

TRANSCENDING BOUNDARIES:
THE ARTS OF ISLAM: TREASURES FROM THE NASSAR D. KHALILI COLLECTION

LOUISE RYAN

B. ED. (ART), M. ART DES. ED., M. ART ED. (HONS.)

**INSTITUTE FOR CULTURE AND SOCIETY
UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN SYDNEY**



**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
© 2015**

DEDICATION

FOR MY PARENTS, WHO INSTILLED IN ME A LOVE OF OTHER CULTURES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank my two principal supervisors that have guided my work over the last five years, Dr Russell Staiff and Professor Tony Bennett. Their encouragement, support, academic expertise and enthusiasm for my research topic provided motivation, confidence and direction throughout the sometimes daunting, but intellectually stimulating, process of making my research idea a reality. I would also like to acknowledge the expert knowledge and recommendations of my co-supervisor Dr Fiona Cameron, whose suggestions have made a valuable contribution to the development and completion of this thesis.

Thank you to the many museum professionals and gallery visitors who freely and unreservedly gave their time, thoughts and opinions that constituted the empirical data upon which this research project is based. To the many other PhD students, staff and academics affiliated with the Institute for Culture and Society at the University of Western Sydney, I would like to convey my appreciation for the feedback and discussions at workshops, conferences, seminars and numerous corridor conversations that sparked new ideas and ways of thinking that enriched my work so significantly over the course of my candidature.

My appreciation to my family and friends, for their continued tolerance over the years with my never-ending work commitments during weekends, holidays and birthdays. For my parents especially, to whom I have dedicated this work, I owe a lifelong debt for their gift of unfailing love and faith in my abilities. Last but not least, special thanks to my husband Robert, for his enormous capacity to provide unconditional intellectual, emotional and financial support, for without you nothing would have been possible.

STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICATION

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Signature:



Date: 16th January 2016

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Figures and Illustrations	ix
Abstract	1
Overview of the study	3
<i>Case study</i>	5
<i>Theoretical framework</i>	7
<i>Methodology</i>	13
<i>Chapter Design</i>	15
Chapter One	21
Debates and dilemmas: The ‘problem’ with Islam, global issues and museum frictions	21
<i>War without end</i>	22
<i>The wider public sphere: Broader conversations, global problems</i>	25
Identity politics and nation building	25
Modernity	27
Governmentality	29
Multiculturalism	32
Colonial legacies	35
Art market and value regimes	37
The influence of the Media	38
<i>Museum Dilemmas</i>	40
The effects of patronage and sponsorship	40
Representation and the politics of display	46
The role of the museum in contemporary society	46
Museums as commercial enterprises	49
The museum object	51
Beauty and the sublime	53
<i>Conclusion</i>	58
Chapter Two	59
Collectors, Collections and the Museum	59
<i>Discursive practices</i>	60
Orientalism/exoticism and metanarrative	60
Collecting Orientalist art today	69

Islamic collections as commodities	77
<i>Case study: Nassar D. Khalili: 'Cultural ambassador of Islam'</i>	82
<i>Conclusion</i>	96
Chapter Three	97
The journey begins: demands and dilemmas	97
<i>Museums and their audiences: display, representation and consultation</i>	97
Local social and political unrest	107
'Face of Evil'	111
Transforming power of art	114
The role of museums and curatorial approaches in the age of 'risk'	128
<i>Conclusion</i>	141
Chapter Four	144
Rethinking national identity: On becoming a 'global centre for cultural enlightenment'	144
<i>The making of a modern nation</i>	145
Nurturing an artistic and cultural psyche	149
The 'Universal' museum	157
Global values or religious censorship?	163
The impact of old and new western museologies	166
Promoting national identity through education	174
Cultural tourism, education and understanding: Cui bono?	178
<i>Conclusion</i>	187
Chapter Five	190
Colonial legacies in a post-colonial world: egalitarianism, laïque and inclusiveness	190
<i>Multiculturalism in Europe today</i>	193
French-style secularism versus religiosity debate	195
L'affaire Foulard	200
<i>The IMA: Building bridges</i>	204
An international collaboration	204
The politics of display and the importance of travelling shows	208
Curatorial opinions and public reactions	218
<i>Musée Quai Branly: reconciling or rewriting a colonial past?</i>	223
The aesthetic versus ethnographic dilemma	227
Politics of display and public reactions	230

Temporary exhibitions: an exception	236
<i>Cité: integration, cohesion and ‘Frenchness’</i>	242
Background: chronicling France’s immigration history	242
Repères and 1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition: Professional opinions and public concerns	246
Criteria of success: A valid and viable cultural enterprise?	252
<i>Conclusion: towards an inclusive society</i>	257
Chapter Six	261
Art and Moral Panics: the precariousness of the aesthetic	261
<i>The journeys end</i>	261
The Netherlands: colonisation to civic integration	265
The media and pivotal moments: separating fact from fiction	268
Moral panics and zero tolerance debates	272
Narratives behind ‘beautiful objects’: Two examples	281
Dynasty and legitimation: the Jami’ al-Tawarikh	282
Artistry, continuity and innovation	288
Art and idolatry: A historiographical dilemma	293
Politics of display at the DNKG	297
Qajar painting: images of monarchy	300
Bestowing prestige: Authenticity and imitation	305
Hybridity and neo-colonialism debates	311
Beauty, aesthetic dispositions and agency	319
Missed opportunities?	323
Criteria of success and social relevancy	324
Final thoughts	325
Chapter Seven	327
Concluding Thoughts: Reflections and recommendations	327
<i>The central question and theoretical framework: a final analysis</i>	327
Cross-cultural understanding: magic bullet or pipe dream?	328
Beauty and the masterpiece: a matter of taste.	330
The object and the travelling display: inside and out	334
Face of Mohammad: a global dilemma	336
Contemporary Islamic art: a moot point	341
Community engagement: a survival skill	347
Significance of study and future research directions	351

<i>References</i>	353
<i>Books and Journals</i>	353
<i>Newspapers and Media</i>	375
<i>World Wide Web Links</i>	387
<i>List of interviewees/transcripts</i>	394
Conversations	395
Appendices	396
Appendix 1	397
<i>Details of methodology</i>	397
Individual interviews/Focus Group details of audiences from the Sydney venue of the AoIE	397
Analysis of methodology	398
Appendix 2	409
The impact of American policy at home and abroad	409
<i>Too many too ignore</i>	411
<i>Media representations</i>	412
Film, television, literature and social media	414
<i>Real or imagined?</i>	420
Appendix 3	422
Collecting and displaying Islamic art: a history	422
<i>Collection formation</i>	425
The role of International Exhibitions	429
Early museum exhibitions of Islamic art	430
Twentieth- century exhibitions	434

List of Figures and Illustrations

- Fig 1: Theoretical model
- Fig 2: Distribution of European countries that have implemented or considering legalization prohibiting the Islamic veil
- Fig 3: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Countess Hanssanville* 1834
- Fig 4: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *The Bathers* 1808
- Fig 5: Eugene Delacroix *Algerian women in their apartments* 1834
- Fig 6: Eugene Delacroix *Odalisque* 1857
- Fig 7: Jean-Leon Gerome *Harem Pool* 1876
- Fig 8: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Interior of the Harem with Odalisque* 1800
- Fig 9: J R Lewis *The Hharem* 1849
- Fig 10: Jerrichau-Baumann *A Fallah woman with her child* 1878
- Fig 11: Henriette Brown *A Visit: Harem Interior* 1860
- Fig 12: Mohammed Racim *The Rais* 1931
- Fig 13: Azouaou Mammeri *Market in the walls of Oudayas* 1930s
- Fig 14: Osman Hamdi Bey *The Scholar* 1878
- Fig 15: Jean-Leon Gèrôme *The Slave Market* 1866
- Fig 16: Alphonse-Étienne Dinet *Young Swimmers at the edge of the Wadi*
- Fig 17: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Turkish bath* 1862
- Fig 18: Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *La Grande Odalisque* 1814
- Fig 19: Gustave Courbet *Origin of the World* 1866
- Fig 20: Antoine-Georges-Prosper Marilhat *A Cairo Street* 1833
- Fig 21: Theodore Chasseuriau *Combat of Arab Horsemen* 1856
- Fig 22: Eugene Fromentin *Tailor in front of Mosque* 1850s
- Fig 23: Destruction of Buddha of Bamiyan Afghanistan, 2001
- Fig 24: Remains of the Great Mosque at Aleppo 2012
- Fig 25: National Museum of Baghdad Iraq 2003
- Fig 26: Cairo Museum Egypt 2014
- Fig 27: Façade of Art Gallery Of New South Wales Sydney
- Fig 28,29: Muslim visitors at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007
- Fig 30: Display at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007
- Fig 31: Mosque dome light display at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007
- Fig 32: Narrow-necked flask Iran or central Asia late 15th century or early 16th Century AD
- Fig 33: Footed Bowl Iran c 1200 AD

Fig 34: *Jonah and the whale Rashid-Al Din's History of the World on Display* Tabriz Iran 1314-15 AD

Fig 35: Man being assaulted with beer bottles by rioters Cronulla 2005

Fig 36: Police and rioters Cronulla 2005

Fig 37, 38: Satirical cartoons about Cronulla 'riots' 2005

Fig 39: *Muhammad receiving the submission of Banu Nadir Rashid-Al Din's History of the World on Display* Tabriz Iran 1314-15 AD.

Fig 40: Auburn Mosque open day 2012

Fig 41: Auburn Community Festival 2012

Fig 42: Poster for *Four Lions* film 2010

Fig 43: *MyPeace* television advertisement 2011.

Fig 44: Online advertisement for St Mungo Museum Glasgow Scotland

Fig 45: Hindu god Lord Shiva from South India damaged by an 'enraged' visitor in 1993 St Mungo Museum Glasgow Scotland

Fig 46: Exterior views of MONA with *Cabinet of Curiosities Box* in foreground

Fig 47: Theatre of the World display MONA 2013

Fig 48: *On the Road to Heaven the Highway to Hell* Stephen Shanabrook MONA 2005

Fig 49 Gregory Green's mixed media 'bomb' in a Bible (*Bible Bomb #185*) Koran and Torah MONA 2005

Fig 50: Olaf Metzger *Turkish Delight* sculpture wrenched from its pedestal 2007 while on display at the Kunsthalle Museum Vienna

Fig 51: The Khalifa Tower Dubai

Fig 52: Abu Dhabi Film Festival poster 2014

Fig 53: Dubai Food Festival poster 2014

Fig 54 Water Discus Underwater Hotel Dubai UAE

Fig 55: Indoor ski slope Dubai Mall Dubai UAE

Fig 56: Indoor aquarium Dubai Mall Dubai UAE

Fig 57: At the Opening of the Exhibition *Art Of Islam* exhibition Khalili and His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi & Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces Emirates Palace Hotel Abu Dhabi 2008 UAE

Fig 58: Emirates Place Hotel Abu Dhabi UAE

Fig 59: *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Gallery One Emirates Palace Hotel Abu Dhabi 2008 UAE

Fig 60: Catalogue for *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Abu Dhabi 2008 UAE

Fig 61: Guggenheim Museum model Abu Dhabi UAE

Fig 62: Louvre Museum model Abu Dhabi UAE

Fig 63: Zayed national Museum model Abu Dhabi UAE

Fig 64: Centre for Performing Arts model Abu Dhabi UAE

Fig 65: Map showing Guggenheim museums worldwide

Fig 66: Expo 2010 UAE pavilion now used as an exhibition space on Saayidat Island Project site UAE

Fig 67: *Cairo Street* international fair in Paris 1889

Fig 68: *Cairo Street* international fair in Chicago 1893

Fig 69: *Arab Street* Middle Eastern section Expo 2010 Shanghai China

Fig70: Middle Eastern Dancers Paris Exposition 1889

Fig 71: Caracalla Dance Theatre presents a dance production *Two Thousand and One Nights* Expo 2010 'Lebanon dazzles visitors with art feast' Shanghai China

Fig 72: Exterior view of Museum of Islamic art Doha Qatar

Fig 73: Display of mosque lamps Museum of Islamic art Doha Qatar

Fig 74: A French firm claims to have become the first to ban the wearing of religious symbols at work Paris 2004

Fig 75: Poster advocating the banning of the Burka Paris 2010

Fig 76: Facade of Institut du Monde Arabe Paris showing catalogue covers photograph of the *Arts Of Islam Exhibition 2009-201*

Fig 77: Display of ceramics with calligraphic designs at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe 2009-2010 Paris

Fig 78: Display of calligraphic artworks at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris

Fig 79: Mosque lamp on display at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Paris 2009-2010

Fig 80: *Zoomorphic Lion* on display at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Paris 2009-2010

Fig 81: Exterior of Musée Quai Branly Paris

Fig 82, 83: Interior display at Musée Quai Branly Paris

Fig 84: Totemic figures from Oceania on display at the Musée du Quai Branly Paris

Fig 85: Interior display of costumes exhibited at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musée Quai Branly Paris

Fig 86: Young Bedouin Tribe Tiyaha image on display at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musée Quai Branly Paris

Fig 87: Mannequin on display at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musée Quai Branly Paris

Fig 88: Exterior of Museum of the Colonies Paris 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris

Fig 89: Painted murals depicting North Africa, Museum of the Colonies Paris 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris

Fig 90: Bas-relief depicting North Africa Museum of the Colonies Paris 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris

Fig 91: Benchmarks permanent exhibition space at *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris

Fig 92: Poster for 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Fig 93: Exhibition space for 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Fig 94: François Kollar's Moroccan Miner photographic display at 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Fig 95: Exhibition space for 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Fig 96: Poster for *Fashion Mix* exhibition 2014 Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Fig 97: Exterior view of De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery in Amsterdam with banners for the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition 2010/2011 Amsterdam

Fig 98, 99: Interior view of De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery in Amsterdam with church architecture and mirror installation for the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition 2010/2011 Amsterdam

Fig 100: Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn (left) Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh (center) Geert Wilders (right), leader of Freedom Party

Fig 101: Satirical cartoon showing Wilders saving western civilization from the *Muslim Hordes*

Fig 102: Still from Van Gogh's film *Submission* showing ex-Muslim refugee and then parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali's naked body covered with verses from the Qur'an

Fig 103: *Muhammad leading Hamzah and the Muslims against the Banu Qaynuqa* Jami' al-Tawarikh Tabriz Iran 1314-5

Fig 104: Qajar enamel *Portrait Miniature of the Qajar ruler Fath'ali Shah* Iran early 19th century

Fig 105: Bannister Fletcher's *Tree of Architecture* 1905

Fig 106: Exterior view of Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne 2014

Fig 107: Interior display space showing Philip George's *Borderlands* display of surfboards and other art works at the Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne 2014

Fig 108, 109: Interior display space Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne 2014

Fig 110: Majida Khattari *Les Parisiennes* 2008 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert* 2012 exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris

Fig 111: Lamia Ziadé, *Pigalle* and *Passy* 2008 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert* 2012 exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris

Fig 112: Mohammed Racim *Femmes à cascade* 1930 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert* 2012 exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris

Fig 113: Mahmoud Saïd, *L'Endormie* 1933 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert* 2012 exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris

Fig 114: British National Front protester 2010

Fig 115: Anti-Muslim sentiments result in vandalism Britain 2010

Fig 116: Visual from Jack Sheehan's book *How the Media created the Muslim Monster Myth* 2012

Fig 117 Online webpage for *Islamic Art: Mirror of the Invisible World* documentary 2012

Fig 118: Comedian Ahmed Ahmed on stage 2007

Fig 119: Online poster for movie *The Muslims Are Coming* 2014

Fig 120: Hall of Honour Munich exhibition 1910

Fig 121: Interior of Munich exhibition 1910

Fig 122: Poster of *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst* exhibition Munich, 1910

LIST OF PUBLICATIONS

The following published papers in electronic and printed journals have included sections of work that have emerged as a result of this investigation.

SELECTED JOURNAL ARTICLES

Ryan, L, 'Beyond the Spectacular: (Re) presenting Islamic Art and Politics of Display', *The International Journal of Arts theory and History* Volume 7, Issue 2, 2013, pp. 51-67

Ryan, L, 'Imagining the Arab Other: The role of the Media in constructing Islamic identity', *International Journal of the Arts in Society*, Volume 5, Number 4, 2010, pp. 93-104

Ryan, L, 'The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia, 2007', *International Journal of the Arts in Society*, Volume 42, Issue 2, 2009, pp.67-80

Abstract

This thesis examines and problematizes curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/ didactic modes of display when the museum's mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture. Based on a case study of the travelling exhibition *The Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Nassar D. Khalili Collection*, this investigation traces the journey of a collection of artifacts through four exhibitionary sites (Sydney, Abu Dhabi, Paris, and Amsterdam) from 2007-2011.

A central aim of this study is to demonstrate the polysemic nature of artifacts when placed in the museum context by exploring the notion that objects acquire additional meanings as a result of site-specific curatorial decision-making. To this end, a theoretical model is developed and applied that profiles how differing practices, procedures and policies of display involve a process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualization, disruption and transformation, affected by and impacting upon particular social, political and cultural nuances in the wider public sphere. A 'tool box' approach to analysis is adopted, drawing on a range of theories from the fields of post-colonial studies, museology, and cultural theory.

Interviews with a cross-section of stakeholders from exhibition venues provide empirical evidence for the evaluation of the experiences, opinions and perspectives of sponsors, curators and museum audiences who were involved in or attended exhibitions and their related events. Additionally, conversations with museum professionals from a range of prominent institutions are included to allow comparison with the travelling display.

In conjunction with findings from primary and secondary sources, discussions will involve reference to museological challenges and dilemmas including: East/West relations historically; Orientalism and practices of Islamic collecting by individuals and organizations; the effects of patronage and sponsorship especially the influence of corporations; the material, aesthetic and commercial properties of the museum object; and questions arising from representations of cultural and aesthetic objects through particular politics of display. These issues are analysed for their interaction with discourse and debates concerning: identity politics, nation building, modernity, governmentality, colonial legacies, multiculturalism, art markets and their collectors, and influence of the media. Final conclusions evaluate the success of these cultural and artistic enterprises and recommendations include the adoption of new museological practices and policies of display that are inclusive of diverse audiences and have the potential to increase cross-cultural understanding on both the local and global level.

Museums are as necessary for countries as are schools and hospitals ... They also heal, not bodies, but minds of darkness that is ignorance, prejudice, superstition and above all the defects that isolate human beings ... They sharp the sensibility, stimulate the imagination, refine the sentiments, and wake up in people the critical and self-critical spirit ... and maybe, above all, the wisdom that makes us capable of differentiating the ugly from the beautiful, the intelligent from the stupid, the good from the bad and the tolerance of the intolerable, that we call culture

MARIO VARGAS LLOSA, PERUVIAN, NOBLE PRIZE IN LITERATURE 2010

Overview of the study

The best way to appreciate art is to separate art from politics because simply, religion and politics have their own language but the language of art is universal. There has never been more need for that universality than today.

NASSAR D.KHALILI

The notion that art alone has a universal language that can transcend all boundaries and find a common ground for humanity to unite is not new. In 1917 it was: 'Those works of art which are loved ... worshipped [not just admired] by the greatest number of people are the most universal works of art.'¹ This referred to the 'Hellenic beauty' of the classics (the works of Homer, Shakespeare, Keats and the Renaissance artists) that possessed '...a superlative harmony of beauty, which makes an irresistible universal appeal'.² By the 1950s there was still 'no better ambassador of good will than art'³ and it was 'sincere paintings' that promoted universal understanding, as long as the viewer engaged in an 'open-minded contemplation ... appealing to the universal spirit of man'.⁴ In more recent times, commentators argue that 'only art lends itself to the full range of experimental capabilities offered by the new technologies' to build 'virtual bridges' between cultures because 'if art can't, nothing can'.⁵

Along with its alleged universal appeal, there is a widespread belief that art and the aesthetic experience possess the power to restore harmony and build cross-cultural understanding. James Cuno, director of the Art Institute of Chicago, maintains that as 'places of refuge and spiritual and cultural nourishment' art museums can provide experiences where the visitor can be 'led from beauty to justice by a lateral distribution of caring',⁶ with Kwame Appiah endorsing museums as arenas where conversations between people from different nationalities, ethnicities and religions have the potential to heal

¹ 'Individualism vs. Universality', *ArtSource: The Art World*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (January 1917), pp. 230-234, retrieved 10 January 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25587728>.

² *ibid.*

³ R Ettinghausen, 'Islamic Art and Archaeology', T Cuyler Young (ed.), *Near Eastern Culture and Society: A symposium on the Meeting of East and West*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 1951, p. 47.

⁴ R Kilgore, 'The Universality of Art', *The Phi Delta Kappa*, vol. 35, No. 8, May 1954, p. 3013.

⁵ JM Eger, 'If Art is a Universal language', *Huffpost Arts & Culture*, January 11, 2001, accessed 10 January 2011, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>.

⁶ J Cuno, 'The Object of art Museums', in *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, Princeton University Press, Princeton New Jersey, 2004.

divisions.⁷ These sentiments are not confined to museum directors and philosophers, but resonate with the general public. For example, when Philippe de Montebello, the former director of the New York Metropolitan Museum wrote that ‘... art museums offer a powerful antidote to hopelessness ... For great art from all parts of the world can enlighten, inspire, awe, and ultimately, help heal’ he was aware that in the days following the 9/11 terrorist attack in New York eight thousand visitors passed through the doors of the museum; a record number equal only to blockbuster exhibition days. Surprised museum staff offered this opinion: ‘it had to do with the power of art to uplift and soothe in times of darkness, the power of museums to offer a consoling ‘big’ picture of human survival and creativity in a space free from geopolitical strife’.⁸

Equally contentious and polemical in current art world debates is how our understanding and interpretation of art is affected by changing museological and curatorial practices and policies of display regarding site-specific contexts, object selection, placement and scenography (furniture, colour, lighting, labeling, background information). Nicholas Serota aptly captures the long-running debate between ‘interpretation’ versus ‘experience’ when considering the visitor encounter, suggesting that many institutions struggle to balance the needs, desires and expectations of the artist, curator and visitor. He argues that prior to the late 1970s

The museum was becoming a history book rather than a cabinet of treasures ... the principal of interpretation, of combining works by different artists to give selective readings, both of art and the history of art, is one of the fundamentals that has underwritten curatorial practice since the mid-nineteenth century.⁹

But with the arrival of new museums such as the Pompidou Centre in Paris in 1977, described as an ‘open museum’ where the public could become the creators through discovery and ideas,¹⁰ and MoMA exhibitions of 1994 (particularly abstract expressionist artists such as Jackson Pollock) the emphasis shifted and promoting the aesthetic rather than the interpretative encounter became increasingly popular: ‘The traditional museum disciplines of juxtaposition, analysis and interpretation were reduced to minimum;

⁷ K Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, N.W. Norton and Company, New York and London, 2006, p. 85.

⁸ A McClellan, *The Art Museum: from Boullee to Bilbao*, University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles California, 2008, p.50.

⁹ N Serota, *Experience or Interpretation, The Dilemma of Museums of Modern Art*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1996, p. 7, 8-9.

¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 14.

experience was paramount.¹¹ Further, Serota speculates that a major consequence of preferencing the ‘experience’ is that the ‘absolute concentration’ on the work ‘obliges us to develop our own reading of the work rather than relying on a curatorial interpretation of history.’¹²

Case study

The pervasiveness of museological dilemmas such as ‘interpretation’ versus ‘experience’ and faith in the restorative and inspirational potential of the aesthetic experience is increasingly challenged by a world saturated with visual culture, a world of the spectacle, a world where boundaries between education and leisure, commercialism and high culture, and art, politics and religion are increasingly blurred. One topical, vibrant and increasingly contentious field of study is the trade in and display of Islamic artifacts and the nascent Middle Eastern art market. This thesis adds to scholarship in this emerging area of inquiry by using the *Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection* travelling exhibition (hereafter referred to as AoIE) as its primary case study, with investigations tracing the journey of this collection of Islamic artifacts through a variety of exhibitionary sites: the Art Gallery of New South Wales (AGNSW), Sydney Australia (2007); Gallery One The Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates (2008); the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), Paris France (2009-2010); and De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery (DNKG), Amsterdam the Netherlands (2010-2011).

The major sponsor of the AoIE was collection owner and philanthropist Nasser D. Khalili, who provided the artifacts for the touring display and covered all travelling and installation costs (including insurance). The venues were only required to cover the specific site-specific costs associated with their individual displays such as publication costs of catalogues, advertising and associated activities. The overriding mandate for this travelling collection was Khalili’s belief in the ability of art to transcend all boundaries through encouraging a common humanity that contributes to reducing conflict between diverse cultures and people. An exploration of Khalili’s unwavering faith in the reforming power of the cultural artifact and the aesthetic experience to intervene and re-configure knowledges and social issues in the minds of diverse audiences forms the basis of this thesis’

¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 17.

¹² *ibid.*, p. 10.

investigations. Discussions, debates and critical analysis revolve around Khalili's mandate and its influence on curatorial decision-making and the politics of display of the travelling exhibition, especially the museums intersections with local contexts and wider public discourse. These investigations are a central aim of this study to examine and problematize curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/didactic modes of display when the museums' mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture.

With this premise in mind, a series of questions arise concerning the belief in the reforming power of the aesthetic object. How could such objects achieve this outcome and is it really necessary to invoke the transcendent in pursuit of this end? Could cross-cultural understanding not be achieved within the limits of the mundane and the ordinary? For Khalili, the encounter with his collection can unite mankind in their humanity. He regards the objects in his collection as belonging to everyone, believing that the diversity of his collection should dispel anti-Muslim sentiments by demonstrating the achievements of Islamic culture throughout the ages.

However this focus on a shared, common humanity effectively reduces and conflates unique cultural features in the interests of the universality of mankind. In presenting the visitor with the moral demand for cross-cultural understanding through exposure to objects capable of revealing a sense of universal humanity, Khalili essentially takes a Kantian approach, where morality and aesthetics are the outcome of reasoning and feeling which we all share. This approach favours the ideal over the real, the universal over the particular, and forms the basis for the possibility of inter-subjectivity.¹³

And yet, perhaps cross-cultural understanding should focus on the particularity of the here-and-now, forgoing such appeals to the grand narrative of quasi-theological universalism. This would amount to addressing the contemporary political issues directly, and entering dialogues with living communities rather than solely gazing on the relics from the past? This also raises the question of what could art possibly contribute in such a forum,

¹³ In Kant's *Critique of the power of judgement*, 5:239,3244, Section 22, he states: 'In all judgments by which we describe anything as beautiful, we tolerate no one else being of a different opinion, and in taking up this position we do not rest our judgment upon concepts, but only on our feeling. Accordingly we introduce this fundamental feeling not as a private feeling, but as a public sense.' (Retrieved 22 March 2014, <http://denisdutton.com/kant_third_critique.htm>)

and what opportunity for cross-cultural understanding could there be without ‘a universal humanity’ to underwrite our communicative efforts?

To facilitate discussions and gather empirical data to investigate these issues, this research considers perspectives and attitudes from community groups and their leaders, museum curators and cultural organizations in Australia, Europe, the United States of America and the Middle East. The aim is to investigate whether the reliance on the aesthetic experience with limited contextual background is sufficient to promote cross-cultural understanding at each venue of the AoIE and what is essentially ‘missing’ if other curatorial approaches (especially the interpretative/didactic) are minimised or absent. Additionally, what the wider consequences are for Muslim communities and countries in negotiating new relations between the cultural institutions of Islam and the western art world will be explored.

Theoretical framework

Questions regarding how museums should present cultural objects have generated heated debates, and in the wake of the last decade, Islamic issues have loomed large both locally and internationally. This study proposes a theoretical model that examines and illustrates the inter-connectedness of the key aspects of the exhibition experience generally and will be tested through an analysis of the AoIE travelling show from 2007-2011. The central premise is that the exhibitionary display is affected by general societal issues and topical debates occurring in the macro level of the wider public sphere¹⁴ that, filtered through social, religious, political, cultural, economic and aesthetic dimensions, reappear as museum dilemmas at the micro level of the museum encounter itself.

The depth of this encounter will depend on the degree to which each of these societal dimensions is allowed to influence the exhibition experience. Only an integrated approach which respects the multi-dimensional context of museum practices will be able to avoid eccentric conceptualizations of the domain, and find a balance between, for example, the aesthetic goals of Khalili's program and the more socio-political goals of the interpretive approach. Further, museum research often downplays the importance of external factors

¹⁴ As defined by Jürgen Habermas, the public sphere is an arena of free speech where society engages in critical public debate and discourse (J Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, 1991).

and 'the bigger picture' so studies like this can be viewed as a potentially useful corrective to the relative imbalance of context in many studies and texts.

Regarding the museum experience, the politics of display and curatorial practices alter the perceived meanings of cultural artifacts when they travel from their initial sites of creation to distant sites of display, subjecting them to a process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation. Importantly, this disparate troupe of travelling objects alters with each venue and according to each specific context, posing the ontological question of whether an exhibition is constituted by the works on display or by its overriding mandate. The concept of a 'troupe of travelling objects' warrants scrutiny as the life cycle of a conventional travelling exhibition involves processes of negotiation and adaption between the collection owner and venues of display and an assortment of co-producers, partners, receiving houses borrowers and renters. Therefore, since curatorial practices are multi-dimensional, museums must consult with both internal and external agents on a constant basis, especially the commercial realities of attracting audiences and interacting with public opinion and the media generally. Consideration is also given to the intersecting, complex and often-contentious relationships between international art markets, the museum sector and local/global contexts while profiling the journey of the AoIE. Discussion will 'map' relationship networks between multiple actors, the exhibition and its social and cultural consequences in the wider public sphere. This approach will facilitate the analysis of interactive properties of the exhibitionary space, related events and multiple discourses surrounding cultural enterprises generally between museum professionals, academics, critics, art experts and the media (figure1).

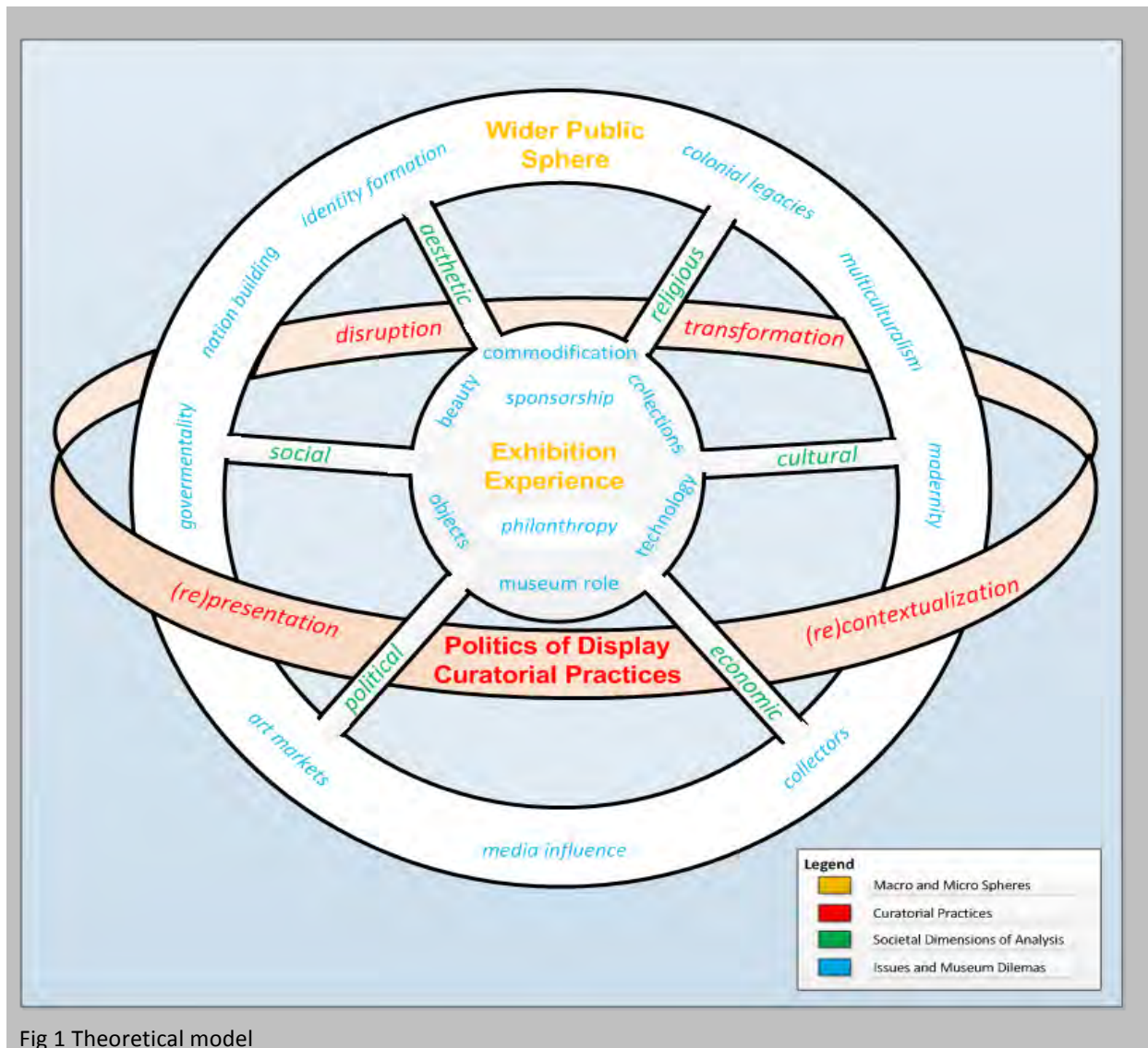


Fig 1 Theoretical model

A variety of philosophical and theoretical positions inform this study utilising a multi-perspective or ‘toolbox’ approach complementing the proposed model that is the single overarching theorizing structure. Discussion and analysis will draw on the opinions and viewpoints concerning eight conceptual topics: identity politics, nation building, modernity (in both the West and East), governmentality, colonial legacies, multiculturalism, art markets and their collectors, and influence of the media. In conjunction with these major issues and hot topics are the ensuing debates in the museological world, many which have simmered for decades and are reignited depending on local, national and global events. Topics explored include six main areas: philanthropy and sponsorship, the role of the museum, beauty and the sublime, the object and collections, material culture and commodification. The next

section provides an introduction to theoretical approaches and museum dilemmas through a summary of major concepts and themes that will inform this study.

Cultural beliefs and practices are embedded in the perceptions, attitudes and values of identifiable communities.¹⁵ Explicit social concepts such as ethnicity, race and nationality are supported through a myriad of implicit and largely unconscious habits,¹⁶ grounding the imaginative construction of group identity through which communities understand themselves.¹⁷ In a global context, a group's identity is promulgated through the mass media via representations that tend to address the ideological preoccupations of the dominant culture.¹⁸ This may differ considerably from the self-image of the communities themselves, who must both distance themselves from these popular misconceptions, whilst remaining faithful to their own sense of cultural distinctiveness.

The dynamics of identity politics, and the rhetoric of cultural difference, however, often conflicts with the demand of the liberal state for tolerance on the part of its citizens.¹⁹ The museum's civic role of educating communities and transforming manners and conduct, by contrast aligns with government imperatives,²⁰ so issues of identity and representation

¹⁵ For further details of the relationship between attitudes and practices and the notion of cultural capital see P Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, USA, 1984.

¹⁶ R Brubaker, 'Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 35, 2009, p. 34. For further details on these focal concepts for cultural practices, also see Bourdieu on the unconscious character of habitus in the formation of social processes.

¹⁷ Imagined communities, can be characterised in terms of distinctive ethnic, cultural or national qualities. See B Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, Verso London, 1983 for the idea of nations as imagined communities; C Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2004, p. 23; in relation to the social imaginary; and for the ethnic imaginary, see G Noble, *Lines in the Sand: The Cronulla Riots, Multiculturalism and National Belonging*, Institute of Criminology Press, Sydney, G Noble (ed.), 2009, pp. 14.

¹⁸ The mass media filter and disseminate abbreviated and simplified cultural images, and contribute to the overall fragmentation of group identity. On the media as a tool of cultural imperialism see HI Schiller, 'Communications and Cultural domination', *International Arts and Sciences Press*, White Plains New York, 1976; on the media as a democratic force for dissemination of information on mass scale, see J Fiske, *Reading the Popular*, Unwin Hyman London, 1989; for the role of the media in shaping public opinion see R McChesney, *Rich Media, Poor democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, New Press New York, 2000. For the role of globalisation as a complicating factor in identity formulation, see F Pakes, 'Global forces and local effects in youth justice: The case of Moroccan youngsters in Netherlands', *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, issue 38, 2010; for sources and consequences of the fragmentation of identity, see Z Bauman, 'From Pilgrim to Tourist- or a Short History of Identity', in S Hall, SP du Gay, (eds), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London, 1996, p.19, 23.

¹⁹ M Foucault, *Dits et écrits IV*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994, p.237; for further discussion the notion of tolerance as a theme of discourse in the liberal state see also W Brown, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford 2006, p. 2.

²⁰ For the development of universal values and beliefs, see M Kenan, 'The real values of diversity', *Connections* Winter 2002, retrieved 10 July 2012, <http://www.kenanmalik.com/essays/diversity.html>; regarding the role of

are a constant theme for museums generally. Khalili's own goal is to promote cross-cultural understanding and a sense of common humanity through the display of Islamic art.²¹ This gives substance to his 'mandate' of cultural intermediation, but the prominence of the aesthetic approach de-emphasises the social and cultural aspects of the works on displays²² and ignores the ambivalent function²³ that his beautiful objects perform outside of their original contexts. For example, Khalili's preoccupation with pre-nineteenth century Islamic art and his aesthetizing process promotes a sense of exoticism which he fails to dispel as displays exclude contextual factors such as the colonial histories, rich narratives and provenance that accompany the works themselves.

The museum, as a socio-cultural institution has been viewed as performing a variety of functions ranging from a site for cultivating citizens, an aesthetic temple to a forum for public debate.²⁴ Such a plethora of characterisations, however, are evidence not of conceptual confusion but rather are indicative of the multitude of distinct pressures to which contemporary museums are subject. They are acknowledged as powerful places for shaping cultural memory,²⁵ contributing to the formation of ethnic identity, and even of strengthening programs of social justice in the wider community.²⁶ But they are also under considerable pressure to adjust to the demands of change in the wider public sphere, and to become more deeply embedded in a variety of other social institutions with which they share a cultural boundary.²⁷

the museum as a partner in civic education see T Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum*, Routledge, London, New York, 1995, p. 20.

