to a local exhibition of Palestinian Arab artists, Al Qassemi began to consider the place of modern Arab art.

In 2002, his first acquisition was a painting by the Emirati artist Abdul Qader Al Rais, whose classic style of painting meticulously captures the workmanship of design, material and colour of the pre-oil local architecture and life in among the coastal Emirati communities<sup>6</sup>. While the traditional architecture and settings were inscribed in Al Rais' paintings, by the 1970s the new oil economy spurred a rapid urban expansion of Sharjah with new architectural commissions for residential, commercial and retail space. This expansion followed alongside Sharjah's central planning that afforded attractive circles, and preserved a heritage area and a park-side ambiance around its principal central lake, now known as the Buheirah Khalifa. By 2010, his collection coalesced into the creation of the Barjeel Art Foundation<sup>7</sup>. Barjeel emerged as an art foundation that would combine the communitarian aspects of a majlis with the showcasing of art that reflected upon and encapsulated these transformations. Thus, just as Al Rais captured the heritage of coastal Emirati architecture and settings, the foundation's headquarters were established in the family business headquarters in downtown Sharjah set among the milieu of new buildings designed and built by the Arab architects his father had commissioned. In Al

---

<sup>4</sup> (Barjeel Art Foundation 2017a)

<sup>5</sup> On Paris as an intellectual center for Arab intellectuals, see among other works, (Lazarowicz 1995), (Kane 2017) and (Bardaouil 2017)

<sup>6</sup> (Cauteren 2017)

<sup>7</sup> A partial listing of Sultan Sooud's many lectures, interviews, forums, blogs and videos are listed in the bibliography. A more comprehensive list is also found on his personal website. (Al Qassemi 2018c); (Al Qassemi 2018a); (Al Qassemi 2018b); (Al Qassemi 2020).

Qassemi's own words Barjeel is "an institution that is private but for the public good," and has never charged entry fees<sup>8</sup>.

In March 2010, *Peripheral Vision* debuted at the Maraya Art Center in Sharjah. Emirati artists featured along with other Arab artists that Al Qassemi had recently acquired. A photograph by Reem Al Ghaith was a playful metaphor. In the black and white photo, a car crosses a sandy field behind a picture of a 'barjeel' or wind tower set on a common dressing room mirror that rests in the sandy foreground. The image of the wind tower, the vernacular symbol of local Gulf architecture, was a pun on the name of the Barjeel Art Foundation. From its inaugural exhibition, a Barjeel show was not about custom, but the subconscious and subversive periphery of these conventions. Expect the unexpected.

Paintings, sculpture, performance and conceptual art by women artists challenged the dominant gender hegemony by men around the world. These included a painting by the Iraqi artist Hayv Kahraman, *Flayed Lamb*, (2008) in the style of Japanese and Chinese painted scrolls. Two exquisitely dressed women in silk and finely coiffed hair are rudely imposed upon by a hung piece of a butcher's flayed lamb, a metaphor for the treatment of women as objects of men's desire and abuse. More shocking was Layan Shawabekh's *Ladies of Gaza* (2009) whose naked and alien bodies, raped and pregnant, as symbols of impunity, brutally imposed by the dual patriarchy of the Israeli occupier and an occupied Palestinian society.

During the next year, Barjeel held two other exhibitions that although organized well in advance, coincided with the Arab Spring that emerged in late December 2010 and continued into 2012. Barjeel's exhibitions were propitious, for the context of its art works revealed many of the underlying social, political and historic themes and conflicts that emerged in the public and revolutionary demonstrations if not its corollary counter demonstrations and repression. While these events unraveled among the poorer non-monarchy states of the Arab countries, the relative insularity and prosperity of cities of the Arab Gulf allowed them to become major centers of the growing commercial and international art market that cast a preference for commercial over public interest. This commercial orientation in the Gulf art market suited a neoliberal global predilection to defer or bypass dissent among the poor and poorer nations. Given this market orientation in the Gulf arts world, it is all the more remarkable that a public and historic model for an art collection emerged through the Barjeel Art Foundation.

Over the next eight years, Barjeel produced and curated over 30 different exhibitions, divided between their art gallery at the Maraya Art Center in Sharjah, four different exhibitions in Abu Dhabi and at the Sharjah Art Museum. In all, there have been well over 100 separate exhibitions and installations at major galleries or museums in North America, Europe, Kuwait, Jordan, Iran, and Singapore<sup>9</sup>. In May 2018, the last of this series of exhibitions came to rest as a

---

<sup>8</sup> (Cauteren 2017) p. 24.

<sup>9</sup> For a complete list of Barjeel's exhibitions, see the entry for (Wikipedia 2018)

semi-permanent installation at the Sharjah Museum of Art, featuring 130 of its major works. This exhibition includes sculptures and conceptual pieces by Saloua Cherkaoui, Mona Hatoum and Adam Henein, paintings by Marwan, Dia Azzawi, Ramsis Younan, Inji Efflatoun, Kadhim Haydar, and many other key figures in Arab modernism of the 20<sup>th</sup> century or contemporary works from this century.

### [The Socio-Historical Paradigms for a Public Collection of Art](#)

Barjeel created a series of community events for exhibition and discussion in rotating venues for the arts at its home galleries and museums in Sharjah, and a program of international exhibitions. This communitarian paradigm offers a milieu for gatherings and discussion, a retreat from the alienation of the inorganic consumer culture of the Gulf cities. Through a social philosophy of art, these exhibitions and gatherings are rooted in a broader theoretical comprehension of Arab art and culture through the experience of modern and contemporary history. It allows for a comparative method for presenting artists from different countries.

This transnational perspective allowed Barjeel to move beyond the national narratives of history that dominate art history and the ideology of the museum. Al Qassemi refers to a pan-Arab perspective for his collection. While other intellectuals face regional struggles, the Barjeel Collection present artists as intellectuals who variously produce art either within a national reference or in a deliberately de-nationalized context. This choice recognizes the significant number of Arab artists who experienced diaspora and other dislocations caused by historical events and wars. By doing so, the question of artistic freedom, and the attempt to break with the paradigms of the past and present appear as a continuing struggle among modern and postmodern Arab artists.

### [Ethnographic, Tribal and Orientalist Paradigms and the “Unwanted” Artist](#)

A comparative history of Arab artists and writers shows that Arab intellectuals experience variables in their socio-cultural hegemony<sup>10</sup>. Intellectuals in the Gulf, Morocco or Jordan confront tribal or ethnographic hegemonies that pressure them to reinforce conditions of the state’s hold on power as allegiance. Thus, in Morocco, museums are notably limited or encouraged to adopt ethnographic themes. An independent modern arts museum has yet to emerge<sup>11</sup>. While the royal families were tolerated during French imperialism, the post-colonial constitutional monarchy created a national hegemony that emphasized a return to Islam and divided the poor and working class amid identities of Berber, Amazigh, and Arab identities<sup>12</sup>. Hamid Irbouh showed how the French subordinated education in its new Protectorate of Morocco to create vocational centers. The teaching of art was limited to producing designs for

---

<sup>10</sup> (Gran 2016)

<sup>11</sup> On varied experiences of museums in Morocco see, (Pieprzak 2010)

<sup>12</sup> (Burke 2014)

French products and decorative motifs for domestic wares and the like<sup>13</sup>. The lasting censorship of Muhamad Choukri's (Shukrī) realist autobiography, *For Bread Alone*, is a well-known but not an isolated example of what one critic calls "unwanted literature"<sup>14</sup>. Accordingly, the notion of unwanted art also applies to the selective self-censorship in modern Arab art exhibitions.

Perhaps the Barjeel Collection better represents the importance of the Casablanca School of indigenous modernism that emerged from the late 1950s than is found in Moroccan museums based on ethnographic models. A cross-section from its collection include, Mohamed Melehi's abstractions, and Ahmed Cherkaoui's *Les Miroirs Rouges*, (1965), that suggests deeply reflective practices of Sufism found among some Maghrebi intellectuals from early modern times<sup>15</sup>.

Melehi, a 1955 graduate of the École des Beaux-Arts, in Tétouan, Morocco, is representative of this post-colonial momentum in the arts. Barjeel's collection was also derivative of the Meem Gallery 2012 exhibition, *Art Morocco: Mohamed Melehi, Ahmed Cherkaoui, Jilali Gharbaoui*.

Moving West, Barjeel presented a large exhibition of the Algerian artist Baya (1931-1998) in a 2021 exhibition, *Lasting Impressions: Baya Mahieddine*, Sharjah Art Museum. This was a solo show on the Algerian artist Baya also featured at the Sharjah Museum of Art, curated by Alya Mohamed Al-Mulla, with original video interviews of the artist by Professor Salwa Mikdadi. Her youth as an orphaned and adopted child took her at a young age from Algeria and placed her at an artist colony in the South of France where she grew up around prominent European Surrealists and other artists, including Picasso. The exhibition allowed for a reflection on her return to Algeria amid the difficult challenges and trajectories of Algerian artists who had to survive the Algerian Civil War and then create their own new manifestos of art upon independence in 1962. Other prominent Algerian artists include Mohammed Khada, whose *Abstraction Vert* (1969) has featured in numerous Barjeel exhibitions. In 1967 Khada was a founder of the art movement *Aouchem*, Amazigh for "tattoo," also referred to as the School of the Sign.

While Libyan artists remain underrepresented in the Barjeel collection for reasons that reflect a mystification or lack of theory about culture during the Qadhafi years, Tunisian artists are more freely shown and widely discussed. Tunisian artists negotiated the extreme censorship of the Ben Ali years, where in the 1970s abstraction in the art of Hedi Turki, or the turn to folkloric imagery in the colorful tapestries of Safia Ferhat were safer choices than representational realism<sup>16</sup>. There is however an unsettling edginess found among Barjeel's Tunisian collection, in

---

<sup>13</sup> (Irbouh 2005)

<sup>14</sup> (Nasalski 2016)

<sup>15</sup> Cherkaoui's early death in 1967 at the age of 33 was especially tragic. On his incorporation of Sufism, see the monograph on the artist's life by Edmond Amran El Maleh, *Ahmed Cherkaoui, The Passion of Signs: collective work*, (Paris: Edition Revue Noire, 1996).

<sup>16</sup> In 1956 Ferhat edited and published *Faïza* the first women's magazine in Tunisia and was the first director of the Institut supérieur des beaux-arts de Tunis. Safia Ferhat's tapestry, *Mère et enfants* (1970s) was shown at the *Memory Sews Together Events That Hadn't Previously Met*, Sharjah Art Museum exhibition (2022). See the shot biography at

Nadia Ayari's *The Fence* (2006) Halim Karibebine's painting, *Carthage Story*, (2007) and Abdallah Akar the Parisian émigré, in his mixed media, *Chant du Tyran* (Song of a Tyrant) 2009.

In Tunisia, museums reopened following the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime in 2011<sup>17</sup>. In the Barjeel Collection, Nadia Ayari's *The Fence* (2007), is a product of a vibrant contemporary art scene that emerged from out of contemporary Tunisian art institutions like the Maison des Arts founded by the art critic and scholar, Ali Louati and now continued by the Kamel Lazaar Foundation<sup>18</sup>. Ayari's painting from 2007, places a human eye as captive within a gated refugee camp and is a commentary on the condition of human rights<sup>19</sup>. Her painting anticipates the Arab Spring and the multidimensional response of Tunisian artists, playwrights and intellectuals<sup>20</sup>. It also bears striking resemblance to the installation and conceptual art of the Lebanese-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum, who also makes use of restraining spaces, fences, and enclosures of the modern state that surround the individual.



Nadia Ayari. *The Fence*. Oil on canvas, 152.5 x 142.3 cm (2007).

These perhaps anticipate the rising consciousness that would emerge in the Arab Spring revolt of 2011, following the desperate self-immolation of the southern Tunisian fruit seller Mohamed Bouazizi, whose death sparked revolt and forced Ben Ali to flee the country. The artistic response can be seen in Barjeel's collection of Mejri Thameur's, *Decapitate Me Please* (2011) and Nadia Kaai-Linke's unsettling representation *Ministry of Tourism* (2011) as a lone prison barred window. The latter was shown at Barjeel's 2017 exhibition at the American University in Beirut, *Between Two Rounds of Fire, the Exile of the Sea*. These currents led to the staging in 2012 of the provocatively entitled exhibition "Politiques/Politics" at the National Center for

---

<sup>17</sup> A major exhibition on 20<sup>th</sup> century Tunisian art is in planning by Ridha Mounmi, whose exhibition on 19<sup>th</sup> century Tunisian art has cast light on the visual arts of 19<sup>th</sup> century Tunisia, (Mounmi 2017)

<sup>18</sup> Doura Bouzid, *École de Tunis* (Tunis: Alif les editions de la Méditerranée, 1995) and Ali Louati, *al-fann al-tashkīli fi tūnis* (The Plastic Arts in Tunisia) (Tunis, 1997).

<sup>19</sup> (Saatchi Gallery)

<sup>20</sup> (Zahrouni 2013) See also, (Saval 2016)



Living Art, Tunis, where Atef Maatallah partook, and whose graphic work, *Meljaa* (2014) is in the Barjeel Collection.

### Egyptian Modern Art and its Museum Problem: the shadow of Orientalism

During the 1940s and up until 1959, Egyptian artists enjoyed a wider freedom as protagonists in cultural, social and political discourse. By the 1960s the state increasingly sought more direct control over the public posturing of the arts. Gradually, the state relied increasingly upon an Orientalist model favoring Egyptian antiquity while asserting tight controls of management for modern and contemporary arts. An indicator of the latter is the rapid change of five different Ministers of Culture in 2011 the year of the Arab Spring, beginning on or about January 28, 2011 when the abstract artist Farouk Housny who had held the position since 1987 was abruptly removed<sup>21</sup>. One may understand this better if we consider that the Egyptian Museum of Modern Art was mostly closed from 2011 until its reopening in January of 2021, an astonishing nine-year period, while continuing to face periodic closures up to the present day. Egyptian statism in the arts relies upon a hegemonic model that uses neo-Orientalism to deflect attention away from the discourse of the modern arts<sup>22</sup>. Beginning with the Free Officer's coup in 1952, the ministry went through various name changes. In 1952 it was named the Ministry of National Guidance, that reflected its direct role in censorship and then in 1958 renamed the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance. The Ministry of Culture has long held a dual role as the office of censorship as it also assumed control of many of the Egyptian museums. The Egyptian Museum of Modern Art is organized under the Ministry of Youth and Culture, and remains subordinate to the Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities that runs the Egyptian Museum, built in 1902, with its collection of antiquities<sup>23</sup>. This state intervention served as a continuum for the aesthetic ideal of the large landowning class that collaborated with the British occupation of 1882 and used this privilege to dominate the Egyptian state and to suppress Upper Egypt as the poorer southern region<sup>24</sup>. It was this same class that later began an elite orientation to introducing modern art through salons in the 1920s, when the fledgling Egyptian Museum of Modern Art was housed within the privately run Wax Museum. After several relocations, it was not until 1995, that it reopened in its current building at the internationally financed Opera House complex.

