

HIAA Symposium
SPACES AND VISIONS

Philadelphia, October 2008

**First Announcement
and Call for Papers for Sessions 1.1, 1.3, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2**

Proposal deadline: February 1, 2008

Program (as of December 25, 2007)

Day 1 (October 16, 2008)

Theme: “Out of Late Antiquity”

Keynote speaker: Alan Walmsley, University of Copenhagen*
(45 minutes), (10 minutes discussion, questions)

Three sessions, four papers (each 20 minutes)

Session 1.1

Session Leader: Alastair Northedge, Université de Paris I (Panthéon-Sorbonne)

Session Topic: “The relationship of Archaeology and Art at the beginning of Islam”

Session Description:

Much of the new data on the material culture of Islam in its early period comes from archaeological sources, and is much wider than the narrow traditional canon established by K. A. C. Creswell. One consequence is a greater awareness of non-Muslim peoples, when the Muslim population was still small, but also the need to identify Muslim populations outside the great architecture. Another consequence is the much wider range of activities that can be detected and which bear on Art and Architecture, such as construction for sporting, military or even industrial purposes. A third is the greater contextualization of significant developments, such as the origins of Islamic ceramics. At the same time, an effort needs to be made to understand the different momentums of archaeology and art history, their different directions.

Speakers: Call for papers

E-mail proposals to Alastair Northedge at anorthedge@wanadoo.fr

Session 1.2

Session Leader: Jonathan M. Bloom, Boston College/Virginia Commonwealth
University

Session Topic: “Fatimid Art”

Session Description:

The art and architecture of the Fatimid period in North Africa and Egypt (909-1171) comprises a diverse

corpus of material in media ranging from urban planning and monumental architecture to carved ivory and rock-crystal. Combined with an extraordinarily rich array of textual sources relating to the arts of the court and urban life, the material culture of this period gives an unusually complete picture of medieval Islamic art from the period before the Mongol invasions. To what extent is this a dynastic art? To what extent is it a regional one? How does it change over the two and a half centuries of Fatimid rule? To what extent can one use the arts of the Fatimid period to generalize about other times and places?

Speakers: Invited and agreed*

- Marianne Barrucand, University of Paris/Sorbonne: “Zirid-Hammadid Stuccoes from Sabra-Mansuriyya”
- Alison Gascoigne, University of Southampton: “Archaeology of the Fatimid Period”
- Nicholas Warner, Independent Scholar, Cairo: “Mapping the Fatimid City”
- Mina Moraitou, Benaki Museum, Athens: “Fatimid Woodwork”

Session 1.3

Session Leader: Heather Ecker, Detroit Institute of Arts

Session Topic: “Messianism, Kingship and Sacred Cities in the Islamic World”

Session Description:

The extraordinary number of cities in the Islamic World that are (or have been) considered sacred inspire this session. Cities sacred to Muslims are found in the Middle East, in North Africa, in the Indian Sub-continent, and arguably, in Europe. These cities attract pilgrims and prestige as the sites of ancient enclosures, as the sites of burial places of saints, as sites of learning, and as sites of caliphal authority. This session will enquire how such cities have supported, and in turn, been transformed by rulers who engaged with messianic ideas and propaganda as a form of legitimation. Such messianic ideas include mahdism (the expectation of an extraordinary figure in the world who will promote an age of justice, of righteousness, of equality and of peace), and imamism (the expectation in the reappearance of the occluded imam as the rightful temporal and spiritual leader of the umma). Messianic rulers have cast themselves as saviours of the people and protectors of the faith, claiming publicly corporal and spiritual lineages that lend them both political rights and spiritual stature. Messianic ideas stretch and compress time in various ways, paralleling the demolitions and constructions that messianic rulers have overseen in various cities, giving form to their mystique and sources of legitimation.

Papers dealing with any aspect of urbanism under the influence of messianism in the Islamic World—in any period—are welcomed.