²¹ Khalili Trust Collection website, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://www.khalili.org/foundrs-profile.html>>. for Khalili's notion of building bridges between diverse cultures and shape community norms and values, and desire for a shared brotherhood of man and a common humanity.

²² G Huggan, *The postcolonial exotic: Marketing at the margins*, Routledge, New York, 2001, p. 14.

²³ CG Spivak, 'The Rani of Sirmur' in F Baker, P Hulme, M Iversen, D Loxley, D (eds.), 1985.

²⁴ I Karp, C A Kratz, L Szwaja & T Ybarra-Frausto, *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/ Local Transformations*, Duke University press, Durham and London, 2006, p. 1.

²⁵ F Cameron, 'Introduction', *Hot Topics, Public Culture, Museums*, Cambridge Scholars, 2010, p. 1.

²⁶ For the social impact of museums and their role in developing cultural identity, see R Sandell, 'Museums and the combating of social inequality: roles' responsibilities, resistance', *Museums, society, inequality*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2002, pp. 3-4.

²⁷ See Karp et al, op cit, p. 1, on the link between the museum and other civic institutions and cultural organisations such as schools, galleries, theme parks, fairs, fiestas, expositions or department stores.

Alongside such questions of institutional identity and purpose, are the issues of the museums' continuing viability. Patronage has always been important for museums,²⁸ but corporate sponsorship is becoming increasingly significant, with many museums actively soliciting funds from private enterprise.²⁹ Corporations are playing a central role in redefining the cultural marketplace³⁰ and of indirectly guiding the public taste.³¹ High levels of dependency on private funds, however, can have a corrosive effect on the status of the museum as an independent cultural institution. Corporate philanthropists eager to project a public image of themselves as liberal and progressive citizens,³² and museums seeking to present their exhibitions as desirable promotional opportunities,³³ negotiate displays that may require the downplaying or exclusion of important issues. Such a relationship would effectively discourage museums from taking a critical stance on contemporary questions, and reduce any possibility of institutional critique along political lines.³⁴

Many consider museums to be part of a new '*spectacular visual culture*',³⁵ where audiences are expecting 'blockbuster' displays that include the same kind of sensory

²⁸ Patronage systems and state sponsorships usually target the upper or upper-middle class audience and are connected closely to both their tastes and social interests (L Ryan, 'Forging Diplomacy: a socio-cultural investigation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the "Art of Australia 1788-1941" exhibition', 2007, p. 5).

²⁹ AGNSW, sponsorship today is a matter for negotiation between sponsors and the event organizers, with both expecting to profit in some way from the engagement. Art Gallery of New South Wales, retrieved 10 March 2011, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>. For the growing dependency of museums on private funding see, C T Wu 'Privatising culture: corporate art intervention since the 1980s', Verso, London, New York, 2002.

³⁰ For the role of corporations in promoting, producing and mediating culture, see Rectanus, M W, *Culture Incorporated Museums, Artists and Corporate Sponsorships*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, London, 2002, p5.

³¹ Wu suggests that senior executives are becoming the new cultural elite, like modern day Medici. Corporations are also assembling Art collections of their own, and sponsoring their own awards (Wu op cit, pp. 5 – 11).

³² Wu suggests that corporations are projecting an image of a 'liberal and progressive force' that is mediated and redefined in corporate terms, confirming their 'intervention in the arts as a great and legitimate cause' (ibid., p. 125).

³³ The AGNSW offers tailored packages designed to meet the marketing and public relations objectives of prospective sponsors (AGNSW, Art Gallery of new South wales, retrieved 10 March 2011, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>, p222). There is also the risk that museums will so restrict their sponsorship packages so as to secure funding. On the risk of self-censorship, see A McClellan, op cit, p. 227.

³⁴ Such 'arrangements' would reinforce power relations established through elitist control of cultural decision-making processes. See for example Eileen Hooper-Greenhill and Mieke Bal (1992), Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (1994) and Bennett (1995, 1998).

³⁵ J Noordegraaf, *Strategies of Display: Museum presentation in the Nineteenth-and Twentieth- Century Visual Culture*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2004, pp. 82,250; also see Rectanus, op. cit., p171, on the primacy of visualisation and the role of technologies as dominant modes of communication for audiences.

immersion as fairs, expositions and theme parks.³⁶ Providing this type of visitor experience is popular with sponsors and museums alike, because such displays attract large audiences, without provoking either controversy or significant social risk. Similarly, the way audiences engage with such exhibitions is also relevant to any investigation into the museum experience. Furthermore, the traditional status of the museum object is that of a unique masterpiece, isolated and beyond the reach of the ordinary citizen,³⁷ but many modern museums now encourage a more sensual and prolonged encounter with objects on display. Replica items, for example, can be purchased through the gallery shops, enabling visitors to become amateur collectors themselves.³⁸ Some galleries includes multiple sensory modalities alongside the visual, often making use of technology to provide a more immersive visitor experience and encouraging more contemporary ways of seeing.³⁹ The artworks themselves are also capable of serving multiple ends,⁴⁰ including those that encourage the cross-cultural understanding between diverse audiences that Khalilli envisages. Lastly, the idea of beauty is by no means immutable⁴¹ because the notion of the sublime, by which a sensitive audience comes to appreciate a work of art, includes not just the immediacy of the senses, but an emotional engagement with the artist themselves.⁴²

Methodology

This project is primarily qualitative, with the experiences and realities of museum/organisational representatives and museum audience's contextualised within debates concerning the capacity for museums to promote cross-cultural understanding. A variety of techniques and investigative methods are used: discourse and textual analysis, descriptive, analytical and argumentative explanations of material evidence including my own observations/interview transcripts and compare/contrast arguments involving other

³⁶ A Witcomb, *A Re-Imaging the museum Beyond the Mausoleum*, Routledge, London, 2003, pp. 5,12,17.

³⁷ H Belting, *The Invisible Masterpiece*, London, Reaktion, 2001, pp. 11-12.

³⁸ A Appadurai, *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge University press, 1986.

The merchandise offered through the commercial channel of the museum is often aligned with the thematic content of the exhibitions themselves. See also C Gosden, "What do objects want?" *Journal of Archeological Method and Theory*, vol. 12, pp. 193-194.

³⁹ S Dudley, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, sense and feeling', *Museum Materiality's: Objects, engagements interpretations*, Taylor and Francis Group, London, New York, Routledge, 2010, p. 3-4.

⁴⁰ EH Gombich, 'Art Transplant', *New York review of Books*, 19 June 1969, issue 12, p. 8.

⁴¹ U Eco, U 'On Beauty', translated from the Italian by Alastair McEwen, Secker and Warburg, Great Britain, 2000, pp. 14,11-12.

⁴² *ibid.*, 278.

exhibitions and sites of cultural events such as museum displays, expositions, and community projects.

Primary and secondary sources of data collection include: exhibition catalogues, speeches, books, newspaper articles, advertisements, infomercials, journal articles, online interviews, visitor focus groups, transcripts, lectures and reports, and online forums such as YouTube and message boards/blogs/chat lines to gauge the responses from internet virtual communities. In particular transcripts from thirty-eight interviews with key stakeholders and groups associated with the AoIE and other museums' representatives were conducted over a four- year period to elicit not only factual information, but also insights into a participant's experiences, opinions and impressions (details of methodology and questionnaires are provided in the appendix 1).

As the majority of this study's empirical finding emerges from qualitative interviews, each chapter relies upon this data to underpin and inform arguments and debates. This is especially the case with the Sydney venue of the AoIE, which was the only venue where numerous focus groups and institutional/museum professional interviews were possible. As a result of this rich database, discourse analysis of perceptions and attitudes of museum professionals, sponsors and audiences is conducted in chapter three forms the basis for many of the topics and issues pertinent to the site-specific contexts that follow in subsequent discussions. In the absence of extensive empirical data, particularly audience reactions in the Paris, Abu Dhabi and Amsterdam exhibitionary sites, research findings from a variety of secondary sources supplement, complement and expand discussions.

Further, comparisons with a wide range of alternate exhibitionary sites bring an added dimension to the investigation of Islamic art and cultural displays. For example: the attitudes towards risk management at the AGNSW is discussed with reference to less risk adverse institutions (MONA in Tasmania and St Mungo's In Glasgow); AoIE in Abu Dhabi is shown to have worked in conjunction with contemporary expositions that continue to perpetuate the tendency of past International expositions to depict of the exotic, oriental 'Other'; the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA) in Paris in directly contrasted with the *Musée du quai Branly* (MQB) and *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration* (French National Museum of Immigration, CNHI or Cité) for their current approaches to representing and displaying former ethnological objects and their accompanying colonial narratives; and the last chapter incorporates contemporary trends in museological practices to lend weight to final conclusions.

Chapter Design

Therefore, this thesis will be structured around a series of chapters that deal with a diversity of related institutional and societal issues using empirical evidence gathered personally (including the case study) and from the public domain. As previously discussed, this data collection will be discussed and analysed by drawing on variety of theoretical perspectives in conjunction with a varied research method that positions analysis and conclusions at both the micro and macro level of the exhibition and in the broader cultural landscape. The design of thesis chapters is outlined below in terms of territory covered empirically, conceptually and theoretically in order examine and problematize curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/ didactic modes of display when the museums' mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture.

The purpose of chapter one is three fold: to provide background details of East/West relationships in order to understand the motivation behind Khalili's travelling show of Islamic art and culture; introduce a number of complex societal concerns and debates circulating in the broader community that will inform discussions and analysis; and explore trends and problems within the museum world. The inter-connectedness of these three domains is fundamental to this investigation, as analysis is based on the premise that general societal issues and topical debates occurring in the macro level of the wider public

sphere that, filtered through social, religious, political, cultural and economic dimensions, reappear as museum dilemmas at the micro level of the museum encounter itself.

The collecting and displaying of Islamic art and cultural objects has a controversial and disparate history and is essential knowledge for the investigation of the AoIE and is examined in chapter two. The colonial and imperialistic activities of major European nations, and several lesser-known ones, are explored for their impact on discursive formations and subsequent social, political, economic and cultural consequences are explored in detail in the displays of the AoIE in France and the Netherlands. The role of the collector is highlighted, as museums rely on their passion for collecting and their philanthropic zeal to supply many of their temporary displays and permanent exhibitions. Discussions reveal the diverse methods that have been employed in the quest to acquire objects for private or public collections and reaction of audiences to their display in homes, auction houses, international expositions and museums from the nineteenth century to the present day. The debates surrounding Orientalism and exoticism are explored and their relevance for this thesis generally is highlighted. Lastly, the changing dynamics of the global art market and its effect on national and international cultural sectors especially in the Middle East is investigated as a precursor to the AoIE display in Abu Dhabi discussed in chapter four.

Chapter three concentrates on the first venue of the AoIE in Sydney Australia at the AGNSW in 2007, that was the most comprehensively investigated venue in terms of empirical data collection and is therefore illustrative of differing perceptions, attitudes and mindsets of audiences, curatorial staff, and institutional, corporate and community representatives. This focus is important to the thesis as a whole, as many of the issues and problems canvassed at this first venue are raised in varying degrees throughout discussions in later chapters. This chapter investigating the inaugural show covers: museums and their audiences in terms of display, representation and consultation; and focuses on curatorial approaches especially in regard to the 'experience' versus 'interpretive' dilemma and 'risk management'. As this is the major site of the empirical evidence for this case study, discussion is based on interviews conducted with focus groups, community leaders and institutional representatives.

Chapter four concentrates on the AoIE's second venue of display: the Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi in 2008. The importance of Khalili's display in launching the UAE (United Arab Emirates) into the international art market is discussed and evaluated, especially in

light of the region's increasing reliance on cultural tourism as the preferred avenue for a successful financial future. Furthermore, it is through education, art and culture that the UAE, especially Abu Dhabi and Dubai, plan to remake their national identities and position 'Islam' and the 'Arab/Muslim' in a more favourable light internationally. The impact of exhibitions is explored in this instance for their: deployment of objects of art and cultural objects to promote wider agendas (such as nation building and identity formation, economic stability and elitism); and the controversies, disagreements and debates that are generated concerning museum globalization and conformity when economics, politics, culture and art collide.

The third venue for the AoIE is the focus of chapter five: the IMA, Paris France, 2009-2010. Comparisons will be made between the IMA (a public/private entity showcasing Arab and Islamic art), and two new museums reassembling and re-displaying colonial collections: *Musée du quai Branly* (MQB) and *Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration* (French National Museum of Immigration, CNHI or Cité). With cross-cultural understanding as a common goal, discussions will reveal the differing mandates and politics of display of these three institutions, especially the current curatorial trend that relies on an aesthetic approach rather than social, historical, political and religious contexts as the basis for displays of artistic and cultural objects. In particular, the role that travelling and temporary displays play in re-presenting and re-contextualizing objects and their disruption and transformation potential for the reconfiguration of narratives (especially national and colonial ones) are evaluated.

The final destination of the AoIE was the De Nieuwe Kerk in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where a new title was adopted for the show, *Passion for Perfection: Islamic Art from the Khalili Collection*. Chapter six concentrates on this privileging of the aesthetic in displays of art and culture, as this venue favoured this format above all other curatorial choices. Discussion and analysis will be based on an in-depth investigation of two artworks from the exhibition (an illustrated manuscript and a royal portrait painting) created during two eras of Iranian (predominantly Muslim) dynastic rule. The aim is to demonstrate the necessity of acknowledging external literary documents and media discourse in addition to aesthetic considerations and the material, intrinsic aspects of the objects on display. This last investigation provides a conclusion to the temporal and lasting legacies of

governmental, institutional, community and individual decision-making in both the private and public social spheres.

The last chapter serves a dual purpose: as a final analysis and conclusion to the case study, its central premise and related themes and issues; and presents a series of recommendations for curatorial policies and practices suggestive of new trends in the museological world. To give further validation to propositions and recommendations emanating from this investigation, empirical data obtained from a variety of private and public institutions concerning the politics of display in the museum context is discussed. The anticipated limitations and predicted significance of the thesis research data and its contribution to the wider body of knowledge are revisited and evaluated and a range of future research directions are considered for their possible merit.

In terms of limitations of the study, the site-specific nature of research couched in a case study of one travelling display of art can arguably restrict the relevance of empirical data from the wider context. A range of measures was employed, designed to reduce the possibility of a lack of wider applicability: the inclusion of four exhibitionary sites in different parts of the world; interviews with a variety of stakeholders; and comparisons with other cultural institutions on key themes and issues. Within this range of measures, however, other restrictions surfaced and caused problems. In particular, the researcher not being able to visit the AoIE venues at the time of the displays in Abu Dhabi, Paris and Amsterdam (all shown before the thesis empirical research was conducted) and cultural, language and legal barriers preventing visitor interviews being conducted in these locations resulted in an overreliance on secondary sources and curatorial/stakeholder opinions and experiences. The reliability of personal interviews, the unequal dynamics of focus groups and time restrictions generally meant that assessing whether the exhibition did indeed promote cross-cultural understanding was not possible with the exception of the Sydney show where individual and focus group interviews were conducted. Due to this restriction, the focus on investigating and analysing the impacts of curatorial/institutional decision-making in terms of displaying Islamic art and culture remains the central issue to be explored in this thesis.

Additionally, the ideological conditioning and position of the researcher requires a degree of reflexivity.⁴³ In this case, the application of a theoretical model effectively counteracts the dilemma by ensuring that the theoretical model itself becomes an instrument capable of refocusing all the relevant factors at particular stages of the debate. Lastly, the use of certain terminology, especially in relation to racial, cultural and religious positions, needs qualification. Many of these words have been described as dichotomies indicating divisions, conflict and suggestive of 'clashes of civilizations' discourse such as: East and West, Primitive and Modern, Muslim/Arab and Western/Orientalist. Such phrases are highly contentious and contested, conceptually loaded and carry a variety of meanings and connotations. The purpose of this investigation is to use the proposed theoretical model in order to interrogate and analyse such terminology and expose their underlying ideological basis to explain their presence and effect at the micro level of the museum experience and its interconnectedness within the broader conversations in the museological world and the wider public sphere.

The central premise of thesis is significant for several reasons. Cultural research into issues of identity, difference and cross-cultural understanding is vital as East-West relations and tensions between the Muslim and non-Muslim communities are prominent topics in local and global disputes and debates. Investigations that listen to the voices of minority and often stereotyped groups such as those of the Muslim and Islamic communities, can promote different perspectives, opinions and attitudes other than those advanced by powerful institutional and private bodies such as museum professionals, entrepreneurial bodies, corporations and media agents that generally dominate the wider public arena.

Secondly, a multi-perspective approach investigates, documents and analyses the exhibition experience and its relationship with conversations in the broader public sphere reveals a myriad of issues, hot topics and dilemmas and possible solutions. For example: a detailed examination and analysis of a collection of artifacts that is exhibited in four disparate sites of display generates recommendations for curatorial policies and practices generally; and by using a variety of dimensions (social, historical, cultural, religious, political and economic) an in-depth analysis of one country and its unique exhibitionary display can

⁴³ 'Mannheim's paradox', that warns 'if knowledge is conditioned by one's social position, then the investigator's knowledge is ideologically conditioned as well (M Apple, 'The new sociology of education: analyzing cultural and economic reproduction', *Harvard University Review*, no. 48, 1978, p.501).

provide site-specific recommendations and suggestions tailored to the needs of an individual museum, society and nation.

Lastly, the Khalili collection of Islamic art generally and the travelling AoIE specifically has had scant, in-depth critical examination and analysis of this topical issue can contribute to the body of knowledge chronicling and investigating the historiography of Islamic art collecting, exhibiting and exhibition. This growing area of study can, in turn, promote knowledge and understanding and bring more comprehensive and balanced views to the forefront to temper controversial and often sensationalized discourses and discussions concerning local and global events involving the Islamic world and Muslim communities.

This introductory chapter has outlined aspects of the thesis project that discussions throughout the investigation will elaborate upon. The following chapter provides background details of East/West relationships crucial to understanding the AoIE, introduces complex societal concerns and debates circulating in the broader community and explores museological trends and dilemmas. The inter-connectedness of these three domains is fundamental to this investigation, as analysis is based on the premise that general societal issues and topical debates occurring in the macro level of the wider public sphere that, filtered through social, religious, political, cultural and economic dimensions, reappear as museum dilemmas at the micro level of the museum encounter itself.

Chapter One

Debates and dilemmas: The ‘problem’ with Islam, global issues and museum frictions ⁴⁴

I think the fight against terrorism will go for a long time. There is a section of the Islamic population which will not integrate.

JOHN HOWARD, AUSTRALIAN PRIME MINISTER

Museums are powerful places for shaping cultural memory and important gatekeepers for directing, opening up or closing down conversations on topics of societal significance.

FIONA CAMERON, *HOT TOPICS, PUBLIC CULTURE, MUSEUMS*

The notion of an East/West divide is a contentious and highly polemical issue. The ‘problem’ the West has with Islam and the reaction of the American government and other countries that follow their lead is discussed in this chapter for the outcomes and consequences of policies, practices and legislation on the national and global level. An overview of the role media has played in sensationalizing events and reinforcing stereotypes and examples of attempts to counteract these negative perceptions is included as a preliminary investigation into a central issue of this study. Khalili constantly confirms that his mission to promote understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities through showcasing his collection of ‘beautiful’ artifacts is a direct response to the East/West situation, an enterprise whose success will be evaluated as the investigation progresses.

The first part of this chapter introduces significant theories and concepts that are defined with reference to their particular importance to discussions and analysis of the four venues of the AoIE under examination. The final section, *Debates and Dilemmas*, highlights museological trends and predicaments that reflect and often produce heated debates in broader discourses between academics, curators, entrepreneurs, institutions and governments worldwide.

⁴⁴ | Karp, et al., 2006, p. 1.

War without end

Commentators such as Jonathon Lyon regard the September 11 terrorist attack as the most poignant reminder of the West's inability to 'engage in any meaningful and productive way with the world of Islam'.⁴⁵ When American president George W. Bush declared '... this new kind of evil ... this crusade, this war on terrorism, is going to take awhile'⁴⁶ he was continuing an almost 1000 year old 'grand, totalizing Western narrative' that has dictated discourse pertaining to what can be said or not said about Muslims and Islam. This lack of cross-cultural understanding has promoted the acceptance of an East/West divide based on unresolved tensions created by the growth of Islamist political strength globally, the increasing incidences of acts of terrorism and religious conflicts, disagreements over social norms and values and civil rights of multicultural communities, to name but a few.⁴⁷ Furthermore, Lyon argues that Western anti-Islam discourse has been a 'conversation' with itself, developing an abstract understanding of the cultural, religious and social traditions of Islam which best suited established and desirable narratives.⁴⁸ Commentators such as Bernard Lewis and the 'clash of civilisations discourse' have perpetuated notions that Islam and democracy are incompatible and that a secular state requires the privatization of religion. Edward Said in particular has vehemently opposed this position, arguing that such representations reiterate and reinforce the view that 'Islam is anti-human, anti-democratic, anti-Semitic, anti-rational'.⁴⁹

The persistence of debates concerning symbols of Islam since 9/11 is not just considered a national but a global concern. The veil and the minaret, interpretations of the Qur'an (especially in regard to the Prophet Mohammad and *jihad*) and construction of mosques and Islamic buildings in general are prominent among current global issues relating to Islam and Muslims in the West. Examples include: France's ban on religious symbols and apparel (especially the hijab or veil as figure 2 illustrates) in 2004 which widened in 2013 with similar bans being enforced in Canada in 2003-2004 and in six German states in 2011; the 2009 banning of the construction of new minarets in Switzerland; intense

⁴⁵ J Lyon, *Islam through Western Eyes*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012 p.1.

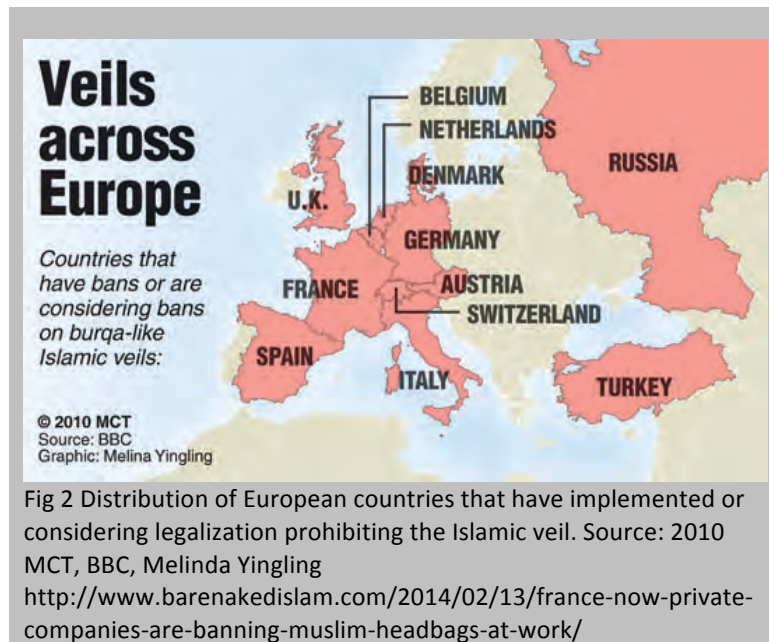
⁴⁶ G Bush, 'Remarks by President Upon Arrival', September 16, 2001, retrieved 10 June 2013, <<http://www.whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09>>.

⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 2.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 4-5.

⁴⁹ E Said, 'Islam Through Western Eyes', *The Nation*, April 26, 1980, retrieved 10 June 2013, National Digital Archive, <<http://www.thenation.com>>.

debate over the building of a mosque and Islamic cultural centre within 2 blocks of 'Ground Zero' in New York in 2010; the virulent opposition to Islam and Muslims by Dutch politicians such as Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party; disputes over de-radicalization programs for jailed terrorists especially in Indonesia; depictions of Mohammad in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, the controversial 2011 anti-Islamic American movie *Innocence of Muslims* and in 2015 the French publication *Charlie Hebdo* and its satirical cartoons that have resulted in controversy, violence and death.⁵⁰



Many European countries have implemented new polices and laws as a result of home-grown acts of terrorism. For example, in France the mass shooting of citizens in Toulouse, including Jewish children, the horrific killing of a British soldier in London in May 2013, the 2014 shootings at the Canadian Parliament House and War Memorial in Ottawa and the recent killing of seventeen French citizens in January 2015 and coordinated bombing in January 2016 were all committed in retribution for acts of 'violence' against Muslim and Islam generally. As a result of these events governments have imposed harsher than normal penalties and jail sentences and changes to their national anti-terrorism policies including: increased policing and deployment of 'special forces'; mosque surveillance; ethnic and religious profiling; and unlicensed wiretapping.

⁵⁰ *ABC Foreign Correspondent* 24 August 2010, *CBS News in Depth* 10 July 2005, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 January 2009, *Herald Sun*, 18 August 2010.

On the Australian political scene, issues surrounding national identity, border security, the perceived failure of multiculturalism and treatment of Muslims were feeding into the 2006-07 'value debate' advocated by the Howard government, which will be discussed further in chapter three. On the fifth anniversary of 9/11 in 2006, Prime Minister John Howard echoed Bush's rhetoric in terms of the 'battle' ahead and the ultimate triumph of democracy: '... I think the fight against terrorism will go for a long time ... There is a section of the Islamic population which will not integrate ... hav[ing] values and attitudes which are hostile to Australia's interest...'⁵¹ Events that fuelled anti-Islam and Muslim rhetoric included racially motivated gang rapes in 2000, the Cronulla 'riots' of 2005 and the Bali bombings the same year, the banning of Islamic schools (especially Camden in 2006) and the continuing arrest and jailing of perpetrators of proposed terrorist acts. Most recently, the tragic hostage situation in Sydney's CBD by a self-proclaimed Muslim cleric promoting the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), just before Christmas 2014, are ongoing reminders of how global and incredibly local the East/West conflict is regarded as being.⁵²

Evidence confirms that Islamophobia is a moral panic that has global dimensions; an issue central to discussions in chapter six.⁵³ Undoubtedly, controversial debates and opinions and media publicity nationally and internationally concentrating on individuals of 'Middle Eastern appearance', has contributed to the trend, since 9/11, of increasing acts of racial vilification against Muslim communities. The circulation of these hot topics in the larger public domain is the focus of the next section of this chapter, especially in terms of their relevance to the particular sites of display of the AoIE and, in turn, their impact on the museum experience.

⁵¹ J Howard, 'Those who don't share our values, won't integrate', *The Age*, September 11, 2006, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.theage.com>.

⁵² For a more detailed discussion of these contextual background issues see appendix 2.

⁵³ Detailed arguments and sources that will inform discussions on the topic of 'moral panics' generally and specifically in relation to the Dutch situation include: S Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1972, p. 1; E Goode, N Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance*, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009 (second ed.), pp. 37-43; F Pakes, 'The Panicky debate: The State of Moroccan Youth in the Netherlands', *Global Connections: Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral panic in the West*, S Poynting, G Morgan (eds.), Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, Surrey, Great Britain, 2012, p. 42-43; H Entzinger, 'The growing gap between facts and discourse on immigrant integration in the Netherlands', *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 2013, p. 3, retrieved 10 July 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.828616>

The wider public sphere: Broader conversations, global problems

The interconnectedness between the wider cultural sphere and the individual museum experience is central to this thesis. This segment provides a brief overview of key definitions and associated issues foreshadowing their significance in informing critical analysis of the central premise of this thesis, the proposed theoretical model and particular case studies in the chapters that follow. The aim is to introduce a number of complex societal concerns and debates circulating in the broader community that impact upon and often reignite museum dilemmas when curatorial practices have to consider their influence and relevance. Specific to this investigation are discourses surrounding concepts of modernity (in both the East and West), identity politics and nation building, colonial legacies and governmentality, multiculturalism, influence of the media, art markets and their collectors.

Identity politics and nation building

The whole domain of ‘identity politics’, especially notions of ‘identity ... groupness and boundness’, are acknowledged by many modern commentators to be problematic concepts. Of importance to this thesis is the work of Brubaker and Cooper, who warn against ‘flat, reductive accounts of the social world ... [advocating instead] a multichrome mosaic of monochrome identity groups’, encouraging other theorists to acknowledge ‘emergent properties’ and situational and contextual particularities when engaging in analysis.⁵⁴ Other significant theories include: Bauman’s view that ‘identity ... is a modern invention ... [and] the real problem is not how to build identity but how to preserve it...’⁵⁵; and Macdonald’s suggestion that identity, is not ‘universal’ but ‘historically and culturally specific’, but is ‘transformed’ as individuals seek to construct their own identities because they have become ‘disembedded’ ‘fragmented’ and ‘displaced’ from a former ‘model of identity’ which was ‘relatively coherent and bounded.’⁵⁶

Along similar lines, Christopher Lasch argues that identity of both ‘persons’ and ‘things’ have ‘lost their solidity in modern society, along with their definiteness and

⁵⁴ R Brubaker & F Cooper, ‘Beyond Identity’, University of California, Los Angeles, 2000, p. 31, retrieved 10 July 2012, http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/18_Beyond_Identity.pdf.

⁵⁵ Z Bauman, 1996, op cit., p.19, 23.

⁵⁶ S Macdonald, ‘Museums, national, postnational and transnational identities’, *Museum and Society*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2003, pp.1, 3, 5-6.

continuity⁵⁷. This in turn leads to a tendency to live one day at a time, and not to be tied down to a particular place or to cultivate any kind of long-term commitment. Such an existence is essentially a life caught in 'a continuous present', cut off from history - no longer inventing, discovering, assembling, constructing identity – but preoccupied with avoiding 'fixation'.⁵⁸ Other aspects of identity are equally as prone to fragmentation, whether it is national, social, ethnic, religious, cultural, or individual. We all have multiple identities, all of which are both emergent and negotiated. In the European context, the world was a place where museums were often 'appropriated' as symbols of 'national identity'⁵⁹ as investigations into the histories of the Australian, French and Dutch situation reveal. However, whether this is the case in the Middle East prior to the AoIE travelling to Abu Dhabi will be debated in chapter four when all aspects of identity (individual, community, regional, national) are considered.

The idea that nation, culture and society are also 'constructed' by those who define them is not a new topic of discussion. For example, John Berger in 1972 expanded the viewpoint that we study 'culture through culture ...we never look at one thing; we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves'; in the early 1980s Roy Wagner argued that anthropologists 'invent' the culture they study on the basis of 'analogies' with their own culture; and in 1986 Clifford claimed that cultures are 'produced historically' rather than via 'scientific' objectivity.⁶⁰

Similarly, such notions themselves have a history. Weber argued that nationhood, race and ethnicity were indistinct vernacular terms whose meaning shifted considerably in different eras and contexts and were not exact analytical concepts.⁶¹ This does not render them irrelevant in a modern global context; it just suggests that these terms themselves are under negotiation. Writers such as Wimmer and Schiller believe that nation-states are in fact 'compatible with globalization ... [and are] currently being reconfigured rather than demolished'. They argue despite the existence of 'transnational communities', the base

⁵⁷ Christopher Lasch quoted in Bauman, p. 23.

⁵⁸ Bauman, 1996, op. cit., p. 24.

⁵⁹ Macdonald, op cit. Macdonald's beliefs are similar to other social theorists such as Harvey, Giddens, Appadurai and Beck.

⁶⁰ J Berger, *Ways of Seeing*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972; R Wagner, *The Invention of Culture*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London, 1981; J Clifford & GE Marcus (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkley Los Angeles, London England, 1986.

⁶¹ M Weber, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, G Roth & C Wittich (trans.), University of California Press, Berkley Los Angeles, London England, vol. 1 & 2, 1978, pp. 395-925.

assumption of 'methodological nationalism' (that is that the 'nation/state/society is the natural social and political form of the modern world') is, at least for the moment, quite secure.⁶² It appears that even with the international restructuring of capitalist economies, and the resultant complex 'geographical transformations' that facilitate vast movements and increased flows of resources, commodities, ideas, information, beliefs, the concept of the nation state is ubiquitous.

Increases in cross-border migration and the claims of various minorities to a distinct cultural identity have, however, produced new contexts of interaction. Cultural boundaries are porous and ambiguous and the distribution and dissemination of varying beliefs and traditions ensure that 'difference' is encountered more frequently.⁶³ This negotiation with 'difference' or 'otherness' is key to debates concerning the effectiveness of museums to facilitate cross-cultural understanding as evident in many discussions: the Howard government's promotion of Australian values and way of life and its societal consequences; the UAE's emphasis on national identity despite its large population of expatriates; and the French and Dutch governing bodies stance on migration of peoples from former colonies and their place in the nation, especially the control of the 'dangerous other.'

Modernity

The concept of modernity in the west is characterized by the progressive development of nation-states (typically representative democracies) that are highly industrialized, urbanized, densely populated capitalist societies. Many commentators agree that large corporations and state bureaucracies dominate the politico-economic landscape, mass media governs public opinion, and a global transport and communication infrastructure supports the constant movement of goods, money and information on an international scale. Further, traditional cultural institutions such as the extended family, the local community, and the unified Christian realm have all gradually faded and a more individualistic, secular and cosmopolitanism ethos has become the norm. A corresponding sense of isolation,

⁶² A Wimmer & NG Schiller, 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences', *Global Networks*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, p. 301.

⁶³ Robins, Smith cited in D Boswell & J Evans (eds.), *Representing the Nation; A reader-History, heritage and Museums*, Routledge, London, New York, 1999; T Bennett, 'Exhibition, Difference and the Logic of Culture', I Karp & C Kratz (eds), op cit., pp. 46–69.

alienation, and meaninglessness often characterizes the psychological life of the modern man, as he confronts and negotiates the hyper-rational, impersonal public sphere.

This public world is also increasingly a global world order and economic and political events in one region have a ripple effect on nations on the other side of the planet. It is commonly recognized that individuals and communities are increasingly exposed to the disruptive effects of a an inter-connected economic order, which typically renders less advanced economies highly dependent on overseas markets, and increasingly, such countries find themselves simply supporting the consumption-driven life-styles of the more advanced, affluent 'western' economies. As Pakes asserts: 'Globalisation does not simplify; it complicates social structure and challenges our traditional modes of analysis.'⁶⁴ Theorists and scholars writing on the topic of modernity and globalization are numerous including: Edmund Husserl, Martin Heidegger, Jean-François Lyotard, Jean Baudrillard, Zygmunt Bauman, Anthony Giddens, Ulrich Beck, Max Weber and Alfred Gell.

In particular, the writings of Beck have been used in discussions of the AoIE in Sydney and the AGNSW attitude towards risk management and how displays of art and culture in the art museum generally (and the AoIE at the AGNSW specifically) fit within this vision of Beck's 'reflective' modernity and the 'cosmopolitan' state. Analysis focuses on certain topics that have provoked controversy: in this case images of the Prophet Mohammad in artworks from the AoIE; and attitudes towards technological advancements in the museum sector. Also under consideration in chapter three are comparisons with two other museums (St Mungo's Museum of Religious Life and Art, Glasgow Scotland and MONA in Tasmania Australia) to illustrate how other cultural institutions deal with risk. The topic of globalization and its impact on nation-building is a central theme in assessments in chapter four of the UAE's decision to concentrate on cultural tourism, art and education to ensure an economically viable and sustainable future. The problems associated with global, universal museums and local cultural identity is especially pertinent to arguments dealing with these issues and consideration is given to the long history of globalization, its impact on the museum world and cultural tourism, and the rise of the Internet and social networking.

⁶⁴ Pakes, 2010, op. cit., p. 118.

Of importance to this research is the manifestation of modernity in the East; a notion that contradicts the claim that the West was responsible for exporting modernity to countries and cultures outside the European world.⁶⁵ The alleged incompatibility with Western values and modernization ignores a large number of influential and powerful 'Islamic modernizers' (government leaders, political elites, secular intellectuals and Islamic leaders and scholars) from the late eighteenth to the last third of the twentieth centuries in Iran, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and, importantly, the Qajar dynasty and its close relationship with the West.⁶⁶ Discussions around this topic include: the role of Islamic inventions in the European Enlightenment; the Renaissance in the East (with a focus on Ilkanid rule and artistic production); and the impact of empire, colonialism, revolution and Imperial power worldwide, especially the rise of Europe and decline of the Ottoman Empire (in this case study that of Qajar art and culture). Scattered in arguments throughout this thesis are references to these issues, as one of the driving forces behind Khalili and his mission to create cross-cultural understanding between the East and West through displays of Islamic art was to raise awareness of historical episodes where close relationships existed and the lack of acknowledgment of the West's debt to the East for advancements in arts, astronomy, mathematics and science.

Governmentality

Two concepts related to governance are vital to this investigation and require particular attention: Wendy Brown's discussions concerning the debate on tolerance and Tony Bennett's theories on the civic role of the art museum. The value of including notions and issues of governmentality lies in its effectiveness as a lens for analysing how differing societal groups operate separately and cross-culturally at both the macro and the micro level.

⁶⁵ Key figures in modernity in the East include: Namik Kemal, Mirza Malkom Khan, Qasim Amin, Mahmud Tarzi, Sayyid Ahmad Khan, Kijai Hadji Ahmad Dachlan, Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abduh and Muhammad Rashid Rida.

⁶⁶ Hossein-Zadeh, "Clash of Civilizations". Why the Delay in Islamic Reformation?, 8 February 2015, *Centre for Research on Globalization*, retrieved 9 February 2015, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/clash-of-civilizations-why-the-delay-in-islamic-reformation/5430129>. 'Islamic modernizers' included: Iranian intellectuals Mulkum Khan (1833-1908) and Agha Khan Kermani (1853-96); Qajar dynasty especially from early to mid 1900s; Sultan Mahmud II and Sultan Abdulhamid of the Ottoman Empire 1826-1839; Muhammad Ali (1769-1849) and his grandson Ismail Pasha (1803-95) in Egypt; and Islamic scholars and leaders Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838-97), Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905), Qasim Amin (1863-1908), and Shaikh Muhammad Hussain Naini in Egypt and Iran; and Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-98) and Muhammad Iqbal (1875-1938) in India (ibid.)