The Egyptian avant-garde mocked the hegemonic function of museums in Egypt as a place of national consensus. The first attack appeared in 1937 when the Egyptian poet Georges Henein - the son of an Egyptian diplomat - returned to Egypt and began a series of lectures and art

---

<sup>21</sup> See the Ministry of Culture's website for its list of previous ministers.

<http://www.moc.gov.eg/en/ministry/previous-ministers/>

<sup>22</sup> (Kane 2013)

<sup>23</sup> On the politics of the planning and opening of the new Grand Egyptian Museum expansions at the Giza Pyramids complex as part of a strategy to shift attention away from Tahrir Square, see, (Elshahed 2011)

<sup>24</sup> On the history of Egyptology and Orientalism in the Egyptian Museum, see (Colla 2007); (Reid 2003); (Daly 2016)

events upholding the subversive methods of Surrealism. When he formed a literary group called the 'Essayists,' they compiled the *Dictionnaire à l'usage du monde bourgeois*, that mocked hierarchy and attacked sexism and conventions. The museum was "a large aggrandized official garbage heap"<sup>25</sup>. This was also an indirect attack on the museum as a form of nation building, as espoused by Mohamed Nagy, one of Egypt's most prominent artists and administrators.<sup>26</sup> More recently, this subversive tone resonated in Abbas Alaidy's postmodern novel, *Being Abbas* (2003). Its main character calls for the destruction of the national narrative in history books and museums as a civilization of only the past, and for turning museums into public lavatories<sup>27</sup>.

The division of museum administration between the separate government ministries has led to bureaucratic rivalries over allocation of funds and the underdevelopment of the Egyptian Modern Art Museum. The management of the Egyptian Modern Art Museum is a bureaucratic hot potato as directors shun the controversies that modern art raises amid the Arab Spring, the turn to Islam, and authoritarian censorship<sup>28</sup>. The Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities is better financed and takes precedence with its administration of the Egyptian Museum first founded in 1895, and now eclipsed with its opening of the new Grand Egyptian Museum (GEM) and National Museum of Egyptian Civilization (NMEC). A third ministry, the Ministry of Agriculture administers its own museums including a collection of art, but has also faced periods of closure.

Reportedly, the Egyptian Modern Art Museum is not only has underfunded, but its closures that lasted anywhere from six to nine years following the Arab Spring undermined its cohesion as an institution. Nervousness over lack of funding and rapid changes of administration led to insecurity about the museum collection's inventory and protection<sup>29</sup>. This infamously came to light during the scandal following the Mahmoud Khalil Museum theft and rather selective prosecution, conviction and imprisonment of Mohsen Shaalan, the artist and Ministry of Culture official, who was ostensibly in charge of guaranteeing that security cameras and other measures were in place<sup>30</sup>.

Museum development in Egypt has also been hindered by bureaucracy and internal wars of position among Egyptian elites. At one point, in around 2000, an army general was appointed as director of the Museum of Modern Egyptian Art. As the state has a long hand within the

---

<sup>25</sup> (Alexandrian 1981) p. 13.

<sup>26</sup> Muhammad Nagi, 'L'Esprit de l'Art Moderne,' reprinted in Naghi and Roussillon, (1988) p. 49.

<sup>27</sup> (Ayidi and Davies 2009) See the discussion in (El-Ariss 2013) 152-153.

<sup>28</sup> A survey of the conditions of various museums in the MENA region, including the Egyptian Museum of Modern Art is found in (Naef 2014)

<sup>29</sup> The exact dates of closure are variously reported. Elsirgany, (2015) noted the museum had been closed for three years, while the reporting of May Selim (2021) noted it had been closed for six years. Reading both reports, it would add up to at least a nine-year closure. As mentioned on the State Information website, previously the museum had been subject to other renovations that required closures and a reopening in 2005.

<sup>30</sup> On the notion that Mohsen Shaalan was a victim of a setup, see the chapter in Tariq Al-Taher, *fannanun mutamaridun* (Rebellious Artists) Cairo: Al-Ṭab'ah al-ūlā ed. al-Qāhirah, 2017.

Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Antiquities, extending deep-state levels of connections, its dual role as a promoter of Egyptian arts and as the main office for censorship yields contradictory tensions and rivalries. Perhaps even more threatening that the visual arts are popular music like the mahraganah songs<sup>31</sup> and sports, where impromptu gatherings pose a threat to the security apparatus<sup>32</sup>.

Attempts to establish museums for the collections of modern Egyptian artists have found bureaucratic hesitance, and rivalries between collectors over individual works of art. Ezzedine Naguib has written of the failure to establish a museum for Inji Efflatoun that disintegrated due to bureaucracy, and the disappearance and theft of many of her artworks, as well as the interests of the family members or trustees of her estate. In other words, the art market and its darker sides have seemingly dissuaded interest in establishing museums for individual artists. Why build a museum, when the works of art can be sold for personal profit?

Despite these museology misgivings, the dynamics of modern Egyptian art allows for students to read, study and locate a wide range of artistic production and discourse that feature in modern Egyptian history. The proliferation of art journalism and criticism alongside the range of private gallery exhibitions is a rich field for further study. The artist Inji Efflatoun, not only exhibited for some forty years but also wrote books on Egyptian women's causes, worked as a journalist in the late 1940s and early 1950s and was a prodigious artist with multiple solo shows in Egypt and at various biennales around the globe.

Barjeel's role as an external institution allows it to collect and exhibit more than 90 different Egyptian artists. These feature remarkable examples of Egyptian painting and sculpture from the so-called pioneer generation of the 1920-30s, including the sculptor Mahmoud Moukhtar. The collection features a full century of Egyptian modern art, beginning with Youssef Kamal's 1921 painting *A View from the Citadel*. Recent works include Moatz Nasr's ceramic figures entitled *Al-Shaab* (The People) dedicated to those who were in Tahrir Square and shown at the Bard Gallery in New York for the 2017 exhibition *No to the Invasion*. Other Egyptian artworks in the collection that remain unexhibited include Amr Nasser's *Joke*, a 2013 silk print parody of General Sisi in the year that he took power as Egypt's new president.

In 2011, the Meem Gallery hosted an exhibition and published *Art Sudan*. It was among the first exhibitions dedicated to Sudanese modern artists outside of Sudan<sup>33</sup>. Sudanese art has also been the locus of a series of conferences and exhibitions on art and writers that were led by the direction of Sheikha Hoor Al Qassimi and Professor Salah Hassan, who are also the founding directors of the new Africa institute in Sharjah. As a number of important Sudanese writers and artists reside in the UAE, the hosting of conferences dedicated to the arts of the Sudan, was

---

<sup>31</sup> Wael Alaa, *Nowness: Bulaq a Pulsing Survey of Cairo's Underground Sounds*. Available online: <https://www.nowness.com/story/bulaq-wael-alaa#!> (accessed on 15 June 2022)

<sup>32</sup> See, Salwa Ismail, (2006).

<sup>33</sup> See the catalogue by the Sudanese artists Ibrahim Salahi and Mohammad Omar Khalil, *Art Sudan*. Dubai: Meem Gallery (2011).

well received<sup>34</sup>. The selection of Barjeel's collection of Sudanese artists was also highlighted in the 2020 *Taking Shape* exhibition in New York.

### Lebanon, Palestine, Syria and Jordan: Art beyond the State

A variation on cultural hegemony and the influence of art exists in Lebanon where the state operates under constant threat of civil war or internal disruption. As a result the state is not a reliable source of funds for the arts. The collapse in the 1970s of Beirut as a financial center spurred its long civil war, while the compromise of sectarian politics and fiscal crises produce a greater reliance on wealthy families and benefactors to fund privately owned commercial museums, leaving other services vulnerable to the largesse of grants from the Arab Gulf, NGOs or institutions like the United States Agency for International Development<sup>35</sup>. This resonates in planning by the Dalloul Foundation for a privately owned Museum of Arab Art in Beirut, that was scheduled to open in 2020, and the private Beirut Museum of Art<sup>36</sup>. The liberal arts community based around the Hamra section of West Beirut, has little connection to Palestinian camps or to the Shi'ia community of the South of Lebanon. Artists in Lebanon forge or negotiate an identity or alliance based on these sectarian divisions and are mindful of Sunni, Shi'a and Christian patronage and locales<sup>37</sup>. Artists who choose a secular path must still navigate these divisions. Hence the long Lebanese Civil War resonates and provides context for artists and movements and especially with the rise of multi-media.

In the Barjeel collection are remarkable examples of the response of artists to these challenges and crises. These include Etel Adnan's 2013 tapestry *Champs de Petrol* (Oil Fields), that is among the most frequently exhibited works in its collection and harkens the transition from Lebanon's place as a financial center for the region before the rise of the Gulf, but which recall the sense of texture in Persian carpets from her childhood. Other iconic works are from the Saloua Choucair, whose wooden sculptures may be read as poetic forms.

In Jordan, royal support with influence by the artist and diplomat, Wijdan Ali, led to the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts and private support from Khalid Shoman, a prominent banker led to the creation of the Darat al-Funun<sup>38</sup>. Darat al-Funun was founded in 1993 as an outlet for

---

<sup>34</sup> Modernity and the Making of Identity in Sudan: Remembering the Sixties and Seventies. (2015). <https://sharjahart.org/press/modernity-and-the-making-of-identity-in-sudan-remembering-the-sixties-and-s>

<sup>35</sup> See for example the \$50 million dollars in grants gifted by USAID in November 2022 to the American University of Beirut (AUB), Lebanese American University (LAU), and Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU). USAID press release, November 10, 2022. <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/nov-10-2022-administrator-power-announces-50-million-higher-education-lebanon>

<sup>36</sup> (Dawson 2017) See also, (Cornwell and Brady 2017)

<sup>38</sup> (Rogers 2013)

the Shoman family's art collection and became an institutional space that supported numerous visiting Lebanese, Syrian, Iraqi and Palestinian artists<sup>39</sup>.

Steve Sabella argues that Palestinian galleries and museums are dependencies of post-Oslo agreement political configurations of power<sup>40</sup>. The history of Palestinian art is well represented by the artists chosen, of whom Steven Sabella and Kamal Boullata have also written on its development<sup>41</sup>. If there is an artist who bridges the Palestinian experience of refugee and émigré, of statelessness and civility, then it is Paul Guiragossian, whose paintings transit the experience as a son of a survivor of the massacre of Armenians in 1915, who after 1948 was forced to abandon his Palestinian residence in Jerusalem and move to Beirut. Others Palestinian artists like Samia Halaby and Kamal Boullata show a clarity of color, design and purpose through abstraction as Palestinian artists in exile<sup>42</sup>. Another frequently exhibited work in the Barjeel exhibitions is Mona Hatoum's *Witness* (2009) as a statement by a Palestinian-Lebanese artist on the realities confronting survivors of the Lebanese Civil War. Hatoum's 1988 video, *Measures of Distance* is an autobiographical short that depicts the conflicts of exile, separation, gender, and the emotional toll of civil war in Lebanon. A more recent lecture by Hatoum offers her own retrospective of some 30 years as an installation, performance and conceptual artist, in which she creates spaces of physical immersion to critique the institutional and structural experience of surveillance, cages, prisons, or public housing, as well as introspective on the human body<sup>43</sup>. How these conceptual pieces are acquired by collectors, art institutes or museums remains an understudied problem for art historians, as the demands of space suggest a preference by auction houses for painting, graphic arts and sculpture as more easily exchanged commodities for art markets.

Another large portion of the collection is of sixty or more Syrian artists, that include Fateh Al-Moudarres and other foundational figures of Syrian modernism, as well as Leila Nseir, whose *The Martyr (Nation)* 1978 was a dedication to fallen women fedayi or freedom fighters<sup>44</sup>. Of all the Syrian artists, it is Marwan Kassab Bacha, who is most featured, including a Barjeel retrospective of his work that opened in June, 2023 in Berlin. The presence of Syrian nationals in Dubai, has contributed to exhibitions and interest in its contemporary art scene, to a large degree as a beneficiary of the Atassi Art Foundation. Recent scholarship by art historians has turned attention to the centrality of state censorship, and questions of artistic autonomy<sup>45</sup>.

---

<sup>39</sup> A monograph history of the collection is Sarah Rogers Sarah and Eline van der Vlist. *Arab Art Histories : The Khalid Shoman Collection*. Amman Jordan: Khalid Shoman Foundation (2013).

<sup>40</sup> (Sabella 2010); (Sabella 2011)

<sup>41</sup> Kamal Boullata, *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present*. London: Saqi Books (2009).

<sup>42</sup> For Samia Halaby's writings on a theory of Palestinian art and artist see (Halaby 2001, 2019).

<sup>43</sup> Mona Hatoum lecture at Magasin III, Stockholm, 28 April, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEG1J01i8vc>

<sup>44</sup> The principal interpretive and theoretical study of Syrian modern art is Professor Anneka Lenssen's *Beautiful Agitation : Modern Painting and Politics in Syria* (2020). The Atassi Foundation in Dubai also sponsors numerous exhibitions and publications on modern Syrian artists, that complement the family's experience in running a Syrian art gallery and their art collection.

<sup>45</sup> On the relocation to Dubai of Syrian gallery owners Rafia Kodmani and Mouna Atassi to and for a larger discussion of artistic censorship see Bank (2020) p. 34.

## Of Manifestos, Martyrs and Murals: Barjeel's Collection of Iraqi Art

In downtown Baghdad, the artist Wijdan Majid was commissioned in around 2019 to complete a series of wall murals celebrating Iraq's intellectual heritage with major figures from the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including those who were tortured or forced into exile by the regime of Saddam Hussein. Among the murals completed are large paintings of the sociologist and historian Ali Al Wardi, the artist Jawad Selim, and the artist and poet Muzhafar Al-Nawab. A series of visually stunning and provocative paintings on the themes of martyrdom, freedom and the Iraqi experience in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will confront most visitors at the Barjeel exhibitions.