Speakers: Invited and agreed

- Sussan Babaie, University of Michigan
- Others: **Call for papers**

Email proposals to Heather Ecker at Ecker@dia.org

Workshop I: On Qur’ans and Codicology (led by François Déroche, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

Day 2 (October 17, 2008)

Theme: “ ‘Unity and Variety’ Once More: Time, Place, Material”

Keynote Speaker: Gülrü Necipoglu, Harvard University
(45 minutes), (10 minutes discussion, questions)

Three sessions, four papers (each 20 minutes)

Session 2.1

Session Leader: Linda Komaroff, Los Angeles County Museum of Art

Session Topic: “Pushing the Boundaries of the Iranian World: Theme; Medium; Dynasty(ies); Place”

Session Description:

The boundaries here are figurative or literal or both. The idea is to take some of the traditional ways in which we look at and classify Islamic/Iranian art but to approach these from novel directions or perspectives or with new information.

Speakers: Invited and agreed*

- Marianna Shreve Simpson, Independent Scholar, Baltimore: “Poetic and Pictorial Narrative”
- Yuka Kadoi, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha: “Textiles and Sino – Iranian Connections”
- Sheila Blair, Boston College: “Turko-Mongol Dynasties”
- Tim Williams, University College, London: “Merv: The Organisation of Space in the Islamic City”

Session 2.2

Session Leader: Barry Flood, IFA/NYU

Session Topic: “Unity in Diversity? Circulation, Stasis and the Canon”

Session Description:

Among the many recent developments in the field that have helped redefine and refine the problematic notion of ‘Islamic’ art is a burgeoning interest in the nature of art produced in regions formerly considered marginal to the canon. Despite its undoubted innovations, much of this work assumes a rather static relationship between region and style, or subsumes regional and stylistic variety into a unity implied by dynastic labels. In addition, the majority of this research has been concerned with the relationship between Islam and its non-Muslim ‘others’. With few exceptions (the recent interest in Fatimid-’Abbasid rivalry, for example) there have been far fewer attempts to analyze or deconstruct the nature of the Muslim self and its relevance to the history of material culture.

These phenomena reflect the instrumentality of fixed or static categories of analysis to the construction of a canon. By contrast, this session seeks to examine aspects of circulation and mobility, their relevance to the material culture of the Islamic world, and implications for its study. The mobility in question might entail shifting patterns of self-identification (conversion between different faiths or modes of Islamic belief, for example), the circulation of artistic forms and concepts as a result of mercantile exchange or pilgrimage, or the ‘translation’ of formal concepts between different media.

Although they may have a particular regional or chronological focus, papers should address the implications of their topic for the broader field of Islamic art, perhaps even for the concept of an Islamic Art itself.

Speakers: Call for papers

Mail or email proposals to:

Barry Flood, Department of Art History, New York University, 303 Silver Center, 100 Washington Square East, New York, NY 10002

Email: barry.flood@nyu.edu

Session 2.3

Session Leader: D. Fairchild Ruggles, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

Session Topic: “Women and Patronage”

Session Description:

Although the patronage of architecture and the visual arts by women has been a rich topic of exploration in the field of art history and gender studies in general, until recently very few scholars had explored the role of women in Islamic art. Those studies that do exist show that women, both freeborn and slave, could amass fortunes and play a key role in the transfer of property, the construction of family identity and genealogy, and the public display of piety through their activities and endowed foundations. Although they did not appear prominently in chronicles and histories, women were important patrons of Islamic art and especially the built environment. One can hardly imagine Istanbul without the mosque, tomb, and bath complexes commissioned by Ottoman women, or Cairo without the tombs and pious foundations of Fatimid and Ayyubid women.

The study of women relies on a different methodology than that for men. Although women of the Prophet’s family and in ruling houses appear in biographies and court chronicles, to find middle and lower class women, one must plumb court cases, dowry records, waqfiyyas, and commercial contracts and correspondence, often seeking moments when women stepped out of normative anonymity and asserted their legal or economic rights. Thus the study of women has benefited from – and contributed to – the methods of “microhistory” with its emphasis on individuals rather than broad currents. Moreover, with our emphasis on material culture and the built monument, art historians (and historians engaged in art history) have made important contributions to the study of women and Islamic culture in general, exploring the operative boundaries of private and public space and the exercise of political power through urban investment.