In Foucauldian terms, governmentality refers to the way populations are governed and controlled through the practices of states and governments.⁶⁷ When Foucault discusses the ‘conduct of conduct’ he is referring to the constraining of possible action through the control over the range of choices an individual can make.⁶⁸ This introduces a contradiction of liberal governance: a citizen is deemed to autonomous and has free will but must abide by the rules, regulations, values and norms of its societies governing bodies. The citizen, for example, is expected not to interfere with the affairs of his neighbour, and in exercising tolerance he is demonstrating a commitment to the liberal virtue of non-interference which, in turn, guarantees to all citizens of a liberal state a significant degree of personal discretion in private matters. Personal liberty is the ultimate good from the liberal perspective, and the state exists mainly to ensure that private rights are respected, and where they are not respected, the state intervenes.⁶⁹

Brown has suggested that the tolerance debate is undergoing a ‘global renaissance’ in the late twentieth century.⁷⁰ She argues that Western liberal democracies respond to societal issues with ‘civilizational discourses’, reinforcing distinctions forged in their colonial past of a tolerant and civilized community on one hand, and the fundamentalist, intolerant, barbarian on the other.⁷¹ Brown maintains:

... that which confers tolerance establishes their superiority over that which is said to require tolerance; the tolerating and the tolerated are simultaneously radically distinguished from each other and hierarchically ordered according to a table of virtue. That which tolerates is not eligible for tolerance; that which is tolerated is often presumed incapable of tolerance.⁷²

This perspective regards tolerance as a tool for managing, depoliticizing and naturalizing cultural identity claims⁷³ and part of ‘a political discourse and practice of *governmentality* that is historically and geographically variable in purpose, content, agents, and objects.’⁷⁴

⁶⁷ M Foucault, *Power: the Essential works 3*, P Rainbow (ed.), The Penguin Press, Allen Lane, London, pp. 201-222.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 341.

⁶⁹ Major theorists include: John Stuart Mill (*On Liberty* 1860), Karl Popper (*The Open Society and its Enemies* 1945), Friedrich Hayek (*Constitution of Liberty* 1960, *Law, Legislation and Liberty* vol. 1-3, 1973, 1976, 1979) and John Rawls (*A Theory of Justice* 1971, *Political Liberalism* 1996).

⁷⁰ W Brown, 2006, *op cit.*, p. 2.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 23-24.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

All chapters discussing the AoIE venues deal in some way with debates around tolerance: the social and racial tensions especially the Cronulla ‘riots’ in Sydney; censorship issues with displays planned for new museums in Abu Dhabi; secularism and faith based allegiances related to Islamic communities in France; and particularly the ‘zero tolerance’ approach to migrant/ ethnic disputes involving Algerian and Moroccan groups in Amsterdam in the final chapter.

The second major theory featured in this study is the notion of ‘regulated freedom’; a concept that is considered essential to an understanding of the practices, procedures and power of governmentality in relation to the role of the museum as a cultural institution. Pivotal to analysis is Bennett’s argument that government has attributed to high culture the task of transforming the private lives of the community by modifying their manners and conduct and connecting modern liberal government and culture so that there was a ‘close relationship between the government of the state and the government of the self.’⁷⁵

Furthermore, Bennett maintains museums are part of the ‘culture complex’ where ‘particular regimes of practice’ impact on ‘the social’ in order to change habits, perceptions, beliefs and customs to serve the purposes of government and exercise their control over populations. These practices and processes ‘make culture’ and are ‘simultaneously ones of “organizing freedom” and distributing differentially across populations’. Therefore, art museums are sites where exhibitions of cultural objects have ‘distinctive powers and capacities that are mobilised in diverse ways, across different networks, by authorities of various kinds’.⁷⁶ Exhibitions attempt to ‘redeploy museum collections for new civic purposes by re-socialising the objects that are contained within them so that they may function as the operators of new kinds of action on the social’.⁷⁷ In this way particular ‘regimes of truth’ (ordered systems of sanctioned discourses and statements)⁷⁸ are disseminated through the processes of self-management and citizenship.

This notion of the reforming power of the art display is central to understanding Khalili’s unwavering belief in the transforming power of art to persuade audiences, change mindsets and foster cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim

⁷⁵ T Bennett, 1995, op. cit., p. 20.

⁷⁶ T Bennett, *Making Culture, changing society*, Routledge, London and New York, 2013, pp. 30-31, 45-6,

⁷⁷ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁷⁸ M Foucault, ‘The Political Function of the Intellectual’, C Gordon (trans.), *Radical Philosophy*, issue 17 (Summer), pp. 12-14.

communities. To fulfil his mission, Khalili is relying on the museum as an educator of the public and cultural mediator to build bridges between diverse cultures and shape community norms and values. Assessments are made throughout this investigation concerning the success or failure of cultural enterprises such as travelling displays of art and culture involving investigations of the changing politics of display in different social, political, cultural, economic and religious contexts and their interconnectness to issues and debates circulating in the wider public sphere.

Multiculturalism

Fundamental to analysis of all four venues that the AoIE travelled to, is the issue of multiculturalism. As an ideology, multiculturalism is advanced by a 'policy community' including governmental policies, legislation and programs adopted to promote a system of beliefs, and represents a public that reinforces and supports the policy community and its ideology.⁷⁹ Global debates and research assessing the success and failure of multicultural policies and programmes are widespread and provide ample data for investigation into site-specific contexts.

Four traditions of multicultural thought relevant to this research are cultural pluralism (governmental acknowledgment and support to preserve and develop ethnic/migrant cultures and communities), welfare multiculturalism (development and implementation of policies, programs and project to improve conditions of vulnerable groups), ethnic structural pluralism (ethnically pluralistic society using 'positive discrimination' to avoid ethnic stratification) and ethnic rights multiculturalism (recognition of a disadvantaged migrant/ethnic population encouraging 'pressure groups' and political representation).⁸⁰ Importantly, the tendency to revert to integrationist/assimilationist policies and practices when multiculturalism is regarded as failing to meet governmental and societal needs is common to political background of all four venues of the AoIE, although of less importance in the UAE with its long history of autocratic rule.

Particularly illuminating in regard to the adoption and success/failure of these various concepts of multiculturalism in the countries/societies in this case study and especially in terms of relations between Muslim and non-Muslim communities are the

⁷⁹ M Lopez, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-1975*, Melbourne University Press, Australia, p. 446.

⁸⁰ Lopez, op. cit., pp. 447-448.

writings of: Scott Poynting, Greg Noble, and Paul Taber in the Australian context (Cronulla ‘riots’, ‘ethnic imaginaries’, the ‘Arab Other’); Carol Duncan, Emily Doherty and Mark Rectancus on the Middle East (cultural commodification, universal museums, impact of western museologies); Tariq Modood, Ghassan Hage, Bennett, Sally Price, James Clifford and Nélia Dias and the situation in France (secular and faith-based allegiances, social exclusion and racial discrimination, ethnographic versus aesthetic debate); and Han Entzinger, David Garland, Francis Pakes, Renee Van Swaaingen and Brown in regards to the Netherlands (moral panics, everyday racism, tolerance debates).

Museums have been co-opted into official policies of multiculturalism as they are deemed to have the potential for many reasons: as facilitators of ‘cross-cultural exchange with a view to taking the sting out of the politics of difference within the wider society’;⁸¹ and for keeping choice and meaningful dialogue alive for audiences by providing different approaches and collaborations that represent the ‘richness and diversity of life.’⁸² However as the following chapters will indicate, establishing and maintaining effective dialogue between diverse cultural groups is exigent, as increasingly individuals are living in a ‘multicultural’ normality where they also have to learn to manage their own multiple and often diverse cultural affiliations. Discourse analysis conducted with interview data from Muslim and non-Muslim audiences at the Sydney venue of the AoIE examined in chapter three, for example, reveals how many young Muslims especially are oscillating between traditionally religious regimes at home and modern secular lifestyles in the wider community.

Furthermore, the observations of Ash Amin who argues that ‘much of the negotiation of difference occurs at the local level, through everyday experiences and encounters’ that involve fluid and dynamic cultural hybrids rather than ‘fixed minority ethnic identities’⁸³ resonates with this study’s findings. This suggestion is in line with empirical data in chapter three that recommends the inclusion of local and regional festivals, Mosque open days, communal dinners, cinema and television events, theatrical performances and comedy to accompany displays of art and culture. Appiah’s belief that all

⁸¹ Bennett 2006, op. cit., p. 58

⁸² R Janes & T Conaty (eds.), *Looking Reality in the Eye: Museums and Social Responsibility*, Calgary University Press, Calgary Canada, 2005, p. 135.

⁸³ A Amin & N Thrift N, *Cities: Rethinking Urban Theory*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002, p.959.

these related activities have the potential to become arenas where cross-cultural understanding can occur and where more meaningful and permanent bridges can be built across cultures and within communities is pivotal to discussions of this concept.

The theories of Stuart Hall (representational theory) and Pierre Bourdieu (cultural capital) are an essential aspect of discussions aimed at uncovering how perceptions, attitudes and mindsets can be culturally, socially and religiously imbued. Similarly, Roger Brubaker maintains that the daily reproduction of ethnicity, race and nationality occurs through our 'perceptions, interpretations, representations, classifications, categorizations, and identifications.'⁸⁴ Comments and opinions expressed by Australian audiences who attended the AoIE at the AGNSW confirm that this is the case with some sectors of both Muslim and non-Muslim visitors, many of whom express extreme views and emotions on topics that appear to challenge tightly held values, norms and behaviours.

In multiculturalism's quest for 'equality' and 'tolerance', Kenan Malik considers cultural diversity a necessity because it allows us to engage in 'political dialogue and debate that can help create more universal values and beliefs, and a collective language of citizenship.'⁸⁵ As discussions with the representatives of museums involved in Sydney and Amsterdam will highlight, this desire to establish a safe arena where debates can be conducted is not always a priority and the ability to promote cross-cultural understanding is difficult to assess without comprehensive in-house research data.

In a similar vein to Khalili's desire for a shared brotherhood of man and a common humanity, American historian Joan Wallach Scott suggests what is required between Muslim and non-Muslim communities: '... is the common ground of shared difference ... [because] by refusing to accept and respect the difference of these others we turn them into enemies, producing that which we most fear about them in the first place.'⁸⁶ This desire for 'common ground' will be shown to be one of the major purposes of all displays of the AoIE and was part of the wider societal response to tensions in communities since 9/11.

⁸⁴ R Brubaker, 2009, op cit., p. 34.

⁸⁵ Kenan, op.cit.

⁸⁶ JW Scott, *The Politics of the Veil*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2007, p. 19.

Colonial legacies

The processes and practices of colonization and Imperialism are well documented and are important components of analysis in chapters six and seven. The focus of these discussions is the persistence of colonial legacies and the problems they present for both former colonies and their host nations especially France and the Netherlands. Many European countries are still grappling with past attitudes, policies and programs concerning immigration, equality and civic rights, and cultural, religious and political representation that impact on the present-day.

In terms of nations that have been previously colonized by the Imperial expansions of British, French, Dutch empires, independence has brought a sense of renewal and often redefinition of national identity distinct from their colonial history. As already highlighted, the process of modernity is seen as providing no overarching narrative to guide these nations in their quest to reinvent themselves in a modern age. The issues most relevant to this study concern debates on the endurance of post-colonial thinking (especially Orientalism, exoticism and hybridity), and their impact on both western and eastern societies.

The term Orientalism has been disputed for centuries but Alexander Macfie's definition of five separate uses of the notion is useful for this investigation as it offers a broad spectrum of possible meanings:

the *scholarly study* of the languages and texts of the Orient (Middle East and later all of Asia); the late 18th century *policy* of the East India Company favouring the preservation of Indian languages, laws and customs; the adoption of an *artistic style and subject matter* associated with the East; a *discourse* of power fashion in the West and deeply implicated in European imperialism; a *corporate institution* harnessed to the maintenance of the ideological and political hegemony of Europe throughout Asia.⁸⁷

In particular, Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* has had a profound impact on the subject and is ever-present in debates around the existence of the East/West dichotomy, especially in the reporting of events in the media that are central to this research. According to Said, Orientalist dogma views the West as 'rational, developed, humane, superior' while the Orient is 'aberrant, undeveloped, inferior', unable to define or represent itself and therefore needing to be controlled and governed in order to be 'set on the road to modernism'. All Muslims and Arabs are viewed as a single entity, with 'Islam' signifying 'all at once a society,

⁸⁷ A Macfie (ed), *Orientalism: a reader*, New York University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 1-2.

a religion, a prototype and an actuality.’⁸⁸ Said maintains that Orientalism was spread by a variety of travellers and writers including: the Italian poet Dante; nineteenth-century scholars Benjamin Disraeli, Gustave Flaubert, Edward Lane and Richard Burton; French orientalists Barthélemy d’Herblot and Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron; and British Arabists Bernard Lewis and Hamilton Gibb. While the many supporters of Said’s perspectives are acknowledged in this study, writers openly critical of his theories are also included in lengthier discussions, especially the perspectives of Lewis, Francesco Gabrieli Kopf, John MacKenzie, Roger Benjamin, Robert Irwin and Sadiq Jalal al-‘Azm.

In line with the focus of this thesis, Orientalism is investigated for its presence in discourses surrounding visual art production in the both European and Middle Eastern societies from the nineteenth-century to the present day. The tendency of European artists to ‘exoticize’ the East is a prominent theme throughout investigations to follow, especially concerning current art collecting in the Middle East and the display of Islamic artifacts in both European and non-European contexts historically.

This study utilises Graham Huggan’s definition of exoticism as a ‘particular mode of aesthetic perception – one which renders people, objects and places strange even as it domesticates them ... oscillat[ing] between the opposite poles of strangeness and familiarity.’⁸⁹ Furthermore, the exotic does not originate ‘somewhere else’ and is then reproduced in representations but is the product of those actual representations, produced through the process of exoticization and are an effect of discriminatory practices.⁹⁰ The critical investigations of Peter Mason, Michel Thévoz, Frederic Bohrer, and Olivier Richon highlight the many features of the exotic that exist in Orientalist paintings. Of interest is a case study of the Ottoman harem by Renia Lewis in *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Harem*⁹¹ that questions the West as the only agency and arbiter of meaning. Also discussed is Huggan’s notion of ‘strategic exoticism’- a practice ‘designed as much to challenge as to profit from consumer needs.’⁹² Homi K. Bhabah’s concepts of third space and mimicry, Robert Young’s views on post-colonial thinking and Gayatri Chakravorty

⁸⁸ E W Said, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books London, New York, Toronto, 1978, p. 300.

⁸⁹ Huggan, op. cit., p. 14.

⁹⁰ P Mason, *Infelicities: Representations of the exotic*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1998, p. 160.

⁹¹ R Lewis, *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Harem*, I B Tauris, 2004.

⁹² Huggan, op. cit., p. 423

Spivak's theories concerning the ambivalence of exoticism are explored to gain a more nuanced understanding of the variety of interpretations concerning this concept.

Additionally, the issue of hybridity and its role in the colonization process is assessed in terms of artists' interpretations of their original and newly acquired homelands through its introduction in chapter two and as an important aspect in the analysis of the two case studies in chapter six. Of significance is the belief that although the Orientalists and painters such as Eugene Delacroix, Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Jean-Leon Gerome painted exotic and mythical scenes of the Harem and Eastern life generally this was not always a one-way exchange and hybrid forms of art on both sides needs to be acknowledged. The writings of MacKenzie are highlighted for his evidence suggesting that it was through artistic production that cross-cultural exchange beneficial to both colonized and colonizers occurred. The author's references to the observations of Billie Melman, Lisa Lowe, Sara Suleri, Mary Louise Pratt and Linda Nochlin particularly are illuminating. Also canvassed are criticisms (especially Lewis') of the omissions of such theoretical positions. Several other key writers on this subject are examined especially Benjamin's exploration of hybrid forms of visual culture in the French colonies of Algeria and Morocco.⁹³

As briefly mentioned, central to the last chapter is the impact of colonial thinking generally and Orientalism specifically on the understanding of certain periods of artistic production, notably the thirteenth century Ilkanid and nineteenth century Qajar dynasties in Iran. In terms of this thesis' case study, the AoIE's overall focus on the aesthetic object/experience is crucial. This is especially the case in terms of Qajar artistic production and colonial discourse that continually reinforced the notion that a precise boundary excluded all art produced after the eighteenth century as 'unIslamic'; a rhetoric that was embedded in colonial practices and evolutionary theories that correlated the rise of modern Europe with the decay of Muslim society.⁹⁴

Art market and value regimes

How 'value' and 'wall power' is attributed to art generally is a contentious issue: is it driven by market forces only or are there a wider range of factors in circulating art forms and attributing value? Some commentators such as Iain Robertson believe market forces

⁹³ R Benjamin, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa 1880-1930*, Berkeley, 2003.

⁹⁴ *ibid.*, p. 13.

entirely control distribution systems and critic Robert Hughes argues that such a network is essential.⁹⁵ Alan Bowness discusses the conditions of success for artists to become recognized requires four stages: peer recognition, critical recognition, patronage by collectors and dealers and public acclaim. In this theory, nations who are seeking to have their collections valued internationally have nine steps to complete on their path to success: perceived as politically stable countries, education especially in art and culture, government policies supporting art/cultural programs and attracting foreign investment, building museums, organizing biennales, establishing local commercial galleries, attracting and encouraging collectors, auction houses and art fairs.⁹⁶

The power and influence of the art markets, experts and auction houses is prominent in the western world. The emerging Middle Eastern art market is a relevant topic of discussion in several sections of this thesis: as part of the case study in chapter four highlighting the role the AoIE played in launching the UAE into the international art market in 2008; and integral to debates in chapter six concerning the perceptions of ilkanid and Qajar art historically and in modern times. Additionally, the role collectors (both European and Middle Eastern) have played in the acquisition and display of Islamic art is discussed in detail in chapter two along with contentious issues such as the repatriation of cultural artifacts to their sites of creation.

The influence of the Media

Since industrialization and late modernity especially, the power of the mass media to exert influence in the public sphere on the national and global level is unquestionable. The ability of media forms (newspapers, television, film, electronic and digital media and the Internet) to shape a societies understanding of news events and information has attracted major critique. Herbert Schiller, for example, has argued that the ability of mass broadcasting to reach unprecedented numbers of people has become a tool of cultural imperialism that reinforces the culture and politics of the dominant nations.⁹⁷ Similarly,

⁹⁵ I Robertson, *Understanding International Art Markets and Management*, Routledge, London New York, 2005; R Hughes, *Nothing if not critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artist*, Penguin, London, New York, 1990. For a detailed account of how the art market and its values t applies to the UAE refer to S. Sabella 'Is the United Arab Emirates constructing its Art History? The Mechanisms that Confer Value to Art', *Contemporary Art Practices Journal*, Vol. IV.

⁹⁶ A Bowness, *The Conditions of Success: How The Modern Artist Rises to Fame*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1989.

⁹⁷ HI Schiller, 1976, op. cit.

Robert McChesney⁹⁸ maintains that rapid pace of new technologies makes them ideal instruments of mass persuasion. Alternatively, John Fiske⁹⁹ believes mass media can potentially become a democratic force for dissemination of information with Ien Ang¹⁰⁰ arguing that the notion of an imagined audience is market driven and that resistance against dominant ideas and perspectives is always possible. Whatever the viewpoint advocated, most argue that mass media has reached saturation point,¹⁰¹ and that there is a 'constant negotiation of power that exists in the media ... that is always enacted across people and groups in complex, shifting and uneven dynamics.'¹⁰²

Benedict Anderson's notion that the modern nation-state is an imagined community,¹⁰³ Charles Taylor's 'social imaginary'¹⁰⁴ and Noble's 'ethnic imaginary'¹⁰⁵ are all significant to discussions concerning the reporting of Islam and Muslim/Arab individuals and communities by the media especially in the Australian, French and Dutch contexts in this case study. Also considered is the role of the 'spectacle' in the reporting of racial conflicts and the promotion of local and global constructions of Islamic identity and Muslim communities that have enormous impact and influence on the public understanding of Islamic heterogeneity. As previous discussions at the beginning of this chapter have highlighted, a central argument in this investigation is the belief that mass media has a prominent role to play in disseminating, amplifying and strengthening negative and stereotypical 'images' such as the 'intolerant Muslim' and 'dangerous Arab Other'. The counteracting and reinforcement of such images (both in the public sphere and museum setting) was the mandate of the travelling AoIE and analysis of the degree of success of this mission requires particular attention along with the multiple contexts that these cultural events were embedded.

That the museum as a civiliser and educator of the public masses has become one of the chief instruments for fostering cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and non-

⁹⁸R McChesney, 2000, op. cit.

⁹⁹J Fiske, 1989, op. cit.

¹⁰⁰I Ang, *Desperately Seeking the audience*, Routledge New York, 1989; I Ang, *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*, Routledge, New York, 1990.

¹⁰¹Other theorists/scholars include Emile Durkheim, Karl Marx, Baudrillard, Marshall McLuhan, Raymond Williams, Jürgen Habermas, Appadurai, and Benedict Anderson.

¹⁰²M Sturken & L Cartwright, *Practices of Looking: An introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, New York, 2009, p. 259.

¹⁰³B Anderson, 1983, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴C Taylor, 2004, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁰⁵G Noble, 2009, op. cit., pp. 14.

Muslims has come as no surprise. However this trend has furthered and, in some instances, reignited contentious and hotly debated issues, resulting in museological dilemmas between academics, curators, entrepreneurs, institutions and governments worldwide. The following section of this chapter examines these problematic issues and foreshadows possible implications for the AoIE that will be discussed in detail in chapters three, four, five and six.

Museum Dilemmas

The traditional role of the museum as an educator and reformer of society has come under intense scrutiny in contemporary times from all sections of society: from institutions and corporations, national and local governments, to community groups and individuals. In order to remain relevant, fiscally viable, attract sponsorship and engage diverse audiences, museum policies and practices have become more closely associated with those of other exhibitionary sites such as the international exposition, the department store and the tourist destination.

This museological trend has brought with it heated debates that interrogate every aspect of the museum operation and this chapter discusses a variety of theoretical perspectives that compete to explain these 'museum frictions': the effects of patronage and sponsorship especially the influence of corporations; problems with representations of cultural and aesthetic objects through particular politics of display; the imperative for museums to become commercial enterprises; and the material, aesthetic and commercial properties of the museum object.

The effects of patronage and sponsorship

Museums actively seek out collections to display in their exhibitions on a temporary, and hopefully, permanent basis. The problems associated with this desire is confirmed by the curator and registrar of the Khalili Collection of Islamic art Nahla Nassar who states: 'We never approach anyone as such we have always been approached ... there is hardly any exhibition of Islamic art anywhere in the world where we don't get requests...' which they cannot always agree to, as the objects 'need to rest' back home regularly so they can be conserved, monitored and cared for.¹⁰⁶ Although Nassar maintains '... we don't enforce any

¹⁰⁶ Transcript L Ryan and N Nassar, 2011, lines 1, 2.

editorial ... we don't dictate anything in particular...¹⁰⁷ to museums that are displaying their collections, patronage and philanthropic partnerships with artists and institutions has proved historically to be both disadvantageous and beneficial to parties involved.

Patronage systems have a long history and have continued in modern times to be a characteristic element of society. State and corporate funding of the arts is well known as a way of supporting culture that reinforces the status of the political and corporate elite. In the USA and UK, opera, symphony orchestras, the ballet, museums, art galleries, plus the infrastructure that supports them, all receive significant funding from both sources. These corporate and state sponsorships usually target the upper or upper-middle class audience and are connected closely to both their tastes and social interests.¹⁰⁸

Most contemporary displays and exhibitions involve a variety of disparate public and private bodies: government agencies, foundations, corporations, trusts and private individuals. However, sponsorship today is typically the territory of private enterprise with largely symbolic government support. Therefore, the expected benefits from patronage are linked to many individual financial supporters who may desire higher profiles and seek to connect with target demographics. Thus, acting in their own vested interests in terms of their image and reputations in society at large, the galleries, museums and theatres are used as discretely sponsored cultural arenas where advertising is given a cultural respectability and conferred with an egalitarian accessibility.¹⁰⁹

Furthermore, modern sponsorship is usually solicited, and corporate sponsors choose to promote cultural events for commercial reasons, rather than from any principled desire to guide values. Sponsorship is distributed across several grades, with a number of sponsors paying to have brand logos prominently located or secure distribution rights. In this sense, sponsorship today is a matter for negotiation between sponsors and the event organizers, with both expecting to profit in some way from the engagement. State cultural organizations such as public museums would experience difficulty continuing to operate without the investment of corporate sponsorship.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.*, line 14.

¹⁰⁸ Ryan, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

For example, the AGNSW boasts a:

... dedicated sponsorship department and works closely with corporate partners to create tailored offers that meet specific sponsor objectives ... unique marketing, public relations, and incentive opportunities ... targeting Australia's largest and most loyal group of arts supporters, providing client entertaining and networking opportunities [and] involving employees, their friends and families with the art gallery societies and our exhibition activities and other cultural events.¹¹⁰

These incentives would have certainly impacted on prospective sponsors of the AoIE when considering the inclusion of arts sponsorship in their funding policies. Additionally, the deployment of sponsored support to keep museum admissions free is a typically effective sponsor/institution relationship.¹¹¹

It is clear that sponsorship is embedded into modern culture, with the boundaries between cultural, political and the social blurring as a result of integrated multi-purpose projects at the local and global level. Corporations especially play central roles in the 'cultural marketplace,' functioning as promoters, producers and mediators of culture.¹¹² However their influence, motives and agendas are open for criticism as Rectanus observes: '[C]orporate cultural politics attempt to legitimize corporate interests in globalized societies – in cultural, social, economic, and political spheres – but in doing so they expose their stake in institutional and communal discourses and values.'¹¹³

The art museum, as a cultural enterprise, is not separated from political and social agendas that shape and define institutions operating in the global marketplace. In attempting to balance the requirements to be relevant and viable and meet sponsorship and funding demands, however, museums have become contested spaces for many reasons especially: their acquisition history and contemporary policies; and the politics of representation and curatorial practices of display. On one hand, relevancy implies a necessity to be topical and sometimes an acceptance of controversy so that museum displays can become 'lively, contentious intersections' of contestation and collaborative activity where different agendas from diverse publics are expressed.¹¹⁴ It follows that

¹¹⁰ Art Gallery of New South Wales, retrieved 10 March 2011, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>.

¹¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 222.

¹¹² Rectanus, *op cit.*, p.5

¹¹³ *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹¹⁴ J Barriendos, *The Interplay of Art and Globalization- Consequences for Museum*, 2006, retrieved 20 September 2010, <<http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/participation/56>>.

J Clifford, 'Museums as contact zones', *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997.

institutions considered relevant attract more audiences, more funding, are more valued and therefore more sustainable. The desire for audience attendance at all costs, however, can result in 'block-buster obsession' which Robert Janes and Gerald Conaty view as an 'addictive substance ... the impact is fast and undeniable, but quickly resolves in the quest for more, and there is never enough'.¹¹⁵

It is also the case that exhibition proposals that do not fulfil the criteria for corporate sponsorship risk are never seriously considered. Indeed, displays that could encourage 'critical awareness, present products of consciousness dialectically and in relation to the social world, or question relations of power' are less likely to attract corporate funding and may discourage future sponsorship resulting in museum 'self-censorship'.¹¹⁶ Furthermore, museum exhibits that promote controversy can result in retreat of sponsors and audiences that threatens their existence. Faced with this situation some museums may be 'self-censoring' by settling for the more conservative goal of creating apolitical spaces where a 'celebratory but depoliticized global humanism' is the expectation.¹¹⁷ In chapters to follow this will be shown to be the case with several of the AoIE venues and their sponsorship arrangements, especially in the Australian context.

A wider investigation lending strength to these observations is C. T. Wu's research concerning the ubiquitous involvement of modern corporations and business organizations in framing and shaping the discourses surrounding contemporary culture, especially that of the art museum. Concentrating primarily on British and American activities (with some reference to the Asian sector), Wu argues that since the 1980s big business has been impacting on every dimension of contemporary cultural development: its construction, its distribution and its reception. Through their involvement in art museums, business organizations and corporations have greatly altered the ways institutions operate and have influenced public perceptions of their role in society.¹¹⁸

Wu highlights corporate art collections who have their own curators and art departments imitate many of the practices of the art museum including touring their collections nationally and internationally. Additionally, corporate art awards have placed corporations in a position to influence 'taste', affect public arts policy funding and become

¹¹⁵ Janes & Conaty, op. cit., pp. 1-17.

¹¹⁶ A McClellan, op. cit., p. 227.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 51-2.

¹¹⁸ Wu, op. cit., pp. 2, 303.

mediators of contemporary culture. She argues that corporate collections especially have ‘reframed the space and redefined discourse on contemporary art’.¹¹⁹

Drawing on Bourdieu’s theory of ‘cultural capital’, Wu posits that cultural products (such as contemporary art) operate as a form of ‘currency’ for corporations materially and symbolically, in late twentieth-century capitalist democracies. Senior executives are the ‘elite within an elite’ with vast economic capital at their disposal that allows them to increase their ‘cultural capital’ (which includes social and symbolic capital) in terms of ‘corporate taste’ and significantly influence society.¹²⁰ Like their entrepreneurial predecessors, these corporate elites or ‘modern-day Medici’ endeavor to sustain and strengthen their dominant rank and status within social and corporate life through a complex web of social/economic relationships and networks. The arts and other cultural pursuits are central component parts of their strategic plan as they operate as symbols of status or distinction as well as possessing ‘market value’.¹²¹ Wu further asserts that despite the prevalence of the ‘public-private’ dichotomy (which is not a clear-cut as it appears) both British and American art museums rely, to varying degree, on external funding from sponsorships that include corporations and business organizations.¹²²

Additionally, Wu believes public arts agencies do not always have the public’s needs as highest priority as they are not independent bodies but ‘operate inside, not outside, the existing political and economic framework of the modern state.’¹²³ The generally homogeneous composition of boards of trustees (majority are from business backgrounds) in both British and American museums is problematic in terms of ‘conflicts of interest’¹²⁴ but

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* This cultural shift was the result of the crucial political changes and the promotion of the ‘free market economy’ of the Thatcher (United Kingdom 1979) and Reagan (United States 1981) eras that were radical departures from the social services policies of the 1960s. Following Unseen Wu maintains:

‘The thrust of the Reagan-Thatcher public policy to substitute the market for the government as the key economic and social institution, and to propagate the marketplace ethos of capitalism during their tenure, ran in parallel with equally cogent political action and social engagements by business in both countries’ (p.4) (M Unseen, ‘The Inner Circle: Large Corporations and the Rise of Business Political Activity in the United States and the United Kingdom’, New York, Oxford University press, 1984).

¹²⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹²¹ *ibid.*, pp. 7-11.

¹²² *ibid.*, pp. 11,19-22.

¹²³ *ibid.*, p. 32.

¹²⁴ For example, many trustees sit on multiple and often competing boards and decisions may have payoffs for their corporation/organization (*ibid.*, p. 94).

still carries the elite status offering 'an institutional means of wielding considerable power within society; it is an avenue of consequence in a capitalist democracy'.¹²⁵

The reason that sponsoring art institutions is so attractive to corporations is that they can 'present themselves as sharing a humanist value system with museums and galleries, cloaking their particular interests with a universal moral veneer'. By associating themselves, furthermore, with the contemporary art scene and its avant-garde innovations, the business world is projecting an image of a 'liberal and progressive force' that is mediated and redefined in corporate terms, confirming their 'intervention in the arts as a great and legitimate cause'.¹²⁶

That the twin ideologies of globalism and business practices have penetrated art museums is unquestionably present with the policies of the Guggenheim especially, and to a lesser extent, the British and French museums. The Guggenheim is promoting its brand internationally at an unprecedented rate despite global financial insecurities: Guggenheim SoHo New York, Peggy Guggenheim Collection Venice, Guggenheim Museum Bilbao, Deutsche Guggenheim Berlin, Germany and the nearly finished Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.¹²⁷ The British Museum and the Louvre in Paris, who have previously confined their activities to mainly national expansions and international loans and travelling exhibitions, are also present in the Abu Dhabi development on Saayidat Island: the British Museum is committed to loaning works to the Zayed National Museum for fifteen years and the Louvre is establishing a satellite museum (Louvre Abu Dhabi) with the promise of thirty years of lending works from their French collection.¹²⁸ This recent trend will be discussed in detail in terms of the role the AoIE played in establishing the art market in the UAE that paved the way for these large-scale projects in Abu Dhabi.

¹²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 85-86.

¹²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 125.

¹²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 283.

¹²⁸ The Saayidat island development will be discussed in detail in Chapter 5.

This intertwining and merging of philanthropy, corporations, public and private institutional interests has the potential, according to Rectanus, for ‘transformation into new hybrid organizations,’ to become places of ‘intervention and renegotiation’ rather than ‘sites for the colonization of cultural and non-profit institutions – essentially coextensive with corporate space.’¹²⁹ Whether museum directors and curators develop strategies to capitalize on these opportunities to represent their unique national and local identities through displays of art and culture is a key issue for this investigation.

Representation and the politics of display

Critiques of the museum and its practices, policies and procedures are numerous and diverse; the following brief overview introduces the dilemmas that this study will be focusing upon in its analysis of the AoIE and the environments the travelling exhibition was displayed in.

The role of the museum in contemporary society

Most arguments concerning the museum, especially its relevance and viability in contemporary society, question their agency and social role in negotiations over the display of collections. Along with concerns over the consequences of sponsorship expectations and commercialism on cultural enterprises, museum debates have raged over problems of representation, the politics of display and the educational and civic role of institutions in social and cultural development generally. In these disputes museums have been portrayed as having many functions:

temples of civilisation, sites for the creation of citizens, forums for debates, setting for cultural interchange and negotiation of values, engines of economic renewal and revenue generation, imposed colonialist enterprises, havens of elitist distinction and discrimination and places of empowerment and recognition...¹³⁰

Cameron suggests that despite these disparate expectations and roles museums are regarded as ‘powerful places for shaping cultural memory and important gatekeepers for directing, opening up or closing down conversations on topics of societal significance’.¹³¹ For example, the American Association of Museums (AAM) is one of the major and most influential agencies in the museum sector. Their strategic plan 2010-2015 envisions

¹²⁹ Rectanus, op. cit., p. 241.

¹³⁰ I Karp et al, 2006, op. cit., p. 1.

¹³¹ F Cameron, 2010, op. cit., p.1.

museums as places where collaborations with individuals and organizations will ‘strengthen communities’ and promote ‘integrity’, ‘openness’ and ‘courage ... by being proactive, valuing criticism, accepting tension, and taking risks ...[and advocating] inclusiveness’ through welcoming ‘diversity of participation, thought, and action ...Creativity... [and] excellence’.¹³²

This perspective imagines museums combating social inequality and disadvantage through an understanding of their social impact on individuals, communities and wider society, contributing to the creation of cultural identity and a sense of place and belonging.¹³³ Similar to Khalili’s aims, many museums aspire to building bridges between diverse cultures and therefore position themselves as mediators for cultures facing confrontation, professing to perform a strong educational and civic role in social and cultural development.¹³⁴ For example, it is unsurprising that most European museums when presenting displays related to Islamic topics, position their perspectives as alternative to what they consider to be common misunderstandings of Islam.¹³⁵ As discussed, to collectors such as Khalili this objective is particularly crucial when deciding where and when he will display his collection.

The museum’s diverse and often multiple directives and multifaceted, conflicting goals are the result of contradictory demands imposed from a variety of interested groups and individuals that include: audiences, funders, communities and professionals, government officials, collectors, and entities that the museum displays represent. Museums are also unavoidably associated and connected to other cultural institutions and exhibitionary displays; defined by others and by themselves in relation to other civic, community and cultural organisations, whether they are schools, galleries, theme parks, fairs, fiestas, expositions or department stores.¹³⁶

As a consequence, museums find themselves embroiled and entangled in public discourse debates, both as producers and replicators; a situation that further complicates

¹³² Strategic plan 2010-2015, *American Alliance of Museums*, retrieved 10 December 2012, <www.aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting>.

¹³³ R Sandell, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

¹³⁴ T Bennett, *The Multiplication of Cultures Utility. The Art Gallery Versus the Alehouse*, Inaugural Professorial Lecture, Faculty of Humanities, Griffith University, Institute for Cultural Studies, 1994.

¹³⁵ F Cameron & S Kenderdine, 'Introduction', *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: a critical discourse*, MIT Press, 2007.

¹³⁶ Karp et al, op. cit., p. 1.

and intensifies discussions around the contemporary role of cultural institutions. The search for identity, on the national, local and individual level, is one of the major driving forces of these conceptual and rhetorical museological shifts.

Since museums are now integrated into leisure spaces that they share with the often contradictory forces of tourist orientations and popular culture, the museums' mission to educate and reform society is increasingly under scrutiny from all sections of society: institutions and corporations, national and local governments, community groups and individuals. Research indicates that many visitors believe the museum has a crucial role in presenting controversial and challenging issues through exhibitions that provoke critical and reflective responses to local and global issues.¹³⁷ While many institutions struggle to adapt to changing cultural and economic environments, museums such as MONA and St Mungo's that will be discussed in chapter three, are seeking 'new' and innovative identities outside of national identities,¹³⁸ transforming themselves to remain topical, relevant and viable while maintaining public confidence.

Many museums (colonial, imperial/state and private) have been seen by a variety of theorists as reinforcing the power of society's dominant elite; a perspective reinforced in earlier discussion regarding sponsorship. Foucauldian approaches, for example, are argued by Eileen Hooper-Greenhill and Mieke Bal (1992), Daniel Sherman and Irit Rogoff (1994) and Bennett (1995, 1998), who view museums as institutions that continually reinforce power relations through discursive and representational practices based on disciplinary or governmental constraints.

Alternatively, writers such as Andrea Witcomb challenge this perspective by considering economic, political, technological factors and the media environment outside the museum that do not involve the exercise of power or rationality.¹³⁹ The 'blockbuster' phenomena, for example, has strong similarities to the fair, expo and theme park in terms of aims and objectives and the use of marketing strategies, designed to attract large and diverse audiences. Some commentators, for example, maintain there is a merging of event culture and museum culture as 'both are characterized by similar orientations to materiality, immediacy ... the primacy of visualization ... and, more recently, interactivity

¹³⁷ F. Cameron, "Risk society, controversial topics and Museum interventions: (Re) reading controversy and the Museum through a risk optic", in Cameron & Kelly (eds) 2010, op. cit., pp.55, 57.

¹³⁸ Macdonald, op. cit., p. 3

¹³⁹ Witcomb, op cit., pp. 5, 12, 17.

between audiences, exhibitions, and technologies as dominant modes of communication.¹⁴⁰ Others suggest the intersecting of entertainment, spectacle and the aesthetic experience is ‘not exactly a new idea’ and needs to be considered by museums and the wider community as integral elements of contemporary culture.¹⁴¹ However, many argue the endless search for private and corporate sponsorship of exhibitions has given rise to the impression of ‘museums for hire, eroding public confidence in the independence and integrity of the institution.’¹⁴²

Museums as commercial enterprises

Although most museums were not designed for commercial purposes, as the result of overlapping public spheres and exhibition practices, Noordegraaf agrees that museums are part of a new ‘*spectacular* visual culture’ which connects with visitors in new ways as ‘museums do not operate in isolation but instead [are] firmly embedded in contemporary visual culture and society’.¹⁴³ In the case of the AoIE in Sydney, Paris and Amsterdam, the familiar layout of the exhibition with the gallery shop positioned at the only exit and healthy profit margins on items for sale, confirms this strong link between culture and commerce.