The martyr series overlap with events and developments in Iraq's modern art movement of the late 1950s that the artist Jawad Selim, along with Suad Al Attar and others, spurred into action through painting and sculpture. It is Jawad Selim's iconic but posthumously completed sculpture-mural, the *nisba al-hurriya* (Monument to Freedom) that evokes nationalism through a combination of action figures on the left side of the mural and symbols of turath or heritage on the right half<sup>46</sup>. While the Barjeel collection has a limited number of Jawad Selim paintings, it has collected several works that reference and restate Jawad Selim's monumental sculpture as a transit through history, memory and the contemporary<sup>47</sup>. In Barjeel's collection is a 2019 reprint of the 1962 black and white photograph "Monument to Freedom." by Latif Al Ani, (1932-2021). As one of Iraq's most prominent photographers, state censorship in 1979 forced him to stop all photography<sup>48</sup>. The sculpture was analyzed in detail for its iconography by the Palestinian writer, Jabra Ibrahim Jabra<sup>49</sup>, a 2016 study for an Iraqi scholarly journal examined the references in the *nisba al-hurriya* to women, while a painting from 2019 acquired by Barjeel shows a restatement of the *nisba al-hurriya* through the 21<sup>st</sup> century experience.

From the 1950s, the manifesto and art exhibition was a means of announcing a new direction from an emerging group of artists. In Iraq a series of manifestos were prominently publicized, including Shakir Hassan Al Said's "Contemplative Art Manifesto" with its reference to Islamic

---

<sup>46</sup> For recent discussions of the sculpture, see Nathaniel Greenberg, "Political Modernism, Jabrā, and the Baghdad Modern Art Group," *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2010, Online:

<https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1603&context=clcweb>, DOI: 10.7771/1481-4374.160;

<sup>47</sup> On the art career of Jewad Selim and his influence, see Saleem Al-Bahloly, "History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting," *Muqarnas*. (2018) Vol. 35, 229-72.

<https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26742196>

<sup>48</sup> See interview by Angeria di Cutó, "Latif Al Ani: 'I was documenting for the sake of archiving. I never thought Iraq would arrive at what it has today'," *Studio International*. May 1, 2018.

<https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/latif-al-ani-interview-photographer-i-never-thought-iraq-would-arrive-at-what-it-has-today>

<sup>49</sup> Jabra Ibrahim Jabra. *Jawad Selim wa al-Nisb al-Hurriyya*. Bagdad: Wazira al-Alām, 1974.

philosophy, that appeared in the daily newspaper al-Jumhirriya in 1966<sup>50</sup>. (Al Said, 2018) This was followed by Al Said's issuance of the One Dimension (al-Bu'd al-Wahid) treatise that emphasized a study of the use of elements of calligraphy and the letter as a compositional basis for abstract art<sup>51</sup> (Shabout, 2020). Among other manifestos was the collective manifesto issued by Dia al-Azzawi and others in 1969, entitled "Manifesto: Towards a New Vision."

Barjeel's collection also brings needed attention to the contextual place of Iraq - a major center for art and cultural art institutions. Modern Iraqi art has been at the cusps of coups, repression, invasion and occupation that resulted in the death by American bombing of one of its premier artists. In spite of these trials and setbacks, Iraqi artists have promoted, prompted, and provoked, persevered and preserved their heritage and sense of invention. Among the many prominent Iraqi artists in its collection are Kadhim Hayder, Dia Azzawi and Shakir Hassan Al Said. Al Said was a participant with Jewad Selim in the *Jama'at Baghdad li-l-Fann al-Hadith* (Baghdad Group of Modern Art) in 1951, and later founded the *One Dimension* manifesto and group in 1971. It is however, Kadhim Hayder's paintings that prevail at numerous Barjeel exhibitions. The scene of dying horses shown in profile on large canvases capture the viewer who must construct the metaphor of the slaying of the Shi'ite martyrs to contemporary Iraqi history in the mid to late 20<sup>th</sup> century, with its history of slayings of communists and Shi'ites by the Ba`athist state.

The careers of Iraqi artists, whether in Iraq or in exile, reflects the rapid cultural and economic development but also the setbacks of totalitarianism, the Gulf Wars and the challenges of its current era of reconstruction.<sup>52</sup> Artists who remained in Iraq during the 1980s had to choose forms of restraint, self-censorship or align themselves with the regime. Among the latter was Layla al-Attar who was able to operate a privately run art gallery in the mid-1980s<sup>53</sup> and later became director of the Director of the Center for National Art until her death from the U.S. bombing of her residence in 1993<sup>54</sup>. Insight into those who worked as artists during the Baathi regime from the 1980s onward is provided in Hana Mal Allah's account<sup>55</sup>. Mal Allah, Head of the Graphics Department at the Institute of Fine Arts in Baghdad reveals a number of unresolved tensions among artists who remained within Iraq during the period of the Iran-Iraq War, the First Gulf War, and aftermath of international sanctions and bombings. Another study of art and politics under the Ba`thi regime reveals the disparate strategies of those artists,

---

<sup>50</sup> Shakir Hassan Al Said, "Contemplative Art Manifesto (1966)," in Lennsen, Rogers, and Shabout, *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. p. 252. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 2018. p. 252

<sup>51</sup> Nada Shabout, "Mediating Abstraction through the Arabic Letter," in Suheyla Takesh and Lynn Gumpert (Eds.) *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s-1980s*. New York: Grey Art Gallery. (2020) pp. 41-49. See also, Shakir Hassan Al Said. "The Philosophical, Technical and Expressive Aspects of the One Dimension (1973)," in Lennsen, Rogers and Shabout (Eds.), *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. New York: Museum of Modern Art. p. 359.

<sup>52</sup> (Selim 2001)

<sup>53</sup> On Iraq in the 1980s see Ulrike Al-Khamis, "An Historical Overview 1900s-1990s" in Faraj (2001) 21-32. On the problem of choice between diaspora, exile or remaining in Iraq, see Rashad Selim, "Diaspora, Departure and Remains," in Faraj (2001) 47-61.

<sup>54</sup> See, (Nusair 2013)

<sup>55</sup> Hama Mal Allah, "Consciousness of Isolation," in Faraj (2001) 63-66.

illustrators and writers who were required to produce illustrations for *Alif Ba* and other periodicals, for as the Iran-Iraq War dragged on, some artists like Ibrahim Rashid were seemingly ambiguous about depicting the role of women who were increasingly conscripted into supporting roles in the army.

The American invasion of 2003 seems to have deflected attention away from the history of the Ba`thi state. While a study of the culture of violence appeared in 2002, this has been replaced with a more applied education approach in the proliferation in Iraqi academic journals published over the past two decades. A study of the several journals dedicated to women's education and the arts in the same period are worth comparing to other approaches in education in other countries. Some studies focus on the American invasion as a cultural break from which to compare Iraqi art production<sup>56</sup>. A recent article on the impact of the art market on Iraqi art explained its methodology as based on causal outputs and what it called descriptive analytical results. with a focus on applied education rather than a theory of the state and culture.

A theoretical approach is required to place the position of intellectual and artistic life within Iraq during the Ba`thist state and the Iran-Iraq War (1980–8), First Gulf Wars (1991), the twelve-year, period of international sanctions (1991-2003) and the American led invasion and occupation of 2003. When the Americans invaded and occupied Iraq in 2003, the country had been at war for 23 years. Dina Khoury has provided a structural historical methodology and theory to understand the complexity of this difficult period<sup>57</sup>. After 1991, the scale of massacres by the Iraqi and resulting martyrdom among Southern Iraqis and their rebellion against the Ba`thi regime was severe as the numbers of persecuted and casualties there was several times the rate of other regions. In these conditions it is difficult to expect to find works of art from within.

If we find in Barjeel's collection, Faisal Laibi Sahi's *Martyrs* (1978) a painting commenting on recent victims of state oppression, it was also prescient of massacres and executions to follow the Ba`thist takeover in 1979, a subsequent period of Iraqi arts that would be faced with even greater loss of life from war and executions. This led the Iraqi war veteran, turned illustrator and artist Najim Fairs (b. 1967) while sitting at a gallery in Amman, Jordan, to recount to the historian Dina Khoury "why should Iraqi art express anything but grief?"<sup>58</sup> The inventory the Mu'assasat al-dhākirah al-'Irāqīyah (Iraq Memory Foundation) an online digital archive of the University of California / Hoover Institute contains interviews of Iraqi artists whose art and experience has escaped the attention of the art markets<sup>59</sup>. These include among others,

---

<sup>56</sup> See, Yasir Anis Kadhim, "al-uslub fi ar-rasm al-'iraqi al-mu`asir qabla wa ba`d al-harb: dirasa tahliliyya muqarna. (Styles in Iraqi Contemporary Painting before and after the War: an analytical comparative study) Al-Academy Journal, no. 88 (2018) 25-40..

<sup>57</sup> See (Khoury 2013)

<sup>58</sup> Interview with the artist Najim Faris, as quoted by Dina Khoury (2013) p. 253.

<sup>59</sup> See the inventory of interviews at [https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5m3nf2b3/entire\\_text/?query=iraq%20memory](https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5m3nf2b3/entire_text/?query=iraq%20memory)



Muwafaq Makki Jasim Al-Musawi (b. 1956) expelled from the Fine Arts institute in 1979 for refusing to join the Ba`th Party; Akram Jaafar Saadallah Tozlo (b. 1933); and the journalist Hassan Al Atabi (b. 1926) who recounted the story of his son Samy, an artist who was executed in 1984 after repeated refusals to join the Ba`th Party.

Similarly, the history of the Museum of Modern Art in Baghdad, the successor to the Center for National Art was plagued by serial wars, looting and plunder of the collections, is worth studying as its restoration is taking different forms, legal, physical, and through online archives<sup>60</sup>.

### The Barjeel Exhibitions

In light of the problem of national museums, Barjeel's project takes on paramount importance. Several exhibitions were dedicated to the artistic examination of a crisis ridden era of international and regional power struggles and civil wars that have put civilians at risk of torture, detention, and bombing or to be left as starving orphans and desperate refugees. At the Paris exhibition *100 Chefs-d'œuvre* (2017)<sup>61</sup>, the Egyptian artist Raafat Ishak's *Nomination for the presidency of the New Egypt* (2012) was exhibited during the transitional period of Egyptian elections. Composed as a manifesto for a new political party in Egypt, its Arabic script is merely a transliteration of English terms, negating a complete comprehension or praxis of action<sup>62</sup>. This is not an artwork that provokes a common or inspired response in the Brechtian sense, but in effect replicates the sense of defeat and hopelessness.

In the 2015 *Home Ground* exhibit in Toronto, the short, difficult life of the Israeli-Arab artist art of Asim Abu Shaqra (1961-1990) was featured.<sup>63</sup> A graduate of Kalisher Art Academy in Tel Aviv, he held his first solo exhibition in 1988 shortly before dying from cancer. In Barjeel's collection, Shaqra's painting, *ṣabūr*, or *Cactus*, shows the enigma of common potted plant uprooted from its native soil and transplanted as a captive onto a windowsill in his neighborhood. The limited number of Shaqra's works available, suggest the art in collections is skewed toward successful survivors, whose marketability is a product of longevity, organization and relative safety.

---

<sup>60</sup> On the condition of Iraqi art and museums see, (Shabout 2014) (Nusair 2013) (Shabout 2012); (Shabout 2006) (Davis 2005)

<sup>61</sup> A conflict over the naming of the exhibit occurred when Jack Lang, IMA's director, and the long serving former Minister of Culture for France overrode the wishes of the curator and Barjeel to name the exhibition *Le visage du monde*, after one of the central artworks in the exhibit by a Moroccan artist. Lang's rejection of the title suggests he holds a Eurocentric view that does not recognize that Arab artists have their own worldview. This Eurocentric and Francophile claim as the center of has a longer and controversial history, that includes the infamous declaration of Jean Clair, former director of the Picasso Museum in Paris and the artistic director of the 1995 Venice Biennale, that the Third World had no modern art.

<sup>62</sup> (Sutton Gallery 2012)

<sup>63</sup> (Takesh 2015)

In 2017, *Between Two Rounds of Fire, the Exile of the Sea*, on the effects of war on Lebanon showed at the American University Museum, Katzen Art Center in Washington, D.C.<sup>64</sup>. It was minimally presented with little or no catalogue descriptions, instead the artwork itself was left the viewer's own reconciliation of one's self in relation to the victims of war in the neoliberal phase of imperialism, dressed as globalization.

A parallel exhibit from Barjeel's collection, *No to the Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects*, also showed in 2017 at Bard College in New York. It took anti-war art along with a catalogue of representative key articles and interviews with a selection of important intellectuals<sup>65</sup>. Among other writers, it featured a critical essay by Tarek El-Ariss, who relates the contemporary Arab artists' focus on the damaged human body in comparison with Ahmed Saadawi's 2014 novel, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*<sup>66</sup>.

### Women Artists and Gender Hegemony

Women across the Middle East are prominent in the modernist movements of art and literature. The history of women artists has received much needed revision to situate the emergence and choice of women to pursue the arts as a vocation. The art history of Arab women artists has received renewed emphasis in the past decade, and build upon earlier scholarship by Azar (1953), Madkour (1991), Mikdadi (1994), Naef (1996), Radwan (2016, 2017, 2021), Adal (2019), Ozpinar and Kelly (2020), Atallah (2020), Kane (2022) and Kane and Mikdadi (2023). The prominence of Salwa Mikdadi, Nada Shabout, Sheikha Hoor Al Qassimi, and Fatenn Moustaffa and other women as curators and gallery owners are examples of influential roles in contemporary Arab arts<sup>67</sup>. To a certain degree this phenomenon reflects the vagaries of choice in modern Arab society where women have asserted themselves in the cultural sphere, while other technical and professional areas were claimed within patriarchal or custom-based practices of exclusion.

By 2013 Barjeel's exhibitions featured women artists. In the Singapore exhibition *Terms and Conditions*, Barjeel's curator, Mandy Merzaban assembled a small but representative group of works that explored realities confronted by women. The Lebanese-Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum's *Plotting Table* mimics a general's planning map. Her simple arrangement of toy soldiers in rounded endless loops is formed in name of the piece, *Infinity*. Her porcelain sculpture *Witness* (2009) is a miniature reproduction of the martyr's monument in Beirut replete with the civil war bullet holes.

---

<sup>64</sup> (American University Museum 2017) . In the collaborative curatorship by Jack Rasmussen and Barjeel curators, the exhibition presented anti-war art as a reflection on the impact of bombing, displacement and exile on Lebanese civilians

<sup>65</sup> (Barjeel Art Foundation 2017b)

<sup>66</sup> The catalogue essays are in the bibliography, but include (El-Ariss 2017) (Merzaban 2017)

<sup>67</sup> (Amirsadeghi, Mikdadi, and Shabout 2009). Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi is a curator and director of Sharjah Art Foundation and the Sharjah Biennale. Fatenn Mostafa is a curator, director and co-founder of [Arttalks](#) in Cairo.