A critical work in the study of women in Islam was Leila Ahmed’s *Women and Gender in Islam* (1992) because it introduced the issue to a wide reading public. In art history, Esin Atil’s special issue of *Asian Art* (1993) was directed toward a general museum audience, but it was written by scholars and inspired others to pursue similar questions. In the past few years alone, many new works – several by HIAA members -- have appeared on the theme of female patronage in Islam. The session will adopt a specifically visual and historical point of view and will present new research on female architectural spaces, female patronage of public building, and the methodology of such studies.

Speakers: Invited and agreed

- Delia Cortese, Middlesex University, and Institute of Ismaili Studies, and Simonetta Calderini, Roehampton University, London: “The Patronage of Fatimid Women”
- Lucienne Thys-Senocak, Koç University: “The letters of Hadice Turhan Sultan”
- Afshan Bokhari, Suffolk University: “Jahan Ara Begum and ‘Visions’ of Legacy”
- D. Fairchild Ruggles: “Women and Patronage in Islam: A Historical Overview of the Study”

Workshop II: On Reading Urban Fabric (led by Attilio Petruccioli, Bari Polytechnic)

Day 3 (October 18, 2008)

Theme: “Confronting Modernity”

Keynote Speaker: Glenn Lowry, Museum of Modern Art
(45 minutes), (10 minutes discussion, questions)

Three sessions, four papers (each 20 minutes)

Session 3.1

Session Leaders: Massumeh Farhad, Freer/Sackler Galleries and David J. Roxburgh, Harvard University

Session Topic: “Museums, Exhibitions, and Collections in Historical Perspective”

Session Description:

The various roles played by museums and the temporary exhibition in fashioning the field of Islamic art have emerged as a topic of interest in recent years and continues to be an area of growing scholarly research. Studies have focused on the history of collecting and museum formation; the dynamics between institutions, curators, collectors, dealers, scholars, and the market; the practices of installation and how they advance overt and covert narratives; and the study of the museum collection/exhibition through the frameworks of modernity and post-modernity. Recent years have witnessed the reinstallation of key collections in Europe and America—opportunities to meditate on the history of the field and its orthodoxies; exhibitions staged with an explicitly historiographic emphasis (the key current example being *Purs Decors?*, at the Musée du Louvre); and the emergence of new public museums and collections, principally in Turkey and the Gulf States. Of equal importance is the exponential growth of art fairs and biennials which present the work of contemporary artists. Museums east and west have now turned to the collection and exhibition of contemporary art. Paper presenters – art historians, curators, artists – for the session are invited to consider these broad topics and the intersections between them. In what ways have fresh perspectives and new practices engendered critical assessments of the field as it is construed?

Speakers: Call for papers

E-mail proposals to:

David Roxburgh at roxburgh@fas.harvard.edu

and Massumeh Farhad at FARHAMA@si.edu

Session 3.2

Session Leader: TBA

Session Topic: On Conservation and Cultural Policies

Session Description:

This session will explore the history and current practices of conservation and restoration in the Islamic world. Case studies are invited to gauge the ways in which specialists, governmental bodies and international organizations contribute to the making of “historic” built environments, and to the creation of local and/ or national identities.

Speakers: Call for papers

E-mail proposals to Farrokh Derakhshani at farrokh.derakhshani@akdn.org

Session 3.3

Session Leader: Nasser Rabbat, MIT

Session Topic: “How to Study Contemporary Islamic Art and Architecture”

Session Description:

Where do contemporary Islamic art and architecture stand in the world today? This too general and consciously polemical question is not new, although recent events have lent it an unprecedented critical urgency. The answers at hand vary widely. Some commentators see in the globalizing trends and the accelerating mobility of artists and ideas beneficial vehicles for increased exposure of the contemporary Islamic art and architecture. Others point to the eurocentric pedigree of contemporary art and architecture and its most entrenched biases, such as artistic hierarchy and cultural segregation, as formidable impediments to a true integration of the contemporary Islamic art and architecture in the international scene. Still others consider the question itself too redundant since they do not think that we can define a contemporary Islamic art and architecture that is not already intermeshed with the global so as to obviate any claim of a definable and separate identity. The papers in this panel will address these and other similar issues through examination of specific case studies.

Speakers: TBA/invited

Workshop III: On Cinema (led by Hamid Dabashi, Columbia University)