These collectable items provide a souvenir or visual memento of the museum experience for the occasional exhibition visitor or are destined for private ‘cabinets of curiosity’ for the modern amateur collector. They are fundamentally aesthetic commodities, providing a visible expression of the cultural capital of the visitor/consumer. Arjun Appadurai suggests as commodities they are ‘essentially a sign in a system of signs of status’¹⁴⁴, explaining why issues of *authenticity* have come to replace the problem of *exclusivity* for such amateur collectors. Further, although the unique art object itself is beyond reach,¹⁴⁵ the visitor/consumer are able to satisfy their desire for status by collecting the merchandise available from the exhibition shop. The gulf between the unique exhibition object and the commodity reproduction is ironically bridged in the case of tourist art, where not only is the group identity of producers a token for the status politics of the consumers,

¹⁴⁰ Rectanus, op. cit., p. 171.

¹⁴¹ A Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking time in the culture of amnesia*, Routledge, New York, 1995, p. 24.

¹⁴² McClellan, op. cit., pp. 228-9.

¹⁴³ Noordegraaf, op. cit., pp. 82,250.

¹⁴⁴ Appadurai, op cit., p. 43. Appadurai is following the work of Benjamin and Baudrillard here see: W Benjamin, ‘The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, *Illuminations*, H Arendt (ed.), London, Fontana, 1968, pp. 214–218; J Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, Sage Publications, London, California and New Delhi, 1993.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.*

but the chain of traditional production is itself altered to suit the commercial and aesthetic demands and desires of a larger and often remote market.¹⁴⁶ This kind of mutual interdependence of producers and consumer and the cultural adjustments that each makes on account of the existence of the other, is illustrative of the essence of late-capitalism consumerism, where the whole circuit of production, exchange and consumption operates at both a material and symbolic level.¹⁴⁷

The circulation of aesthetic objects are, from this perspective, intelligible as a system of symbolic exchange of signs which Baudrillard suggests has now overshadowed the material objects themselves.¹⁴⁸ The rarity and beauty of an object from some distant land might guarantee its value on purely economic grounds, but the object might also function in contemporary society as a token of Orientalism or Primitivism for example. In some cases, such objects have in fact helped the Occident structure its self-image. For instance, the first European travelers returned home with artifacts from these foreign lands and cultures that were often employed to illustrate the 'competing images of the romantic and noble primitive and the cannibalistic barbarian as suited the arguments or interests of the time'.¹⁴⁹ The object themselves then, could be mobilized in any number of diverse cultural programs, and being essentially mute, were indifferent as to whether they were deployed to express diversity, difference, evolutionary development or national unity.¹⁵⁰

While such discussions of recontextualisation might underwrite the de facto sovereignty of the curator with respect to these compliant and passive objects, it overlooks the phenomenon of objectification that any material process entails to some degree. One of the consequences of late capitalism is the pliability of desire, which is exploited by marketing and advertising professionals, and through the product design process contributes to the effective exploitation of the individual.

In contrast to the exhibition objects, which are arranged in accordance with the cultural program of the curator, the for-sale objects in the exhibition shop are themselves the outcome of deliberate design efforts, which exploit the cultural needs of the visitor. One connects with these objects in a way that is not possible for the exhibition objects; the level

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 44-47.

¹⁴⁷ For a more detailed discussion see F Jameson, *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*, Durham, Duke University press, 2001; R Bocoock, *Consumption*, London, New York, Routledge, 1993.

¹⁴⁸ J Baudrillard, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London, California and New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1993.

¹⁴⁹ D Miller, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Blackwell, Oxford, Cambridge, 1987, p. 122.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 129-130.

of interaction is more intimate and sensual, and the objects themselves are advertised in ways that appeal to consumers. In this sense, one could regard the exhibition as the stimulus for the cultural desires that are then satisfied by the commodities themselves.

In a modern consumer society, desire itself has been in effect manufactured and manifests itself as demand for products on the part of customers. The modern museum can be viewed as conjuring the cultural desires through the presentation of unique and aesthetic works; capitalizing on the demand this generates through the sale of merchandise carefully selected to link thematically to cultural stock that the museum itself offers to its visitors.¹⁵¹

The museum object

The role of the 'object' on display is itself disputed: while conservative attitudes maintain the museum artifact is 'primary material that museums convert into a lasting cultural good through collection, classification, conservation, and exhibition', others such as Saumarez Smith, pose the fundamental question of whether it is the artifact's 'intrinsic' qualities (material, craftsmanship, skill) or 'extrinsic' properties (cultural and aesthetic norms, client demands) that determine the form of an object.¹⁵² Objects have multiple lives and identities, as Philip Fisher states: ' "[N]ew characteristics come into existence and earlier features are effaced" as objects pass from one social and cultural context to another'.¹⁵³

Sandra Dudley argues persuasively that the 'materiality' of the museum object has become subordinate in the 'object-information package' that institutions use as a 'tool' to embed objects with meaning in terms of wider social, political or educational significance. Furthermore, the concentration on accompanying information museums supply (for example textual information panels) can interfere with the viewer's engagement or 'sensory interaction' with objects on the physical and emotional level, thereby inhibiting reflectivity that can make these experiences potentially 'transformative'.¹⁵⁴ Dudley advocates an 'object-subject interaction'¹⁵⁵, emphasizing the significance and value of sensory

¹⁵¹ See also Gosden, op. cit., pp. 193-194.

¹⁵² R Starn, 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 110, no. 1., 2005, p. 9, retrieved 20 March 2012, <<http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/110.1/starn.html>>.

¹⁵³ McClellan, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁵⁴ Dudley, op. cit., p. 3-4.

¹⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 5.

experiences as an '*a priori*' rather than '*a posteriori*' to the museum encounter: '... embodied and emotional engagements with objects can provide more powerful alternatives or additions to textual interpretation in enabling visitors to understand and empathize with stories objects represent'.¹⁵⁶ Furthermore, stressing the formal and aesthetic properties of objects ignores the importance of spatial-temporal considerations and sensory experiences of all kinds- visual, oral, haptic, aural, kinaesthetic and gustatory.¹⁵⁷ In Dudley's words: '...Materiality, then, is about not solely meaning or simply physical form, but the dynamic interaction of both with our sensory experience'.¹⁵⁸

However, the dominance of the visual in museum displays is often at the expense of other senses. Robert Zimmer and Janis Jeffries observe: 'What is being denied in the reduction to the visual is the possibility of intimate, engagement with cultural artifacts.'¹⁵⁹ This occurs when we cannot touch museum objects, for example, and these writers advocate the use of multi-sensory interactive technology to enhance the museum encounter. Chris Gosden extends the notion of the agency of objects as he maintains that when we ask what an object's function is we attach 'a power or capacity to objects, although not necessarily will or intention' as objects carry:

... certain characteristics of form which channel human action, provide a range of sensory experiences (but exclude others) and place obligations on us in the ways we relate to objects and other people through these objects. Patterns of exchange or consumption derive partly from the nature of the objects themselves.¹⁶⁰

Conversely, Daniel Miller in his investigations into the relationship between society and culture states that it is the '...very physicality of the object that makes it appear so immediate, sensual and assimilable belies its actual nature, and that material culture is one of the most resistant forms of cultural expression in terms of our attempts to comprehend it'.¹⁶¹

In the case of the AoIE for example, the diverse racial groups that the exhibition unified under the constructed community of Islam may have attributed significantly different meanings and messages to their cultural artifacts than the labels and inferences

¹⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 4.

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 7-8.

¹⁵⁹ R Zimmer & J Jeffries, 'Accessing material through technologies of mediation and immediation', *Journal of Futures*, pp. 5, 111, retrieved 12 December, <<http://elsevier.com/locate/futures>,>doi:10.1016/j.futures.2007.05.007.ff>.

¹⁶⁰ Gosden, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

¹⁶¹ D Miller, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

that curatorial bodies promoted in their collection of 'beautiful' objects. Therefore, art displays can carry meaning other than intended by their makers as a curator appropriates artifacts to tell particular stories to target audiences through the process of re-presentation and re-contextualization that potentially transforms and disrupts artifacts original properties.

Beauty and the sublime

Concepts of beauty and its relationship to the museum object that collectors such as Khalili maintain encourages cross-cultural understanding through recognition of a common, universal humanity, requires closer examination. Many philosophers and theoreticians have argued over the role of beauty and the sublime in cultural and artistic production and its effect on humanity.

Prominent art historian E. H. Gombrich argued in the 1960s that an object is made artistic, historical or ethnographic through: '... the manner of detachment ... nearly all the objects in our collections were once intended to serve a social purpose from which they were alienated by collectors. Works of art have always proved capable of serving a multiplicity of ends ...'¹⁶² Additionally, Gombrich raises the concept of beauty and art when he discusses the displaying of copies of Greek sculptures in houses and gardens: '... the image was prised loose from the practical context for which it was conceived and [was] admired and enjoyed for its beauty and fame, it is, quite simply within the context of art.'¹⁶³

However, Umberto Eco maintains that '...Beauty has never been absolute and immutable but has taken on different aspects depending on the historical period and the country ...' Furthermore, the relationship between art and beauty has often been an ambiguous one as, although humans preferred the 'beauty of nature,' there was the acknowledgement that '... over the centuries it was artists, poets and novelists who told us about the things that they considered beautiful, and they were the ones that left us examples.'¹⁶⁴

Eco refers to the Sublime, a concept that he describes as an 'effect of art' involving the 'emotional' relationship between an artist and his audience, 'determined by a

¹⁶² E H Gombrich, 'Art and Illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation', London, Phaidon Press, 1969, p. 120.

¹⁶³ *ibid.*, p. 8.

¹⁶⁴ Eco, *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 11-12.

convergence of certain rules and whose end is the procurement of pleasure.’¹⁶⁵ Eco ties ‘Romantic Beauty’ to historical moments; for example, the Romantics modified the concept of beauty profoundly when, struggling between ‘Romantic taste’ and ‘Classical canons’, produced a variety of images linked to the Orient and the ‘cult of the exotic.’ The perfect illustration of this tension, Eco posits, is the contrast between the hyperrealism of Ingres’ painting of the Oriental and Delacroix’s imprecise style aimed at depicting ‘... a surprising, exotic, violent Beauty.’¹⁶⁶ The differing treatment of similar subject matter is obvious when comparisons are made between Ingres’ *Countess Hanssonville* (1834) and *Women of Algiers* (1834) by Delacroix (Fig. 3 and 5).

Of note in this discussion on the relationship of beauty and Jan Assmann’s suggestion that: ‘the sublime is the opposite of beautiful. Whereas the beautiful appeals to the senses and attracts humans to the visible and the sensual world, the sublime transcends our sensual and conceptual capabilities of comprehension ...’¹⁶⁷



Fig 3 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Countess Hanssonville* 1834.

Source:

<https://pitchfordyeung.wordpress.com/2014/05/14/paintings-from-the-romantic-period/>



Fig 4 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *The Bathers* '1808.

Source: <http://pictify.com/352932/the-valpinon-bather-la-grande-baigneuse-1808-ingres>

¹⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 278.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 307-308. Compare Ingres’ *Countess Hanssonville* (1834) and *Women of Algiers* (1834) by Delacroix.

¹⁶⁷ J Assmann, ‘What’s Wrong with Images’, in *Idol Anxiety*, J Ellenbogen & A Tugendhaft (eds.), Stanford University Press, Stanford California, 2011, p. 30.



Fig 5 Eugene Delacroix *Algerian women in their apartments* 1834. Source: http://www.artble.com/artists/eugene_delacroix/paintings/women_of_algiers_in_their_apartment

Conversely, the relationship between museums and the West in terms of ideal beauty and the concept of the masterpiece is argued by Hans Belting to be a problem throughout the history of art and particularly for modern art because of its 'constant restlessness; the 'unceasing production' towards an 'ideal of absolute art, which persistently drove artistic production but always eluded it'.¹⁶⁸ Here Belting is describing a masterpiece as invisible, 'a metaphor for the idea of a work that comprises art in the absolute- a state beyond the reach of every tangible artwork' as 'an absolute masterpiece was not an excellent work, it was an impossible one.'¹⁶⁹ He uses as illustration the Romantic era where 'the cult of the idea lived on as the cult of the work that was rephrased as an absolute masterpiece. The perfection of art thus took refuge in single works, which in turn required an aura....'¹⁷⁰ This aura that the beautiful object or masterpiece possesses (also critiqued by Walter Benjamin in his 1936 essay *Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*) is crucial to the effect of the aesthetic experience that exhibitions such as the AoIE depend upon for their success.

¹⁶⁸ Belting, 2001, op. cit., pp. 11-12.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 102-4.

The concept of 'beauty' and its association with 'otherness' in relation to displaying the objects of other cultures is another highly contentious issue for the art museum. There is a widespread belief in a universal conception of beauty, founded on the 'average' individual or on 'biological' aspects and that everyone knows who and what is beautiful. Since antiquity an 'ideal image' has been promoted, giving rise to an entire system of aesthetics. European artists during the Renaissance, for example, based their concept of the perfect human body on Platonic notions that art was superior to nature because its representations could eliminate nature's faults.

Parthar Mitter, however, argues that notions of beauty are also cultural constructions, with 'colour' as the first marker of difference promoted particularly by nineteenth century European writers advancing the claim of white racial superiority over other races and cultures.¹⁷¹ This had led to the 'coding' of 'otherness' as 'inferior, sexually excessive and animal',¹⁷² a descriptor that has been applied extensively to the Arab or Muslim 'other' in stereotypical, fantasized and 'Orientalised' depictions for centuries. One such instance is evident Orientalist painter's depictions of women (such as Fig 4 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres 1808 *The Bathers* and Fig 5 Eugene Delacroix *Algerian women in their apartments* 1834) who Belting notes 'do not live in the east, but dreams – like the painter, who never went there – of an imagined Orient ... the Orient is a metaphor of longing for an unattainable ideal, and as such it enters into an unexpected fusion with the dream of the ultimate masterpiece'.¹⁷³

Important to this study is Clifford's Art-Culture System demonstrating how works produced in traditional contexts can be regarded as singular masterpieces from the perspective of western collecting practices. The model identifies a range of cultural institutions that address the public's expectations regarding such art-objects, especially their aesthetic qualities and status as authentic works. The components of the system include: art museums and art markets focus on the singular status of unique objects; ethnographic museums concentrate on the collective links to material culture; museums of technology focus on the innovation and invention; and curio collections provide a residual category for commercial products and artistic reproduction. In terms of Islamic art objects,

¹⁷¹ For more details see P Mitter, 'The Hottentot Venus and the Western Man: reflections on the construction of beauty in the West', *In Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness*, Editors E Hallam & B V Street (eds.) Routledge, New York, 2000, pp. 35-50.

¹⁷² Ibid. pp. 29-30. See also writings of Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, James Clifford and Jonathon Lyons.

¹⁷³ Belting, 2001, op. cit., p. 102.

for example, cultural materials have been made mobile across the art/culture poles of the system. The AoIE represented and contextualised traditional and collective everyday artifacts as stand alone 'star objects', thereby acquiring the properties of originality and singularity. This is particularity evident in the French context in chapter five and the final venue of the AoIE in Amsterdam, where former ethnographic artifacts are transformed into art objects by concentrating on the aesthetic qualities of selected 'masterpieces'.¹⁷⁴

These diverse viewpoints and theories on the role of beauty in art are essential to the main premise of this thesis. Highlighted in earlier discussions, the wilful neglect of the contribution of the Arab/Muslim world in art and science to Western development and the belief in the universality of the 'beautiful' object to transcend all political, cultural and religious boundaries is central to Khalili's mission in touring his collection of Islamic art and culture. The power of visual culture in contemporary society and its role in discourses concerning 'otherness' makes investigations of cultural representations and how they are constructed and exhibited vital to analysing relations of power and cross-cultural perspectives in the politics and aesthetics of display.

¹⁷⁴ J Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*, Harvard University press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1988, pp. 222-229.

Conclusion

It is clear the museum is often embroiled in heated arguments in the public arena over its practices, policies and procedures. The roles of collectors, curators, sponsors and audiences are intensified by dichotomies that are difficult to transcend: individual cultural identity and respect for diversity and the promotion of a common and unified humanity; the blockbuster phenomenon and the aesthetic experience; fiscal demands of modern sponsorship versus the didactic function of the museum; and the beautiful object and the consumer commodity. These tensions or museum ‘frictions’¹⁷⁵ contribute to multifaceted and often conflicting goals, missions and expectations.

Since predicaments resonate with the broader discourses and topical debates of the global community and impact on both the macro and micro levels of society, as this introduction into museum dilemmas and the wider public sphere has shown. As discussed, these conversations in the wider public sphere and museum dilemmas have been particularly controversial when it comes to Islamic art and culture and political, religious, cultural and social relationships between and West and ‘the rest’. The next chapter provides a history of collecting and displays of Islamic artifacts as a backdrop to the investigation into the practices and politics of display of this thesis’ primary case study and its four-year journey.

¹⁷⁵ Karp, 2006, op. cit., p. 1.

Chapter Two

Collectors, Collections and the Museum

Islamic art – even today – is supposed to dazzle its viewers into pleasure, mimicking the imagined pleasures of the harem, the bazaar, or other adventures in A Thousand and One Nights.

WENDY SHAW, THE ISLAM IN ISLAMIC ART HISTORY

If you don't have a passion you are like a fire without a flame.

NASSAR D. KHALILI

No collector, collection or museum display is the same. Discourses and narratives alter significantly when objects are represented and recontextualised; disrupting and often transforming the cultural artifacts on display by imbuing the works with new identities and knowledges that affect all that come in contact with them. This chapter examines the historical trajectory of the tensions and controversies that have made the process of collecting and displaying Islamic art and cultural objects a contested activity. The colonial and imperialistic activities of major European nations, and several lesser-known ones, are touched upon. These discursive formations and their subsequent social, political, economic and cultural consequences are explored in detail in the displays of the AoIE in France and the Netherlands.

The role of the collector is highlighted, as museums rely on their passion for collecting and their philanthropic zeal to supply objects, interpretive material and funding for their temporary displays and permanent exhibitions. Discussions reveal the diverse methods that have been employed in the quest to acquire objects for private or public collections and the reaction of audiences to their display in homes, auction houses, international expositions and museums from the nineteenth century to the present day. The debates surrounding Orientalism and exoticism are explored and their relevance for this thesis generally is highlighted. Lastly, the changing dynamics of the global art market and its effect on national and international cultural sectors especially in the Middle East is investigated as a precursor to the AoIE display in Abu Dhabi discussed in chapter four.

Discursive practices

In *Archives, Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, Mejcher-Atassi and Pedro Swartz remind us that collections are used by their makers, sources and audiences significantly by 'construct[ing] identity, not just that of the social group whose reality is interpreted through the objects on display, but also that of the collections authors.'¹⁷⁶

Collections are often comprised of disparate individual and unique objects detached from their original sites of creation and purpose, examined, catalogued, classified, grouped then archived, by their new owner. These travelling troupes of artifacts are constantly having their identity transformed, altered and reshaped by those who acquire them through decisions made concerning their conservation and display. These processes continually remake the possible meanings of these displays in the discourses and narratives they tell. In turn, different audiences will reinterpret the meaning and messages these works convey according to their own cultural codes, norms and contexts. Collections potentially have this transformative power because museum curators reorder arrangements of objects to 'make arguments' that are often contentious and hotly debated. They are part of a discursive practice (and the world beyond) where cultural artifacts function in 'negotiated sites of knowledge production as well as retrieval' reflecting and interrupting material, social, political, economic and cultural conditions both locally and globally. Ultimately, collections are the evidence of the practices that went into their creation and dissemination.¹⁷⁷

Orientalism/exoticism and metanarrative

Much of the collecting and displaying of Islamic art from the Middle East, by both individuals and institutions, was carried out during the era of European colonial expansion.¹⁷⁸ Any investigation into imperialistic activities requires consideration of the continuing Orientalism debate, especially post 9/11 and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq stimulating new conversations and critical analysis in contemporary scholarship concerning East-West relations.

¹⁷⁶S Mejcher-Atassi & JP Swartz, *Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*, Ashgate, London, 2012, p. 2.

¹⁷⁷ibid., pp. 19,22,25.

¹⁷⁸ For a detailed discussion of the history of Islamic art collecting and display see appendix 3.

The term 'Orientalism' itself has led a complex and contested existence. A value-neutral definition of Orientalism remains in the Oxford Dictionary along with its more controversial meaning highlighting the polemical nature of the debate: a 'style, artifacts, or traits considered characteristic of the peoples and cultures of Asia ... (and) the representation of Asia in a stereotyped way that is regarded as embodying a colonialist attitude.'¹⁷⁹ Other commentators advocate as many as five separate meanings for the term as outlined in chapter one.¹⁸⁰ Some writers maintain Orientalism originated in ancient Greece; while other commentators suggest the decrees of the Council of Vienne (1311-12)¹⁸¹ is a more likely starting point. Western Asia and Egypt constituted the geographical context of orientalism in the Middle East, with the invasion of Egypt by Bonaparte in 1798 coupled with the era of European Imperialism, increasing the significance of the term.¹⁸² Following the end of the Second World War (1939-45) the term became increasingly volatile, with critiques over European colonization from intellectuals and scholars (many originating from or associated with the orient) resulting in theories vigorously assaulting the basic tenants of Western imperialism.

Four key commentators emerged: Egyptian sociologist Anouar Abdel-Malek (arguing Orientalism aimed to enslave much of the Third World through colonization which was an instrument of imperialism); Syrian and Arabic historian A. L. Tibawi (maintaining Orientalism was a method designed to interpret and understand Arab nationalism and Islam generally); Palestinian-American Edward Said (labelling Orientalism a 'saturating hegemonic system' and 'cumulative and corporate identity'); and sociologist Bryan S. Turner (believing Orientalism legitimized theories, beliefs and attitudes which impacted upon the orient's sociology, economics and geography).¹⁸³

From these critiques, Said's 1978 book *Orientalism* (and to a lesser degree its sequel

¹⁷⁹ Oxford Dictionaries, retrieved 20 February 2013,

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/orientalism>.

¹⁸⁰ A Macfie (ed), *Orientalism: a reader*, New York University Press, New York, 2000, pp. 1-2.

¹⁸¹ The Council of Vienne was the 15th ecumenical council of the Roman Catholic Church that planned the reform of its clergy, organised new crusades and dealt with the alleged crimes of the Knights Templar.

Dictionary.reference.com, retrieved 3 March, 2014, <dictionary.reference.com/browse/council+of+vienne>

¹⁸² R Irwin, *For lust of Knowing: Orientalists and their enemies*, Penguin, 2006, p. 6.

¹⁸³ *ibid.*, pp. 2,3. For more detailed discussions see A Abdel-Malek, 'Orientalism in Crisis', *Diogenes*, no. 44, winter 1963, pp. 104-12; A L Tibawi, 'English-Speaking Orientalists', *Islamic Quarterly*, no. 8, 1-4, 1964, pp. 25-45; Said, 1978, *op. cit*; B S Turner, *Marx and the end of Orientalism*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1978.

*Culture and Imperialism*¹⁸⁴) are considered the most significant as they stimulated and transformed discussions (especially in the fields of Middle Eastern and post colonial studies), remaining central to twenty-first century debates on the topic. In *Orientalism*, Said questions perception as a concept, the relationship between object and subject and the notion of 'self' and 'other' using a vast array of European philosophers, scholars, historians, political theorists, politicians, poets and travel writers.¹⁸⁵ Said's theoretical framework is based broadly on European philosophical thinking (derived from German philosophers G. W. F. Hegel and Friedrich Nietzsche), drawing specifically on Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory, Michel Foucault's discourse analysis and Antonio Gramsci's notion of cultural hegemony to create an all-inclusive, intra-disciplinary metanarrative. Said defines Orientalism as a 'particular epistemological framework' that enabled 'a western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.'¹⁸⁶ Orientalism, he states, must be viewed as a 'discourse' (in Foucauldian terms) to allow an understanding of how the West was able to 'manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively.'¹⁸⁷ This was made possible by the objectification of the East as a subject of 'knowledge', with its accompanied discourses having the semiotic power to 'represent' the Orient.

Said's theories in *Orientalism* are praised by many¹⁸⁸ for fundamentally teaching: vigilance against stereotypes and essentialism; interrogation of the roots and reasons beyond explanations and representations';¹⁸⁹ and aiming at identifying Orientalist discourse '... as a creative body of theory and practice', designed, consciously or unconsciously, to serve the interests of the European imperial powers.¹⁹⁰ However, some commentators are unsure of Said's promulgations¹⁹¹ and many are openly critical of aspects central to his

¹⁸⁴ E W Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Vintage Books, New York Toronto 1993.

¹⁸⁵ *ibid.*, preface. Said's list included: the Italian poet Dante; nineteenth-century scholars Disraeli, Flaubert, Lane and Burton; French orientalists d'Herblot and Anquetil-Duperron; British Arabists Lewis and Gibb.

¹⁸⁶ Said, 1978, *op. cit.*, pp. 2-3.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ Scholars supportive of Said include Schaar, Inden, Kabbani and King.

¹⁸⁹ P Rushworth, *Orientalism revisited*, 2012, assessed 2 February, 2013, <<http://www.albab.com/arab/articles/text/orientalism.htm>>

¹⁹⁰ Macfie, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

¹⁹¹ Commentators Halliday, Ahmad, Majeed, Sayyid, Behdad and Hourani in particular.

work.¹⁹² For example, Lewis (one of the Said's harshest critics) has accused his work of being:

... not only seriously flawed from an academic point of view - it deals only with a small part of the Arab world, ignores German, Austrian and Russian Orientalism and frequently displays ignorance of historical fact – it also displays prejudice, bias and obsession ... the arbitrary rearrangement of the historical background and the capricious choice of countries, persons, and writings ...¹⁹³

Kopf adds that Said's *Orientalism* 'lacks historical precision, comprehensiveness, and subtlety'¹⁹⁴ with al-'Azm commenting on '... Said's tendency to essentialize the Occident, in much the same way that he accuses the Orientalists of essentializing the Orient ... lend[ing] strength to the essentialistic categories of *Orient* and *Occident*...'¹⁹⁵ Furthermore, Said's argument that the 'Orient' was an imaginary textual construction has been criticized for ignoring the 'real Middle East ... [and] denying human agency' as the 'Orient' was also 'a site of debate rather than a silent reservoir for exploration of Western scholars and artists'.¹⁹⁶ More recently Irwin scathingly wrote: '... the qualities of *Orientalism* are those of a good novel. It is exciting, is packed with lots of sinister villains, as well as an outnumbered band of goodies, and the picture that it presents of the world is richly imagined, but essentially fictional.'¹⁹⁷

Of particular interest to this investigation are the arguments of MacKenzie in his book *Orientalism: History, theory and the arts*,¹⁹⁸ being one of the few contemporary works concentrating on the visual arts (a topic Said only briefly mentions) rather than literary

¹⁹² Bernard Lewis, Kopf, MacKenzie, Sadiq Jalal al-'Azm, Billie Melman, Sheldon Pollock, Clifford, Robert Irwin, Martin Kramer, Kanan Makiya, Pina Sardar, Ben Jelloun, Patrick Porter, Bart Moore-Gilbert and Keith Windshuttle to name a few.

¹⁹³ B Lewis, *Islam and the West*, Oxford University press, 1993, chapter 6. Writers and researchers considered to have played a significant role in conveying Eastern doctrines and traditions to the West include French metaphysician Guenon and Coomaraswamy, an Anglo-Ceylonese art historian (H Oldmeadow, 'The Debate about Orientalism', *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions*, World Wisdom Inc, 2004, retrieved 2 February 2014, www.worldwisdom.com/public/library/default.aspx).

¹⁹⁴ D Kopf, 'Hermeneutics versus history', *Journal of Asian studies*, issue 39, no. 3, 1980, pp. 495-506.

¹⁹⁵ S Jalal al-'Azm, 'Orientalism and Orientalism in reverse', *Khamsin*, issue 8, 1981, pp. 5-26. The 'Occident' is defined as the Western Hemisphere and European countries, while the 'Orient' comprised Eastern Mediterranean countries, particularly East Asia.

¹⁹⁶ Rushmworth, op. cit. See Dabashi's *Post-Orientalism: Knowledge and Power in Time of Terror* (Translation, 2009), for an examination of the Orientalist Goldziher, Benjamin (2003), op. cit. for an exploration of hybrid forms of visual culture in the French colonies of Algeria and Morocco and a case study of the Ottoman harem by Lewis (2004), op. cit., all questioning the West as the only agency and arbiter of meaning.

¹⁹⁷ Irwin, op. cit., p. 309.

¹⁹⁸ JM MacKenzie, *Orientalism; History, theory and the arts*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, New York, 1995.

texts. In his book, Mackenzie uses the term 'Orientalism' to describe a painting genre whose subject was predominately Middle Eastern and North African, which was initiated by the French in the early nineteenth-century, but later adopted by other European artists including the British.¹⁹⁹ The author looks at a range of arts (painting, architecture, design, drama, theatre, opera) with the aim to offer alternative readings of Orientalist works other than Said's (who he admits to admiring) by examining: '... the extent to which the Orientalist thesis can be revised in more positive and constructive ways by escaping the literary obsession and to consider the relationship among different cultural forms, both elite and popular in character.'²⁰⁰

MacKenzie stresses that factors such as specific historical moments, intention, production and audience must be considered in any analysis.²⁰¹ He cites the work of several women (Melman, Lowe, Suleri and Pratt) who he maintains have 'reversed' Said's binary oppositions by 'highlight[ing] mutual complicity and the interpenetrations of imperial and indigenous culture which can produce reversals in apparent power relationships'.²⁰² For example, MacKenzie agrees with Suleri's suggestion that the desires of the colonizer to search 'beyond the veil' for the Orient's secrets, was performed via the pictorializing depictions of Oriental women's faces and bodies.²⁰³ Importantly, MacKenzie singles out Nochlin's critique of Orientalist painters for adopting the 'Said/Nochlin approach' that views art works in terms of their 'imperial ideology and hegemonic approaches to the East'.¹ Others (such as Ibn Warraq) share MacKenzie's view but there are other commentators, however, who share Nochlin's Saidian approach. These include the critical investigations of Mason, Thévoz, Bohrer, and Richon, who highlight the many features of the 'exotic' that exist in Orientalist paintings.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁹ *ibid.*, xiii.

²⁰⁰ *ibid.*, xiv.

²⁰¹ *ibid.*, pp. 15.

²⁰² *ibid.*, p. 2.

²⁰³ S Suleri, *The rhetoric of English India*, 1993, cited in D Cherry, 'Algeria In and Out of the Frame: Visuality and Cultural Tourism in the Nineteenth-Century', N. Lübbren and D. Crouch (eds.), *Visual Culture and Tourism*, Berg, Oxford, New York, 2003, p. 46.

²⁰⁴ For detailed arguments see: MacKenzie, *op. cit.*, chapter 2; L Nochlin, 'The Imaginary Orient', *The Politics of Vision: essays on Nineteenth-Century art and Society*, New York, Harper, 1989, p. 43; R Kabbani, *Europe's Myths of the Orient: Devise and Rule*, London, Macmillan Press Ltd., 1986, p. 79; I Warraq, 'Linda Nochlin and the Imaginary Orient', *New English Review*, June, 2010, http://newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm/frm/65193/sec_id/65193; O Richon, 'Representation, the Despot

However, Reina Lewis has persuasively argued that MacKenzie's theories of Oriental painting are flawed on several levels: using 'artistic creativity' as a defence for 'unequal power relations of transcultural exchange'; playing down the significance of the broader imperial environment European artists worked in; failing to consider the racist and anti-Semitic consequences of the crusades when associating medieval chivalry with Arabic culture; and ignoring the challenge, from both Occidental and Oriental scholars, of the central Western belief of the harem as a 'sexual prison', acknowledged as 'one of the worst excesses of negative stereotyping'.²⁰⁵ Especially illuminating is Lewis' examination of the work, both visual and literary, of women in the early twentieth century who wrote and painted images of segregated Muslim life (especially inside the harem) for Occidental audiences. Lewis discusses the work of artists such as Elisabeth Jerichau-Baumann (Fig 10. *A fallah woman with her child*, 1878) and Henriette Browne (Fig 11. *A visit: harem interior, Constantinople*, 1860) who travelled extensively in the East and gained access to the harem, and conveyed a radically different world (often austere, even religious) when compared to the exotic and mysterious depictions by Delacroix, Gérôme and Ingres (see fig 6,7,8).²⁰⁶ Additionally, J F Lewis' *The hareem*, 1849, (fig 9) is an interesting example of a male painter who also depicts the harem as a place of 'decorous behavior and sartorial propriety'.²⁰⁷

and the Harem: Some questions around the academic Orientalist painting by Lecomte-du- Nouÿ (1885),
Europe and its Others, F Baker, P Hulme, M Iversen, D Loxley (eds.), Colchester, University of Essex, vol. 1,
1985, p. 1; S Edwards, 'Rethinking Orientalism, Again', *The Getty Iris*, 2010,
<http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/rethinking-orientalism-again/#sthash.eI0DTGJk.dpuf>; J Zoanna, 'The Sultan and
the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of "Jane Eyre,"' *Signs*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press,
vol. 18, no. 3 (Spring, 1993), pp. 598, retrieved 27 February, 2013, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174859>>.

²⁰⁵ R Lewis, 'Reviewing Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts by John M MacKenzie', *Oxford Art Journal*,
vol. 22, no. 2, 1999, pp. 133-36.

²⁰⁶ R Lewis, 'Cross-Cultural reiterations: Demetra Vaka Brown and the performance of the racialized female
beauty', *Performing the body/performing the text*, (ed.) A Jones and A Stephenson, Routledge 1999, pp. 56-75.

²⁰⁷ R Benjamin, 'The Oriental Mirage,' *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*, The Art Gallery of New South Wales,
1997, p. 16. For a more detailed analysis of Browne's work see J Kuehn, 'Exotic Harem Paintings: Gender,
Documentation, and Imagination,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, University of Nebraska Press, vol. 32,
no 2, 2011, pp. 31-63.



Fig 6 Eugene Delacroix *Odalisque* 1857. Source: http://www.fineartlib.info/gallery/p17_sectionid/33/p17_imageid/1064



Fig 7 Jean-Leon Gerome *Harem Pool* 1876. Source: http://www.fineartlib.info/gallery/p17_sectionid/33/p17_imageid/1084

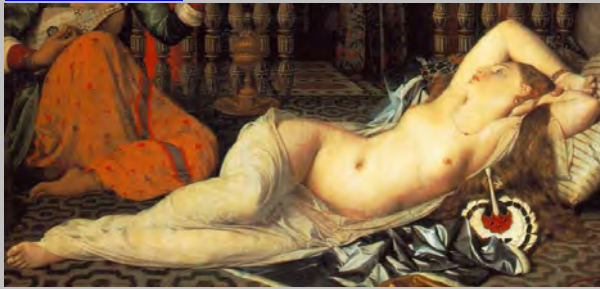


Fig 8 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Interior of the Harem with Odalisque* 1800. Source: <http://www.personal.kent.edu/~rberrong/aziyade/aziyade.htm>



Fig 9 J R Lewis *The Harem* 1849. Source: <http://www.ngv.vic.gov.au/essay/the-harem-painting-behind-the-scenes/>



Fig 10 Jerrichau-Baumann, *A Fallah woman with her child*, 1878. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elisabeth_Jerichau-Baumann



Fig 11 Henriette Brown, *A Visit: Harem Interior*, 1860. Source: <http://www.sakipsabancimuzesi.org/en/node/244>

Writers such as Benjamin also believe that Orientalism was not always:

... a one-way journey, a stream of visions frozen by the European travellers and carted home for consumption, without reference to the responses of those objectified in the process. A visual technology like painting, implemented in a colonial situation, becomes available to users other than those who imported it ...²⁰⁸

Furthermore, Benjamin argues a relationship existed as '... the cognitive and critical understanding of Orientalist painting modified the personal and governmental strategies that brought the paintings about, and vice versa'.²⁰⁹ Through a series of case studies, Benjamin examines a variety of hybridized forms of visual culture from the 1850s-1930s as a result of French colonization in Algeria and Morocco. Taking an intercultural interaction approach, he concentrates on European artists such as Étienne Dinet (see fig 16) and Algerian painters Azouaou Mammeri and Mohammed Racim, to illustrate compellingly how similar subjects, themes and techniques appealed to colonizer and colonized alike (see fig 12, 13).²¹⁰ Likewise, art historian Mary Roberts cites the case of Turkish Osman Hamdi Bey,²¹¹ for this indigenous artist's use of imaginary and pictorial devices similar to Gérôme (figs 14 and 15). Furthermore, Deborah Cherry argues that although vision was ordered through the strategies of 'pictorializing and 'framing' by the colonizer, Algerian artists were creating hybrid artworks that bred 'uncertainty' that suggests a 'disruptive force within visual representation that breaks the frame of Imperial authority as well as refusals to Western visual culture.'²¹²

²⁰⁸ Benjamin, 2003, op. cit., p. 4.

²⁰⁹ *ibid.*, p. 5.

²¹⁰ Benjamin, 2003, op. cit., chapter 9. Examples include: Mammeri's *Interior of the Kairouine Mosque, Fez*, (c. 1927), and Racim's *Dancer*, (c. 1922).

²¹¹ M Roberts, *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, J Beaulieu & M Roberts (eds.), Duke University press, Durham and London, 2002. For example: *Two Musician Girls* (1860) and *Tortoise Trainer*, 1906.

²¹² Cherry, op. cit.



Fig 12 Mohammed Racim *The Rais* 1931. Source: <http://www.orientalistart.net/Page2.html>



Fig 13 Azouaou Mammeri *Market in the walls of Oudayas* 1930s. Source: <http://www.cmooa.com/en/peinture-orientaliste-peinture-contemporaine-marocaine-art-islamique-bijoux-anciens?page=5>



Fig 14 Osman Hamdi Bey *The Scholar* 1878. Source: http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:OSMAN_HAMDY_BEY_TURKISH_1842-1910_THE_SCHOLAR.jpg

It is clear that the notion of an objectification of the East by the West is more complex and contentious than it appears when institutions and cultural systems, as well as individuals, are considered. What is illustrated through these disparate and polemical viewpoints on Orientalist literature and visual arts is that perception is always culturally, socially and historically situated, affecting the collecting and displaying practices and policies of both past and present European and non-European agencies.