Barjeel's exhibition in Tehran featured a number of prominent women artists that included Inji Efflatoun. Her inclusion acknowledged her role in many of the emergent avant-garde movements in Egyptian arts from the 1940s-60s. Her commitment to feminism and social causes, her support for communism in Egypt led to her imprisonment during the Nasser years, when she and thousands of political prisoners were imprisoned, in her case for five years from 1959 to 1964<sup>68</sup>. Her answer was to create a series of paintings from prison that depict the maltreatment of women but also their own dignity. Efflatoun is one of a number of important women artists found in Barjeel's collection. Exhibitions and further study of Marguerite Nakhla, Tahia Halim, Saloua Choucair, Etel Adnan and many others may be made. Because of Barjeel's concerted effort to collect the works of Marguerite Nakhla, Inji Efflatoun and Tahia Halim, it is now easier to reconstruct and situate the fuller role and participation of women in the modern art movements in Egypt as well as in the case of Nakhla in Europe.

### [Etel Adnan, Saloua Choucair and Mona Hatoum: the Voice and Agency of Lebanese Women Artists](#)

Lebanon's history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century suffered the consequences of mass starvation during World War I, the imperialism of the French mandate and Israeli wars of occupation, and lingering conflicts of sectarian divisions between contingents of sectarian rivalries over control of land ownership and political power. The consequence of the Lebanese Civil War has not escaped those participants and intellectuals who lived through it and among these women artists have been among its most sensitive and perceptive critics. As in other parts of the Arab world, women artists found a voice through a multidimensional use of the arts. The Barjeel collection features an impressive collection of many of its most important artists and representative pieces.

In the painting, *La Montagne Liban* (Mount Lebanon), Etel Adnan (b. 1928) and Simone Fattal (b. 1942) collaborated in a mystical washed brushwork that dissolves the artifice of borders between countries. Produced a few years before the breakout of the Lebanese Civil War, the painting is a logical outcome of their shared experience. While both artists identify themselves as Arab Americans based on their long residence in the United States, each artist retains an engagement with their native land, Adnan to Lebanon, and Fattal to Syria.

Shortly after this painting was completed, Etel returned to work in Beirut as the cultural editor of two newspapers from 1972-76. Her experience resulted in *Sitt Marie Rose*, a seminal novel of the Lebanese Civil war (1975-1990). It chronicles the assassination of a Lebanese Christian woman, killed by Phalangists to silence her support for Palestinians. The controversy of the novel forced Etel Adnan to return to California where she has made her home and resumed her distinctive literary and artistic career. Etel Adnan's abstract paintings have a clarity of lines and pure tonal colours, and the figureless abstract paintings and landscapes are suited to her poetry and existential philosophy.

With an exceptional background of study in art and philosophy at the Sorbonne, UC Berkeley and Harvard, for many years she was a professor of philosophy and aesthetics at the Dominican College in San Rafael. She has received worldwide critical acclaim for her poetry, novels and art, and a 2014 retrospective showed at the Mathaf Museum in Doha.

---

<sup>68</sup> See (Najīb 2000).

The sculpture entitled *Poem* by Saloua Roudah Choucair (1916-2016) endures not only as a testament to the sculptor's sense of form and composition but also of the remarkable and enduring career of the artist herself<sup>69</sup>. As a student of architecture and painting in France, she was inspired by the forms of Le Corbusier and studied directly under Fernand Leger. As we see in *Poem*, the artist presents a sense of unity and cohesive fusion of materials, for each layer of the wood is composed as lines of an Arab poem, with alternating lines and forms of words in hemistich balanced forms. Choucair provides us with a merger of abstraction rooted in structural reference to Arabic and Islamic forms. Although raised in a secular Druze family, her sensitivity and appreciation of Arabic poetry is expressly represented through attention to structure and rhythm. The uppermost layer of the wooden sculpture contains the three ligature dots that abstractly suggest the letter sheen for shi`ir or poetry in Arabic. Renowned for her public sculptures her exploration of form and color is vividly explored in one of her early abstract paintings, *Composition in Yellow* of the early 1960s.



Saloua Choucair. *Poem*.

The Lebanese Civil War is rendered in classical porcelain figures by Mona Hattoum who was born and raised in Beirut to a Palestinian family. The Greco-Roman gestures, clothing are punctuated by the bullet holes of modern guns. The postures of victory or a reclining figure at a salon are converted into the dying Gaul. Her other commentaries on war, include *Infinity*, an arrangement of toy soldiers aligned in

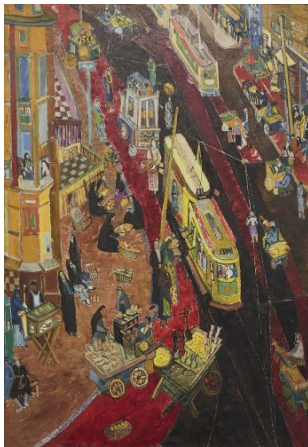
---

<sup>69</sup> Samir Sayegh, "Mi'ah 'ām tatwaj riyādah an-nahātah Salwa Rawdah Shuqayr (One Hundred Years Celebrating the Pioneering Sculptress Saloua Roudah Choucair)." *Al-Hayat*, June 24: 16

the figurine of the infinity symbol. A recent lecture by Hatoum at the 1-2-3 Gallery in Stockholm, offered her personal retrospective on her thirty years as a conceptual and installation artist<sup>70</sup>.

### Egyptian Women Artists Portray Women's Work

In the 1950s, women artists who had joined with an expansive Egyptian feminist movement turned their attention to scenes of women at work, as porters and vendors, as mothers and caretakers of children, as agricultural workers. Zeinab Abdel Hamid's *Quartier Populaire* (1956) is given a French title, for the elite women of Cairo, preferred and used French as a language of class distinction. Despite this, these mostly bilingual French and Arabic speaking Egyptian women artists were keen in depicting scenes of women at work on the public streets, working as vendors, or socializing as neighbors to shop for produce or tend to their children. Zeinab Abdel Hamed (1919-2002) was a graduate of an art academy in Spain and in 1952 began teaching in Bulaq, Cairo's poorer working-class neighborhood, at the *ma`had al-ali li-ma`lumat al-funun al-jamila* or Higher Institute for Women Teachers in the Fine Arts. The institute had just graduated its first class of certified teachers in the preceding years, whose graduates included Menhat Helmy (1925–2004), and Gazbia Sirry (1925–2021). All three women are recognized as among Egypt's most distinguished women artists of the 1950s. And so, when Abdel Hamid turned to a depiction of a street scene of Cairo, women dominate the lower foreground corner where women are shown as vendors, shoppers and neighbors. Abdel Hamid's socialized street scene paralleled similar scenes of etchings and paintings by Menhat Helmy, who had also taken up social portrayals of women working in the urban environment. Elsewhere in the Barjeel collection we find several 1958 paintings, the year after Egyptian women gained full voter suffrage. These are Helmy's *Outpatient Clinic*, and Mariam Abdel Aleem's *Clinic*, of women at health clinics, while in the same collection there are earlier depictions of women peasant laborers by Inji Efflatoun, *Farm* or *Ezba* (1953).



Zeinab Abdel Hamid. *Quartier populaire*. Oil on canvas, 116 x 81 cm (1956)

---

<sup>70</sup> (Hatoum, 2022)

### Romantic Artists and the Realities of Law 96.

A direct comparison of depictions of Upper Egyptian homes painted in their unique pastel tones is found in two paintings set perhaps about a half-century apart. An earlier undated painting by Mohamed Sabry (b. 1917) that follows the techniques of a Beaux-Arts tradition of salons and studios of Cairo and Alexandria's artistic elite, shows a village scene that is recognizably Upper Egypt. Ibrahim Ghazala returned to this theme in his *Village Houses* (1992), that shows women and children of the village at rest watching over several grazing animals. The soft colourful pastels of the distinctive walled architecture matches the colors of the women's clothing in the foreground in a scene suggestive of an early morning or late afternoon. The ribbons of alternating colour are patched together in a quilt-like masonry that stretch in bands across the canvas and break up the composition of earth, walls and sky, together creating an imagined harmony.



Figure 1 Ibrahim Ghazala, *Village Houses* (1992) Oil on wood. SM2011-762

How vastly different these pastiche scenes of Sa`idi or Upper Egyptian life are from the realities of renewed oppression against the peasant tenants, who had been promised land reforms during the opening rhetoric following the Free Officer's Coup of 1952 and the early Nasser state. In the same year that Ghazala painted his tranquil scene, the new Law 96 was enacted. This new law set in motion the displacement of thousands of peasants and tenant farmers who found themselves faced with eviction, or levels of landlessness, homelessness or with new indebtedness and higher rents. Just five years after Ghazala painted his peaceful scene of village life, a clash broke out in 1997 between the large landowner and his tenants at one of these "sa`idiyya" or content villages<sup>71</sup>. The artist and art critic Ezzedine Naguib, while employed by the Palace of Culture in Kafr Al-Sheikh in the Egyptian Delta, organized a series of Brechtian styled theatre and poetry performances by artists and poets during the years 1967 to 1978, and described in his provocative book *Al-Samatun* (The Silent) on the need for mobilization between artists, writers to bridge the gulf between art theory with the realities of everyday life and struggle of the people<sup>72</sup>. In reaction to Law 96, a number of artists banded together to form a support group and communal effort to assist peasants in resisting the impact of the new law<sup>73</sup>. In retaliation for

<sup>71</sup> A series of multiple outbreaks of violence between large landowners and their tenant farmers and peasants took place in 1997 and 1998, including at Sa`idi or Upper Egyptian villages, where farms were set ablaze and

<sup>72</sup> On his personal experience with this movement see his own book, *Al-Samatun: tajarub fi al-thaqafa wa-al-dimucratiyya bil rif al-Misri*. (The Silent: Experiments on Culture and Democracy in the Egyptian Village) Cairo, 2012.

<sup>73</sup> On the history of Law 96 and resistance to it, see `Ashmawi, 2001. For a short description of the legal effects of the law (Act No. 96, 1992, to amend certain provisions of Legislative Decree No.178, 1952, on Land Reform) which

these efforts in Kafr Al-Sheikh on behalf of displaced peasants, the artist and art critic Ezzedine Naguib was arrested and imprisoned in 1997 along with others and chronicled in his book on this experience<sup>74</sup>. His arrest was likely a result of the authorities' fears over the continued intifada against Law 96, where a battle between broke out between a large landowner and his tenants at a village in Kafr Al-Sheikh governate required the presence of security forces to quell the rebellion<sup>75</sup>. Another form of contemporary discord, is the revival of attacks upon Sufism found in the recent works by contemporary Egyptian artists. In Ammar Abo Bakr's *Hidden Sufi*, the outward attacks by Salafists and so-called reformers like the Muhammad 'Abduh (1849-1905) who argued for the suppression of public Sufi celebrations and practices, is brought to bear in an image of a covered and bound face, with the inscription in French, stating "I am the one who does not have the right to be."<sup>76</sup>



Ammar Abo Bakr, *Hidden Sufi*. Acrylic and spray paint on canvas, 400 x 300 cm, 2015

This was followed by a rearranged exhibition of the Barjeel exhibition space at the Sharjah Museum of Art that directed an equal share in the number of women and men artists.

### Mona Saudi and Adonis

In *Petra Stones* the sculptor Mona Saudi (1930-2022) presented a series of twelve silkscreen and ink on paper inspired by poetry and hurrifiyya artistic calligraphy. In a collaborative effort with Adonis ('Alī Aḥmad Sa'īd Aṣḥar, b. 1930) the best-known of contemporary Arab poets. Mona Saudi, as a Jordanian artist with a mother from Lebanon and a father from the Hijaz in Saudi Arabia, has chosen the locale of the remarkable ancient civilization of Petra for her theme. In a unique collaboration, Adonis re-presented a set of his *Petra Stones* poems along with a special dedication to Mona Saudi for this series of ink on paper works. Together the merger of these two artists presents an inspired vision of multidimensional arts. A bilingual limited edition art book that reproduced the art works with the poems of Adonis was also issued (Saudi and Adonis 2011).

---

allowed landowners to increase rents up to 22 times the taxed value of land and to sell property without consent of their tenants, see International Labor Organization. NATLEX. Egypt (549) 2014.

[https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p\\_lang=en&p\\_isn=31252&p\\_country=EGY&p\\_count=549](https://www.ilo.org/dyn/natlex/natlex4.detail?p_lang=en&p_isn=31252&p_country=EGY&p_count=549)

<sup>74</sup> Naguib (1998)

<sup>75</sup> See 'Ashmawi, p. 230.

<sup>76</sup> On anti-Sufi stances, including that of Muhammad 'Abduh, see Binton, "Sha'rawi and Sufism in Egypt," (2019), pp. 132-55.

The unique quality of Mona Saudi's convergence on paper with pen and ink represents both the natural form of the stone and the hint of antiquity. She takes a thin line of a pen to inscribe the words of Adonis' poems. Unlike classical Arabic poetry that featured wide-nib pens, Mona Saudi's copying of Adonis' text onto the paper gives it a lyrical and flowing quality that mimic the tree like forms of branches that are referred to in both poem and drawing. We have seen artists like the British sculptor Barbara Hepworth, the Egyptian sculptors Mahmoud Moussa (1913-2003) or the contemporary sculptor Mahmoud El Dewihi, refine and re-present the natural qualities of stone to their most elemental shapes. But here Mona Saudi takes the natural forms and resituates them amid as Petra Stones recalling the place of the best known and enduring of the Jordan valley's heritage sites. The unique qualities of the geologic formation of Petra sandstone has given it the name of Nubian Sandstone, a soft stone with its red oxide coloring that was famously carved by the Nabatean civilization at the city of Petra into temples and administrative sites within its tall cliffs. The choice of a collaboration with Adonis on this art project was an inspired and natural choice.

The poems we find here were originally written and printed in Paris in 1994 (Adonis 1994). Of direct relevance to the Petra Stones series is an earlier series of Adonis' poems that were set around the theme of trees that were first published in the 1965 as *Kitāb al-taḥawwulāt wa-al-hijrah fī aqālīm al-nahār wa-al-layl* (A Book of the Shifts and Movements by Night and Day) (Adūnis 1965)<sup>77</sup>.