Collecting Orientalist art today

Despite the controversy surrounding Orientalist works, collectors from North Africa, the near and Middle East are now dominating the art market for Oriental art. Benjamin succinctly queries the apparent paradox: ‘... if the Saidian critique of Orientalism rang true, why would collectors of Arab, Turkish or other non-Western ethnicities favour such demeaning imagery of their culture today?’ There are many instances of the ethnic, national and religious diversity of these non-Western collectors to support this view: the Maghrebian States of Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia include individuals of Turkish, Arab, Jewish and Berber descent; Arab Muslims from Saudi Arabia or Gulf States who are Jews of Turkish as well as Israeli nationality, Lebanese-Arab-Christians (Maronite), non-Arab Persian Muslims and Armenian Christians.²¹³

The cross-cultural exchange that MacKenzie and Benjamin have argued reveals the colonized as resistant and active agents with the capacity to influence cultural, military and everyday aspects of their existence under colonial rule. Artists such as Racim, Mammeri and Bey, who adopted Western pictorial techniques, highlight hybrid art forms that can affirm identity, reflect the complexity of cultural circumstances, and counteract or reinterpret European artistic canons.²¹⁴ Acquiring these portrayals of the past is viewed by many non-Western private collectors and institutions as reappropriating their heritage: ‘... the image that was fixed by the Occident in the Nineteenth century – the Orientals are now attempting to recover it’.²¹⁵ An interesting example is the incorporation of Orientalist art in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar, which was opened in 2008 as part of the liberalisation effort by the emir, Sheik Hammad, to showcase the achievements of Islamic civilisation through art. Among its exhibits is the provocative Orientalism collection centring on depictions of Arab life by nineteenth century French and English artists, including a caricature of a squatting North African warrior, paintings of Algerian women performing seductive dances and portraits of sultans and pashas by Italian artists from the sixteenth century. This surprising inclusion of Orientalist paintings can be viewed as perpetuating

²¹³ Benjamin, 1997, op. cit., pp. 32,39.

²¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 32-33.

²¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 33. Interview with Brahim ben Hossain, former Curator of Contemporary Art, Institut du Monde, Arabe, Paris, 1996.

colonial discourses but, alternatively, this museum's practices of display can be seen as an attempt to re-negotiate and re-interpret these images. Journalist Nicolai Ouroussoff observes:

to many Arabs they [paintings] are also vividly detailed historical records of a period that is otherwise undocumented. Realistic painting did not exist in the Arab world; photography was not common till the late 19th century. As Sheik Hassam saw it when he was building the collection, "these were the only records of a life that was fast fading from memory ... the paintings were not simply relics of cultural Imperialism ... you should think of all of this as part of a cultural movement, an exchange of ideas" ... the Orientalist museum suggests an understanding that the foundations of any healthy culture must be built on an unflinching appraisal of the past and the government here intends to put it up for public scrutiny²¹⁶

However, as previous discussions remind us, the reality or 'truth' of any depiction is contentious. The desire to capture a scene or a people through photographic or painted images often aimed at creating a 'timeless' and therefore 'frozen image', can quickly gain historical 'fixity' and 'iconic' status. The 'idealizing aesthetic' seen in such images are the result of an awareness of a past fast disappearing but scenes portrayed in the Orientalist paintings are not accurate documentary images but often examples of *exotica*. As Philippe Julian maintains 'Orientalism is only a phase in the cult of the Exotic'²¹⁷ and the 'exotic' as Mason reminds us 'is never at home ... [as to be exotic] traces of *home* have to be erased.'²¹⁸ Mason cites the example of scantily dressed women portrayed in paintings, especially the wearing of costumes low on the hips, as the result of artistic license on the part of the nineteenth century painters such as Delacroix, Gérôme and Ingres rather than conforming to 'ethnographic authenticity' attributed to artists such as Dinet.²¹⁹ These are 'imaginary' scenes, as the poses and costuming of these women were often copied from erotic, European studio-shot photographs of prostitutes and not those of the harem (where the European artist's gaze was not permitted) or everyday women in the street.²²⁰

²¹⁶ N Ouroussoff, 'Building Museums, and a fresh Arab Identity', *New York Times*, 26 November 2010, retrieved 21 March 2011, www.nytimes.com/2010/11/27/arts/design/27museums.htm.

²¹⁷ P Jullian, *The Orientalists: European Painters of Eastern Scenes*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1977, p. 19.

²¹⁸ Mason, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

²¹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 129.

²²⁰ *ibid.*



Fig 15 Jean-Leon Gérôme *The Slave Market* 1866.
Source:
<https://mydailyartdisplay.wordpress.com/2012/09/14/the-slave-market-by-jean-leon-gerome/>

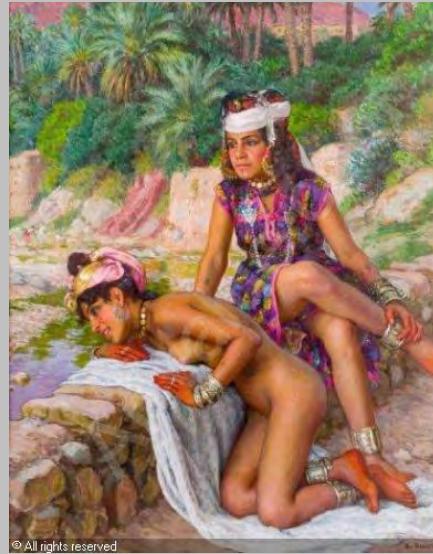


Fig 16 Alphonse-Étienne Dinet *Young Swimmers at the edge of the Wadi*. Source:
<http://www.artvalue.com/default.aspx?ID>

It is hard to separate these works from their symbolic associations with the superiority and control of colonial authorities; a hierarchical system that can be seen as being perpetuated in modern times by collections such as Sheik Hammad's in his museum in Doha. Seen from this perspective, the collecting and displaying of Orientalist works may actually be maintaining adverse stereotypical images of Islamic faith and Arab-Muslims generally. The postcolonial exotic as a cultural representation, in this sense, then runs the risk of becoming part of the commodification of cultural difference in the 'otherness industry ... tied to the market-driven societies of modernity.'²²¹

However, exoticism is 'at best an unstable system of containment' Mason²²² argues, as it can never be 'definitive or exhaustive' and is continually 'refashioned' through a process where conflict may 'unsettle as much as reassure, dislodge authority as much as reconfirm.'²²³ Visual culture on display is only 'exotic' to the 'tourist gaze'²²⁴ as to be the

²²¹ Huggan, op. cit., pp. 423-424.

²²² Mason, op. cit., p. 147.

²²³ Bhabha, *The location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994.

²²⁴ J Urry, *The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies*, Sage Publications, London, California and New Dehli, 1990.

'Other' it must be unfamiliar. To the majority populations of Islamic and Arab nations these representations are traditions and rituals of the everyday and are familiar and therefore not exotic at all. Acknowledgement and ownership of these cultural representations may operate as a form of 'strategic exoticism,'²²⁵ opening up what Bhabha calls a 'third space'²²⁶ that can potentially disrupt and destabilize authority that allows for 'conceptualizing and international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism with the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of cultures hybridity.'²²⁷ This rhetorical 'third space' that accommodates cultural hybridity is also a space of mimicry and ambivalence that can also threaten '*normalized* knowledges and disciplinary powers'²²⁸... revers[ing] the effects of colonial disavowal, so that other 'denied' knowledges enter upon the dominant discourse and estrange the basis of its authority.'²²⁹

Similarly, Spivak argues that 'the planned epistemic violence of the imperialistic project' was also a 'subject constituting project' that requires new narratives that can 'answer one back,' making visible the place of the subaltern subject.²³⁰ Young believes the approach suggested by Spivak and Bhabha provides an alternative to Orientalism and the exotic Other (which Said is criticised for failing to suggest) by exploiting the 'ambivalence' of Orientalist discourse, allowing for the possibility of inverting 'the dominant structures of knowledge and power without simply reproducing them.'²³¹ In this way, stereotypical images that symbolized the erotic, mysterious East can be seen through a decolonized framework, in regard to the Islamic traditions, rituals, and customs.

These perspectives resonate with Young's observations concerning the wearing of the veil that can represent 'control or defiance, oppression or autonomy, patriarchy or non-Western communal values' depending on 'who you are.'²³² Empowerment and agency to individuals outside the dominant regime was possible even in colonial times, with Franz

²²⁵ Huggan calls 'strategic exoticism' a practice 'designed as much to challenge as to profit from consumer needs' (op. cit., p. 423).

²²⁶ Bhabha, op. cit., p. 38.

²²⁷ *ibid.*

²²⁸ *ibid.*, p. 86.

²²⁹ H Bhabha, 'Signs taken for wonders: Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree outside Dehli, May, 1817', Baker et al, 1985, p.98.

²³⁰ Spivak, op. cit., p. 131

²³¹ R Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Routledge, London and New York, 1990, p. 173.

²³² R Young, *Postcolonialism: A very short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 82.

Fanon writing that the veiled woman ‘who sees without being seen frustrates the colonizer.’²³³ By rejecting a ‘certain set of statements’ based on the stereotypical ‘Arab-Muslim’, the image of an individual existing within a specific cultural/social/religious/historical environment replaces a definitive collective notion of what it means to be ‘Islamic’ that is all inclusive: a frozen and timeless representation that in reality is completely ‘untrue.’²³⁴ Through ‘strategic exoticism’ and agency there is the possibility that ‘exoticist myths’ can be redefined and the idea of images continually deferring back to an unending chain of representations is resolved.

With many of the Orientalist works depicting the figure, ownership of these works by Muslim collectors is often problematic. However, it appears the prohibiting of human images (aniconism) as dictated in the Hadith (collection of gestures, acts and sayings of the Prophet Mohammad and second source of law after the Qur’an) seems to have not always been adhered to. Art works with human depictions have been part of non-Western collections since the sixteenth century when the courtly aristocratic North Indian Mogul rulers and Savafid Persian princes privately commissioned illuminated manuscripts. During the nineteenth century the Ottoman court similarly commissioned portraits of significant figures from European and Turkish artists; the beys of Tunis also employed similar practices.²³⁵ For example, the reformist politician and Ottoman diplomat Khalil Bey’s collection of contemporary French art in the 1860s included works by Gérôme, Delacroix and Ingres’ including several well-known erotic paintings: Ingres’ *Turkish bath* and a replica of *Grand odalisque*, Courbet’s infamous lesbian-themed nudes *Origin of the World*, *The sleepers*, *Jealous Venus pursuing Psyche*, as well nostalgic and culturally positive works Fromentin’s *Tailors in front of the Mosque*, Chasseuriau’s *Combat of Arab Horsemen* and *A Cairo Street* by Marilhat (figs 17-22). However, Benjamin comments that the female nude is consistently the only genre that Muslim collectors habitually shun.²³⁶

²³³ *ibid.*, p. 88.

²³⁴ *ibid.*, p. 82.

²³⁵ Benjamin, 1997, *op. cit.*, p. 33, 68. The beys of Tunis were the monarchs of Tunisia who ruled from 1705 till the abolition of monarchy in 1957.

²³⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 33-34. The reluctance to invest in female nudes by Muslim collectors is confirmed in Benjamin’s interviews with Lynne Thornton, art historian and sales room consultant and Brain McDermott, Director of the Mathaf Gallery, London, 1995.



Fig 17 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *Turkish bath* 1862. Source: <http://alejandromerola.tumblr.com/post/81620416966>



Fig 18 Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres *La Grande Odalisque* 1814. Source: http://www.artble.com/artists/jean_auguste_dominique_ingres/paintings/la_grande_odalisque



Fig 19 Gustave Courbet *Origin of the World* 1866. Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/iholczmann/art-ihs/>



Fig 20 Antoine-Georges-Prosper Marilhat *A Cairo Street* 1833. Source: <http://www.artexpertswebsite.com/pages/artists/marilhat.php> Source: <http://www.artexpertswebsite.com/pages/artists/marilhat.php>



Fig 21 Theodore Chasseuriau *Combat of Arab horsemen* 1856. Source: <http://www.pubhist.com/w13851>



Fig 22 Eugene Fromentin *Tailor in front of Mosque* 1850s. Source: <http://www.pubhist.com/w16345>

A collector during the 1920s that also favoured Orientalist works was wealthy Egyptian politician Mahmoud Khalil who acquired works by Gérôme, Belly, Fromentin, Marilhat, and Dauzat with a preference for Egyptian scenes that he bought fundamentally for their 'decorative value'.²³⁷ Whatever the personal or profit-making motives for collecting, Middle Eastern buyers such as Bey and Khalil were both seeking to emulate the European appetite for collecting art and cautiously asserting their ethnic identity through depictions of their pre-colonial heritage. Despite the tendency to populate local museums with European oil paintings, art created by European travellers and works by indigenous artists sold locally and were inspired by ethnic art traditions and modernism.²³⁸

In the early 1970s exhibitions (driven by museums and auction houses), revisionist research/scholarship and publications, and a small group of collectors revived the market for Orientalist works that had fallen out of favour for almost fifty years. Initially, French collectors bought paintings as nostalgia or in a spirit of repossessing their colonial past and were interested in works from North Africa (especially colonial Algeria). However, an exhibition in 1975, *Mahmals et Attatichs*, aimed at developing a wider audience selling primarily to museums and individuals such as Edmonde Charles-Roux (whose family had been associated with Egypt since the nineteenth century), Yves Saint-Laurent and Alain Lesieutre, an art dealer. In addition, major auction houses Drouot (Paris) and Christie's and Sotheby's (New York/London) began concentrating on Orientalist works. Buyers included museum curators and private collectors from North Africa and Turkey; still a dominant group in today's market.²³⁹ Increasing interest from the Arab world is illustrated by the 1978 *Eastern Encounters* exhibition that sold forty per cent of the artworks to Arab clientele. Collectors were often Arabs living in Europe, and later, from Saudi Arabia or the Gulf States who bought at auctions and salerooms through agents representing their interests. The majority of Arab-Muslim buyers interested in Oriental art are private collectors who rarely resell their acquisitions as Thornton and McDermott confirm: 'the idea of selling things to buy other paintings is very much a Western concept of the market.'²⁴⁰

²³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 34, citing G Lacambre.

²³⁸ *ibid.*

²³⁹ *ibid.*, p. 35, citing an interview with Thornton and Soustiel.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 36, citing interview with Thornton and McDermott.

Museums in Qatar, Kuwait and Bahrain, on the other hand, tend to shy away from Orientalist themed works and concentrate on collecting traditional Islamic artifacts. Furthermore, non-western collectors generally prefer realistic, ethnographically accurate works that depict cultural sites or everyday life, while Western buyers have national preferences (for example the British prefer Lewis, the French Renault).²⁴¹ Though several works by the Algerian-Turkish indigenous painter Racim have been purchased by collectors from the Gulf States, Benjamin suggests this may be due to their themes (Qur'anic illuminations and Andalusia Moorish society), stressing the fact that during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries Europeans were generally prohibited from entering the Persian Gulf region and Arabia and, until recently, paintings portraying the human figure were banned by conservative and traditional rulers. Paradoxically, European depictions of a lost world (traditional religious, domestic, social and recreational scenes) are the only cultural and historical documents available to Arab-Muslim collectors. For example, in the opening speech by the Sultan of Oman (His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said), at an exhibition of Orientalist paintings in 1995 in Muscat, Oman, states his hope that the display will counteract the process of modernization by supporting '...the noble aim of preserving unique Omani traditions, cultural and folkloric heritage...'²⁴²

Christie's auction house in London achieved record sales for Orientalism paintings in 2008, with fierce competition from European, Indian, American and the Middle Eastern buyers. For example, Gérôme's *Veiled Circassian Woman* was bought for over two million pounds. However, Juliet Highet cites McDermott from Mathaf Gallery London, stating most of his clients would consider paintings depicting nudes and slave markets as 'not seen as genuine...'²⁴³ The nearby Tate museum was displaying *The Lure of the East: British Orientalist Painting*, with 120 paintings destined for venues in the East: Istanbul, Turkey and Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates. Art writer and poet Raficq Abdulla was invited to comment on the exhibition and believes the exhibition was 'a focus, a module upon which people of different cultures can exchange perspectives and prejudices, becoming more

²⁴¹ *ibid.*, p. 36.

²⁴² *ibid.*

²⁴³ J Highet, 'Behind Orientalism's Veil', *Saudi Aramco World*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2009, retrieved 20 February, 2013, pp. 16-23, <<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200902/behind.orientalism.s.veil.htm>>

aware of who they are- and who they are not- in a fast globalizing world.²⁴⁴ Abdulla adds, 'I get bored with this "gaze" business ... you are different, so you get looked at. But how you are perceived is vital ... [being objectified] is indecent and demeaning, though most Orientalism is not offensive.'²⁴⁵ Ali Can Ertug, Senior Vice President of Sotheby's believes many Orientalist works '... are incredibly honouring of our heritage ... [as a Turk] I find the Orientalists' genuine interest flattering and valuable ...' Furthermore, Ertug maintains paintings which 'eroticize the Middle east and can be erroneous ... are questioned by Middle eastern buyers ... those artists who are truthful get better prices.'²⁴⁶ Interestingly, many Middle Eastern women are purchasing Orientalist art for their homes with McDermott advising an audience of over fifty women at the Abu Dhabi Foundation in 2009 on the topic of collecting Orientalism. With the increased buying power of museums in the Middle East, it appears that the growth in museum investment is being fuelled by an increasing cultural awareness of their heritage despite being interpreted through Western eyes.²⁴⁷

Islamic collections as commodities

By the late nineteenth-century, many European art dealers and collectors had accumulated a vast array of non-Western artifacts (see appendix 3 for details). As the attraction and acquisition of Japanese art began to wane in the 1890s, agents such as critic and art dealer Siegfried Bing and his group, which included Henri Vever, Raymond Koechlin, Charles Gillot and Gaston Migeon, became Islamic art connoisseurs. Vever, for example, encountered and became an enthusiastic collector while travelling in Turkey, Bukhara, Caucasus and Samarqand while Bing contributed to the spread of the art nouveau style through his displays of Islamic glassware, textiles, jewellery, book design and furniture. Others such as Martin combined collecting, scholarship and dealing to great advantage.²⁴⁸ However, the increased demand for Islamic objects made quality artifacts harder to obtain and often resulted in excavations of a clandestine nature at sites at Susa, Rayy and Sultanbad in Iran, Fustat in Egypt and Raqqa in Syria.

²⁴⁴ M Carey, MS Graves, 'Introduction: the historiography of Islamic art and architecture, 2012', *Journal of Historiography*, op. cit., p. 6, retrieved 13 December, 2012, p.6, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/introgravesabdcarey2.pdf>>.

²⁴⁵ *ibid.*

²⁴⁶ *ibid.*

²⁴⁷ *ibid.*

²⁴⁸ Vernoit, (ed), *Discovering Islamic Art: scholars, collectors and collections 1850-1950*, I B Tauris New York, London, 2000, pp. 29-30.

By the beginning of the twentieth-century Armenian dealers were sourcing items from Iran and Turkey and selling them to European collectors. Hagop Kevorkian and Dikran Khan Kelekian²⁴⁹ were particularly influential art dealers who commissioned books chronologically detailing their collections to disseminate knowledge and understanding of Islamic art. Other dealers who were active in Europe included Armenians Sivadjian and Kalebjian, and Joseph Soustiel, who had connections with Jewish and Greek communities in the Middle East. In London, the collections of Indian art remained prominent, often owned by a variety of retired officials and representatives of colonial government such as Henry Bathurst Hanna, Victor Goloubew, Ananda Coomaraswamy, Thomas Holbein Hendley, Charles Hercules Read and Mrs Jopling Rowe.²⁵⁰

The aftermath of the First World War, then the Depression of the 1930s, quelled enthusiasm for Islamic arts and the market went quiet until the 1960s, when the investment value of art as a commodity was unquestionable.²⁵¹ However, in the decades after the Second World War, American interest in the Middle East steadily increased due to the 1948 formation of the State of Israel and the world's reliance on petroleum from the region. The largest permanent collection of Islamic art in America occurred with the opening of the new Islamic wing at the Metropolitan Museum New York (hereafter referred to as the Met) in 1975. The dozen galleries were organized by regions and chronologically from the early eras of Egypt and Syria to India in the eighteenth-century, making this a rare encyclopaedic display for its time.²⁵²

Interest in Islamic art was also evident in Europe, with the 1971 major exhibition of Islamic art at the Musee du Louvre and the ambitious *Festival of Islam* exhibition in London in 1976. The London exhibition was the largest since the 1910 Munich display,²⁵³ featuring more than six hundred works from twenty-four countries in Europe, North America and the Middle East. Many publications resulted from this venture that reinvigorated curiosity in

²⁴⁹ For a detailed case study of D G Kelekian's activities generally and role as an art dealer to American collector Henry Walters who bequeathed his substantial collection of Western and Eastern art to the City of Baltimore in 1931, see M S Simpson, 'A gallant Era: Henry Walters, Islamic Art and the Kelekian Connection', *Ars Orientalis*, op. cit., pp. 91-112.

²⁵⁰ Vernoit, op. cit., pp. 30-31.

²⁵¹ Ibid., p. 32.

²⁵² SS Blair, JM Bloom, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no. 1, March 2003, pp. 156-7.

²⁵³ See appendix 3 for details.

Islamic art and by the early 1980s London had surpassed New York as the central art market for wealthy collectors, many from the Middle East.²⁵⁴

Conflicts since the 1970s in Iran, Afghanistan, Iraq and many other regions of the Middle East and Central Asia have affected the sourcing of new items for the collector and museum alike, and investors now look to North Africa, Spain and South East Asia for their Islamic acquisitions. European museums such as the London's Victoria and Albert and British Museum, the Louvre in Paris and the Museum für islamische Kunst in Berlin have not had the large privately-funded budgets of their American counterparts but, as their main collections were formed in earlier times, they have continued to collect at a steady, if not diminished, rate. The David Collection in Copenhagen is a rare exception with its enormous range of objects acquired by Jewish lawyer C. L. David and now run by the C. L. David Foundation and Collection since his death in 1960.²⁵⁵

There were few significant private collectors of Islamic art during the 1970s besides Khalili: Sheikh Nasser al-Sabah of Kuwait, Edmund de Unger in London, Kuwaiti Jasim al-Homaizi and Hashem Khosrovani. A decline in the Turkish art market and the Iranian Revolution in 1979 lowered prices and drew some new players into the market, especially the Sultan of Brunei and Sheikh Saud al-Thani of Qatar.²⁵⁶ Since 9/11 and the Iraq war of 2003, however, interest in many art forms (both ancient and modern Islamic and International art) has been significant. Cultural production backed by foreign capital and the establishment of branches of auction houses in the Middle East (such as Christie's, Sotheby's, Phillips De Pury and Bonham's) have further propelled the region internationally.²⁵⁷

By 2007 the economic wealth of the Middle East was so buoyant that the continued rise of interest in Islamic artifacts was creating an emerging, and vibrant global art market.²⁵⁸ Sara Plumbly, Christie's London office director of sales, stated 'all eyes the world over have turned to the Middle East;' this is evident in the variety of individuals and institutions collecting including those from the Middle East itself, India, Turkey and Iranians living

²⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 157

²⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 157.

²⁵⁶ Moore, *op. cit.*

²⁵⁷ Mejcher-Atassi & Swartz, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

²⁵⁸ E Gibbs, cited in S Nambair & M Brown, 'Limited supply, soaring prices for Islamic art Investing Marketplace by Bloomberg', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 July 2007, retrieved 31 January, 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

abroad such as Khalili.²⁵⁹ It appears that the United Arab Emirates, governments of Kuwait and Qatar along with private buyers, are competing to conserve their heritage and increase collections in museums.²⁶⁰ Especially since the opening of the Museum of Islamic art in Doha Qatar, rare and top quality items are now sought after and sold at a premium. As CEO of investment house *Fine Arts Fund* Phillip Hoffman predicts: ‘... we anticipate that with the new museum projects in the Middle East in countries such as Qatar and Abu Dhabi, there will be a much more dynamic environment in the Islamic market and collectors will become more active’.²⁶¹ This is especially true with Abu Dhabi’s plan over the next ten years to build the Saadiyat Island complex (meaning ‘the island of happiness’ or ‘place of enlightenment’ in Arabic) to house the Zayed National Museum and a branch of the Louvre and the Guggenheim with an estimated cost of \$544 million; a project on an incredible scale designed to rival European institutions and remake the UAE as one of the world's major cultural capitals.²⁶²

Charles Pockock, managing partner at the Meen gallery in Dubai, warns museum collectors should ‘buy back the culture now, before it is too expensive’ as a small number of big investors are influencing auction prices. Items bought at auctions are rarely resold as it appears the majority of museums and private buyers are building permanent collections. ‘Very few of the people buying are doing it for investment’, Lucian de Guise, acting head curator of the Islamic art museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur explains, ‘it has got to do with personal aesthetic and cultural pride.’²⁶³ Similarly, Alice Bailey, department head for Islamic and Indian art at Bonhams London, recommends: ‘it is a great time to start forming a collection ... [as] a collection will have a higher value than individual art’.²⁶⁴

Often auction houses were in the habit of approaching well-known collectors such as Khalili with pre-auction ‘special packs’ of up-coming items for sale reinforcing Khalili’s claim that ‘he draws things to him; he doesn’t have to go looking for them’.²⁶⁵ However, this practice is becoming a thing of the past. According to Khalili, ten to twenty years ago

²⁵⁹ CNBC.com, ‘Islamic Art: More than religious artifacts’, 2012, retrieved 2 March 2013, <<http://www.cnbc.com>>.

²⁶⁰ Gibbs, op. cit.

²⁶¹ CNBC.com, op. cit.

²⁶² Ibid.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ryan and Nassar, op. cit., lines 15,2.

auction houses were selling ten to fifteen museum quality items out of a possible two hundred to three hundred items; now they have one-two pieces and twenty-five to thirty bidders. 'Anyone who says Islamic art is expensive is dreaming' he states, 'the Muslim world is not short of money, but the world is short of objects. This is only the beginning'.²⁶⁶ Khalili laments that collections like his are now impossible to create these days: 'With all the money in the world, and all the time in the world, you could not put twenty per cent of this collection together now ... the chapter is closed'.²⁶⁷

The importance of collections and their impact as a series rather than singular items is crucial to the politics of display. Gabar highlights the role of the collecting process and its effect on displaying Islamic objects: '[T]hey are in fact to be seen as ethnographic documents, closely tied to life, and more meaningful in large numbers and series than as single creations ...'²⁶⁸ However, he does qualify this observation, as though objects are viewed as part of a group (multiple), they became singular through the process of collection or 'radical detachment', where they are reclassified and exhibited as art.²⁶⁹

In line with the upsurge in collecting Islamic art, many European and American museums have revitalized collections, highlighting exhibitions of Islamic art in an attempt to promote greater cross-cultural understanding between the Judeo-Christian and Muslim worlds. Only a month after 9/11, the Met displayed three of the largest-ever Islamic art exhibits: *Treasure of the World: Jewelled Arts of India in the Age of the Mughuls, Glass of the Sultans* and *Courtly Radiance: Metalwork from Islamic India*. The perceived social function of these displays, occurring at this 'most opportune moment', was to 'help lighten the shadow of violence that has tainted Islam over the past few weeks'.²⁷⁰

Many exhibitions were to follow including: *Passport to Paradise: Sufi Arts in Urban Senegal* (LA, UK, 2003); *Urban Islam* (Amsterdam 2004, Basel 2006); *Beirut to Baghdad* (Sydney, Australia, 2005); *Inside Iran* (2006); *Venice et l'Orient* (a collaboration between MOMA Arab World Institute [IMA] in 2006); *Cosmophilia: Islamic Art from the David*

²⁶⁶ Khalili quoted in S Nambair, M. Brown, 'Limited supply, soaring prices for Islamic art Investing Marketplace by Bloomberg', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 July 2007, retrieved 31 January 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

²⁶⁷ S. Moore, 'A leap of faith', *Financial Times*, 12 May 2012, retrieved 7 June 2013, <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/f526cb06-98f5-11e1-9d3-00144feabdc0.html>>.

²⁶⁸ O Gabar 'An art of the object', *Artforum*, vol. 14, no. 7, March 1976, pp. 25, 39

²⁶⁹ *ibid.*, p. 25.

²⁷⁰ DD Ali, *islamonline*, 21 October 2001, retrieved 8 January 2008, <IslamOnline.net>.

Collection, Copenhagen (Boston, US, 2006); *Made in Palestine* (New York, 2006); and the travelling exhibition *Building Islam in Detroit* (2008). Several displays were controversial such as: *Islamic art and patronage: treasures from Kuwait* (AGNSW, 2002), which was considered by some community members as 'an affront to our Christian sensibilities' after the terror of 9/11.²⁷¹; *Treasures of Palestine* (Powerhouse Museum, 2004), *Without Boundaries: Seventeen Ways of Looking* (MOMA, 2006); and *Palestine 1948* (Amsterdam, 2008), provoking debate in numerous communities concerning the Palestine-Israeli conflict.

Other initiatives aimed at bridging the cultural divide between East and West included collection updates such as the Victoria and Albert's newly refurbished Islamic Gallery in 2006 (funded by Saudi national Mohammed Jameel) and the opening of the International Museum of Islamic Cultures in Jackson, Mississippi, US in 2008. Of note, was the Louvre's new Islamic wing opened in 2005 at the cost of twenty million dollars with a second sixty million dollar wing added in 2009.

Case study: Nassar D. Khalili: 'Cultural ambassador of Islam'

Most private collections today are either the result of collecting a few objects based on their artistic merit (connoisseurship) or take the philatelic tactic of assembling objects into a complete series.²⁷² Khalili appears to combine both these collecting traditions in his more than 30-year quest to purchase, preserve and display precious and rare art works. Khalili falls into the passionate collector category: '... if you don't have a passion you are like a fire without a flame ... there's no norm. There's an element of surprise that always gives you the adrenalin ...'²⁷³; confessing the art works 'talk' to him - he affectionately relates: 'I can't say no to that [object], look how wonderful it is ... got a personal attachment to every single piece'²⁷⁴ ... They pick me up. I don't pick them up'.²⁷⁵

Khalili holds firm to the belief that 'you are born a collector. You die a collector. You never stop'.²⁷⁶ He is a self-proclaimed scholar, benefactor and collector, a 'devout', Iranian-

²⁷¹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 26, 2002, retrieved 2 January 2008, <http://www.smh.com.au>.

²⁷² T Shah, 'The Khalili Collection of Islamic art', *Saudi Aramco World*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1994, pp. 38-47, retrieved 11 November, 2012,

<<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/199406/the.khalili.collection.of.islamic.art.htm>>.

²⁷³ Arts and Antiques, 'Khalili makes dazzling debut', *Arabian Knight*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2008, p.60.

²⁷⁴ N Nassar quoting Khalili, Ryan and Nassar, op. cit., line 15.

²⁷⁵ E Ellison 'In Pursuit of the finer things: The art of collecting art Part 1: Private Collections', *The Global Edition of the New York Times*, 2 October 2010.

²⁷⁶ S Rocker, 'Artistic bridge- building', *Jewish Chronicle online*, 2007, retrieved 2 January 2008, <<http://www.thejc.com>>.

born Jewish billionaire who frequently quotes an old Persian proverb (often used to decorate art works) as his mantra '... all possessions are God's alone: we are mere custodians ... ownership is a myth'.²⁷⁷ Khalili has purchased a staggering 20,000 objects from the 7th to the 13th centuries from diverse Islamic countries, including over 500 of the world's rarest Qur'ans. He has several smaller collections of Japanese art (Meiji period 1868-1912), Spanish damascened metalwork (1850-1900), Indian and Swedish textiles (1700-1900) and Russian enamels (1700-2000) but decided to concentrate on collecting Islamic art as it was 'an underappreciated area with a vital but frequently misunderstood message.'²⁷⁸ To Khalili, collecting art is like:

Creating a huge, beautiful picture made out of different pieces, like a jigsaw. You only appreciate the picture when all the pieces of the puzzle are put in place²⁷⁹ ... like a symphony ... every object has its note and the combination of them all makes the music. There is not much point just having the lead violin and the piano.²⁸⁰

Having grown up in a family of art dealers, Khalili believes collecting was 'in his blood'.²⁸¹ By the age of ten he was already trading banknotes and stamps, acquiring his first artifact (a nineteenth century Qajar lacquer pen box – a gift from a family friend) on a buying trip with his father when he was thirteen. Khalili proved to be a child prodigy, publishing his first book at fourteen detailing the lives of 225 world geniuses which became an instant best seller translated into many languages and is still in print today. He went on to complete a PhD at the University Of London in 1988 based on his own collection of Persian Lacquer ware. During the 1980s and early 1990s Khalili amassed a fortune dealing in art and real estate in London with the belief that 'Art is for passion ... real estate is for financial gain'²⁸² and that you cannot call yourself a collector but a 'selector' if objects are purchased for personal enjoyment alone;²⁸³ a statement which confirms his place in the 'romantic collector'. Khalili further defines his role as a collector as fulfilling five criteria:

²⁷⁷ A Lycett, 'Islamic collection offered to Britain', *The Middle East*, no. 218, 1992, p. 50, retrieved 3 January, 2008, <<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au>>

²⁷⁸ P McLeod, 'The arts of Islam: special advertising report', *Weekend Australian*, 23 June 2007.

²⁷⁹ M Gayford, 'Healing the World with Art', *Independent Newspapers UK*, 16 April 2004, retrieved 7 June 2013, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>

²⁸⁰ Moore, op. cit.

²⁸¹ P McLeod, 'Magical Forest to share with the world', *Weekend Australian*, 7 June, 2007.

²⁸² The Australian, 'Collectors beyond Frontier', 3 May, 2007, retrieved 22 June 2008, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>

²⁸³ *Knowledge @ Wharton*, 'Contemporary art has become like buying shares', 12 June, 2012, retrieved 22 June 2012, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/Arabic/printer_friendly.cfm?articleid=2835>.

... to purchase art, to conserve art, to research art, and to publish and to exhibit art. When you have done this, you have done something for humanity. Don't call yourself a collector if you buy a painting because you're rich ... because that is for your benefit, it doesn't benefit anyone else ... never mix investment with what you are doing as a mission in life ...²⁸⁴

Khalili's dedication to promoting cross-cultural understanding beyond collecting art is immense and widespread. He holds chairs and professorships at numerous universities, and has been dubbed by high-ranking Iranian officials as 'the cultural ambassador of Islam', being recently named a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador in October 2012 for his 'promotion of peace among nations through culture and education'.²⁸⁵ He is an advocate of interfaith dialogue, establishing the Maimondes Foundation, for which he was made a Knight of the Equestrian order of Pope St. Sylvester in 2004. The organisation encourages peace and understanding between Jews and Muslims, and expresses Khalili's belief that 'there is more that unites the two religions than divides them'.²⁸⁶ Khalil's father established the Khalili Family trust called the Nour Foundation (meaning 'light' in Turkish, Arabic and Persian) which owns the collections and is responsible for the production of books and catalogues designed to educate at the local and global level. For example, the Foundation published an encyclopaedic time line detailing the history of Islamic art in 2008 which he sent to centres in the Muslim World and distributed 40,000 copies to British schools.²⁸⁷

Khalili also established the Khalili Research Centre (KRC) for art and material culture of the Islamic societies of the Middle East and of their non-Muslim members and neighbours at Oxford University in 2005 along with the Brunei Gallery (funded by the Sultan of Brunei) to enable students studying at the centre to have access to real objects and its accompanying digitized data base. The KRC is part of the Faculty of Oriental Studies within the University, and is administered by a director and a management committee appointed by and answerable to the Board of the Faculty.²⁸⁸ As a gesture to his birthplace, Khalili co-founded the Iran Heritage Foundation, a UK non-political charity with the aim of encouraging and conserving the cultures, history and languages of Iran and the Persian world, to improve the West's image of Iran with Khalili suggesting that:

²⁸⁴ Arts and Antiques, 'Khalili makes dazzling debut', *Arabian Knight*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2008, pp. 61,64.

²⁸⁵ Unescopres, 16 October 2012, retrieved 20 October 2012, <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/director_general_design>.

²⁸⁶ McLeod, op. cit.

²⁸⁷ *The Times*, retrieved 20 May 2011, <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/richlist/person/0,,46952,00.html>>.

²⁸⁸ Khalili Family Trust website, retrieved 20 September 2010, <<http://www.khalili.org/foundrs-profle.html>>.

Iranians were the custodians of one of the great empires before they became Muslim. They are one of the most intelligent groups of people in the world; the poetry, philosophy, medicine, culture is virtually unrivalled ... don't judge the [Iranian] people in politics. Judge them by what they have done for humanity.²⁸⁹

Khalili's mission to bridge cultural divides even extends to borrowing the Arsenal football field in London on Sunday mornings to host soccer games between nine to ten year old Muslim and Jewish children.²⁹⁰

'Art' Khalili believes 'unites mankind'²⁹¹. His philosophical argument for collecting Islamic art hinges on a saying from the Qur'an 'Truly, God is beautiful and loves all beauty', and that in Islam beauty is considered a quality of the 'divine' which permeates its religion as well as aspects of daily life.²⁹² Khalili insists he collects Islamic art not because it is Islamic but because it is 'the most beautiful'. He defines Islamic art as 'art produced by Muslim artists for Muslim patrons ... [and] is not exclusively religious', challenging the misconception that all Islamic art is religious.²⁹³ Khalili argues that unlike Christian art which is ninety-five per cent religious, Islamic art is over ninety per cent secular, which is one of the main misunderstandings concerning the culture: 'One of the strengths of the culture' he states 'is that it cannot be labelled ...'²⁹⁴ This is an interesting comment as Khalili is suggesting that while Islamic art is beyond 'labelling', Christian artifacts do not qualify based on the percentage of religious content. If his aim is to find a common humanity through the universal language of art, setting up dichotomies such as the above is surely reinforcing rather than dispelling the notion of an East-West divide? This is the same accusation levelled against Said discussed earlier in this chapter: essentializing the Occident in the same way the Occident essentializes the Orient.

Furthermore, Khalili maintains that Islamic art is a presentation of humanity, revealing the harmony between the spiritual and the practical through the Muslim and Arab world's immense achievements in arts, astronomy, mathematics and science; a contribution

²⁸⁹ B Adams, 'Islam's Jewish envoy Billionaire an unlikely promoter of Islamic art', *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong, 1 July, 2007, retrieved 1 July 2007, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

²⁹⁰ Forbes.com, Nasser Khalili, *The World's Richest People*, retrieved 2 December 2006, <www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/CZAK.html>.

²⁹¹ AGNSW Events, AGNSW website, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>.

²⁹² Khalili Trust Collection website, op. cit.

²⁹³ *ibid.*

²⁹⁴ S Lauder, 'The World Today- World's largest private collection of Islamic art in Sydney', *ABC online*, 7 June, 2007, retrieved 28 July 2007, <<http://www.abc.net.au>>

that was crucial to the development of Western culture yet rarely acknowledged.²⁹⁵ He feels that this great Islamic heritage went largely unnoticed by the world and this spurred him to collect artifacts, as they are 'displaced from history and deserved to be preserved and recognized'.²⁹⁶ He writes of Islamic art:

... All truly great art has a way of transcending political and religious boundaries, and the arts of this land are no exception ... Religion and politics have their own languages, but the language of art is universal ... a bridge between cultures ... the greatest weapon of mass destruction is ignorance²⁹⁷ ... life without knowledge is like fire without a flame.²⁹⁸

However, he does qualify his mission as not one of 'educating' but 'inform[ing] people who are the custodians of their own culture'²⁹⁹ as they have a 'duty to promote it ...'³⁰⁰ because 'beautiful objects don't only belong to Muslim people. They belong to humanity at large'.³⁰¹ Khalili believes that visual representations of Islam have the power to 'open minds',³⁰² considering himself '... a tool, an instrument'³⁰³ to encourage mutual respect between cultures and change people's minds about Islamic art and civilisation. He maintains that by displaying its diverse cultural history Islam is seen as 'combating anti-Muslim sentiments...' by portraying itself as 'neither an inward-looking and monolithic religion, nor is it about terrorism or xenophobia'. For example, a day after 9/11 his exhibition in the USA requested more catalogues due to the large number of visitors requesting copies.³⁰⁴ The collection is believed by many to be fulfilling Western desires for the display of important Islamic artworks yet is considered not 'overtly influenced by this essentially alien and distorted view ... [but] formed with an acute awareness of the criteria by which Muslims themselves have judges and still judge their art'.³⁰⁵

²⁹⁵ Moore, op.cit.

²⁹⁶ ibid.

²⁹⁷ Art Gallery of New South Wales, *The Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Nassar D. Khalili Collection*, Exhibition Catalogue, AGNSW Publishing, Sydney Australia, 2007.

²⁹⁸ M Weisblott, 'Center stage', *Lifestyle Magazine*, 2009.

²⁹⁹ R Kohn, 'Arabesque: the art of Islam', *ABC Radio National*, 1 July, 2007.

³⁰⁰ The New Zealand Herald, 'Art-lover opens eyes to Islam', 7 July 2007, retrieved 22 July 2007, <<http://proquest.umi.com>>.

³⁰¹ CSC Arts, 'Collector shares beauty of Islamic art with the world', 25 June, 2007, retrieved 30 June, 2007, <<http://cbc.ca/news/arts/artdesign/story/2007/0/25/islamicart.html>>.

³⁰² The Canberra Times, 'Telling Islam's story', 23 June, 2007, retrieved 30 June 2007, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>.

³⁰³ The New Zealand Herald, 7 July 2007, op. cit.

³⁰⁴ Rocker, op. cit.

³⁰⁵ *The Khalili Collection*, (n.d.), retrieved 20 August 2012, <<http://aroundtheworld.forumpro.fr/Islamic-art-f11/the-khalili-collection-t139.htm>>.

Khalili's notion of 'art as transcendence', his aesthetics, his distinction between 'informer' and educator', and his views on cross-cultural understanding needs to be critically examined. The belief that beautiful objects can arouse thoughts and feelings beyond the limits of mundane and ordinary experience accounts for Khalili's deploying his collection instrumentally in the interests of cross-cultural understanding. Cuno agrees with Khalili's view that art and the aesthetic experience can transcend political, religious, cultural and historical boundaries as long as 'narrow definitions of culture' (which separate and distinguish nations such as 'cultural property as national property') are ignored and replaced with notions of universal humanity. Cuno argues: 'when art and culture are strictly attached to a nation we lose the cross-cultural ties ... [suggesting] works of art-paintings, artifacts, music, or dance-transcend the cultures and the peoples that create them, intertwining the histories of different people...'³⁰⁶

Similarly, Roxanne Euben warns against pigeon-holing the world into 'uniform and identifiable entities whose boundaries are clearly demarcated from one another carv[ing] up the world in ways that erase fissures within each category and the mutual indebtedness between them.' She does add that our ability to understand and engage in cross-cultural dialogue is limited by the continuing 'systematic inequalities of a postcolonial world.'³⁰⁷ Furthermore, as Gabar observes the insistence of the universality of art and its ability to transcend boundaries is dependent on the 'irrelevancy of contingency'.³⁰⁸ However, this capacity of the object 'to stand alone says less about the nature of the object than about our categories and attitudes ... by suppressing contingency and presenting the objects on their own, such installations lay claims to the universality of the exhibited objects as works of art.'³⁰⁹

³⁰⁶ M Bell, J Cuno, 'Who's Rights? Repatriation of Cultural Property: Two experts debate whether art and artifacts should be repatriated', *IIP Digital/US Department of State Publications*, 2 November 2010, retrieved 10 March 2014, <http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2010/10/20101022140412aidan0.7519953.html#By_James_Cuno

³⁰⁷ R L Euben, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic fundamentalism and the limits of modern rationalism, a world of comparative political theory*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999, p. 13.

³⁰⁸ Gabar, op. cit., p. 25.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.* For a comprehensive analysis of the viewpoints concerning transcendence (especially in religious terms) see W S Stoker, W L van der Merwe (eds.), *Looking Beyond? Shifting views of transcendence in philosophy, theology, art and politics*, Rodopi B V, Amsterdam, New York, 2012; and for an interesting discussion of belief systems and cross-cultural understanding see B R Wilson (ed.), *Rationality*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1979.

In terms of the distinction Khalili makes between being an ‘informer’ rather than an ‘educator’, the approach appears paternalistic in that he is informing Muslims of their ‘duty’ or mission to spread enlightenment and ‘open minds’ through exhibiting their cultural artifacts. Khalili is portrayed as someone who is in a position to know what Muslims value and meet the needs and expectations of Western audiences; a position that is open to challenge especially when colonial/imperialistic attitudes and the legacy of Orientalism are considered. In this interpretation, Khalili can be seen as occupying the role of cultural educator, directing and shaping the values and actions of a population that needs to be shown how to represent themselves; a sentiment reminiscent of Marx’s famous statement that Said used so effectively in *Orientalism*.³¹⁰ Additionally, as a collector of Islamic objects, it is in Khalili’s interest to promote his collection, and through display, to enhance its value and his reputation as a scholar, collector and benevolent philanthropist; an aspiration that clearly has historical precedence as shown in the activities of individuals and institutions that have been discussed earlier in the chapter.

Khalil’s personal wealth and disputes over the value placed on his collection lend weight to these observations. In 2007 the British Sunday Times named Khalili the fifth richest man in Britain, upgrading the value of his collection to £500 million pounds in 2006 and then again to £4.5 billion in 2007³¹¹, the year the AoE was shown in Sydney and a year before the Abu Dhabi exhibition, which surprised many in the art market who felt this was an inflated figure.³¹² When the Sydney show was insured for £400 million pounds *The Art Newspaper* remarked: ‘As this is the cream of the collection, it is hard to see where the extra 4b [BP] comes from’. One individual work in Khalili’s Islamic Collection draws particular attention: a seventeenth century Shahnameh, an important Persian illustrated album, was bought by the Nour Foundation in 1989 for 275,000 British Pounds but Khalili

³¹⁰ Karl Marx wrote in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1853): ‘They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented.’ Said includes this statement in *Orientalism* (1978) to describe the process through which the Occident stereotypes and ‘Orientalises’ the East. Said maintains: ‘The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of the truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would’. Relating this concept to governance, Said argues that from the Orientalist perspective, the Orient is also incapable of political representation. Said, 1978, op. cit., pp. 201-21.

³¹¹ *The Worlds Billionaires*, retrieved 2 January, 2007, <<http://www.forbes.com/profile/nasser-khalili/>>.

³¹² S Smee, *The Australian*, AAP Newscentre, 7 July 2007.

gave its value in 2006 at \$47.5 million 'on the assumption that this was the price that the Islamic Republic of Iran was willing to pay in kind for the work'.³¹³

There are other criticisms of Khalili's philanthropy and benevolent projects. For instance, there were some obvious benefits from his sponsorship of displays of his art collections. As the Australian art critic John McDonald commented on the 2007 Sydney show:

Even though no one doubts the sincerity of his interest in Islamic art, or his desire to reconcile the Muslim, Jewish and Christian worlds, Khalili's philanthropy has helped boost the presumed value of his collection, which is now believed to be worth billions of pounds. Perhaps a few of our own billionaires should take note: by helping others in an apparently disinterested fashion you can also help yourself.³¹⁴

This is not an isolated comment concerning Khalili's motives for displaying his Islamic collection. Various UK newspapers have suggested that his past Islamic displays are 'possibly more to do with investing than collecting'³¹⁵ with the UK's *Mail on Sunday* and *Sunday Telegraph* dubbing him the 'Secret Sultan'³¹⁶ and 'Sir Mysterious Billionaire'.³¹⁷ Adding to the intrigue was the questioning of Khalili by Scotland Yard in October 1993 over his ignorance regarding a stolen Islamic antique helmet in his possession.³¹⁸ Khalili's highly publicised and controversial offer in 1992 to lend his 20,000 object collection to Britain in exchange for a museum to house them led to ridicule concerning his artistic taste and his philanthropic motives, some labelling his collection as 'ill-gotten rubbish'³¹⁹ and exhibitions designed to provide 'a shop window for his collection...'³²⁰ Some of the most disparaging remarks were from the influential *Art Newspaper* suggesting that there were several reasons why the museum proposal was rejected: the British Government felt the offer was

³¹³ G Adam, 'How Khalili almost sold his collection to Abu Dhabi: Fine works of Islamic art are at the centre of a dispute with his former business partner', *The Art Newspaper*, 2013, retrieved 11 November 2013, <<http://www.theartnewspaper.com>>.

³¹⁴ J McDonald, 'Of this world and the other-visual arts', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July 2007, retrieved 22 July, 2007, <<http://www.infoweb@newsbank.com>>.

³¹⁵ *The Times*, 23 October, 1992, retrieved 10 July 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

³¹⁶ R Oldoyd, 'Secret Sultan' makes U3bn from Islamic Art; EXCLUSIVE: The Top 300 British Millionaires and How They Made – or Lost – a Fortune' *Mail on Sunday*, 2 February, 2003, p.7, retrieved 22 July, 2008, <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-98277231.html>>

³¹⁷ *Sunday Telegraph*, 2 May 2004, retrieved 22 July 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

³¹⁸ S J Checkland, 'Khalili at the BM: Art diary', *The Times*, London UK, 22 February, 1994, retrieved 23 July 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

³¹⁹ M Swibel, 'God is Great', *Iranian.com*, 2 March 2005, retrieved 25 July 2008, <<http://www.iranian.com/Photoday/2005/March/dk.html>>.

³²⁰ S J Checkland, 'Offer of Islamic treasures splits art world', *The Times*, London UK, 2 October 2, 1992, retrieved 25 July, 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

too risky due to Khalili's demand that the museum loan was for 15 years on the proviso that if the collection was not 'exhibited to his satisfaction' he would reclaim it;³²¹ the British Museum and the Victoria and Albert Museum already had significant collections of Middle Eastern Art; and since

... Britain's 2.5 million Muslims ... mostly come from the Indian subcontinent ... the Khalili collection has about as much connection with their material culture as a collection of French Medieval art has with Czech Baroque art ... a far more significant gesture by the government towards Britain's immigrant community would be a hefty grant for the proposed Indian Museum in Bradford, which the V & A wants to create to display the nation's holdings of Indian art.³²²

Others such as Michael Franses, a retired UK art dealer, believed the lack of interest in the offer was because British society is a very 'closed' one, not trusting Khalili because he was 'Iranian and strange and different',³²³ with long time Khalili supporter Lord Young cautioning that 'the collection could become a national asset and that Britain should not let the opportunity slip'.³²⁴ Then in 2009 controversy and suspicion erupted over how Khalili had amassed his personal fortune of 2.5 billion pounds and saw him accused of not only advising the Sultan of Brunei but buying for him. The Sultan has declined to comment on his relationship with Khalili but the consensus among other art dealers appears to be that Khalili's benefactor is the Sultan of Brunei himself.³²⁵

Unsurprisingly, in a formal statement Khalili vehemently denies that he is buying art works for anyone other than himself, evidenced from his catalogued collection of Islamic art publications.³²⁶ He continues to maintain his responsibility as a collector, insisting that 'the question of value... [regarding his collections] is irrelevant. Nothing belongs to anyone forever ...'³²⁷ and that 'money is just paper ... my loyalty is to the objects...'³²⁸

³²¹ W Green, 'Getting Rich through Islamic Art', *Bloomberg Markets*, May, 2010.

³²² Lycett, op. cit.

³²³ Green, op.cit

³²⁴ Checkland, op.cit.

³²⁵ W Green, 'Iranian Student With \$750 Turns Billionaire — Made by Islamic Art', *Muslim Observer*, 1 April, 2010, pp. 12-14, retrieved 20 September 2010, <<http://muslimmedianetwork.com/mmn/?p=5996>>.

³²⁶ *ibid.*

³²⁷ *The Independent*, UK, 16 April, 2004, retrieved 12 July 2008, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>.

³²⁸ M Hollingsworth, 'The treasure seeker; who the astonishment of his peers, an unassuming Iranian art dealer has somehow built up a personal fortune of 2.5 billion pounds. Is David Khalili a genius or merely the agent of some of the world's biggest spenders?', *Evening Standard*, London UK, 27 March, 2009, retrieved 20 September 2010, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.

Despite these criticisms and speculations, many others view his collections as ‘unrivalled’, ‘without parallel in museums let alone the market’³²⁹, ‘impossible to recreate’ and ‘literally priceless’,³³⁰ especially his Islamic art collection which is considered as one of the world’s most extensive, finest and unique as it contains virtually every form of art and craft created in over fifty Islamic countries. This collection is deemed ‘far more systematic and historical’ than either the British Museum or the Victoria and Albert, according to Rogers, honorary curator of the Khalili collection.³³¹ It is also one of the most thoroughly researched and published in the world (27 volume series near completion authored by Islamic scholars) and is seen by Raby as ‘providing a synoptic vision of the arts of the entire Islamic world ... reviving the heroic art of collecting’.³³² Furthermore, in the wider media Khalili receives more good press than bad. For example, the *Independent Newspaper* in the UK has described Khalili’s motives for collecting as ‘idealistic and educational. He wants the world to understand these things better and value them more highly’.³³³ Some writers have gone as far to describe him as ‘charismatic’, a ‘collector and a connector’ responsible for providing ‘a chance to see beyond stereotypes...’³³⁴ with his dedication to collecting on ‘such [a] scale he is spoken of in the same breath as the late oil billionaire, Paul Getty’.³³⁵ Khalili has ‘an exotic form of humility’³³⁶ according to *Sunday Times Magazine* and is a man of ‘obvious rare taste’.³³⁷

Debate over the activities and motives of Khalili as a collector reveals much about the nature of collecting/displaying and the impact of market forces. If artifacts become rare commodities then entitlement to own and display these objects can become contested,

³²⁹ W Robinson, Director of Islamic art, Christies, cited in ‘The Guardian of History’, *The Canvas Supplement*, January 2000, pp. 40-4.

³³⁰ E Gibbs, C Penhallurick & W Robinson, *Canvas supplement*, Khalili Family trust website, retrieved 22 June 2012, <<http://www.khalili.org/foundrs-profile.html>>.

³³¹ T Shah, ‘The Khalili Collection of Islamic art’, *Saudi Aramco World*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1994, retrieved 11 November 2012,

<<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/199406/the.khalili.collection.of.islamic.art.htm>>pp. 38-47.

³³² *ibid.*

³³³ G Norman, ‘Art Market: mysterious gifts from the East’, *Independent.co.uk*, 13 December, 1992, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://Independent.co.uk>>.

³³⁴ *The Times*, cited on the Khalili Trust website, op. cit.

³³⁵ T Rubython, *Euro Business*, London, (n.d.), retrieved 13 January 2008,

<<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>.

³³⁶ B Appleyard, ‘Envy, controversy and suspicion follow this billionaire art collector everywhere he goes. But he always has the last laugh’, *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 12 July 2009.

³³⁷ H Mason cited in D J Craig, ‘Authority and collector Khalili to explore glories of Islamic art’, *B.U. Bridge*, vol. 20, 7 February, 2003, retrieved 27 March, 2008, <<http://www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2003/02-07/khalili/htm>>.

especially when heritage issues are concerned. Grabar argues that collectors induce 'rarity by creating scarcity ... categories ... create their own rarity ... the very ubiquity of the kinds of objects that interest ethnographers contributes to their ephemerality ...'³³⁸ As we have seen, historically many institutions employed agents to source artifacts on their behalf that were not always ethical or legal: Clarke and Murdoch Smith for the South Kensington Museum; Lane-Poole for a British educational body; Churchill for the British Museum; and a variety of French explorers and Orientalists for the Louvre (see appendix 3). With current requests to museums for repatriation of cultural artifacts by source nations an ongoing process in many countries especially when objects appear to be the result of theft or 'shady' dealings in a lucrative black market trading in stolen antiquities rivalling that of the narcotics trade or human trafficking, there may well be a constant stream of new cases brought before the courts in an effort to repossess lost heritages.

High-profile examples of disputed artifacts 'acquired' during colonial times include: Greece seeking the return of the Parthenon marbles displayed in the British Museum; and Egypt requesting the return of both the Rosetta Stone also owned by the British Museum and the Nefertiti bust displayed in the Neues Museum in Berlin; Benin bronzes from Nigeria and belonging to the collections of several international museums. An interesting recent Australian example is the request by the Indian government in February 2014 to return an eleventh century dancing Shiva bronze valued at \$5.1 million, which the Australian National Gallery purchased from New York art dealer Subhash Kapooris who is currently on trial for commodity fraud.³³⁹ The AGNSW itself has come under suspicion for their purchase of several Indian artifacts bought with little proof of provenance prior to 2004.³⁴⁰ There are cases, however, where museums are actively returning items to their original owners. These include: the Met returning the Euphronios krater to Italian authorities in February 2006; the Swedish government's repatriation of the Haisla totem Pole to its aboriginal Haisla elders in Kitimat, British Columbia also in 2006; Japan's return of 1000 artifacts to South Korea in 2010 that had been stolen during their colonial occupation (1910-1945); and the National

³³⁸ Gabar, op. cit., p. 25.

³³⁹ A M Nicholson, 'National Gallery of Australia defends practices despite admitting it may have been conned into buying stolen Indian art', *ABC News Online*, retrieved 10 march 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-05/national-gallery-defends-practices-over-suspected-stolen-art/5300966>).

³⁴⁰ Q McDermott, D Richards, 'Dancing Shiva', *Four Corners ABC*, 24 march 2014.

Museum of Australia repatriation of over 1000 objects and more than 360 sacred and secret objects to indigenous communities since its establishment in 1980.³⁴¹

This situation raises an uneasy question for collections such as Khalili's. If the collectors insistence that cultural artifacts belong to a common humanity and all loyalty is to the objects, the concerns of Islamic and Arab nations that their cultural artifacts be restored and maintained not resold as culturally stripped commodities to be traded on art markets may be valid? A recent example is the reported looting and resale of Bronze Age artifacts by Islamist extremists from war-torn Iraq and Syria.³⁴² In this sense, the appropriation of another nation's historical artifacts is an insult to national pride as cultural possessions are synonymous with unique cultural identity and heritage. All these situations influence the art market in terms of escalating prices and overinflated values, which means a monopoly is created where purchasers are mainly the wealthy established collectors and institutions, eliminating any chance for new players to enter the market.

The politics of display are also affected by these dilemmas, with Western institutions criticized for representing, recontextualizing and reinterpreting the meaning of objects to suit Western audiences in ways very different from their original historical and cultural functions. Opinions include James Cuno and Malcolm Bell, who while agreeing that repatriation is generally not politically motivated, disagree on the roles museums need to play societally. Cuno's argument is that museums need to be encyclopaedic to assist in the dissipation of 'ignorance ... while prompting inquiry and tolerance of cultural differences ... [to] encourage a cosmopolitan view of the world and promote a historically accurate understanding of the fluidity of culture.'³⁴³ Conversely, Bell maintains that '*repatriation is a form of restoration*': museums preserve artifacts that may be destroyed by local populations (Buddhist statues in Afghanistan destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, the escalating destruction of ancient artifacts and archaeological sites by ISIS and the recent Tunis Bardo

³⁴¹ For more details see: C Edwards, C Milner, 'Egypt demands return of Rosetta Stone', *The Telegraph* UK, retrieved 10 March 2014, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/1436606/Egypt-demands-return-of-the-Rosetta-Stone>>; Xinhua News Agency, *S Korea to retrieve stolen cultural property from Japan: media*, 2010, retrieved 10 March 2014, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-11/08/c_13596596.htm>; <<http://www.nma.gov.au>> Collections>.

³⁴² Al Arabiya News, 'After Charlie Hebdo, Arab World Institute fights terror with culture,' 30 January 2015, retrieved 31 January 2015, *alarabiya.net*, <<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2015/01/30/After-Charlie-Hebdo-Arab-World-Institute-fights-terror-with-culture.html>>.

³⁴³ Bell & Cuno, op. cit.

Museum attack)³⁴⁴ effectively conserves relevant archaeological or historical documents, promotes professional relations and international scholarship, and allows greater access for diverse, global audiences to all forms of art and culture (figs 23-26).³⁴⁵ For example, along with the planned opening of prominent new galleries at the British Museum dedicated to Islamic art and culture following the extraordinary success of the *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* exhibition, the museum is assisting in training Iraqi curators to improve techniques in 'emergency heritage management' to deal with the on-going damage and looting of their cultural artifacts.³⁴⁶

Furthermore, Australian archaeologist Craig Baker argues modern archaeology is interested in collecting 'information and ideas rather than the objects themselves' in a process of 'collaboration rather than colonisation.'³⁴⁷ The emphasis is now on establishing local, regional 'contextualised' museums to encourage tourism and develop the native people's 'pride and ownership of their own past.'³⁴⁸ Baker does acknowledge the battle against looting of archaeological sites and black market trading of stolen artifacts is challenging, fuelled by the buying power of unscrupulous private collectors.³⁴⁹ The contesting of the museum in terms of ownership and rights to collect artifacts is a debate that will be fought on many fronts by many parties, both in the legal and cultural arenas, in the battle for possession and repossession of national, community and individual identity and cultural heritage.

³⁴⁴ For current example see D Pipes, 'Islam bulldozes the past', *Washington Times*, 20 March 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/20/daniel-pipes-islam-bulldozes-past/>; BBC News, 'Tunis Bardo Museum attack: Thousands join protest', 29 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32105232>

³⁴⁵ Bell & Cuno, op. cit.

³⁴⁶ M Roddy, 'New British Museum galleries to help counter militants' image of Islam', 30 March 2015, *The Daily Star*, retrieved 30 March 2015, <https://dailystar.com.lb/Arts-and-Ent/Culture/2015/Mar-30/292561-new-british-museum-galleries-to-help-counter-militants-image-of-islam.ashx>.

³⁴⁷ C Baker, 'Archeologist Craig Baker on Contemporary Archeology', *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures Video story wall*, retrieved 5 May 2014, <http://projects.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/afghanistan/video/>.

³⁴⁸ *ibid.*

³⁴⁹ *ibid.*



Fig 23 Destruction of Buddha of Bamiyan, Afghanistan 2001. Source: <http://www.npr.org/2011/07/27/137304363/bit-by-bit-afghanistan-rebuilds-buddhist-statuesource:>



Fig 24 Remains of the Great Mosque at Aleppo 2012. Source: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/world/middleeast/article3569131.ece>



Fig 25 National Museum of Baghdad Iraq 2003. Source: <http://iwa.univie.ac.at/iraqarchive2.html>



Fig 26 Cairo Museum Egypt 2014. Source: <http://www.therecord.com/news-story/4871604-millennia-old-archeological-sites-in-iraq-and-syria-face-looting-destruction-under-militants/>

Conclusion

The intention of this chapter has been to provide an historical overview of the collection and display of Islamic art and culture and the individuals and institutions involved in influencing and shaping its trajectory. Spanning three centuries from the late nineteenth-century to the present day, a variety of explorers, travellers, artists, writers, scholars, politicians, collectors, institutional agents and curatorial bodies have been shown to contribute to discourse surrounding the role the artifact as a collectable item and its place in collections and exhibitions in both the East and West. The necessity for scholarship in the field of Islamic art and cultural history has been highlighted (including the lesser known collecting histories of China, Russia and Germany), making valuable additions to the wider conversation concerning colonial and imperial policies and procedures of France, Britain and America.³⁵⁰ The impact of such activities on both the colonizer and the colonized has involved discussion of controversial issues, especially the underlying metanarratives of Orientalism and exoticism debates, and the contentious and ubiquitous nature of these discursive formations that profoundly influence the dissemination and maintenance of certain knowledge practices.

In particular, the role of the collector in this narrative has been crucial to understanding patterns of cross-cultural and transnational negotiations, pointing to lively and sometimes chequered pasts that resonate with current disputes concerning repatriation of cultural antiquities that continues to question the ethics of museum policies and practices. A critical examination of contemporary players such as Khalili have revealed historical precedence in personalities such as Pope and Binney³⁵¹ in terms of their passion for collecting and displaying Islamic art to promote wider community awareness and appreciation of their treasured 'exotic' and 'beautiful' objects. It is also clear that the emerging Middle Eastern collector and regional museums are significantly altering the dynamics of a previously Eurocentric art market and is a trend that is having a profound effect on issues of national identity and heritage.

The following chapter explores the dilemmas art museums face in their struggle to exhibit these collected objects in new contexts where institutional agency transforms and reconfigures their meanings in the quest to entice, inform and entertain their diverse audiences. Discussions will include the complexity and problematic nature of patronage, philanthropy and sponsorship and representation and the politics of display when representing Islamic art.

³⁵⁰ See appendix 3 for details.

³⁵¹ Baker, op. cit.

Chapter Three

The journey begins: demands and dilemmas

The power of art can open our minds.

EDMUND CAPON, 2007.

Multiculturalism & Islamification? Australia Say's NO!

SLICK 3166

Balancing the needs of audiences with the demands of sponsors and shareholders and making wise curatorial decisions concerning the politics of display in an increasingly risk averse society, are dilemmas the museum world is facing in contemporary times in their attempt to remain viable, relevant and topical institutions. This chapter concentrates on the Sydney venue at the AGNSW in 2007 that was the most comprehensively investigated display site in terms of empirical data collection and is, therefore, most illustrative of perceptions, attitudes and mindsets of audiences, curatorial staff, and institutional, corporate and community representatives. This focus is important to the thesis as a whole as many of the issues and problems canvased in this first venue are raised in varying degrees throughout discussions in later chapters.

This chapter deals with two major issues: museums and their audiences in terms of display, representation and consultation; and curatorial approaches especially in regard to 'risk management' in the twenty-first century museum. Discussions illustrate the different perspectives of museum professionals and their audiences regarding issues surrounding the display of cultural artifacts, the effect of decisions by institutions on individuals and communities and the degree to which cross-cultural understanding was promoted.

Museums and their audiences: display, representation and consultation

The Khalili Collection had lent objects to more than fifty museums and has been part of over thirty-five exhibitions in America and Europe prior to 2007, which included the Louvre in Paris, the MET in New York and the State Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg

Russia. The Sydney venue of the AoIE (AGNSW fig 27) was, however, the first example of the Khalili Trust itself touring a substantial number of their Islamic collection. This exhibition attracted over 75, 000 visitors from June-September

2007 and was trans-national with its inclusion of 320 works from Spain, Turkey, North Africa, India, Syria, Iran

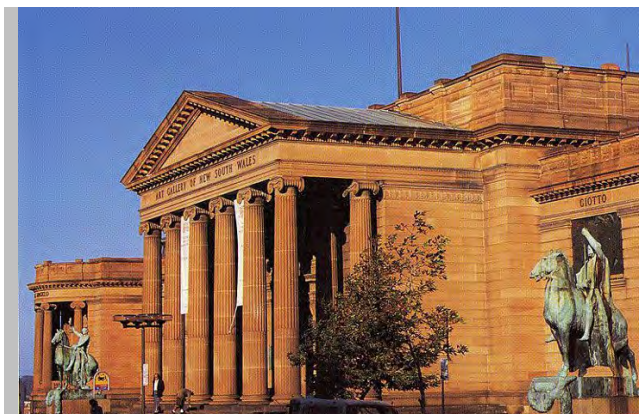


Fig 27 Façade of Art Gallery Of New South Wales Sydney.
Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>

and China spanning the seventh-twentieth centuries. Additionally, a comprehensive catalogue, extensive lecture series, film screenings, musical performances, educational programs, celebrity talks and events such as an international symposium, conference and community day accompanied the display. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, it is important to remember that all travelling and installation costs (including insurance) at this and all other venues of the AoIE was underwritten by Khalili himself and objects were lent free of charge. This level of involvement and control may have influenced curatorial decisions relating to the politics of display and further emphasised the requirement to follow the collection owner's preference for aesthetic rather than interpretative modes of exhibition. This would especially have been the case if a return exhibition was desired; a wish that the AGNSW staff expressed.

The wider social imperatives of the AoIE, which the media detailed, were clearly articulated by Edmund Capon, then director of Art Gallery of New South Wales, reinforcing Khalili's sentiments discussed in chapter 2, when he stated:

The very word Islam casts both light and shadow over our contemporary world. I believe there has never been a greater need for the wealth and imagination of Islamic cultures and artistic heritage to be revealed ... to both Islamic and non-Islamic communities ... One is indeed moved to consider how our modern world would be blessed if it could be rid of the radical religious fundamentalists that so distort faiths and derail the causes of humanity and tolerance.³⁵²

³⁵² Exhibition and Events brochure, AGNSW, June-November 2007, retrieved 2 June 2009, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>

The AoIE was opened by Minister Barbara Perry, MP of the government of New South Wales on Friday 22nd of June 2007, with a speech echoing Capon and Khalili's socio-cultural aims and confirming the government's commitment to sponsoring multicultural events. Perry was the Minister for Western Sydney and local member for Auburn; therefore her responsibility for representing some of Australia's largest Islamic communities is evident in her speech:

... It's no secret these communities have been under immense pressure over the past decade. For many in the community, their views on Islam are seen through the prism of International and dramatic television images ... [and see] the story of Islam as not only a religion, but as a well-spring of a profound and sophisticated culture ... that is rich, diverse and compelling ... in this post-September 11 and post-Bali era, every Australian of Islamic background should come and see this exhibition ... to be reminded that they are the inheritors and descendants of a great civilisation, just like those who share the Christian tradition ... It is an invitation for engagement between civilisations. An engagement based on mutual respect. An engagement written in the humane and unifying language of art. It is – above all other things – simply beautiful ...³⁵³

The AoIE was in fact part of the AGNSW principles of multiculturalism Ethnic Affairs Priority outcomes 2007-08, as outlined in section 3 of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism act 2000*. In working to achieve the objectives of their policy, the gallery had a mandate to present exhibitions, public and education programs promoting 'respectful intercultural community relations: leadership, community harmony, access and equality, and economic and cultural opportunities'.³⁵⁴

Despite the educational aspiration of the exhibition with chosen pieces from the Khalili Collection selected to present a comprehensive and panoramic view of the arts of the Muslim world, it was the aesthetic approach to display that was overwhelming showcased. The exhibition space was divided into four historically grouped sections ('Adaptation and Innovation', 'Splendours of Baghdad', 'Phoenix Rising' and 'The Age of Empires')³⁵⁵ following

³⁵³ *ibid.*

³⁵⁴ AGNSW Events, *Annual Report 2007-08*, retrieved 2 June 2009, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>. The paragraph in the section of the *Community Relations Commission and Principles of Multiculturalism act 2000* that pertains to cultural institutions is section (f): 'all institutions of New South Wales should recognise the linguistic and cultural assets in the population of New South Wales as a valuable resource and promote this resource to maximise the development of the State' (retrieved 24 March 2014, <http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/legislation_and.../principles_of_multiculturalism>

³⁵⁵ The first section 'Adaptation and Innovation' displayed rare copies of the Qur'an were shown alongside ceramics, metalwork, glass and textiles, many of the latter reflecting earlier Byzantine and Sasanian artistic traditions produced between the 7th and 10th centuries. Following this, the 'Splendours of Baghdad' covered

a pre-determined pathway along a chronological timeline. The emphasis on the encyclopedic nature of the display reveals Khalili's preference to follow the layout in his major book on the subject *Timeline of Islamic Art*. Whether this display feature was a point of negotiation with the AGNSW director, curatorial staff and Sydney architect Richard Johnson who designed the show is unclear. However, it is an important part of Khalili's rhetoric concerning the mandate for his travelling group of objects as he considers such events highlight the history of Islamic art and cultural production and are a 'passport to pride and dignity' for Muslims and illustrates the 'East's contribution to the West' to non-Muslim audiences.³⁵⁶ There was evidence of consensus between the collection owner and the AGNSW director, however, with both agreeing during an interview that one of the 'stand outs' was the illustrated folios from the celebrated *Jami' al-Tawarikh* ('The World History') of The Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din (discussed in detail in chapter six) with Capon describing the artifact as 'relics of humanity' not just Islamic art.³⁵⁷

The carefully controlled space and light of the 'white cube' was reconfigured to include arched doorways at the entrance to each section and friezes of Arabic calligraphy simulating mosque architecture throughout the exhibition space. Every section showcased an ordered assemblage of glass vitrines containing strategically spot lit artworks, designed to intensify the impact, heighten the experience and focus visitor attention on the aesthetic qualities of the objects on display. At the centre of the exhibition, under a brilliant dome of light that contrasted with the darkened environment, 'Pilgrimage and Prayer' was an alcove devoted to the practice of the religion of Islam and included acoustically soft Arabic music, creating the 'hushed transcendental mood which we associate with a chapel...'³⁵⁸

art from the medieval period (10th - early 13th centuries), illustrating the exceptional achievements of the Abbasid court artists and the technical innovations connected with this period. The mid-13th to the 15th centuries was covered in the section 'Phoenix Rising' illustrating the arts produced in Iran, Central Asia, the Middle East and Turkey in the wake of the Mongol invasion during the Ilkhanid, Mamluk and Timurid periods. Prominent in this display is the illustrated folios from the celebrated *Jami' al-Tawarikh* ('The World History') of The Ilkhanid vizier Rashid al-Din that will be discussed in detail in chapter six. Finally, 'The Age of Empires' was devoted to the art of the Ottomans, Safavids, Mughlas and Qajars (16th - 19th century). Demonstrating the development of blue-and-white and Iznik ceramics and tiles, fine carpets and textiles, richly enamelled and jewelled objects and exceptionally beautifully illuminated Qur'ans and illustrated manuscripts. At the centre 'Pilgrimage and Prayer' was devoted to the practice of the religion of Islam. This display included prayer books, scientific instruments used to determine the direction and times of prayer, depictions of the holy places in Islam, pilgrimage scrolls and textiles associated with the two holy sanctuaries at Mecca and Medina. (Khalili Family Trust website, op. cit).

³⁵⁶ *ibid.*

³⁵⁷ Exhibition and Events brochure, AGNSW, op. cit.

³⁵⁸ Serota, op cit., pp. 9-10.

Importantly, labelling was kept to a minimum (brief factual descriptions only) and the exhibition closed with a display showing the interaction between the Muslim world and Europe and the cross influences seen in arts produced in the later 19th century. These displays of dazzling jeweled encrusted objects from the Indian sub-continent aimed at leaving the visitor with the lasting impression of the 'beauty' of Islamic art above all else.

Furthermore, the organizers emphasized many times that over ninety per cent of works on display were secular, reinforcing and drawing attention to the aesthetic nature of the exhibition rather any political or religion context. However, both Capon and Khalili conceded that in Islam 'every aspect of life is dedicated to the almighty'.³⁵⁹ The exhibited objects were culturally, stylistically and aesthetically diverse, including: illuminated manuscripts and Qur'ans; colourful ceramics and enamel objects; lustre-painted glass; lacquer ware; and finely woven textiles (figs 28 and 29). Capon described the effect that their exhibition space wanted to convey: 'We wanted to create a sense of spectacle ... the feeling of walking into another world.'³⁶⁰ The Khalili Collection curator, Nahla Nassar, commented on the dramatic effect of the show:

We chose the subjects to tell the story of Islamic art. But the space was wonderful. The central room of the exhibition had double height walls, painted a very dark blue and above, the lighting looked like a starry sky shining through a glass dome. The effect was absolutely amazing, extremely atmospheric.³⁶¹ (figs 30 and 31).

³⁵⁹ *ibid.*

³⁶⁰ N Randall, 'David Khalili', *Hali: Frontlines Profile*, 18 December 2009, Issue 162, p. 26.

³⁶¹ *ibid.*



Fig 28 Muslim visitors *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>



Fig 29 Display *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>



Fig 30 Display *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>

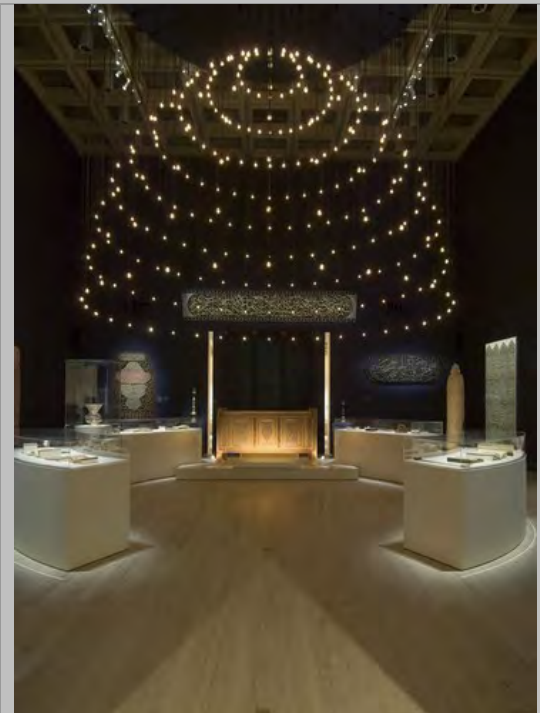


Fig 31 Mosque dome light display *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>

Media reports were overwhelmingly positive regarding the AoIE but rather than highlighting their differences, it was the artifacts' similarities that were repeatedly emphasized. Many articles supported the view that the works on display were selected to reveal the nature and range of the Khalili collection, and aimed to promote peace and

understanding by demonstrating the shared cultural heritage of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Several reports contained the statement by Khalili that the artworks ‘tell us that Islamic religion was a religion of tolerance, and the three religions lived side-by-side in harmony for centuries’.³⁶² It was a ‘fact’ that it was not unusual for Muslim and Jewish artists to work together on art commissioned by Muslim rulers and Christian patrons, during the golden age of Islamic art (mid eightieth-thirteenth centuries). In addition, Muslim and Moorish weavers worked alongside Jewish dyers in Central Asia and Andalusia.³⁶³

Examples cited to illustrate this perspective included: a fifteenth century manuscript depicting Mohammed encircled by his relatives as well as depictions of Moses, Mary and Jesus, illustrating the connections between the three religions; an Iranian flask not unlike objects from the Ming dynasty (fig 32); several decorations which were noticeably Buddhist (fig 33); and the tale of Jonah and the whale (which is told in both the Bible and Qur’an) that appears in Rashid-Al Din’s *History of the World on Display* (fig 34). This encyclopaedic work was the first survey of Muslim history written from the viewpoint of the Mongol conquerors by Rashid al-Din in 1314-15. This manuscript came from the Asiatic Society’s collection and for a decade was the most valuable work of art ever sold at auction,³⁶⁴ and is discussed in detail in chapter six.