The print shown in Figure 1 below, from the Petra Tablet series is subtitled "shajrah" or tree. The figural drawing of the stone tablets show the outline of a bird flying or facing to the left and fitted above a tree or leaf that emanates from the rock itself. The large stone figure below is also shaped as a type of primitive letter that may be read with the E like form of the bird's tale. The artist has chosen to inscribe at the left the following stanzas from Section 11 of Adonis poem, which is then repeated (Saudi and Adonis 2011, 16-17, 25-26, 32). The stanza begins with a reference to a nightingale in a juniper tree and continues in the excerpt below that is inscribed in the drawing.

It sings not to the tree but to us who pass  
in the early morning between the branch  
and the stone  
And you butterfly who have just come out  
of Qasr Al-Bint  
Have you no horse but this air that drips  
with sweat?  
No home but this cage forever being  
women by inkwells of colour  
And needless of death  
Revelation emanating from Al-Lāt<sup>78</sup>  
Elation

لا لِلشَّجْرَةِ يَغْنَى بِلْ لَنَا نَحْنُ الَّذِينَ نَعْبِرُ بِأَكْرَأَ بَيْنَ الْعُصْنِ وَ الْحَجَرِ  
و أَنْتِ أَيْتَهَا الْفَرَاشَةُ الَّتِي حَرَجْتَ لِتَوَّهَا مِنْ قَصْرِ الْبِنْتِ  
لَكَ فَرَسٌ غَيْرُ هَذَا الْهَوَاءِ الَّذِي نَتَصَبَّبُ عَرَقًا؟ أَلَيْسَ  
لَكَ بَيْتٌ غَيْرَ هَذَا الْفَقْصِ الَّذِي لَا تَكْفُ عَنْ نَسْجِهِ مَحَابِرُ  
اللَّوْنِ وَأَبْرُ الْمَوْتِ؟  
وَحْيٌ مِنْ هَمَةِ اللَّاتِ:  
حُبُّ

<sup>77</sup> In Beirut in 1957 Adonis helped establish the influential journal *as-Shi'ir* (Poetry) and in recent decades, Adonis' column in the Thursday culture page of the Lebanese newspaper *Al-Hayat*, is an anticipated weekly feature. In a career spanning eight decades, his large diwān or collection of poems have been collected and translated into numerous languages (Adūnis 1988). Adonis has also written extensively on the theory of modern Arab poetics, including his *Introduction à la poétique arabe* (Adonis 1985), and translated into English (Adonis, *An Introduction to Arab Poetics* 1990). Other extended works of his literary theory and criticism originally appeared in Arabic in 1978 (Adūnis 2005).

<sup>78</sup> Al-Lāt was a name of one of three goddesses worshipped in pre-Islamic Arabia. Al-Lāt was one of the goddesses worshipped at the Qasr al-Bint Temple at Petra, which may have been syncretized into Roman religion as Venus or Minerva, the daughters of Jupiter that was found in the region by the 1<sup>st</sup> century B.C.. when this temple was first constructed.



To discover the ocean of meaning  
In the vessel of sleep  
Revelation emanating from Al-Uzza:  
I gave the wind to utter the last word  
I gave the water to contain the fire  
I gave the wing to cut the space in two -  
One half for inhalation the other for  
exhalation  
Revelation emanating from nowhere  
From the soil and the stone  
Not from pages  
Comes the Book  
As was revealed,  
With the eye of the soil I shall see  
With the ear of the stone I shall hear  
I will only rely on what inhabits my body

أن نكيشف  
محيط المعنى  
بسفينة النوم  
وحي من جهة العزي:  
أعطيت للريح أن تقول الكلام الأخير  
للماء أن تحتوي النار  
أعكيت للجناح أن يقسم الفضاء قسمين -  
واحداً للشهيق و آخر للزفير  
وحي من لا جهة:  
من التراب و الحجر  
لا من الورق  
يجيء الكتاب  
كمثل ما أوحى، -  
سأرى بعين التراب و أسمع بأذن الحجر  
و لن أعول إلا على ما يسكن جسدي

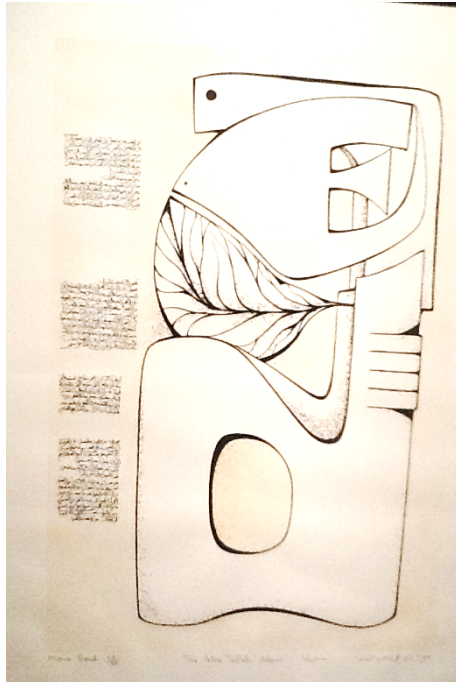


Figure 1 Mona Saudi, The Petra Tablets - "Shajrah" (Tree) Ink Print on Paper No. 26/30

## Marwan, Boullata, Azzawi and the De-nationalized Community of Exile

A number of the most prominent Arab artists live and actively produce and write from exile. For many it is the result of forced exile due to the threat or experience of censorship and

imprisonment<sup>79</sup>. The recurring exhibitions of Palestinian and other Arab artists among the Barjeel's shows, as well as its corollary Meem gallery, underscores the persistence of exile.<sup>80</sup> It is through Barjeel's personal engagement with contemporary artists and close coordination with the MEEM Gallery co-owned and directed by Charles Pocock, that it has been able to amass a substantial and growing collection of three of the most prodigious and well-known modern Arab artists: Kamal Boullata, Dia al-Azzawi, and Marwan Kassab Bachi. There are good reasons for selecting these three artists, for each was also a major writer in the arts or an important contributor to contemporary intellectual discourse.

The primacy of the Syrian artist Marwan Kassab Bachi (1934-2016), whose watercolours, oil and tempera portraits show his signature of abstracted expressions rendered in a cacophony of floral tones and facial portraits set in geomorphic forms. In 2014 Sultan Al Qassemi traveled to Berlin to meet with the Berlin based artist who graduated from art school in Germany, and who successfully exhibited throughout Europe for nearly 50 years. However, his connection to events in Syria and Palestine influenced Marwan to reference his home region. In *Three Palestinian Boys* (1970) Marwan chose to depict three Palestinian youths who became iconic figures during the First Intifada as symbol of resistance. He painted them from a low angle on an oversized canvas to make them appear larger than life. He also dedicated a collection of paintings to a future Palestinian National Museum. The enigmatic psychologic portrait, *Der Gemahl* (The Husband, 1966) shows three distorted limbs clutching the upper body, chest and chin, with a third clutching a large stick, seen by some as a phallic symbol<sup>81</sup>. Others see *Der Gefuhl* as a man in middle age crisis confronting sexual frustration<sup>82</sup>. In the Barjeel collection, Marwan's 1965 portrait of the Syrian and Iraqi political figure Munif Al Razzaz has contemporary relevance, for he was the father of Omar Razzaz, Prime Minister of Jordan from 2018-2020.

Barjeel's sponsorship of literary prizes for poetry and short stories bridges a recurring theme found among the artists in its collection and particularly the interest of Marwan and Abderrahman Munif in their collaboration on Munif's semi-autobiographical *sira madina* (Biography of a City). The Mudun short story prize, announced by Barjeel in 2021, is a call to writers of short stories about urban life in the region<sup>83</sup>.

---

<sup>79</sup> On the problem of exile see, Halabi, Zeina. *The Unmaking of the Arab Intellectual: Prophecy, Exile and the Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2017; and Peter Gran, "Arab Literary Exiles and Their Writing in Light of the Arab Spring." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 47:1-15 (2016).

<sup>80</sup> (Sabella 2016)

<sup>81</sup> (Bank 2014)

<sup>82</sup> (Kholeif 2015)

<sup>83</sup> See Mudun Short Story Prize. (7 June 2021). <https://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/news/mudun-short-story-prize/>. On the awarding of the Poetry prize winners, see Introducing the Winners of the Barjeel Poetry Prize 2020. (12 December 2020) <https://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/news/introducing-the-winners-of-the-barjeel-poetry-prize-2020/>

Marwan's commitment as an intellectual allowed him to carry on a deep and lasting friendship with Iraqi based novelist Abderrahman Munif (1933-2004) whose Saudi joint citizenship was taken away following his publication of his searing and probative five-volume *Cities of Salt* novel. The publication of their letters reveals the philosophical approach to art as an extension of freedom in the midst of repression<sup>84</sup>. In this collection of letters, beginning with a handwritten letter from 1990 to the last emails of 2003-04, we find both writer and artist discussing the relation of writing and art, with Marwan illustrating many of his letters back to Abderrahman in characteristic watercolors or washes of floral patterns. It was another book by Abderrahman, *sira madina (Biography of a City: Amman in the 1940s, that had first been published in 1994*. Marwan wrote a thirty-page introduction to a later edition that was accompanied by Abderrahman's contour sketches of portraits of characters in his book. Although Munif stated that it was not an autobiography or a novel. Marwan noted however that the accompanying sets of illustrations by Munif were of three different segments. The first were sketches of Munif's family tree, tracing his matriarchal and patriarchal lines, his grandmother was from Iraq, his father from Saudi Arabia, while he himself was raised in Amman, Jordan. A second section of drawings were impressions of the characters set in the city about which he was writing, and were of a semi-autobiographical nature, while the third set of drawings cast themselves as characters out in the wider fabric and social milieu of the city of Amman. In his introduction, Marwan selected and compared illustrations from Kufic Koranic illustrations and Islamic pottery, a prehistoric cave drawing from Chauvet, a Sumerian sculpture a line drawing by Willem de Koonig from 1949 and other modern artists that situated Munif's own sketches and their integration into the text of his book.

Other notable artists include the Palestinian born, Kamal Boullata (1942-2019), the Iraqi Dia Azzawi (b. 1939), and the Lebanese poet, novelist, journalist and artist, Charbel Dagher<sup>85</sup>. Like Marwan, both Boullata and Azzawi maintained residences in America or Europe that allowed them a freedom as resident exiles. Born and raised in Jerusalem, the richly lucent and precise geometric forms and tiles surrounding the Dome of the Rock were an inspiration for Boullata's use of silkscreens and calligraphy. A graduate of the Corcoran School of Art, Boullata had a long career as an art teacher and practicing artist. A Fulbright Senior Scholar, and notable artist in residence appointments, he was distinguished by his eloquent and prodigious writing on art criticism and histories of art, and a history of Palestinian art. An article on modern art published in *Mundus Artium* in 1977, was perhaps the first article written in English to survey modern Arab art, and included important color reproductions of key artists, and selected pages of the Iraqi artist Jewad Selim's notebooks<sup>86</sup>. His calligraphy painting with the words *Thawra aw Tharwa*, (Revolution or Wealth?) epitomizes his incisive sense of irony while his silkscreen series in the last years of his life explored mysticism<sup>87</sup>. A number of important exhibitions were held at the Meem Gallery in Dubai, when Boullata's art works rose in value as the modern Arab

---

<sup>84</sup> The letters are published in Arabic, (Munif and Kassab Bachi, 2012)

<sup>85</sup> On *hurufiya* see the Alexandria exhibition catalogue and reproduced book text by (Dagher 2016), (Dagher 2014)

<sup>86</sup> (Boullata 1977)

<sup>87</sup> This painting was personally discussed by Boullata with this author during the opening show of the Mathaf in Doha, where it is in its permanent collection.

art market took off after 2007. Meem published four separate catalogues of his exhibitions and sponsored the publication of his posthumously published selected writings.

Dia Al-Azzawi's place among the major artists in Barjeel's collection was made possible through the close work of Charles Pocock at the Meem Gallery in Dubai and the sponsorship of his multiple exhibitions and publication of elaborate catalogues of his major works. This began in the same year that Barjeel began its first exhibition. In 2010-11 Al-Azzawi co-curated with Charles Pocock the five-part *Art in Iraq Today* series at the Meem Gallery in Dubai, featuring fifteen or more contemporary Iraqi artists who worked from the diaspora of intellectuals and artists<sup>88</sup>. With the retrospective of the aftermath of the American led invasion and occupation of 2003, the exhibitions provided poignant insight into the plight of Iraqi intellectual life. For an earlier series of exhibitions in 2000 highlighting and comparing the place of Iraqi artists both within Iraq and the diaspora of Iraqi artists, see Maysaloun Faraj, *Strokes of Genius* (2000).

Like Marwan and Boullata, Dia Al-Azzawi assimilated writing about art with his own art practice. A pivotal and founding member of several modern Iraqi art movements, in 1968 Al-Azzawi co-founded and wrote the manifesto for *Al-Ru'yah al-Jadida* (New Vision). Azzawi's training as both an archaeologist and artist allowed him to inscribe symbols and forms of Mesopotamian art, while his interest in the contemporary witnessed a series of paintings dedicated to poets and victims of the purges of intellectuals under the Baathist regimes. He was also director of the Iraqi Antiquities Department in the late 1960s to 1976, and an editor of several cultural magazines, including the *Funun Arabiyya* in the early 1980s. Azzawi had been based in London since 1976 where he headed the Iraqi Cultural Center in London from 1977-1980. Following the Baathi Party purge in 1979 and accession to total power of Saddam Hussein, Azzawi's base in London allowed him to dedicate himself to the arts, whereas in Iraq the state redirected the arts to its nationalist ideology during the Iran-Iraq war, and otherwise suppressed or dissuaded writers, journalism, photography and the arts.

These conditions of exile and residence abroad compare with the vastly different experiences of Paul Guiragossian, the Armenian born, Palestinian and Lebanese artist who experienced multiple tragedies and a double displacement of both the Armenian genocide and the Palestinian refugee status. The 2012 exhibition, *Alienation*, included potent works on the problems of forced displacement, exile and the pressures of refugees or potential refugees in seeking any level of emigration or citizenship status<sup>89</sup>. It included insightful interviews of two of the principal artists in the exhibition, Raafat Ishak and Larissa Sansour<sup>90</sup>.

## Art Teaching and the Practice of Art

---

<sup>88</sup> For a short biography and bibliography of Al-Azzawi see (Al-Bahloly, 2023)

<sup>89</sup> (Barjeel Art Foundation 2012)

<sup>90</sup> (Merzaban 2012b); (Merzaban 2012a)

The number of artists found in the Barjeel collection who were also art teachers would make a useful study for scholars. Barjeel has seemingly attempted to bridge the lack of an organic production of artists as art teachers. Why are there not more art history and arts programs in the UAE for example is a product of the drive to replace the teaching of the arts with matriculations limited to the STEM fields. If art programs leading to an MFA are threatened, then art history is an even rarer, privileged and elite position in the region's colleges. The paths found in a number of Arab countries where art teaching provided a base for careers as practicing artists is no longer certain. Thus, from the late 1940s and for much of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, we found a large number of practicing artists who based their careers as art teachers as well as practicing artists.

### Of Artists, Art Markets and Museums in the Gulf Region

In the MENA region museums are state enterprises, while private galleries with their temporary shows are left to individual and family collections<sup>91</sup>. In the Gulf states, where a model of Gulf Futurism and high-tech and high-rise architecture compete against some notable examples of a more people-oriented scale of appropriate architecture, the museum fits more or less into the former<sup>92</sup>. Around the world, the postmodern museum features dramatic exhibition halls that overwhelm the art pieces themselves. This postmodern approach is a dominant feature of the new Gulf museums as well. Given the level of initial capital and requirements of funding, these institutions are reliant on state support and commitments of capital. In return, the state receives a showpiece of art that allows a hybrid veneer of cosmopolitanism, that invites the organized structures of the global art world and its gallery system, and that integrates international, and Arab regional artists who more or less conform with this market. The organization of Art Dubai as an international commercial exhibition receives major sponsorship from the Abraaj Group and other Gulf based business consortiums, and the Saudi government funded Misk Art Institute headed by the artist Ahmed Mater<sup>93</sup>.

Another trend is found among 21<sup>st</sup> century Arab art foundations, including the Sharjah Art Foundation's biennales. This coincided with the rise of major museums in the Arab Gulf countries, the newly opened Louvre in Abu Dhabi, the Museum of Islamic Art and the Mathaf: Museum of Arab Art in Doha, and the Sharjah Museum of Art. A lease model of museum development has occurred in which the new Louvre Abu Dhabi is instead a branded enterprise leased by the Louvre to the Emirates for a set number of decades<sup>94</sup>. Curiously, the award of architectural competitions for recent museums have shunned Arab architects.

---

<sup>91</sup> (Amirsadeghi, Mikdadi, and Shabout 2009) (Schwartz 2012) On specific problems of collecting Iraqi art see, (Shabout 2012)

<sup>92</sup> In the Gulf states the appearance of modern art museums stand in direct contrast to local museums of heritage that present an ethnographic approach of tribal life and culture from the pre-oil century to the present. The term Gulf Futurism was coined in references to the extremism of architecture in Doha by the artist (Maria 2012) p. 192.

<sup>93</sup> (Gronlund 2016)

<sup>94</sup> (Pogrebin)

Some critics see the invention of cultural heritage as a political-cultural strategy of the Gulf states that constrains the formation of intellectuals and representative politics<sup>95</sup>. Adam Hanieh's writing on the politics of accumulation and the Arab Spring are suggestive<sup>96</sup>. A recent study of the development of Arabian Peninsula and Gulf region museums summarizes several trends<sup>97</sup>. Tourism remains a predominant model for many of these museums and explains an ambivalence by Gulf curators and arts administrators toward their own national or thematic museums. This import model is seen in the curatorship and museum studies program at the Sorbonne Abu Dhabi branch of the French university and similar programmes at NYU Abu Dhabi<sup>98</sup>. Only brief studies of the UAE's and other Gulf art institutions, museums and art markets have been undertaken<sup>99</sup>. Among the Gulf region's museums, Sharjah Art Museum (SAM) has placed modern and contemporary art on the map as a public venue<sup>100</sup>. Barjeel's donation of a large number of modern and contemporary works to SAM showcased in *The Short Century* and *The Modern and Contemporary* exhibitions of 2016<sup>101</sup>.

#### Barjeel's New Praxis for a Museum of Modern Arab Art

Barjeel's shift to a more permanent exhibition space harkens the foundation's emphasis on public display of art<sup>102</sup>. It is also a part of a regional expansion of art museums. Barjeel is closely integrated with Sultan Al Qassemi's private gallery the Meem Gallery that he co-founded with his business partner Charles Pocock. Established several years before Barjeel the gallery's location in Dubai's art district, its prominent shows included Dia Azzawi and Kamal Boullata. Meem and Barjeel published extensive written works by both artists that illuminate the philosophy of their art and integral experience in the arts and recent history.

What are the prospects of art museums and exhibitions as the 21<sup>st</sup> century transits through multimedia and the mystery of AI generative language and digitization? Barjeel has fully engaged with online multimedia and 3-dimensional walk-through videos for its own permanent collection at the Sharjah Museum of Art. The choice is then given to the visitor to remain as a virtual tourist who peruses but remains at a digital distance, or to attend and walk through the exhibitions. If you are the latter you may have encountered a visiting artist from Barjeel's exhibitions as for example the late Mona Saud, whose residence at the museum allowed a visitor to directly discuss her hurrifiya series on Petra that are prominently on display.

Do we stand at a crossroads for art and its exhibition space? Do we choose to be on the side of Team Human or Team AI? If the former, then the museum and gallery exhibition space, the

---

<sup>95</sup> (Exell, Karen, and Trinidad)

<sup>96</sup> (Hanieh) (Hanieh) (Hanieh 2011) (AlShehabi, Hanieh, and Khalaf 2013) (Hanieh 2013)

<sup>97</sup> (Exell and Wakefield 2016)

<sup>98</sup> (Hamdan)

<sup>99</sup> (Ali 2016) (Buffington 2014) (Sabella 2009) (Mualla 1995)

<sup>100</sup> (Al Qassemi 2016)

<sup>101</sup> Other essays from the catalogue include: (Radwan 2016); (Abdulaziz 2016);(Kane 2016)

<sup>102</sup> (Gronlund 2018)

role of art schools and studios are to be upheld. If it is only the latter, then arguments against funding or providing space for the arts may continue to encroach. It is only a matter of time before we find AI curated exhibitions in virtual space. With the rise of the Gulf art markets, out of which Barjeel sprung, the consumption of art was predicated upon a burgeoning interest in opening events and shows where an art audience was created and greeted at various showings at galleries throughout the Sharjah, Dubai and Abu Dhabi metropolitan arts venues. In tangent with this art market arose prominent art institutes, the Jameel Art Center in Dubai, the Sorbonne University extension in Abu Dhabi, the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum, and NYU Abu Dhabi, where the arts and humanities are supported in its various forms. However, despite these institutes, the trend for young Emiratis and other resident students at colleges in the UAE is to be pushed into the STEM fields, where technology is reified over the development of humanism and the traditions of the Enlightenment, or the Arab Nahdas. Few students are encouraged or given the opportunity to pursue teaching as an art career, for few colleges and secondary schools are hiring art teachers. Thus, the traditional support system of art teaching that one found in 20<sup>th</sup> century Egypt, Lebanon, Iran and Turkey, has dissipated. In these conditions the aspiring artist is left to negotiate and transit this void into the digital spaces and arts. On the other hand the younger generation is showing a keen interest in animation and digital arts, that combine forms of storytelling, plot and context. If two-dimensional paintings and graphic arts, and three-dimensional sculpture and textual arts are representative of the pre-digital era, then the experiments of conceptual art, video and digital multimedia may still reflect upon the contextual production of this earlier art discourse. It is this reflection that Barjeel's project for exhibitions and a museum of modern Arab art encourages and presents a challenge at the crossroads of art between its physical space and a digital form.

In the Arab world, the arts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are framed by the trajectory of history and struggle in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the multiple Gulf wars since the 1980s, as well as the post-globalization realignment after the crash of 2007-2008, and the aftermath and retreat from the Arab Spring of 2011-12. If the arts of the 21<sup>st</sup> century are tenuously placed, artists are forced to create a social milieu for art and audience. They do so within and against the constraints of a heightened Gulf regional art market, whose rise after 2007 runs opposite the realities of global financial markets and national economies with imposed austerity. The internet and social media are new replacement venues. Animated and digital art forms will increase.

The rapid urbanization of the UAE led a number of its artists to depict the passing or transition into commercialism. While the paintings of the pioneer artists Abdelqader Al Rais and Ahmed Al Ansari, captured this transformation in exquisitely rendered paintings of traditional architecture or harbor scenes, we find several other portrayals of the everyday ordinary. In Nadia Al-Duraihem's painting of a small solitary store on the edge of a desert town's residential area, the ubiquitous biqa, the common corner grocery store is given a central place of focus along with its adjoining small mosque and minaret that appear to show the grocery store as somehow enmeshed or jammed into the side of the mosque. The store stands out as one of a kind for in small towns or on the edges of towns there is often only one store, or one lonely mosque or petrol station. The sandy colored streets are devoid of pavement, and yet the residential block in the receding distance show a bank of rooftop television antennas, dating

the structures or perhaps the status of its residents. The scene is unpretentious for its single market with its handpainted sign is devoid of the modern hyper-markets of global consumerism to be found in the fast growing Gulf cities. There are no Coca-Cola signs, or glitzy advertisements, or any neon or plastic signage. Instead we only find the solitary but subdued Al-Arabi Grocery sign.



Nadia Al-Duraihem, *Al-Arabi Grocery*. Oil on canvas. 55 x 44 cm. (2001).

In Bashir Sinwar's *Houses*, (1984) the quiet street of a village street in Khor Fakkan is the fruit of the artist's long residence in the United Arab Emirates provided him with a long career as an artist and illustrator before his eventual return to his homeland of Palestine. The scene is bathed in sunlight with shadows from the trees and overhanging roofs and balustrades of upper floor of the buildings. As in Al-Duraihem's *Al-Arabi Grocery*, there is no direct human presence. Instead the only hint of human activity are the few pieces of hanging laundry on the right. It seems a quiet village but its residents have built up the space of their houses with additions and canopies on the upper floors. Its streets are unpaved and the accumulated debris of sand along the side of the roads suggest a deserted scene, a half-abandoned village or a village that has not woken up. The collective solace is counterbalanced by the verdant overhang of the trees that frame the buildings on the left and in the distance at street's end.



Bashir Sinwar. *Houses*. 59.5 x 45 cm. Oil on canvas. 1984.

While select numbers of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula artists began their studies in the 1950s and 1960s at art institutes or colleges outside of their region, the takeoff of the arts in the region began in the 1980s. By 1995, the appearance of multiple galleries was evident and prompted Tilal Al-Mualla, the editor of the arts journal *Ar-Rafid* to report on the rise in art galleries and exhibitions. When he submitted his survey questions to the unnamed gallery dealers, they ignored him or refused to respond, despite his assurances that he would give them space to present their ideas in his journal. Hence, he was left to conduct a survey of a number of Emirati artists, including Hassan Sharif. In his opening question Al Mualla, prefaced his article with a



statement about the rapid growth of the arts in the UAE and its expansion into neighboring Gulf countries. He posed the following proposition to the artists about the new consumerism of art:

The history of art confirms that owners of art galleries and art dealers do not care about the artwork itself. Rather, the important thing is to get the commodity out there, and for other people to consume it, what do you think?<sup>103</sup>

This statement prompted a variety of responses, including from the artist Hassan Sharif, who as a graduate of a London art school, had returned home to the UAE in 1984, and noted that the owners of the "galleries" are people who are clueless, although elegant in their clothes and accoutrements, very careful in their social relations, and who speak more than one language, especially French, and are always associated with prominent personalities. And he noted the sale of paintings is probably more than selling used cars<sup>104</sup>.

Over the next decades as Barjeel and other art foundations, art institutes, galleries and the big auction houses arrived, that valuation had increased several fold. It had grown so much in value Hassan Sharif's own art works following his death in 2016 were selling at Sotheby's with a low of \$23,750 US to a high of 75,600 GBP<sup>105</sup>.

In the Gulf states, the lack of a genuine organic production of artists and art teachers out of schools and colleges has led to an import strategy for the arts. This is not an exceptional or isolated experience. Given the place of the Gulf states as the primary region of capital accumulation in the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, this allowed many artists to come from Arab countries. The overreliance upon English narratives and discourse produces a diglossia between poetry as an Emirati or Gulf form of culture, and the visual arts that integrates non-Arabic speakers in a segregation of the visual arts from Arabic written and oral culture. One result of this dichotomy is the under-representation of Gulf based visual artists in relation to other Arab and world arts.

The Gulf adopts a model of reliance upon the largesse and inspired choices by art foundations funded by wealthy benefactors, rather than on the traditional path for artists as art teachers, who may in turn generate art declarations, manifestos and art movements through organized collective exhibitions<sup>106</sup>. Thus, the paths found in Iraq, Syria, Algeria or Egypt, where we find a series of manifestos and declarations by groups of artists, is more diffused in the Gulf, despite the largesse of art foundations. A substantial proportion of the artists from outside the Gulf region that are featured in the Barjeel collection worked as art teachers as their main source of income. The Arab artists of the modern art period, mid-to-late 20<sup>th</sup> century, could not depend on an art market but instead relied upon positions in schools and colleges, or work as

---

<sup>103</sup> Mualla, Ȧilāl. 1995. p. 115.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid. p. 115.

<sup>105</sup> Sotheby's. 2023. Website page for Hassan Sharif.

<https://www.sothebys.com/en/search?query=hassan%20sharif&tab=objects>

<sup>106</sup> To this author's knowledge the first discussion on the impact of galleries and the market on artists in the United Arab Emirates is the insightful interview of Emirati artists (Mualla 1995)

journalists or translators, along with a certain amount of government or public commissions for art.

In the Gulf cities of Abu Dhabi and Dubai the gallery has until recently been the substitute for a lack of museums. Amid the vagaries of the heightened luxury art market for Arab modernists and contemporary artists where the major Sothebys and Christies auction prices now run from \$2-3,000 into six figure sums. An indicator of the rise of the art market may be seen in the Sotheby's auction of Inji Efflatoun's *La Moisson* (The Harvest) 1966, which had an original sale price of L.E. 15 (15 Egyptian pounds) written on the back of the wooden frame presumably when it was displayed at La Nuova Pesa in Rome. In the 2022 Sotheby's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Middle East auction, its price was estimated at between 10-15,000 GBP<sup>107</sup>. The sustainability of that model of high finance and luxury art shows may be tested with the recent financial pressures and the 2018 bankruptcy and collapse of the Abraaj Group, a major corporate sponsor of Art Dubai. In Sharjah, with its state patronage model and less commercial approach to the visual arts, the art association and foundation were substitutes for the gallery. The Barjeel Art Foundation, as a Sharjah foundation, fits this latter model, while the co-ownership of Al Qassemi and Charles Pocock in the Meem art gallery integrates them into the Dubai based commercial art scene.