Fig 32: Narrow-necked flask, Iran or central Asia, late 15th century or early 16th Century AD *Arts of Islam Exhibition Sydney 2007*. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>

Fig 33: Footed Bowl, Iran, c 1200 AD *Arts of Islam Exhibition Sydney 2007*. Source: <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>

³⁶² P McLeod, ‘Telling Islam’s story’, *The Canberra Times*, June 27, 2007, retrieved 10 June 2008, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>

³⁶³ *ibid.*

³⁶⁴ *ibid.*



Fig 34: *Jonah and the whale* Rashid-Al Din's *History of the World on Display* Tabriz Iran 1314-15 AD *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Sydney 2007. Source: <[http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov](http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au)>

There were four general groups of key stakeholders in the Sydney AoIE: institutional agencies (AGNSW curators and public, community and exhibition programmers, exhibition registrar, exhibition and catalogue designers); entrepreneurial philanthropists/private sponsors (collection owner and curatorial staff, Westfield, National Australian Bank, AGNSW Presidents Council, VisAsia); federal, state and local government involvement (Australian Arabic Relations under the Commonwealth Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, State Government Department for Arts, Sports and Recreation, Minister Barbara Perry MP, NSW Government) and participating community groups (the Islamic friendship Association of Australia and the Affinity Intercultural Foundation).

All stakeholders viewed the AoIE as a highly successful collaborative venture. When referring to the AoIE in the AGNSW Annual report 2007-08 Edmund Capon reflected:

In retrospect, I think this was one of the most significant exhibitions that this gallery has ever undertaken ... the exhibition was particularly timely, for the non-Muslim world Congress to know more of the great histories and cultures of the countries that comprise the Muslim world³⁶⁵

In an interview Capon reiterated the exhibition's success: 'Australian audiences, both Muslim and non-Muslim are just not familiar with Islamic art. The show opened eyes and minds ... it was a revelation, broadly speaking.'³⁶⁶

³⁶⁵ AGNSW Events, *Annual Report 07-08*, op. cit., p. 31.

³⁶⁶ Randall, op. cit, p. 26.

The financial success of the exhibition was evident in record ticket sales as the AoIE attracted more than double the visitors of any other exhibition that year, drawing crowds comparable to those visiting the annual Archibald, Wynne and Sulman Prize Exhibition 2007, one of the most visited exhibits in the country.³⁶⁷ Another indication of the show's success was the selling out of exhibition catalogues, which rarely occurs.³⁶⁸

Other related exhibition activities were also lucrative endeavours. *The Ages of Islam*, a series of 14 lectures from May-July, was sold out by May 2007, as was the thirteen-week film screening of the movie *Shiraz*. The lecture series was advertised as an 'introduction to one of the world's great religions, as it is probably the least understood and most often misrepresented in the West today ... to show how a multi-faith, tolerant and ideas – laden civilisation could develop'. Special events such as *David Khalili in conversation with Bob Carr*, former Premier of New South Wales on the 25th June, was fully booked with 320 participants.³⁶⁹

Education programs ran in conjunction with the exhibition, targeting student from Kindergarten through to Year 12, including teachers' exhibition previews and Years K-6 teachers' holiday workshop offering free education kits. These programs were a great success with both teachers and students, with one art teacher, Evelyn Tomazos of Bankstown West Public School, using the AoIE as stimulus for a complete unit of work for her Year 5 and 6 students. As fifty per cent of her pupils were Muslims, she considered that 'these children need to feel there's something very positive about their art and background'.³⁷⁰ The exhibition was part of National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security (NAP), an initiative of the Australian Government and state and territory governments, and transport and entry to the Arts of Islam exhibition was provided for approximately 600 primary and high school students in the Western Sydney region. Other educational activities included Islamic storytelling and workshops, scheduled twice a week over three weeks in the July school holiday period 2007.³⁷¹

³⁶⁷ AGNSW Events, *Annual Report 2007-08*, op. cit.

³⁶⁸ L De Guise, 'Bridging the Gulf: The Arts of Islam exhibition puts a well-known collection into a novel, new setting', *Islamic Art Asian Art*, April 2008, p. 16.

³⁶⁹ AGNSW Events, op. cit.

³⁷⁰ L Doherty, 'The art of Islam', *NSW Public schools website*, 2007, retrieved 15 August 2009, <<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au>>

³⁷¹ AGNSW Events, op. cit.

Muslim community involvement was an important social and cultural focus of the related exhibition activities, with Khalili commenting that 'the Muslim community in Australia needs a bit of support for seeing their own culture. I'm happy to bring these artworks here. It is a good move'.³⁷² Participants included The Affinity Intercultural Foundation (AIF), established in 2001 by young Australian Muslims, with the mission 'to create and sustain enduring affinity and relationships with people through inter-cultural and inter-faith dialogue and understanding'.³⁷³ Their presence at the AoIE 101 question day and evening events was considered an important part of both the AGNSW and AIF's educational and informative community programs, aimed at encouraging dialogue and interaction between Australians of different backgrounds and faiths. Importantly, Mehmet Ozalp, author and president of AIF gave a celebrity talk on 1st August 2007, focusing on intercultural and interfaith dialogue from his two books, *101 Questions You Asked about Islam* (which the AGNSW session was named after) and *Islam in the Modern World*. Two other community events that attracted crowds were the *Art of Islam Symposium* on Friday, 22 June and the Community Day on Saturday 23 June 2007. Speakers included Capon, Khalili, Nahla Nasser (acting curator and registrar of the Khalili collection), JM Rogers (honorary curator of the Khalili collection), Qur'an recitations by Sheikh Ahmad Abu Ghazaleh, Kurdish and Turkish musical pieces, workshops with calligrapher Salem Mansour, and 'question time' with volunteers from Al-Ghazzali Centre.³⁷⁴

Opinions of the success of the AoIE in the eyes of sponsors were evident. For example, the Council for Australian-Arab Relations (CAAR) an initiative of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) Australian Government, was one of the major government sponsors funding a symposium and a fund-raising dinner that raised approximately \$50,000 for AGNSW acquisitions. The council stated in its Annual report 2006-7 that its sponsorship of the AoIE had been 'an outstanding promotion for the work of the CAAR'.³⁷⁵

³⁷² N Breskin, 'Showcasing the art of Islam,' *The Australian Jewish News*, 2007, retrieved 15 August 2009, <<http://www.ajn.com.au>>

³⁷³ Affinity Intercultural Foundation website, retrieved 15 August 2009, <affinity.org.au/>

³⁷⁴ AGNSW Events, *Annual Report 2007-08*, op. cit.

³⁷⁵ The Council for Australian-Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2006-7*, retrieved 15 August 2009, <<http://www.dfat.gov.au/caar/>>

Local social and political unrest

Exhibitionary sites often consider themselves as spaces immune from the problems of the outside world but persistent political and social unrest in Australia and a barrage of associated media images concerning Muslims and Islam inevitably affected the attitudes and opinions of some visitors.³⁷⁶ As Cameron maintains, museums are not sites of enclosure: rather they are part of public culture intimately connected with political circumstances and public debates that impact on collections and displays.³⁷⁷

Australia's evolving religious structure and geographical location on the border of Asia (home to over 1200 million Muslims) makes knowledge of Islam and Muslim culture essential in government policy-making decisions. The political response to these social issues is reflected in the Australian Coalition Government's official view on multiculturalism in 2007 that aimed 'to build on our success as a culturally diverse, accepting and open society, united through a shared future'.³⁷⁸ However, despite Australia being one of the worlds' most culturally diverse countries with policies and projects favouring racial diversity and integration including events like the AoIE, further investigation continues to reveal the existence of complex societal issues in relation to racial difference and 'Otherness'. Over the last decade, the problematical upsurge of Islamic fundamentalism and the 'War on Terror' has involved political discourses which have promoted the 'Clash of Civilisations' rhetoric

³⁷⁶ Despite many art museums having staging controversial exhibitions in the past, the AGNSW had received criticism for their 2002 *Islamic art and patronage: treasures from Kuwait*, with one commentator writing that the exhibition was an 'affront to our Christian sensibilities' after the terror of 9/11 (SMH, 26 November 2002, retrieved 10 July 2009, <<http://smh.com/news>>). This indicates that media reporting of Islam and Muslims influences some AGNSW audiences. Research data from this study that is discussed in this and subsequent chapters lends weight to this statement. For example, some Muslim's who volunteered to be available for visitor's to ask questions commented that they were not approached very often because of 'the fear factor' as a result of 'Islam in the media' as the typical AGNSW visitors 'don't interact much with Muslims' (Transcript L Ryan and S Ansari, 2011, lines 53-57). This view is also supported by findings from research projects such as *Museums as Contested Sites*, which found that although some audiences believed including displays which encouraged cross-cultural understanding was a generally acceptable, fifty two per cent of participants either doubted or condemned exhibitions related to terrorism. Though many museum audiences would not associate Islamic art and culture with terrorism, it is reasonable to assume that some visitors are influenced by the long-running discourses in the media portraying Islam and Muslims in a negative light. (L Ferguson, *Pushing Buttons: controversial topics in museums*, retrieved 31 March 2014, <hosting.collectionsaustralia.net/omj/vol8/pdfs/ferguson-paper.pdf>)

³⁷⁷ F Cameron, 'Object-orientated democracies: Conceptualising museum collections in networks,' *Museum management and Curatorship*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2008, pp. 229-243.

³⁷⁸ AGNSW Events, *Annual Report 2007-08*, op. cit.

and the public imaginings of the Middle East as a continual site of violence and conflict including the media's demonization of the 'Arab Other' as 'the face of evil'.³⁷⁹

Social unrest of this nature closer to home is evident in two highly mediatized events. In the early 2000s, a series of gang rape attacks committed in Sydney by a group of Lebanese Australian men against predominantly Anglo-Celtic teenage girls, attracted widespread public outrage and the harshest penalties imposed on acts of sexual violence in Australian history. Of even greater impact was a series of 'riots' in December 2005 at the Sydney beachside suburb of Cronulla, and later Maroubra, instigated by Anglo-Celtic factions against Lebanese Muslims, which led to further inquiry into ethnic relations and the condition of multiculturalism in Australia within political and media discourses. Images and reports that were beamed around the globe concentrated on the violent alcohol-fuelled confrontations with police and anyone of 'Middle Eastern appearance' and many political cartoons populated the pages of national and regional newspapers highlighting various controversial aspects of the conflict (figs 35-38).



Fig 35 Man being assaulted with beer bottles by rioters Cronulla 2005. Source: <http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/race-riots-spread-to-suburbs/2005/12/11/1134235951313.html>



Fig 36 Police and rioters Cronulla 2005. Source: <http://www.barenakedislam.com/2012/12/page/10/>.

³⁷⁹S Poynting, G Noble, P Tabar, J Collins, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other*, Institute of Criminology/ Federation Press, Sydney, 2004; G Noble, 'The Face of Evil: Demonising the Arab Other in Contemporary Australia', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2008, pp. 14-32.

A contributing factor in this racial dispute were comments from talk back radio host Alan Jones, on the 5th Dec 2005, on 2GB radio, where he called on listeners to respond to the SMS messages being circulated and read them on air a number of times, adding statements such as: 'What kind of grubs? Well I'll tell you what kind of grubs this lot were. This lot were Middle Eastern grubs.' The series of widely circulated SMS's believed to instigate the gathering at Cronulla (some 270,000 SMS messages were sent in the days before the 'riots') included:

This Sunday every ... Aussie in the shire, get down to North Cronulla to help support Leb and wog bashing day ... Bring your mates down and let's show them this is our beach and they're never welcome back ... Every ... Aussie. Go to Cronulla Beach Sunday for some Leb and wog bashing Aussie Pride ok ... All Leb / wog brothers. Sunday midday. Must be at North Cronulla Park. These skippy aussies want war. Bring ur guns and knives and lets show them how we do it.³⁸⁰

Jones' actions were seen as playing a central role, both in relation to activating the Anglo Australian masses and transmitting their views on these events to politicians with whom they were influential.³⁸¹ Social networking sites such as You Tube were rife with many individual and group postings that ranged from moderate to extreme attitudes and comments concerning the conflict. Titles included: 'Lebanese Boys Speak the truth about Cronulla Riots part1, 2 and 3'; 'Why Some Australian Lebs Give Me A Bad Name'; 'Lebanese Australians - We are Australian!'; 'Boys Punch on with Aussie Cronulla Riots Lebanese via Phone'; ' Multiculturalism & Islamification? Australia Says NO!' ³⁸²

Other paraphernalia circulating at the time included the proposed 'Cronulla 2230 Board game', where the object of the game was to buy property in the Sutherland Shire in order to donate money to right-wing groups like Australia First and Patriotic Youth League. Images of people waving the Australian flag are positioned on the board, which also contains the words, 'today is the Shire's Independence Day ... Freedom to all Aussies'.³⁸³ The 'Cronulla riots', as they were labelled, and the associated media and social networking responses clearly illustrated the level of cultural tension that existed in Australia prior to

³⁸⁰ Posted online by *cronullariots*; posted by *Ramio 1983*; posted by *ferrous 13*; posted by *GeeThug*; posted by *slick 3166*; all retrieved online 14 March 2010.

³⁸¹ A Jakubowicz, 'Masculinity, Culture and Urban Power,' *Lines in the Sand: The Cronulla Riots, Multiculturalism and National Belonging*, Sydney, Institute of Criminology Press, G Noble (ed.), 2009, pp. 168-184.

³⁸² Posted online Facebook quotes, op. cit.

³⁸³ A Moses, 'Cronulla game falls between legal cracks,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 2006, retrieved 10 June 2007 <www.smh.com.au/news/web/cronulla-game.../1160850910458.htm>

2007, highlighting the wider social imperatives of exhibitions such as the AoIE which media articles excluded from their discussions of the art display.



Fig 37 Satirical cartoons about Cronulla 'riots' 2005.
Source: <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/cronulla-riots-against-lebanese-226.html>



Fig 38 Satirical cartoons about Cronulla 'riots' 2005.
Source: <http://nicholsoncartoons.com.au/beach-riots-cronulla-lebanese-226.html>

Political responses to this crisis varied but were revealing of underlying agendas and governmental policies. The Liberal Prime Minister John Howard emphatically denied that these riots were a reflection of racism in Australian society,³⁸⁴ claiming there was no 'underlying racism in Australian society' and that the problem lay with a minority of groups lack of 'manners' and 'Australian values'.³⁸⁵ At the local level, the New South Wales parliamentary representative for Cronulla stated 'there were some drunken louts who have indulged in racist remarks but this [Cronulla] is not a racist community'.³⁸⁶ However, Morris Iemma, the then Labour New South Wales Premier, referred to the conflict as 'the ugly face of racism'. Kuranda Seyit, the Director of the Forum on Australian-Islamic Relations, was more direct when he argued that the riots showed an '... underlying racism running deeply in the Australian psyche. It has been simmering for a few years but I think the latest incident here will have really let loose their inherent racism'. (fig 37,38)³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ S Poynting, 'What caused the Cronulla riot?' *Race & Class*, Sage Publications, vol. 48, no. 85 2006, pp.33-34, retrieved 5 July 2009, <<http://rac.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/48/1/85>>

³⁸⁵ Quoted on ABC radio, 6 December 2005.

³⁸⁶ Davies and Porter, quoted in K Dunne, 'Performing Australian Nationalisms at Cronulla,' G Noble (ed.), op. cit., pp. 85-86.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.*

Another controversial incident in 2007 involved intense opposition to a proposed Islamic school in Camden, Sydney which resulted in a local residents' campaign of strategically stereotyping Muslims as 'fanatical, intolerant, militant, fundamentalist, misogynist and alien', culminating in protesters ramming two pigs' heads on to metal stakes, with an Australian flag between them. This was similar to a previous incident in 2004, when a severed pigs head was impaled in front of a Muslim prayer centre in Annangrove, Sydney.³⁸⁸

'Face of Evil'

In addition to the gang rapes in 2000, the 'Cronulla Riots' and the proposed Islamic school protests in Camden, there had been a range of media reports and images that had fuelled cultural tensions. Instances include: NSW MP, Reverend Fred Nile, in 2002 who urged the government to consider 'banning the wearing of the hijab in public places as a security precaution, because it could be used by terrorists to conceal weapons and explosives';³⁸⁹ the Sydney Morning Herald's article in February 4th 2006 titled *Riot order: avoid Middle Eastern Men*;³⁹⁰ Sheik el Hilaly's comments in late 2006 comparing 'scantily clad women to raw meat left out for cats';³⁹¹ and the fear that extremists were seeking local Somali recruits in Melbourne in 2007.³⁹²

In fractious social climates such as those surrounding the AoIE, the concept of 'difference' or 'otherness' is increasingly problematic for many reasons. Encountering the 'unfamiliar' potentially threatens cultural and individual identity in relation to values, norms, beliefs and traditions. The way we perceive social relationships and community expectations, their 'deeper normative notions and images' and the 'common understandings that makes possible common practices and a widely shared sense of legitimacy' is what Charles Taylor calls the 'social imaginary'.³⁹³ These imaginaries, based on

³⁸⁸ Comments from K Dunn, 28 November, 28, 2001, quoted by ABC News, 2007.

³⁸⁹ V Leone, 'The fear of Muslims', *The Age Education Unit*, 4 December 2002, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://education.theage.com.au/cmspage>>

³⁹⁰ A Clennel, 'Riot order: avoid Middle Eastern Men', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 February 2006, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/riot-order-avoid-middle-eastern-men/2006/02/03/11.htm>>

³⁹¹ R Kerbaj, 'Muslim leader blames women for Sex attacks', *The Age*, 26 October 2006, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.theage.com.au>>

³⁹² B Zwartz, 'Terror fear as extremists seek local Somali recruit', *The Age*, 13 April 2007, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.theage.com.au>>

³⁹³ Taylor, 2004, op. cit., p. 23.

disparate types of ordering, are often conflicting and repeated, sensationalised stories and stereotypical images persuade many that that what they are reading and seeing is depicting reality rather than a narrow perspective.³⁹⁴ Noble has described the ‘ethnic imaginary’ as the ‘ways we perceive ‘ethnic’ groups and differences in cultural values and practices, at home and abroad,’ explaining how the processes of ‘ethnicisation’ or racialization can be seen as connecting to social imperatives, cultural classifications, ethical discourses and political risk.³⁹⁵ As evidenced, media reporting has an influential role to play in communicating, amplifying and reinforcing negative and stereotypical ‘images’ (such as the ‘Arab Other’) both in the museum and media context, and cannot be removed or isolated from the social context in which they are embedded.

Government policy concerning multiculturalism was implementing changes that were reverberating socially, culturally and politically prior to the AoIE in 2007. Museums in New South Wales had been compelled to include their multicultural communities in their programming plans since the late 1990s when the New South Wales State Government tabled *The arts and cultural diversity policy*, with the requirement that: ‘all State-funded arts and cultural institutions and activities [had to] incorporate and reflect the State’s cultural diversity, and thereby open up resources and opportunities to artists and communities of non-English speaking backgrounds’.³⁹⁶ The focus of the Howard government’s policy at the time based on ‘Australian values’, what were ‘acceptable’ differences for a ‘cohesive community’ and the need for all to integrate has been described as a ‘neo-assimilationist agenda’ and an ‘impossible fiction’ according to Cameron McAuliffe.³⁹⁷ This is borne out by policy changes in early 2007 where the term ‘multiculturalism’ was replaced by ‘integration’ in the government’s Immigration portfolio and while keeping Multicultural Affairs, removed the term from identity issues and relegated it to Consumer Affairs and Urban Development.

This shift towards the ‘integration’ of communities of different racial backgrounds was problematic for art museums such as the AGNSW. In this instance, even though some

³⁹⁴ Noble, 2009, op. cit., p. 14.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 15.

³⁹⁶ NSW Ministry for the Arts, ‘The Arts and Cultural Diversity: Principles for Multicultural Support in new South Wales’, Sydney, NSW Ministry for the Arts, 1997, quoted in I Ang, *The Predicament of diversity Multiculturalism in practice at the art museum*, Sage Publications, London, Thousand Oaks, CA and New Delhi, vol. 5, no. 3, 2005, p.306.

³⁹⁷ C McAuliffe, *Popular Cultural Relativism: Religion, Racial Profiling and National Multiculturalisms*. Everyday Multiculturalism Conference Proceedings, Macquarie University, September 28-29, 2006.

visitors found the exhibition strategies use of the overarching umbrella of 'Islam' presented a 'less fragmented' and 'more unified view' of Islam,³⁹⁸ this curatorial decision also prompted critical responses to even the title 'Arts of Islam': one commentator considered its use a 'misnomer', maintaining there is no specific 'Islamic artistic impulse' outside the Qur'an,³⁹⁹ while another argued that the concept of 'Islamic art' has 'less substance than the notion of 'Christian art' from the British Isles to Germany to Russia during the 1000 years separating the reigns of Charlemagne and Queen Victoria might have'.⁴⁰⁰ These concerns are part of the larger debate over the use of the term 'Islamic' in the art historical field variously advocating: the adoption of the term 'Islamicate' when referring to the 'secular' aspects of Islamic art and culture because of the questionable and problematic association with Islam as a religion;⁴⁰¹ the universalist approach common to Sufism (advocated by Sayyed Hossein Nasr and Titus Burckhardt) that spirituality rather than religion is the unifying element;⁴⁰² the breaking up of the categorical distinctions into temporal and regional terms;⁴⁰³ descriptive, iconographic, dynastic approaches, 'urbanist architectural' analysis and examination of manuscripts surrounding art works;⁴⁰⁴ and abolition of the term altogether as it is an 'imagined terminology ... a product of Western thought'.⁴⁰⁵

The exhibition's decision to connect racially diverse cultures over thirteen centuries as part of the *National Action Plan to Build on Social Cohesion, Harmony and Security* incentive, can be seen as aligning itself to this 'assimilationist' notion of conflating cultural identity and connecting with the flow of communication promoting cultural cohesion and integration rather than diversity and 'together-in-difference'.⁴⁰⁶ The government imperative

³⁹⁸ Transcript L Ryan and R Phipps, 2013, lines 151-53.

³⁹⁹ C Allen, 'Islam's world: rich traditions within limitations'. *The Australian Financial Review*, 28 June 28 2007.

⁴⁰⁰ S Melikian, 'Qatar's museum of Islamic Art: despite flaws, a house of masterpieces', *The New York Times*, 2008, retrieved 10 December 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/06/arts>.

⁴⁰¹ SS Blair, JM Bloom, 2003, op. cit., pp.152-153.

⁴⁰² *ibid.*, p. 158. For more detail see S Hossein Nasr, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, State University of New York Press, Albany, 1987; T Burckhardt, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, London, World of Islam Festival, 1976.

⁴⁰³ WMK Shaw, 'The Islam in Islamic art history: secularism and public discourse', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, p. 3, retrieved 13 December 2013, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shaw1.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 8.

⁴⁰⁵ A Shalem, 'What do you mean when we say "Islamic art"? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the art of Islam', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, p. 8, retrieved 13 December 2013, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shalem.pdf>

⁴⁰⁶ I Ang, 'Together-in-difference: beyond diaspora, into hybridity', *Asian Studies Review*, 1467-8403, vol. 27, issue 2, 2003, pp. 141 – 154.

to become more 'inclusive' and embrace 'cultural diversity' was proving to be a complex and multifaceted task for the AGNSW's curatorial and programming professionals regarding events such as the AoIE, with their practices and policies not always seen as meeting the governmental directive.

In the media, the reporting of the exhibition, which included newspapers and magazines, television and radio, resonated with the underlying 'assimilation' agenda of government policies at the time. In the wider conversation, the media had repeatedly referred to the 'failure of multiculturalism' to address the 'problem with Islam' reinforcing the popular understandings of alternate religious doctrine as a 'threat', positioning Muslim identity in direct opposition to Australian identity. The image evoked is the 'Arab Other' as an ever-present and global threat, reducing all people from the Middle East to 'Lebanese Muslim' terrorists.⁴⁰⁷

This negative portrayal of anything 'Muslim' or about 'Islam' was reiterated by Muslim community members who attended or were involved in the AoIE in Sydney:

... we have a big problem with the media ... we are saying one thing and they are putting out another ... and they turn it into something different⁴⁰⁸ ... we did an event on September 11, 2005 ... we got attacked by some media outlets ... we were condemning terrorism on that day ... and then the media attacked us for doing it ...⁴⁰⁹ we've [Muslims] lost interest in the media totally ... actually don't want them there because they don't listen ... there's a sort of gate we can't get over or get through.⁴¹⁰

As a result of these controversial opinions, criminal cases and media publicity in Australia by the time of the AoIE in 2007 there was an escalation of acts of racial defamation involving people of 'Middle Eastern appearance' being spat upon and violently assaulted, becoming victims of vandalism and arson, and intimidated by explicitly sexual acts such as indecent exposure, offensive sexual suggestions and threats of sexual assault.⁴¹¹

Transforming power of art

Considering the social, political and racial tensions existing in Australia prior to 2007, how did the promoters of these displays counteract 'negative' images and promote cross-

⁴⁰⁷ A Jucubowicz (2009) 'Masculinity, Culture and Urban Power' in Noble, 2009, pp. 176-8.

⁴⁰⁸ Transcript L Ryan and B Gunaydin, 2011, lines 782-94.

⁴⁰⁹ Transcript L Ryan and M Saral, 2011, lines 82-111.

⁴¹⁰ Transcript L Ryan and L Gunaydin, 2011, lines 233-249.

⁴¹¹ S Poynting, 'Bin Laden in the Suburbs': Attacks on Arab and Muslim Australians before and after 11 September', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, vol. 14, no. 1, July, 2002, pp. 43-64.

cultural understanding? Did the exhibition audience share this view, or did other perceptions, attitudes and interests dominate the exhibitionary experience?

Display organizers and curators hoped to realise their desire to promote cross cultural understanding through their own knowledge of how spaces work, how art affects audiences and how the visual and sensory experience can be harnessed to produce desired effects. Through the practices and policies of display, exhibitionary sites believe they are able to transform the cultural object into a transmitter of new meanings and values, altering and disrupting cultural, social and political nuances associated with its creation. This process seeks to deploy the art object and aesthetic experiences as a function of government, having the power to civilise, to produce self-regulating citizens through what Foucault describes as the 'technologies of the self'.⁴¹²

Exhibitions are never 'neutral' but 'constructed' and 'motivated' by their 'cultural producers'. They are 'spaces of representation', places of translation and meaning construction where the viewer encounters objects, visual representations, textual information, reconstructions and sounds creating 'an intricate and bounded representational system.'⁴¹³ The visitor may consciously and physically travel through this highly mediated exhibition space but unconsciously and conceptually opinions, viewpoints and mindsets may or may not be altered. As Hall explains, positive experiences cannot be guaranteed to occur as during this process of engagement 'competing, conflicting and contested meanings and interpretations' can be experienced by the viewer.'⁴¹⁴ This is because meaning in terms of objects, people, and events in themselves do not possess fixed, constant final or true meaning but are slippery, 'changing and shifting with context, usage and historical circumstances ...'⁴¹⁵ Societies and the people within them make meaning, and these meanings can alter from one culture to another as cultural codes (the classification systems that assign meaning to the world). Thus, the mental images and concepts people 'carry around in their heads' differ, so the world can be decoded and translated in a variety of ways according to individual and community norms, customs and belief systems.

⁴¹² M Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, L Martin, H Gutman & P Hutton (eds.), University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988.

⁴¹³ S. Hall, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage, London, 1995, pp. 9-179.

⁴¹⁴ *ibid.*

⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*

In the case of the AoIE in Sydney, the use of article lighting focusing on 'star objects' separated the visitor from the space containing the object whose agency was essential to transcending boundaries and uniting humanity through the aesthetic experience and contemplation of the beautiful artifact. However, as Serota argues '... out of school and at worship, with all our facilities given over to the experience of the work itself'⁴¹⁶



does not guarantee that attitudes and mindsets will be permanently altered. Despite interviews and focus groups at the Sydney venue providing valuable data for the following analysis, the limitations that have been highlighted in the introductory chapter suggest that assessing cross-cultural understanding is difficult when relying on the recollections and truthfulness of interviewees and, without visitor responses from the other venues of the AoIE, an over-reliance on secondary sources. However, by focusing discussions on responses relating to sensitive issues related to object display, the aesthetic experience of audiences, the role of community consultation and the impact of associated cultural activities in the wider public sphere, valid conclusions can be drawn.

The effect of belief systems on audience responses to the Sydney exhibition was displayed in a number of ways. Several Muslim focus group participants were surprised, and some suspicious, of why a Jewish person was displaying Islamic art and what were his real 'motives'.⁴¹⁷ A particularly contentious and sensitive issue was the controversy over depictions of the prophet Mohammad (especially his face, see fig 39) in art and cultural displays. In terms of the travelling AoIE, this issue was unproblematic for the Abu Dhabi,

⁴¹⁶ Serota, op. cit., pp. 9-10.

⁴¹⁷ Transcript L Ryan and O Sukkarieh, 2011, lines 431-51.

Paris or Amsterdam venues,⁴¹⁸ but was a key point of disagreement between parties involved in the Sydney show.

Views seemed to be polarized over these depictions and appeared driven by whether you were a Muslim or non-Muslim visitor. Research data reveals that at the Sydney AoIE the average visitor was: non-Muslim female, from New South Wales, living in the socio-economically affluent Eastern Suburbs or the North Shore area of Sydney, who rated the exhibition 'highly' after spending over an hour in the exhibition and was 'aware' of Islam prior to their visit.⁴¹⁹ This 'typical visitor' of the AGNSW is confirmed by *Museums and Galleries NSW* State report in 2010, as being the norm in the public museums and galleries generally with the audience profile skewed towards: the over 55 female, with a tertiary degree (particularly post-graduate qualifications), who lives within 5 kilometers or local government area, regularly visits galleries and museums with friends or family, spends on an average 60 minutes viewing the exhibition with the vast majority voting these visits as 'good' or 'terrific'.⁴²⁰

One participant who fitted this profile believed that images of Mohammad may possibly bridge differences between cultures but appeared ignorant of Muslim religious sensibilities:

... I feel it is important for Westerners to view these images to help them reflect on the depth of the Islamic culture- hopefully it will provide a better understanding and insight and a more compassionate view of all Muslims. As for Muslims, I don't believe it would offend them. If anything, they should feel a sense of pride when viewing such exquisite artworks and seeing Mohammad in such a poetic and aesthetic image. It is also a way of all Muslims understanding in greater depth their rich history.⁴²¹

Another target demographic visitor felt museums have the right to display controversial images but acknowledged that they may not represent ethnic groups with 'sensitivity' and that this is often how they also perceive themselves:

... If the local people had problems it probably says something about their level of sophistication or perhaps their sensitivity about feeling displaced, and feeling alienated ... Indigenous people are constantly affronted by even diligent and conscience efforts to behave respectfully towards the material, because indigenouness and Muslimness are

⁴¹⁸ The issue of depictions of Mohammad will be discussed in subsequent chapters dealing with the other venues the AoIE.

⁴¹⁹ AGNSW 'Art Gallery of NSW, 2007 Arts of Islam exhibition-key data', marketing department, 2007.

⁴²⁰ M Mackenzie and M Huxley, *Guess who's going to the gallery? A strategic audience evaluation and development study by the Museums and Galleries NSW*, NSW Government Community Arts NSW publication, 2010.

⁴²¹ Transcript L Ryan and E Courtenay, 2013, lines 246-52.

not monolithic things and unfortunately we tend to treat those groups as if they were monolithic and some of the groups treat themselves that way... If the works have been made then there is a legitimate reason for displaying, but I guess disclaimers are a way out of the dilemma, we have given you the information...⁴²²

Others were more intolerant of adverse views such as this comment from a non-Muslim male visitor who, while agreeing that artistic practices should not be censored as the gallery had a right to 'challenge belief and value systems generally' finding this attitude 'quite legitimate and well within their remit', felt Muslim visitors should 'self-censor' if necessary:

... The fact that there were images that showed the face of Mohammad at the exhibition demonstrated that the prohibition has not always been in place and that Muslims have not always and everywhere found it offensive. That some modern Muslims were offended, and went on to criticise the gallery for displaying the works simply demonstrates the degree to which these critics are out of step with the beliefs and values of modern society, regardless of the degree of solidarity they have managed to achieve amongst themselves ... in retrospect, should have post[ed] warnings outside the gallery, that the exhibition contained some works that might offend Muslims, and then let the visitors self-censor. If the Gallery was made to adjust their curatorial practice based on anticipated responses from every prickly sector of the community, then their whole reason for being would disappear, and I for one would probably stop going to such a museum out of sheer boredom.⁴²³

However there were exceptions, as evidenced in this observation from a non-Muslim visitor who appeared to have greater knowledge of and was more empathic with the Muslim religious perspective: 'Well certainly it [image of Mohammad] would offend me if I was a religious Muslim ... I would be horrified if there were human beings in the art, because it wouldn't be Islamic art.'⁴²⁴

Outside the AGNSW target demographic audience, the common reaction from Muslim visitors interviewed was that even if they were personally not insulted, the majority of Muslims would take offense and view the display of such images as problematic:

... when you start drawing images of Prophet Mohammad and his looks, that can really go hurting a lot of people⁴²⁵ ... the use of the image of Mohammad could be offensive to a lot of Muslims .. [Mohammad] has a face which is against early Sufi interpretations of Mohammad as too perfect a being to be depicted by man that many Muslims would think should be followed, despite this being an artwork made for secular usenot my opinion though⁴²⁶

⁴²² Transcript L Ryan and P McKeon, 2012, lines 329-38.

⁴²³ Ryan and Phipps, op. cit., lines 424-442.

⁴²⁴ Transcript L Ryan and K West, 2011, lines 335, 606.

⁴²⁵ Ryan and Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 158-60.

⁴²⁶ Transcript L Ryan and N Debbousse, 2011, lines 443-9.

One Muslim visitor and her friends in particular were extremely insulted by the images:

... I was shocked ... when I saw the pictures I couldn't believe it... I was disappointed... I was with a group of friends and we just saw it and just looked away, I personally was very shocked, I was very shocked, and I think art is art but people are people and no matter what you do there has to be a drawn line where you realise that some things offend and hurt people and just for the sake of art you can't break millions of hearts ... If I knew it was there I would of never gone. I would definitely not ... I would have told my friends don't go ... I mean if I had a piece of art work that offends Jews or Christians... I would think twice and be sensitive.⁴²⁷

Mehmet Saral, a key community leader and current president of AIF which was the main Muslim agency involved in the exhibition, felt that the Muslim community had not been consulted concerning this issue: '... it's not acceptable showing his face ... Yes I think in future it would be good to consult Muslim's about some things that could be offensive to them. But when I say Muslim's, we should go with the majority not with some minorities ... the majority would say no to it'.⁴²⁸

An even stronger criticism of the AGNSW failure to seek the Muslim perspective was suggested by a community leader and AoIE performing artist Omeima Sukkarieh:

... it was really badly organized, from an organizational point of view ... just did not have the level of understanding and sensitivity, both cultural and religious to be able to deal with the people she was dealing with ... she [AGNSW rep] was really stressed out because she had absolutely no idea where to promote stuff to ... and she asked me for contact lists. And I said I can't give you contact lists, I would never give out contact lists ... I think art galleries are great, but if those art spaces don't have, or don't know how to connect with the communities where they are trying to engage, then it's useless ...⁴²⁹

Other Muslim visitors, including volunteers who helped out during the exhibition, reinforced this lack of community consultation and engagement yet further:

I think the very most important thing that the NSW art gallery failed to do ... is to engage communities from the very beginning. Engage more than one organization, I think that's lazy if nothing else ... they certainly weren't going to get a 'no' from anybody in the community sector ... because you have vested interest, if you have put time into it, you are going to want everyone to see what you have been doing, you want your family to come, so therefore you really do have that true co operation, consensus. And then you don't have the problems of representation, and what people may or may not like ... The AGNSW is not accessible to people ... I really would of liked to have seen a lot more young people ...⁴³⁰ if they had

⁴²⁷ Transcript L Ryan and R Ansari, 2011, lines 200-20.

⁴²⁸ Ryan and Saral, op.cit., lines 171-201.

⁴²⁹ Ryan and O Sukkarieh, op. cit., lines 573-821.

⁴³⁰ Transcript L Ryan and K Sukkarieh, 2011, lines 630-83, 693.

consulted and been more proactive in involving the Muslim community ... they could of definitely got members, they could of advertised [the show] in the Muslim community ... to do that you really need to engage the community and the community's got to feel ownership for it.⁴³¹

Generally, other interview data revealed that while many visitors did want to be more informed about Islam and Islamic culture and learn something from the objects and their labels, many others regarded the exhibition as a social outing and not necessarily an educational event. Despite lectures, talks, Q and A sessions and access to Muslim volunteers manning information counters, most interviewees (both Muslim and non-Muslim) did not report engaging in or observing conversations between culturally different groups: 'I never really did see much people interacting, I didn't see people of different cultures ... I was wearing a hijab ... obviously I am an identifiable Muslim ... no one ever come up to me and made that conversation. And I didn't either personally'⁴³² and '... we had name tags and walked around, but nobody actually wanted any help or knowledge ...'⁴³³ Visitor comments included: '... they certainly didn't stand out'⁴³⁴ with some unaware of the service: 'I didn't realise they were there, you often see volunteers there but I thought it was monitoring for security than information'.⁴³⁵

Additionally, certain activities were inaccessible or unappealing to some community groups unless they were free and preferred alternate activities. For example, so far this research has failed to locate any Muslim who attended the community day arranged by the gallery (many commenting they prefer to go to locally organized events) and have found no Muslim who attended the lectures which were seen by Muslim focus group participants as too expensive and were sold out well in advance anyway.⁴³⁶ This was contrasted with comments from several non-Muslim visitors who had attended at least one lecture/celebrity talk and thought they 'did a fairly good job'⁴³⁷ and 'for somebody who had never heard it- it would be a big thing ...'⁴³⁸ It appears that unless they had free tickets and transport⁴³⁹, interviewed Muslim community groups believed not many of their members would ever

⁴³¹ Transcript L Ryan and S Ansari, 2011, lines 210-13, 327-9.