### Continuing Exhibitions and Venues beyond Borders

In the ten years since the 2013 exhibition in Singapore, Barjeel has staged dozens of separate exhibitions at various venues, including two new exhibitions, a retrospective on Marwan in June 2023 in Berlin, and a show entitled, "Highlights from the Barjeel Collection," at Christie's in London. Barjeel has loaned out selected art works for around 130 separate temporary, long term and for the permanent exhibition at Sharjah Museum of Art. These range from local exhibitions in the UAE at government institutions, to major art museums and galleries around North Africa and the Middle East, Europe, Asia and North America, with such wide ranging locations as Baku and Berlin, London and New York, Tokyo, Toronto and Vancouver, Mexico City, Amman, Kuwait and Asilah in Morocco. This lending continued throughout the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, and new loans are currently planned into 2025.

These temporary and selective loans enable a medium of exchange and artistic discourse that augments the interests of art institutions and their audiences. The tangible presence of physical art works in a world of digitization, is itself a reflection of the human condition and experience. With the rise of AI and digitization, the experience of walking into and through an exhibition of art requires a commitment of time and engagement by the visitor. It invites a pause in one's daily life to seek a respite and a challenge to our assumptions.

The need for a community based and locally sustained arts is then an open forum that requires funding and participation through a commitment of time and focus from neighbors, students,

---

<sup>107</sup> See Sotheby's 20<sup>th</sup> Century Art / Middle East, Lot 17 for Inji Efflatoun.  
<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2022/20th-century-art-middle-east>

teachers and artists. As in Europe and the U.S., artists and galleries cluster among rented warehouses, lofts, and organize street shows. In Dubai, the Al Serkal Avenue artistic hub is comprised of converted industrial spaces<sup>108</sup>. High costs especially affect non-profit foundations, many of whom remain family owned. This forced Barjeel to curtail its international exhibitions and close its non-commercial gallery space at the Maraya Art Centre in Sharjah. Given the flux of these currents in the contemporary art scene in the Gulf, what is the legacy and role of the permanent Barjeel exhibitions at the Sharjah Art Museum? It promises a public display of 20<sup>th</sup> century modern Arab and a model for the contemporary viewer and artist. Without a permanent collection this recognition would be more fleeting. To Barjeel's credit, we now have a place to study, reflect, and teach the important role of Arab artists as major contributors in the modern world.

---

<sup>108</sup> The Alserkal complex is apparently owned by the Emirati family structured Alserkal Group of corporate companies, including the Eisa Bin Nasser Bin Abdullatif Alserkal EST. that commissioned the Dutch OMA architecture group to design the Concrete, its minimalist exhibition space. See the OMA website: <http://oma.eu/projects/concrete-at-alserkal-avenue>

## Bibliography

- ʿAshmawi, Sayyid. 2001. *Al-fallahun wa as-sultah: al-dhawa' al-harakat al-fallahiyya al-misriyya 1919-1999*. (The Peasants and the State: in light of the Egyptian peasant movements 1919-1999). Cairo: Merit.
- Abdulaziz, Omar. 2016. "The Collection of Sharjah Art Museum." In *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection of the Sharjah Art Museum*, 45-53. Sharjah: Sharjah Art Museum.
- Adal, Raja. 2019. *Beauty in the Age of Empire: Japan, Egypt, and the Global History of Aesthetic Education*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Al-Azzawi, Dia and Meem Gallery (Dubai United Arab Emirates). 2011. *Art in Iraq Today*. Milano: Skira.
- Al-Bahloly, Saleem. 2018. "History Regained: A Modern Artist in Baghdad Encounters a Lost Tradition of Painting," *Muqarnas*. (2018) Vol. 35, 229-72. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.2307/26742196>
- Al-Bahloly, Saleem. "Dia Al-Azzawi." 2023 *Mathaf Encyclopedia of Modern Art and the Arab World*. <http://www.encyclopedia.mathaf.org.qa/en/bios/Pages/Dia-Azzawi.aspx>
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2016. "The Bellwether of Gulf Art Museums." In *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection of the Sharjah Art Museum*, 17-19. Sharjah: Sharjah Art Museum.
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2018a. "Events." accessed June 1. <http://sultanalqassemi.com/events/>.
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2018b. "Public-Engagements." accessed June 1. <http://sultanalqassemi.com/public-engagements/>.
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2018c. "Videos." accessed June 1. <http://sultanalqassemi.com/videos/>.
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2020. *The Activism of Arab Women Artists*. SFS Center for Contemporary Arab Studies. Available online: <https://ccas.georgetown.edu/2020/06/03/the-activism-of-arab-women-artists/> (accessed on 15 June 2022)
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud. 2021a "The Longest Nights with Joy are Short," in Al Qassemi and Reisz (Eds.) *Building Sharjah*. Berlin: Birkhäuser. pp. 29-34.
- Al Qassemi, Sultan Sooud and Todd Reisz (Eds.) 2021b. *Building Sharjah*. Berlin: Birkhäuser.
- Al Said, Shakir Hassan. 2018. "Contemplative Art Manifesto (1966)," in Lenzen, Rogers and Shabout (Eds.), *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.
- Al Said, Shakir Hassan. 2018. "The Philosophical, Technical and Expressive Aspects of the One Dimension (1973)," in Lenzen, Rogers and Shabout (Eds.), *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.
- Alaa, Wael. 2017. *Nowness: Bulaq a Pulsing Survey of Cairo's Underground Sounds*. Available online: <https://www.nowness.com/story/bulaq-wael-aaa#!> (accessed on 15 June 2022)
- Alexandrian, Sarane. 1981. *Georges Henein*. Paris: Seghers.
- Ali, Atteqa. 2016. "The rise of art institutions in the United Arab Emirates and its impact on contemporary art." In *Museums in Arabia Transnational practices and regional processes* edited by Karen Exell and Sarina Wakefield, 167-180. London, U.K.: Taylor & Francis Group.
- AlShehabi, Omar, Adam Hanieh, and Abdulhadi Khalaf. 2013. *Transit States : Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*. London: Pluto Press.
- Al-Taher, Tareq. (2017) *fannanun mutamaridun* (Rebellious Artists) Cairo: Al-Ṭab'ah al-ūlā ed.
- American University Museum. 2017. *Between two rounds of fire, the exile of the sea: Arab Modern and Contemporary Works from the Barjeel Art Foundation*. Washington, D.C.: American University Museum.
- Amirsadeghi, Hossein, Salwa Mikdadi, and Nada M. Shabout. 2009. *Newvision: Arab contemporary art in the 21st century*. London: TransGlobe Publishing.
- Atallah, Nadine. 2017. *Women, art and the nation. History of the exhibitions of two Egyptian women artists, from the 1950s to the present day: Inji Efflatoun and Gazbia Sirry.*" *Archives of Women Artists, Research and Exhibitions* magazine. Available online: <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/magazine/femmes-lart-nation-histoire-expositions-de->

- deux-artistes-egyptiennes-annees-1950-a-nos-jours-inji-efflatoun-gazbia-sirry/ (accessed on 22 May 2022).
- Atallah, Nadine. 2018. Amy Nimr. Aware. Available online: <https://awarewomenartists.com/en/artiste/amy-nimr/>. (accessed on 10 May 2022)
- Atallah, Nadine. 2019. Gazbia Sirry (1925-2021). Dalloul Art Foundation. Available online: <https://dafbeirut.org/en/gazbia-sirry> (accessed on 15 May 2022)
- Atallah, Nadine. 2020. "Have there really been no great women artists ? Writing a feminist art history of modern Egypt, in Özpinar Ceren et Kelly Mary (éd.), *Under the skin : feminist art and art histories from the Middle East and North Africa today*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, (Proceedings of the British Academy, 230), p. 11-25.
- Atassi Foundation. Atassi Foundation for arts and culture blog. <https://www.atassifoundation.com/>
- Ayidi, Ahmad, and Humphrey T. Davies. 2009. *Being Abbas el Abd*. Cairo: American University in Cairo Press.
- Azar, Aimé. 1953. *Femmes peintres d'Egypte*. Cairo: Impr. française
- Bank, Charlotte. 2014. "Marwan: Topographies of the Soul." In *Marwan: Topographies of the Soul*, 1-3. Sharjah: Barjeel Art Foundation.
- Bank, Charlotte. 2020. *The Contemporary Art Scene in Syria: Social Critique and an Artistic Movement*. New York: Routledge.
- Bardaouil, Sam. 2017. *Surrealism in Egypt: Modernism and the Art and Liberty Group*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Barjeel Art Foundation. 2012. *Alienation*. Sharjah: Barjeel Art Foundation; Art Advisory Associates Ltd.
- Barjeel Art Foundation. 2017a. *100 Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art moderne et contemporain (100 Masterpieces of Modern and Contemporary Art)*. Gand, France: Éditions Snoeck.
- Barjeel Art Foundation, Center for Curatorial Studies. 2017b. *No to the Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects*. New York: Bard College.
- Barjeel Art Foundation. 2020. Introducing the Winners of the Barjeel Poetry Prize 2020. (12 December 2020) <https://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/news/introducing-the-winners-of-the-barjeel-poetry-prize-2020/>
- Barjeel Art Foundation. 2021. Mudun Short Story Prize. (7 June 2021). <https://www.barjeelartfoundation.org/news/mudun-short-story-prize/>
- Brinton, Jacqueline G. (2019) "Sha'rawi and Sufism in Egypt." In *Preaching Islamic Renewal*, 132–155. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Boullata, Kamal. 1977. "Modern Arab Art-Quest And Ordeal." *Mundus Artium* 10, no. 1: 106-133.
- Boullata, Kamal. 2009. *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present*. London: Saqi Books.
- Boullata, Kamal. 2019. *There Where You Are Not: Selected Writings by Kamal Boullata*. Munich: Hirmer.
- Buffington, Melanie L. and Maral Bedoyan. 2014. "Museum and Art Education as a Response to Place in Doha, Qatar." *Journal of Cultural Research in Art Education* 31:162-178.
- Burke, Edmund III. 2014. *The Ethnographic State: France and the Invention of Moroccan Islam*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Cauteren, Phillippe Van. 2017. "Interview with Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi and Karim Sultan." In *100 Chefs-d'oeuvre de l'art moderne et contemporain (100 Masterpieces of Modern and Contemporary Art)*, edited by The Barjeel Art Foundation, 23-37. Gand, France: Éditions Snoeck.
- Colla, Elliott. 2007. *Conflicted Antiquities: Egyptology, Egyptomania, Egyptian Modernity*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press.
- Cornwell, Tim, and Anna Brady. 2017. "Collectors tackle rise in fake Modern Middle Eastern art." *The Art Newspaper*, November 1. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/beirut-collection-quarantines-paintings-as-it-tackles-forges>.

- Dagher, Charbel. 2014. "Hurufism: Pathways and Prospects." In *Tariqah*, edited by Barjeel Art Foundation, 88-115. Sharjah: Barjeel Art Foundation.
- Dagher, Charbel. 2016. *Al-Hurufiyya Al-'Arabiyya: fann wa huwiyya (Arabic Lettering: Art and Identity)*. Beirut: Sharakah al-matbu'at wa an-nashr. Original edition, 1990.
- Daly, Okasha El. 2016. "Egyptology : the missing millennium : ancient Egypt in medieval Arabic writings."
- Davis, Eric. 2005. "History Matters: Past as Prologue in Building Democracy in Iraq." *Orbis* 49 (2):229-244. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.orbis.2005.01.004>.
- Dawson, Aimee. 2017. "Private museum of Arab art in the pipeline for Beirut." *The Art Newspaper*, July 20. <https://www.theartnewspaper.com/news/private-museum-of-arab-art-in-the-pipeline-for-beirut>.
- di Cutó, Angeria Rigamonti. 2018. Interview "Latif Al Ani: 'I was documenting for the sake of archiving. I never thought Iraq would arrive at what it has today'," Studio International. May 1, 2018. <https://www.studiointernational.com/index.php/latif-al-ani-interview-photographer-i-never-thought-iraq-would-arrive-at-what-it-has-today>
- El-Ariss, Tarek. 2013. "Hacking the Modern." In *Trials of Arab modernity literary affects and the new political*, 145-171. New York: Fordham University Press.
- El-Ariss, Tarek. 2017. "No to the Invasion: From the Archive." In *No to the Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects*, edited by Barjeel Art Foundation and Bard College Center for Curatorial Studies, 12-17. New York: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College.
- Elsahed, Mohamed. 2011. "The Case Against the Grand Egyptian Museum." *Jadaliyya Magazine*.
- Elsirgany, Soha. 2015. "The Egyptian Museum of Modern Arts: The story behind its partial closure." *Ahramonline*, October 5. Accessed March 31, 2018. <http://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/25/152100/Arts--Culture/Visual-Art/The-Egyptian-Museum-of-Modern-Arts-The-story-behin.aspx>.
- Exell, Karen, Exell Karen, and Rico Trinidad. "'There is no heritage in Qatar': Orientalism, colonialism and other problematic histories." *World archaeology* 45 (4).
- Exell, Karen, and Sarina Wakefield. 2016. *Museums in Arabia : Transnational Practices and Regional Processes*. London, U.K.: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Faraj, Maysaloun. 2001. *Strokes of Genius : Contemporary Iraqi Art*. London: Saqi Books.
- Gran, Peter. 2016. "Arab Literary Exiles and Their Writing in Light of the Arab Spring." *Journal of Arabic Literature* 47:1-15.
- Greenberg, Nathaniel. 2010. "Political Modernism, Jabrā, and the Baghdad Modern Art Group," CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2010, Online: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1603&context=clcweb>, DOI: 10.7771/1481-4374.160
- Gronlund, Melissa. 2016. "Art Dubai to partner with Saudi Arabia's Misk Art Institute." *The National*, March 6. <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/art/art-dubai-to-partner-with-saudi-arabia-s-misk-art-institute-1.710414>.
- Gronlund, Melissa. 2018. "Sultan Al Qassemi: Taking a 'Warrior's Break'." *The National*, January 23, 2018. Accessed March 10, 2018. <https://www.thenational.ae/arts-culture/sultan-al-qassemi-taking-a-warrior-s-break-1.697754>.
- Halaby, Samia. 2001. *Liberation Art of Palestine. Palestinian Painting and Sculpture in the Second Half of the 20th Century*. New York: H.T.T.B. Publications, 2001.
- Halabi, Samia. 2019. "View of the Political Basis of Abstraction in the 20th Century as Explored by a Painter". *Manazir Journal*. Vol. 1, 77-90.
- Halabi, Zeina. 2017. *The Unmaking of the Arab Intellectual: Prophecy, Exile and the Nation*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

- Hamdan, Sara. "After a Sputtering Start, the Louvre Abu Dhabi Project Gathers Pace." *New York Times*, September 26, 2012. <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/09/27/world/middleeast/27iht-m27-gulf-louvre.html?action=click&contentCollection=Art%20%26%20Design&module=RelatedCoverage&region=Marginalia&pgtype=article>.
- Hanieh, Adam. "Beyond Authoritarianism: Rethinking Egypt's 'Long Revolution'." *Development and change* 47 (5):1171-1179. doi: 10.1111/dech.12253.
- Hanieh, Adam. "Khaleeji-Capital: Class-Formation and Regional Integration in the Middle-East Gulf." *Historical materialism : research in critical Marxist theory* 18 (2):35-76. doi: 10.1163/156920610X512435.
- Hanieh, Adam. 2011. *Capitalism and Class in the Gulf Arab States*: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hanieh, Adam. 2013. "Overcoming Methodological Nationalism: Spatial Perspectives on Migration to the Gulf Arab States." In *Transit States : Labour, Migration and Citizenship in the Gulf*, 57-76. London, U.K.: Pluto Press.
- Hassan, Salah M., Ibrahim El Salahi and Tate Modern (Gallery). 2013. Ibrahim El-Salahi : A Visionary Modernist. London: Tate Publishing in association with the Museum for African Art.
- Hatoum, Mona. 1988 *Measures of Distance*. Video. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eKGPeFM-Uf8>
- Hatoum, Mona. 2022. Lecture at Magasin III, Stockholm, 28 April, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XEG1J01i8vc>
- Hoover Institution Archives. 2023. Mu'assasat al-dhākirah al-'Irāqīyah (Iraq Memory Foundation) an online digital archive of the University of California / Hoover Institute. <https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt5m3nf2b3/>
- Irbouh, Hamid. 2005. *Art in the Service of Colonialism: French Art Education in Morocco, 1912-1956*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Ismail, Salwa. 2006. "The Politics of Security: An Economy of Violence and Control". In *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the Everyday State*. Edited by Salwa Ismail. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 176–207.
- Kane, Patrick Matthew. 2013. *The Politics of Art in Modern Egypt: Aesthetics, Ideology and Nation-building*. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Kane, Patrick Matthew. 2016. "The Dynamics of Sharjah Art Museum's Modern Arab Art Collection." In *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection of the Sharjah Art Museum*, 21-44. Sharjah: Sharjah Art Museum.
- Kane, Patrick Matthew. 2017. "'The Modernist Movements in the 20th Century,'" In *100 chefs-d'œuvre de l'art moderne et contemporain arabe: La Fondation d'Art Barjeel (100 Masterpieces of Modern and Contemporary Art: Barjeel Art Foundation)*, 43-67. Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe in Paris.
- Kane, Patrick Matthew. 2022. "Menhat Helmy and the Emergence of Egyptian Women Art Teachers and Artists in the 1950s" *Arts* 11, no. 5: 95. <https://doi.org/10.3390/arts11050095>
- Kane, Patrick, and Mikdadi, Salwa "Inji Efflatoun". In *obo in Islamic Studies*, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0290.xml> (accessed 30 May. 2023).
- Kholeif, Omar. 2015. "Tracing Routes: Debating Modernism, Mapping the Contemporary." In *Imperfect Chronology: Arab Art from the Modern to the Contemporary - Works from the Barjeel Art Foundation*, edited by Omar; Stobbs Kholeif, Candy, 16-24. London; Munich: Whitechapel Gallery; Prestel Verlag.
- Khoury, Dina Rizk. *Iraq in Wartime : Soldiering, Martyrdom, and Remembrance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013.
- Lazarowicz, Anja. 1995. *Albert Cossery Ein Ägypter in Paris*. München: Hanser.

- Lenksen, Annela, and Sarah Rogers, Nada Shabout (Eds). 2018. *Modern Art in the Arab World: Primary Documents*. New York: Museum of Modern Art.
- Lenksen Annela. 2020. *Beautiful Agitation : Modern Painting and Politics in Syria*. Oakland California: University of California Press.
- Madkour, Nazli. 1991. *Women and Art in Egypt*. Cairo: Arab Republic of Egypt, State Information Service.
- Maria, Sophia Al. 2012. *The Girl Who Fell to Earth: A memoir*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art. 2018. "About Us." accessed June 10.  
<http://www.mathaf.org.qa/en/about-us>.
- Merzaban, Mandy. 2012a. "Interview with Larissa Sansour." In *Alienation*, 41-45. Sharjah: Barjeel Art Foundation; Art Advisory Associates Ltd.
- Merzaban, Mandy. 2012b. "Interview with Raafat Ishak." In *Alienation*, 17-21. Sharjah: Barjeel Art Foundation; Art Advisory Associates Ltd.
- Merzaban, Mandy. 2017. "In Chronological Disorder: Revisiting Histories of Invasion." In *No to the Invasion: Breakdowns and Side Effects*, edited by Barjeel Art Foundation; Center for Curatorial Studies; Bard College, 63-69. New York: Center for Curatorial Studies, Bard College.
- Mikdadi, Salwa. 1994. *Forces of Change: Artists of the Arab World*. Washington, DC: National Museum of Women in the Arts and the International Council for Women in the Arts.
- Ministry of Culture, Arab Republic of Egypt. Accessed June 6, 2023.  
<http://www.moc.gov.eg/en/ministry/previous-ministers/>
- Mounmi, Ridha. 2017. "L'Éveil d'une nation." In. Tunis: Officina Libraria
- Mualla, Tīlāl. 1995. "Tashtīt qawi al-ibdā` ... wa ta`īl imkānāt al-ibtikār at-tashkīlī (Dispersing the forces of creativity ... and disrupting the possibilities of artistic innovation). ." *ar-Rāfid* (7):114-125.
- Munif, Abd al-Rahman, and Marwan Kassab Bachi. 2012. *Fi adab al-sadaqah*. Beirut: Dar al-Tanwir : al-Muassasah al-`Arabiyah lil-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr.
- Munif, Abd al-Rahman. 2018. *Sira madina: 'amman fi al-arba'inat* (Biography of a City: Amman in the 1940s). Beirut: Dar al-Tanwir : al-Muassasah al-`Arabiyah lil-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr. (sixth edition).
- Naef, Sylvia. 1996. *À la recherche d'une modernité arabe, L'évolution des arts plastiques en Egypte, au Liban et en Irak*. Geneva: Slatkine.
- Naef, Silvia. 2014. "'Hidden treasures'? Museum collections of modern art from the Arab World." In *The Politics and Practices of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East: positioning the material past in contemporary societies*, edited by Irene Maffie and Rami Daher, 270-89. London: I.B. Tauris.
- Naguib, Ezzedine. 2000. *Fannānūn wa shuhda': al-fann al-tashkīlī wa ḥuqūq al-insān (Artists and Martyrs: The Plastic Arts and Human Rights)*. Cairo: Markaz al-Qāhira li-dirasat ḥuqūq al-insān.
- Naguib, Ezzedine. 2012. *Al-Samatun: tajarub fi al-thaqafa wa-al-dimucратиyya bil rif al-Misri*. (The Silent: Experiments on Culture and Democracy in the Egyptian Village) Cairo: General Organisation for Cultural Palaces.
- Naguib, Ezzedine. 1998. *Mawāsīm al-sijīn wa-al-azhār : al-muthaqqaf wa-al-sultah 97 (A Season of Prison and Flowers: the intellectuals and the authorities 1997)*. Cairo: al-ilamiyyah.
- Nammour, Cesar. 1990 *Al-naht fi lubnan (Sculpture in Lebanon)* Beirut: Dar al-fannun al-jamila.
- Nasalski, Ignacy. 2016. "Unwanted Literature: A Case of the Moroccan Writer Muhammad Shukri." *Studia Litteraria Universitatis Iagellonicae Cracoviensis* 1:15-26.
- Nusair, Isis. 2013. "The Cultural Costs of the 2003 US-Led Invasion of Iraq: A Conversation with Art Historian Nada Shabout." *Feminist Studies* 39 (1):119-48,309.
- Ozpinar, Ceren, and Mary Kelly. 2020. *Under the Skin: Feminist Art and Art Histories from the Middle East and North Africa Today*. Oxford: The British Academy and Oxford University Press.
- Pieprzak, Katarzyna. 2010. *A Private Cabinet of Curiosity: The Belghazi Museum and its Politics of Nostalgia, Imagined Museums : Art and Modernity in Postcolonial Morocco*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.



- Pogrebin, Robin. "Louvre Abu Dhabi Will (Finally) Open in November." *New York Times*, September 6, 2017. <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/09/06/arts/design/louvre-abu-dhabi-opening.html>.
- Radwan, Nadia. 2016a. "The Sharjah Art Museum Permanent Collection: Filling a Void in a Fragmented World Art History." In *Modern and Contemporary Art from the Collection of the Sharjah Art Museum*, 9-13. Sharjah: Sharjah Art Museum.
- Radwan, Nadia. 2016b. Inji Efflatoun: Multiple Idioms of an Egyptian New Woman. In *Focus: Works from Mathaf Collection/Mother Tongue: Selected Works by Inji Efflatoun*. Edited by Leonore-Namkha Beschi. Doha: Arab Museum of Modern Art.
- Radwan, Nadia. 2017. *Les modernes d'Égypte: une Renaissance des Beaux-Arts et des Arts appliqués (1908–1938)*. New York, Oxford, Vienna: Peter Lang.
- Radwan, Nadia. 2021. Review of: *Under the Skin: Feminist Art and Art Histories from the Middle East and North Africa Today*. *Third Text: Critical Perspectives on Contemporary Art and Culture*. Available online: [www.thirdtext.org/radwan-undertheskin](http://www.thirdtext.org/radwan-undertheskin) (accessed on 26 May 2022).
- Reid, Donald Malcolm. 2003. *Whose Pharaohs? : Archaeology, Museums, and Egyptian National Identity from Napoleon to World War I*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Rogers Sarah A and Eline van der Vlist. 2013. *Arab Art Histories : The Khalid Shoman Collection*. Amman Jordan: Khalid Shoman Foundation.
- Rogers, Sarah. 2013. "Histories in the Making: The Khalid Shoman Collection and Darat al Funun." In *Histories in the Making: The Khalid Shoman Collection and Darat al Funun*, 1-40. Amsterdam: Khalid Shoman Foundation; Idea Books.
- Rohde, Achim. 2010. *State-Society Relations in Ba'thist Iraq : Facing Dictatorship*. Florence: Taylor & Francis Group.
- Saatchi Gallery. "Nadia Ayari: The Fence." accessed January 22. [https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/nadia\\_ayari\\_fence.htm](https://www.saatchigallery.com/artists/artpages/nadia_ayari_fence.htm).
- Sabella, Steve. 2009. "Is the United Arab Emirates Constructing its Art History? The Mechanisms that Confer Value to Art." *Contemporary Practices: Visual Arts from the Middle East* 4:122-132.
- Sabella, Steve. 2010. "Reconsidering the Value of Palestinian Art and Its Journey into the Art Market." *Contemporary Practices: Visual Arts from the Middle East* VII:80-100.
- Sabella, Steve. 2016. "The parachute paradox (chapter from a Jerusalem memoir)." *Palestine - Israel Journal of Politics, Economics, and Culture* 21 (4):101-106.
- Sabella, Steve. 2016. *The Parachute Paradox*. Limited ed. Bielefeld: Kerber Verlag.
- Salahi, Ibrahim and Mohammad Omar Khalil. 2011. *Art Sudan*. Dubai: Meem Gallery.
- Saval, Nikil. 2016. "Tunisia, Through the Eyes of Its Artists and Intellectuals." *New York Times*, November 1. Accessed December 25, 2016. [http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/01/t-magazine/tunisia-artists-intellectuals.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/11/01/t-magazine/tunisia-artists-intellectuals.html?_r=0).
- Schwartz, John Pedro, Sonja Mejcher-Atassi,. 2012. *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*. Edited by John Pedro Schwartz, Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja Professor: Ashgate.
- Selim, May. 2021. Uncovering the gems of recently-opened Museum of Modern Egyptian Art. Al-Ahram Online. <https://english.ahram.org.eg/NewsContent/5/25/398200/Arts--Culture/Visual-Art/Uncovering-the-gems-of-recentlyopened-Museum-of-Mo.aspx>.
- Selim, Rashad. 2001. "Diaspora, Departure and Remains." In *Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art*, edited by Maysaloun Faraj, 47-61. London: Saqi Books.
- Shabout, Nada. 2006. "Historiographic Invisibilities: The Case of Contemporary Iraqi Art." *The International Journal of the Humanities* 3 (9):53-64.
- Shabout, Nada. 2012. "Collecting Modern Iraqi Art." In *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, edited by John Pedro Schwartz, Mejcher-Atassi, Sonja Professor, 197-210. Ashgate.

- Shabout, Nada. 2014. "Whose Space is it?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 46 (1):163-165. doi: <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.hct.ac.ae/10.1017/S0020743813001347>.
- Sharjah Art Foundation. 2015. Modernity and the Making of Identity in Sudan: Remembering the Sixties and Seventies. <https://sharjahart.org/press/modernity-and-the-making-of-identity-in-sudan-remembering-the-sixties-and-s>
- State Information Service. 2022. Egyptian Modern Art museum. <https://beta.sis.gov.eg/en/egypt/tourism/museums/egyptian-modern-art-museum/>
- Sutton Gallery. 2012. "Exhibitions: Raafat Ishak, Nomination for the presidency of the New Egypt."
- Takesh, Suheyla. 2015. *Home Ground: Contemporary Art from the Barjeel Art Foundation*. Edited by Aga Khan Museum; Barjeel Art Foundation. Toronto: Aga Khan Museum.
- Takesh, Suheyla. 2017. "Exhibition Statement." In *Lines of Subjectivity: Portrait and Landscape Paintings*, edited by Suheyla Takesh, 6-7. Barjeel Art Foundation; Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts,.
- Takesh, Suheyla and Lynn Gumpert (Eds.) *Taking Shape: Abstraction from the Arab World, 1950s-1980s*. New York: Grey Art Gallery. (2020)
- Wikipedia. 2018. "Barjeel Art Foundation." Wikipedia, accessed June 10. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barjeel\\_Art\\_Foundation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barjeel_Art_Foundation)
- Zahrouni, Rafika. 2013. "The Tunisian revolution and the dialectics of theatre and reality." *Theatre Research International* 38 (2):148-57.