⁴³² Ibid. Lines 30-34.

⁴³³ Ryan and B Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 235-7.

⁴³⁴ Ryan and Phipps, op. cit., line 64.

⁴³⁵ Ryan and Courtenay, op. cit., lines 169-70.

⁴³⁶ Ryan and B Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 1254-56.

⁴³⁷ Ryan and McKeon, op. cit., line 162.

⁴³⁸ Ryan and L Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 191-2.

⁴³⁹ Transcript L Ryan and B Gunaydin, 2011, lines 318-20

travel into the city or to a gallery there⁴⁴⁰; as one non-Muslim visitor volunteered when asked why the Muslim community would prefer their local events over a visit to the AGNSW: 'Well their local place is surrounded by people who dress like them'.⁴⁴¹

Many of the Muslim focus group participants felt other events like Mosque open days and guided tours, Iftar dinners during Ramadan where Muslims and non-Muslims ate together,⁴⁴² local festivals like ones at shopping malls, advertisements like those created by *Mypeace* on TV and billboards and movies like '1001 Inventions' and the British comedy film about Muslim suicide bombers the 'Four Lions', did more to address misconceptions about Islam and Muslims and break down barriers (figs 40-43).⁴⁴³ While non-Muslim participants agreed with these suggestions, they felt that the display of Islamic art and culture such as the AoIE still had a significant role to play in promoting cross-cultural understanding.⁴⁴⁴

⁴⁴⁰ Ryan and K/ O Sukkarieh, op. cit., lines 597-610.

⁴⁴¹ Ryan and McKeon, op. cit., line 272.

⁴⁴² Ryan and B Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 67-71; L and Saral, op. cit., lines 330-364; Ryan and K/ O Sukkarieh, op. cit., lines 223-269; Ryan and M Ozlap, 2011, lines 569-591; Ryan and L Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 642-7.

⁴⁴³ Ryan and K/ O Sukkarieh, op. cit., 168-70, 346-56.

⁴⁴⁴ Ryan and Courtenay, op. cit., lines 236-52.



Fig 40 Auburn Mosque open day 2012. Source: L Ryan



Fig 41 Auburn Community Festival 2012. Source: L Ryan



Fig 42 Poster for *Four Lions* film 2010. Source: <https://demonresume.files.wordpress.com/2010/11/final-one-sheet-mpaa.jpg>



Fig 43 *MyPeace* television advertisement 2011. Source: <http://www.mypeacepalacecollection.com/eng/articles---books---booklets---brochures---folders---newspapers---adds.html>

There were also varying limits among people in terms of levels of perception. How many engaged beyond the surface properties of the 'beautiful object', confident they possess what Pierre Bourdieu⁴⁴⁵ calls 'cultural capital', the ability to 'see through' objects on display to uncover the concealed order of art which underlies their arrangement; the 'politics of the invisible ...'? Nassar stated when asked about the selection process for an exhibition: '... you can't show objects without aesthetic value ... aesthetic appeal ...'⁴⁴⁶ but views on the topic of beauty and knowledge among audiences were varied irrespective of religious or cultural convictions. On one hand, some audiences believed seeing beauty was enough without looking further: '... when people see a little bit of art they get transformed by it ... the beauty and the glamour⁴⁴⁷ ... all liked it in a really "wow", sort of sense⁴⁴⁸ ... purely on an aesthetic base, I just think they are beautiful works of art⁴⁴⁹ ... it [art] transcends all. Because art is art'⁴⁵⁰ ... appreciate the beauty, that's it'⁴⁵¹; with one visitor considering the museum itself was responsible for limiting the object's power, admitting that sometimes it's hard to see beyond the negative connotations associated with Muslims and Islam:

... beauty is important but museums take away the purpose of things ... It still was tempting to look at the object and divorce it from the contemporary Islamic society and because the past of Islam is often very volatile because of their politics, which is happening at the moment in the Middle East, or because of colonial and post colonial tensions you can say "oh yes this is wonderful, but it is not what they do today" ...⁴⁵²

Alternatively, some visitors saw a higher purpose beyond an object's surface beauty:

...I think it expanded our knowledge greatly of the culture⁴⁵³ ... when something is beautiful you get to know it for its whole purpose, and I think that includes who made it, why it was made, what it was used for, not just because it's simply a beautiful jewelled object ... I think you are limiting the object⁴⁵⁴ ... through art we get to know each other's culture ... Islamic art is beautiful and it brings people, non - Muslims closer to understanding Muslims ...⁴⁵⁵ you transcend differences through art.⁴⁵⁶

⁴⁴⁵ P Bourdieu, 1984, op. cit. p. 172.

⁴⁴⁶ Ryan and Nassar, op. cit., lines 307-8.

⁴⁴⁷ Ryan and L Gunaydin op. cit., line 467-9.

⁴⁴⁸ Ryan and McKeon, op. cit., line 184.

⁴⁴⁹ Ryan and Courtenay, op. cit., lines 39-40.

⁴⁵⁰ Ryan and R Ansari, op. cit., lines 376-82.

⁴⁵¹ Ryan and Debbousse, op. cit., line 114.

⁴⁵² Ryan and McKeon, op. cit., lines 145, 188-92.

⁴⁵³ *ibid*, line 313.

⁴⁵⁴ Ryan and R Ansari, op. cit., lines 294-312.

⁴⁵⁵ Ryan and Saral, op. cit., lines 222-4.

⁴⁵⁶ Ryan and Ozlap, op. cit., lines 363-5.

Importantly in this case, several believed dialogue was essential to understanding another perspective when viewing cultural artifacts. As one participant commented: 'Interaction is much more exciting and inviting than just pictures by themselves. And having someone to explain and interact with, I think you would get a little bit more out of it ...with dialogue it's more powerful'⁴⁵⁷ and ' ... everyone sees things differently ... through someone else's eyes you see things you don't see yourself and I think that's why it is nice to share exhibitions with friends ...'⁴⁵⁸

Additionally, the physical layout of an exhibition can significantly affect an audience's aesthetic experience. As mentioned in earlier discussions, glass display cases, enclosed spaces and technological innovations that are designed to enhance the visitor experience also act as barriers, creating distance between viewer and the 'real' object and 'limits' the 'level of engagement'.⁴⁵⁹ Descriptive and didactic textual panels and labels, which allow for individual interpretation are decoded and translated via individual and cultural codes of understanding, can also minimize the 'spiritual' experience through a concentration on 'less atmospheric ... educational and archival' curatorial approaches that were 'unlikely' to alter mindsets.⁴⁶⁰ These issues highlight the curatorial dilemma that not everyone comes to an exhibition for the same reasons and with similar expectations of the experience they will have.

Reactions to exhibitionary spaces varied between visitors to the AoIE even within the same community groups. For instance, responses to labelling and rhetoric of speeches and exhibition publications (catalogue, brochures, advertisements) resonated with some Muslim and non-Muslim participants who viewed all the text and publications related to artworks on display as appropriate and tasteful⁴⁶¹; while other Muslims (particularly Sunni Muslims)⁴⁶² were offended by the statement that the exhibition was ninety per cent secular, as they believed all art was made for God therefore religious: '... most of those people [artists] would have been inspired by some part of their faith ... if I was an artist I would be

⁴⁵⁷ Ryan and K Sukkarieh, op. cit., lines 113-18, 141.

⁴⁵⁸ Ryan and Courtenay, op. cit., lines 20-3.

⁴⁵⁹ Ryan and Phipps, op. cit., line 211.

⁴⁶⁰ *ibid*, lines 335-36, 344, 391.

⁴⁶¹ Ryan and Debbousse, op. cit., line 449; Ryan and Courtenay, op. cit., lines 158-65.

⁴⁶² Ryan and Saral, op. cit., lines 130-48; Ryan and L Gunaydin, op. cit., lines 112-24.

totally offended ... calling it secular takes away the part of Islam ... you are kind of negating a whole history ...'⁴⁶³

Promoting cultural diversity through the practice of classifying artifacts as universally aesthetic is problematic as investigations of the Musée du quai Branly in Paris have revealed. Dias argues that while the 'innovative gaze' aims at providing unfettered contemplation of the 'visually stunning object' freed from its labelling as anthropological specimens, the museum is ignoring issues with its controversial colonial past by reproducing 'the dynamics of colonialism' and engaging in a 'homogenising process, by valorising art as a feature common to all cultures.'⁴⁶⁴ This conflating of cultural diversity in the AoIE under the unifying label of 'Islamic' (both in a religious and secular sense) raised in discussions already certainly resonates with such concerns and has implications for cross-cultural understanding. Separating artifacts from their contextual backgrounds by privileging the aesthetic value can undermine attempts to create equality among cultural and artistic display that is a contentious area in terms of the museum's politics of display and the wider public sphere surrounding debates concerning agency, governance and multiculturalism. These issues will be discussed in detail in chapter five.

A critical examination of dialogue gathered in interviews reveals the power dynamics operating in the museum context and dominant discourses influencing the creation of knowledge, meaning and ideology, especially in regard to shared and patterned modes of talking and thinking about social, cultural and political issues.⁴⁶⁵ Discourses from privileged sectors of society (curators, typical museum visitors) who have access to 'cultural capital' can shape dominant discourse (consciously or unconsciously) so that aspects of society appear 'natural' or 'common sense'. This means like-minded people will align themselves with dominant discourses they feel a 'natural affinity with', yet members of other alternate thinking groups can sometimes adopt the viewpoints and ideas of dominant groups as their own 'common sense' even when these beliefs do not support their own interests.⁴⁶⁶

This is particularly the case with the issue of images of the Prophet Mohammad where the AGNSW curators and the majority of non-Muslim interviewees felt there was no

⁴⁶³ Ryan and R Ansari, op. cit., lines 97-152.

⁴⁶⁴ N Dias, 'Double erasures: rewriting the past at the Musée du quai Branly', *Social Anthropology*, vol. 16, no. 8, 2008, p. 302, 304-06.

⁴⁶⁵ M Karlberg, 'Discourse Theory and Peace', *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*, First Edition Ed. D J Christie (ed.), Blackwell Publishing Ltd, London, United Kingdom, 2012, pp. 2-3.

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.*

issue with the displaying of such images that many of the Muslim community thought were insensitive and inappropriate. Yet there was a group of university trained Muslim interviewees who, while agreeing that they may be offensive to the majority of Muslims and the communities they were actively part of, did not personally feel insulted. The different cultural and religious codes are obvious in the polarity of views that separate the Muslim and non-Muslim audiences, institutional staff and audiences; however there are some visitors operating in liminal spaces between worlds such as the educated Muslim interviewees. Thus, while the majority of audiences surveyed appear to be reconfirming their cultural codes and mindsets, some participants are experiencing conflicting and competing experiences that contribute to the development of multiple identities.

On the question of the beautiful object and the aesthetic experience promoting cross-cultural understanding, major stakeholders and curators from the AGNSW were adamant that every measure had been taken to promote this outcome and they had been successful based on the responses from their typical and loyal audiences. Both groups felt catering to the majority of atypical visitors was not justified in the case of the AGNSW. That the dominant power groups and discourses were maintained is obvious and illustrates the self-justifying and legitimatizing frameworks that museums such as the two under discussion are operating under.

In many instances, empirical data has revealed problems arose because of differing, contradictory or opposing viewpoints on certain issues. For example, despite attempts to focus on the 'star object' as the vehicle for transforming public awareness, it is clear contradictory perceptions between AGNSW curators and Muslim and non-Muslim visitors existed in regard to depictions of Mohammad and whether the 'beautiful' object and the aesthetic experience can transcend boundaries and alter perceptions. According to Ivan Karp, audiences have two choices when they are exposed to exhibitions that challenge cultural assumptions: 'either they define their experience to fit the existing categories of knowledge, or they reorganize their categories to fit better with the experience.'⁴⁶⁷ It appears in this case, the exhibition experience was insufficient to influence or change specific and often disparate cultural processes and formations that underpin discourses and representations that influence attitudes and mindsets of some visitors.

⁴⁶⁷ I Karp & SD Lavine, 'Culture and Representation', *Exhibiting Cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display*, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, London, 1991, p. 22.

There appear several reasons for the failure of the aesthetic experience to promote cross-cultural understanding and alter the attitudes and perspectives of Muslim and non-Muslim visitors, that research data from the AoIE in Sydney can permit speculation. The absence of a sense of belonging and fairness that Muslims have expressed in this research data, for example, reveals a mistrust of western institutions such as museums and lack of faith in their capacity to represent their Muslim and Islamic stories through their cultural objects in objective and unbiased ways. Community consultation and acknowledgement of cultural sensitivities seems a major hurdle for Muslim and non-Muslim participants in these cultural ventures despite the best of intentions from all parties involved in the venture. The polarity of views between Muslim and non-Muslim visitors in regard to depictions of Mohammad, the success of Muslim volunteers, whether the 'beautiful' object and the aesthetic experience can transcend boundaries and perceptions of an exhibition's capacity to change mindsets, confirms how complex and problematic the AGNSW's mandate is, in being more inclusive and attract diverse audiences.

Previous research into the incorporation of community groups into the exhibitionary displays at the AGNSW has shown, ⁴⁶⁸ marginal groups such as those identifying as 'Asian' and 'Muslim', are the hardest demographic to attract because the art museum is outside their comfort zone and 'simply an alien institution'.⁴⁶⁹ Traditional institutions such as the AGNSW have often been accused of catering to the upper and middleclass elite in society; as Bourdieu persuasively argues the art museum's primary purpose was to inculcate the 'aesthetic disposition' that '... reinforce[d] for some, the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion'.⁴⁷⁰ The AGNSW had made attempts at community involvement in the AoIE by recruiting Muslim volunteers to answer visitor questions regarding Islamic art and culture. However, most volunteers complained that they were 'quite bored' due to lack of visitor interest; suggesting that the AGNSW could have used them as 'official tour guides' as many of them were official guides at the Auburn Gallopi Mosque and felt that a Muslim was better equipped to 'answer questions on Islam'. As one volunteer commented: 'they

⁴⁶⁸ Ang, 2005, op. cit, pp. 305-20.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid*, p. 313.

⁴⁷⁰ P Bourdieu, A Darbell, *The Love of Art, European Art Museums and their Public*, C Beattie and N Merriman (trans.), Oxford, Polity Press, 1991, p. 112.

[the AGNSW] really need to engage the community and the community's got to feel ownership for it'.⁴⁷¹

There appears to be a line that the AGNSW was not prepared to cross where community groups are excluded from decision-making processes concerning displays of their cultural and artistic heritage. Interestingly, in both this study and Ang's study of the AGNSW, Menzies (the Asian department curator) justifies the 'dropping' of community consultation in favour of the expert opinion of the museum professionals because curatorial staff are the best judges of 'aesthetic value'⁴⁷² to 'show the best of the art' for both the 2005 *Buddha: the radiance within exhibition* and the *AoIE* in 2007.⁴⁷³ This is especially the case when the 'experience' is favoured over 'interpretation' as the main display policy, because the role of object agency becomes paramount to success due to the lack of contextual background to enhance visitor appreciation and understanding. Maintaining the right balance between curatorial expertise, community consultation and audience expectations while remaining viable and relevant cultural institutions is obviously problematic for the AGNSW; a dilemma shared by many contemporary museums as the following discussions highlight.

The role of museums and curatorial approaches in the age of 'risk'

According to Beck (2002), the events of 9/11 and their aftermath (such as incidents in Australia detailed in the previous section), are part of living in 'world risk society'. Along with ecological disasters such as Chernobyl (and more recently Fukushima Daiichi in 2011), mad cow disease, gene technology, global warming, and continuing worldwide financial crisis, 'global terror' is now part of the 'axes of conflict in world risk society'.⁴⁷⁴ Following his 1999 seminal work,⁴⁷⁵ Beck reiterates that risk as a global phenomenon 'inherently contains the concept of control. Pre-modern dangers were attributed to nature, gods and demons. Risk is a modern concept. It presumes decision-making. As soon as we speak in terms of 'risk', we are talking about calculating the incalculable, colonizing the future'.⁴⁷⁶ The

⁴⁷¹ Ryan and Debbousse, op. cit., lines 25-26; Ryan and S Ansari, op. cit., lines 509, 32-9, 327-9.

⁴⁷² Ang, op. cit., p. 317.

⁴⁷³ Transcript L Ryan and J Menzies, 2011, line 466.

⁴⁷⁴ U Beck, 'The Terrorist Threat: World risk society revisited', *Theory, Culture & Society*, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, Sage Publications, vol. 19, no. 4, 2002, pp. 39-55, 41.

⁴⁷⁵ U Beck, *World Risk society: Towards a new modernity*, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 1999.

⁴⁷⁶ Beck, 2002, op. cit., p. 40.

calculating of risks is what Beck views as part of first modernity, a period characterized by industrial society and traditional, nationalized lifestyles based on the family, class structures, cultural and national boundaries, democracy and scientific progress.⁴⁷⁷

Beck concedes that wealth and risk distribution are not equally spread throughout the modern world and argues the world is not necessarily more dangerous than in previous eras, but genuine and perceived threats, such as nuclear disasters and global terrorism activities are a result of advances in science and technology.⁴⁷⁸ These unexpected consequences of the success of this process of modernization have propelled society into an advanced second or 'reflective' modernity. Whereas in first modernity risk was seen as controllable through mechanisms of measurement and prevention such as those employed by experts in government, the police force, insurance companies, knowledge systems and institutions like museums, Beck posits that second modernity is an era of 'de-bounding of uncontrollable risks'.⁴⁷⁹ As these 'manufactured uncertainties' (often a result of scientific developments) and real hazards become global issues, reservations, doubt and wariness of previously trusted systems of risk management have resulted in individualisation (where people are more personally responsible for their own actions) and a preoccupation with assessing and making accountable public and private societal bodies ('reflective modernisation').⁴⁸⁰

Beck draws a fundamental distinction between ecological and financial conflicts and the terrorist threats, however, as the former are unforeseen consequences or accidents of unwise decisions ('bads' as opposed to 'goods'), whereas the latter are 'intentionally bad'.⁴⁸¹ He views the particular characteristics of the terrorist threat as:

(bad) intention replaces accident, active trust becomes active mistrust, the context of individual risk is replaced by the concept of systemic risks, private insurance is (partly) replaced by state insurance, the power of definition of experts has been replaced by the states and intelligence agencies; and the pluralisation of expert rationalities has turned into the simplification of enemy images.⁴⁸²

⁴⁷⁷ Beck, 1999, op. cit., p. 14.

⁴⁷⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 19-50.

⁴⁷⁹ Beck, 2002, op. cit., p. 41.

⁴⁸⁰ Cameron, 2010, op. cit., p.58.

⁴⁸¹ Beck, 2002, op. cit., p. 44.

⁴⁸² *ibid.*, p.45.

Beck warns this global 'axes' of threat (ecological, financial, and terrorist) is seen as potentially unleashing unimaginable consequences as advances in science and technology open a '*Pandora's box* that could be used as a terrorist toolkit'.⁴⁸³ Beck suggests that this pessimistic vision of the present should not result in the 'surveillance state' however, where personal freedoms and democratic principles are sacrificed. Instead a 'cosmopolitan state' should evolve where there is a reason for 'hope', a 'new phase' of the 'globalization of politics, the moulding of states into transnational cooperative networks ... on the basis of human rights and global justice' to promote global wellbeing. Unlike multiculturalism or universalism, this 'civilizing' of world risk society through 'compressed cosmopolitanization'⁴⁸⁴ will combat the 'culture of fear'⁴⁸⁵ and 'causes of terror' by 'not just accept[ing] but value[ing] differences', recognizing 'the otherness of the other', and advocating the importance of 'solidarity with foreigners both inside and outside national borders ...' thereby 'revitaliz[ing] and transform[ing]' the world.⁴⁸⁶ Beck maintains this 'enforced cosmopolitanization' is a necessity because in a 'threat public sphere' which is 'emotionally and existentially determined'⁴⁸⁷ ... you have to cooperate or fail because it is a global issue' and distinctions such as 'us' and 'them' and the 'other' no longer apply on any level – national, international, local, global, macro or micro.⁴⁸⁸

How do displays of art and culture in the art museum generally (and the AoIE at the AGNSW specifically) fit within this vision of Beck's 'reflective' modernity and the 'cosmopolitan' state and how do they deal with risk? Since many museums like the AGNSW were established as colonial institutions and are products of first modernity, this is problematic on many levels. Traditionally museums functioned as bastions of civilisation and sites for the creation of model citizens through pedagogic practices and policies. As mentioned in the last chapter, theorists such as Hooper-Greenhill and Bal (1992), Sherman and Rogoff (1994) and Bennett (1995, 1998), use a Foucauldian perspective to argue that museums are institutions that continually reinforce power relations through discursive and representational practices based on disciplinary or governmental constraints. Bennett, for

⁴⁸³ S Gallini in L. Culver et al, 'Revisiting Risk Society: A conversation with Ulrich Beck', *RCC Perspectives*, Munich, issues 6, 2011, p.13.

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.*

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.*, G Mom, quoting F Furedi In L Culver, et al, 2011, p.17.

⁴⁸⁶ Beck, 2002, *op. cit.*, pp. 46-50.

⁴⁸⁷ Quoting U Beck, C Lousley, *World at risk*, Polity press, Cambridge, 2007, L Culver, *op. cit.*, p.21.

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 20.

example, credits the nineteenth and twentieth century museum setting with creating a new social space whose crucial role was to better the working class via the improving influence of the middle class. Art was considered a resource that possessed the power to produce civic reform. Through programs of self-improvement, the museum object was radically reshaped so that the educational function transformed the object into both an epistemic and governmental artifact, directed at whole populations via mass education programs of civic formation.⁴⁸⁹

As Cameron has highlighted, controversy had 'no place and is indeed incompatible' with the formation of museums 'given the emphasis on risk control, discipline, the collective, audiences as objects of governance, expert knowledge systems and rationality, and the exclusion of the non-expert voice'. Further, she maintains many museums are still promoting a 'modern risk regime ... [by] continuing to control cultural conversations within certain boundaries ... [discouraging] interactions between the various parties instead privileging their own or authorizing certain narratives'.⁴⁹⁰

This appears the case with the AoIE with the AGNSW curators commenting:

... we use a traditional museum perspective ... an apolitical presentation about the objects ... And in some ways it worked just fine in that, because I think that in itself, being apolitical is political in its own way ... Well we are an art museum so we tried to show the best of an art, and I think in a way you come back to the neutral idea. If people want to give it a political twist, then you have to diffuse that and your strategies are to diffuse it ...there are places for that sort of dialogue ... debates about politics ... I wasn't necessarily hoping for that, that's for sure.⁴⁹¹

Curators Menzies and White confirmed this was also the viewpoint of the Khalili Collection owner and curatorial team: 'They didn't want to make it a political issue and they were very clear about that'.⁴⁹² This is reinforced from the curator of the collection, Nahla Nassar, who believes that educating the public via exhibitions is a 'way of getting cultures to understand each other's history' however '... local politics is not really our concern...'⁴⁹³

⁴⁸⁹ Bennett, 1995, op. cit., pp. 28, 33.

⁴⁹⁰ Cameron, 2010, op. cit., p.57.

⁴⁹¹ Transcript L Ryan and J Menzies/S White, 2010, lines 439, 454-468.

⁴⁹² Ryan and Menzies, op. cit., line 451.

⁴⁹³ Ryan and Nassar, op. cit., lines 90-2,376-7.

One non-Muslim Focus group participant held similar beliefs:

... it's [the AoIE] specialness comes from not necessarily being hooked into ... contemporary political debates ... it is probably part of the appeal of the museum to have that degree of removal and if you want an engagement, if you wanted to be in the thick of contemporary debate you might be better off in a different institution perhaps ... not in their [the AGNSW] interest to have an aggressive debate going on under their roof ... transcending boundaries probably is about not being engaged directly with the everyday political situation.⁴⁹⁴

The general attitude of the AGNSW regarding social and political issues in their art displays was especially evident in the issue of depictions of Mohammad that has previously been discussed and reinforced the curatorial decision to concentrate on the 'beauty' of the objects rather than their contextual backgrounds particularly discussions involving religion. Initially the curatorial decision to display these controversial images appeared to be encouraging debate and stimulating discussions around contentious subjects despite criticisms arising from the AGNSW's 2002 *Islamic art and patronage: Treasures from Kuwait*, which was considered by some community members as 'an affront to our Christian sensibilities'⁴⁹⁵ after the terror of 9/11. However, further investigations revealed that far from the AGNSW operating under second modernity conditions and utilising strategies that promote 'reflective' thinking through engaging in debates over controversial issues, lack of community consultation was the reason behind the display decision to use artworks depicting the image of Mohammad.

Museums operating as first modernity institutions that seek to control risk parameters, concentrate on the collective and governable audience through directing conversations and limiting boundaries base many of their curatorial decisions with their target demographic audience in mind. The majority view obtained from interviews and focus groups conducted with non-Muslim visitors that was previously discussed in this chapter echoed the AGNSW curators attitude towards this issue who did not perceive the depiction of Mohammad's face a problem before, during or after the show and demonstrates their self-referencing and legitimizing system that relies on a target audience as criteria of success:

⁴⁹⁴ Ryan and Phipps, op. cit., lines 86-99, 120-21.

⁴⁹⁵ *Sydney Morning Herald*, November 26, 2002, retrieved 10 July 2009, <http://smh.com/news>.

... I remember too when the show went up people were saying 'you can't show images of the prophet in the show'. There was quite a few, there was a bit of aggro that came out on the expectation that we wouldn't be doing the proper thing, and that we might have our own attitude. And of course it's art, you can't get away from the art, if someone's painted the prophet in the 14th century...there's a reality to that. When people saw the enormity of what the exhibition was it was beyond their wildest dreams. This is people from the community ... All of those worries or concerns that we weren't going to handle culture properly seemed to be put into the back of the mind.⁴⁹⁶

This criteria of success based on satisfying the 'typical' AGNSW visitor is obvious as the curators view that they had 'no worries' about showing images of Mohammad runs contrary to the warning given by the Khalili Trust curator:

We are very aware that Islamic art, although it is not necessarily entirely religious in its content a large amount of it, a substantial amount of it, is of a religious nature, and it means a lot to Muslim people. So we are very careful that especially the religious part of any display does not offend anyone.⁴⁹⁷

Additionally, the curator's perspective on how successful the Muslim volunteers were in engaging with visitors was at odds with that of the volunteer's comments that were previously discussed. While the volunteers felt underused, rarely asked questions and were often bored, the curators commented that the volunteers were 'very popular actually and consistently right the way through [the exhibition]... they [the volunteers] loved it ... [saying] this is just so exciting ... it actually empowers them ... stimulated an interest in their own cultural activities ...'⁴⁹⁸This discrepancy implies either that they curators were unaware of the true feelings of the volunteers or that they were simply ignoring the issue. They seemed disinterested in what my research finding may show, suggesting they were working within their risk-assessed criteria of success that was aimed at satisfying their target audience, which was not typically Muslims. As previous research in 2005 revealed the AGNSW marketing department (which was still there in 2007) was firmly aimed at attracting the 'loyal' visitor: '... Classic marketing theory says that's it's much easier to get your loyal audience to come back than a completely new one ... until we know how to convert our own loyalists, you can't begin to grapple with converting those who are less loyal'.⁴⁹⁹

Meeting the demands of loyal sponsors and the need to meet corporate expectations of 'brand' exposure through effective marketing and publicity and other fringe

⁴⁹⁶ Ryan and Menzies/White, op. cit., lines 340-55.

⁴⁹⁷ Ryan and Nassar, op. cit., lines 209-13.

⁴⁹⁸ Ryan and Menzies/ White, op. cit., lines 97-141.

⁴⁹⁹ Ang, 2005, op. cit., p. 315.

benefits also affects management decisions at the AGNSW. This is an important consideration, as sponsors desire to be seen as associated with a 'clean and uplifting product – art – and access to an affluent public'.⁵⁰⁰ For example, the AGNSW boasts a:

dedicated sponsorship department and works closely with corporate partners to create tailored offers that meet specific sponsor objectives... unique marketing, public relations, and incentive opportunities... targeting Australia's largest and most loyal group of arts supporters, providing client entertaining and networking opportunities [and] involving employees, their friends and families with the art gallery societies and our exhibition activities and other cultural events.⁵⁰¹

These incentives would have certainly impacted on prospective sponsors of the AoIE when considering the inclusion of arts sponsorship in their funding policies and ensuring that sponsorship requirements were not adversely impacted would have been incorporated into the risk-management guidelines at the AGNSW.

These responses are examples of Beck's belief that 'radicalized modernization' has 'undermined' first modernity institutions (such as the museum) producing institutional crisis, especially in regard to risk and conflict.⁵⁰² For example, many museums such as the American Museum of Natural History now have an online section of their website titled *Risk Management and Disaster Planning* suggesting the use of 'evaluation tools' developed by the insurance industry, to 'identify the greatest risks to their collections and set procedures in place to plan for and reduce the effects of unavoidable disasters'. Though insuring against risk has been part of these institutions since their inception, it is emphasized that this need for 'disaster planning' is because 'in the wake of recent world events, institutions have learned that they must prepare to be able to respond in the case of disaster', implying that risks have increased due to world events which includes terrorist activities. The website recommends numerous other links and resource sites for more information including approaches of other museums to this issue (especially Museum SOS website), workshops, other online risk assessment tools, management tutorials, FAQs on risk assessment, worksheets and checklists for outlining a disaster plan and emergency management suppliers and services.⁵⁰³

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.*

⁵⁰¹ Exhibition and Events brochure, AGNSW, *op. cit.*

⁵⁰² L Culver et al, *op. cit.* p. 8.

⁵⁰³ *American Museum of Natural History, Risk and Disaster Planning*, retrieved 10 July 2013, <<http://collections.paleo.amnh.org/9/risk-management-and-disaster-planning>>.

In a similar vein to Beck, Sharon Macdonald believes this type of museum restructuring where 'everything is controversial', and attempts to 'cool down' these hot topics results in risk aversion strategies designed to frame and contain 'overflows' by '... sett[ing] the terms within which the viewer will view ... so that certain connections will be made rather than others ...'; where distinct contexts, arenas and 'self circulating interactions in which excess and the potential for questioning the legitimacy of the framework itself are edited out'. In this framework of self-justification alternatives are constrained and legitimized through reference to target audience needs only and criticisms from those excluded from the frame are eliminated - no 'interrogation of silences, the unsaid and unrecognized'.⁵⁰⁴

Another illustration of the AGNSW operating in first modernity institutional mode is their reliance on specific framing which is a transparent, rule-governed, corporate managerial style approach to risk assessment that is self-legitimizing and provides justification for museological practices and procedures: '... we then questioned our people in marketing ...so we already had some sort of mechanisms in place ... I was going by that as a bit of a template ...'⁵⁰⁵

Some museums take a different approach to risk and controversy however, satisfying Beck's criteria for second modernity institutions. For example, St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art in Glasgow Scotland (a registered charity partly funded by the Glasgow City Council) displays artworks and religious objects based around Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism with the aim 'to promote understanding and respect between people of different faiths and of none, and offers something for everyone'.⁵⁰⁶ Considered the only museum in the world to be dedicated solely to religion, risk assessments are conducted on all their exhibitions but this has not affected their decisions to tackle sensitive issues and go beyond the aesthetic qualities of an object to include contextual and background information regardless of their controversial nature (fig 44).

⁵⁰⁴ Callon (1998), Goffman (1971), Latour (1999) and Silverstone (1985) in S MacDonald, *Materializing culture: behind the scenes at the science Museum*, Berg, Oxford, New York, 2002, pp. 250-52.

⁵⁰⁵ Ryan and Menzies, op. cit., lines 36-8.

St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art - Glasgow Life, website information, assessed 10th July 2013, retrieved <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our.../st-mungo.../home.aspx>.

In order to assess risk the museum doesn't conduct internal discussions based on risk management procedures and corporate style guidelines but base their decisions ultimately on the outcome of workshops with the schools in the area and the general public, facilitated focus groups and community consultation with a multitude of cultural groups, forums and symposiums prior to an exhibition being approved for display.⁵⁰⁷ The museum often organizes a community-curated exhibition where members of the public bring items for display that have a special story or are of significance to the owner and their written and sometimes oral descriptions are included in the exhibition.⁵⁰⁸ The museum does not shy away from sensitive and provocative subjects in these displays either. For example, a 2010 exhibition in partnership with community groups displayed a collection of Palestinian poems and Israeli artifacts under the theme of titled *Conflict*, which while popular, drew criticisms from both cultural groups.⁵⁰⁹



Fig 44 Online advertisement for St Mungo Museum Glasgow Scotland. Source: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/st-mungos/Pages/default.aspx>

⁵⁰⁷ Ryan and Menzies, op. cit., lines 75-153.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid, lines 181-93.

⁵⁰⁹ Transcript L Ryan and 'museum fieldworker', Pseudonym used, 2011, lines 234-8.

The museum maintains they attempt to depict traditions differently to other museums: they include visitor opinions in their displays that they believe portray religions 'sympathically' while allowing for contentious issues to be open to critical thinking. Mark O'Neill, the first senior curator at St Mungo's, explains this approach:

If the aim was to communicate something of the meaning of the objects, we had to reverse the usual process in museums of draining them of their dangerous meanings to render them safely aesthetic, historical or anthropological. In the case of religion 'meaning' has an emotional and spiritual dimension that can be described much more powerfully by those who experience it than those who have simply studied it.⁵¹⁰

To achieve this aim, each display room contains a bulletin board where visitors are encouraged to share their responses to exhibits and despite the majority of comments being positive, the displaying of religions comparatively has drawn complaints addressed to the museum and the Glasgow Council in some instances: some groups feeling their cultural and religious traditions were 'under-represented'; offence taken that captions suggested missionary work had 'damaged indigenous cultures'; an image of a girl enduring ritual circumcision with one visitor so offended he wrote, 'St. Mungo's: where Satan is free to run rampant'; and an enraged visitor damaging a statue of the Hindu God Shiva soon after the museums opening in 1993 (fig 45).⁵¹¹

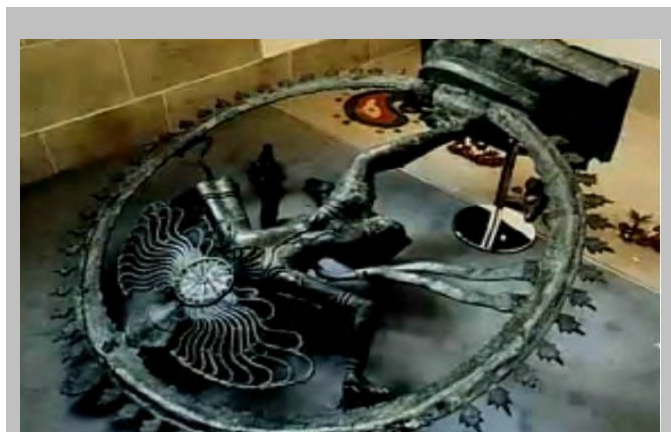


Fig 45 Hindu god Lord Shiva, 1970s
South India damaged by an 'enraged' visitor in 1993, St
Mungo Glasgow. Source:
[http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/st-
mungos/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/st-mungos/Pages/default.aspx)

⁵¹⁰ M O'Neill quoted in 'AD317: Is religion a museum piece?', 1994, p. 28, website article, retrieved 10 July 2013, <https://moodle.fp.tul.cz/mod/page/view.php?id=11354>.

⁵¹¹ *ibid.*

According to a current museum fieldwork, the staff is trained to handle controversial debates and encourage discussions concerning conflict so it is:

out there instead of under the counter ... you can say what you like and whether they agree with that or shift their view, at least they have got that knowledge and it might shift their view, it is just about the debate and for us as professionals it is about how we have that debate safely so it doesn't inflame the conflict but it is about people stepping back and thinking that is interesting, it is about how we facilitate that debate ...[challenge is] totally crucial to everything we do ... because people learn through challenge, not just the status quo.⁵¹²

In terms of reactions to Islamic displays, the museum works closely with their 'sizable' Muslim community groups with the curator reflecting that: '... we haven't had any trouble [with displays of Islamic art and culture] ... we have had comments like this should be more Christian, but we haven't had any comments saying you shouldn't have Islamic objects, which is interesting ...'⁵¹³

A more extreme example of indifference towards risk is MONA (Museum of Old and New Art) in Hobart Tasmania (a large island off the Australian mainland). MONA is the largest privately owned museum in the southern hemisphere and is dependent on gambling dividends for its survival; a fact that is equally controversial or risky for both 'benefactor and beneficiary'. Owner David Walsh (Hobart-born art collector, professional gambler, mathematician, brewer and vintner) admitted shortly after its opening in 2011 that he had 'run out of money and was in debt to banks, to friends, to everybody'.⁵¹⁴ As Walsh pays all museum costs from private funds and has no board or governance to qualify for tax-free status, MONA costs Walsh personally approximately \$8 million a year. Walsh isn't fazed by the situation however, believing risk is relative:

I'm ballsy. I have a different attitude to risk to most people. And because I got lucky it looks like I know what I'm doing. It's an example of Darwinian survivor bias⁵¹⁵ ... At the moment no component of this enterprise is set up for not-for-profit, but the plus side is I can sell something if I get sick of it ... Most museums have to jump through hoops to de-accession, but for me it's a matter of taking it out of the warehouse or pulling it off the wall ... I don't think, as a ratio, I'm more in debt than any other people are. It's incredible fun; you do something like this not because of what you know but what you learn. And I've learned a lot about art and a lot about people.⁵¹⁶

⁵¹² L Ryan & 'museum fieldworker', Pseudonym used, 2011, lines 565-576.

⁵¹³ *ibid*, lines 396-99.

⁵¹⁴ J Richardson, *go mona...*, 2013, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.yourdemocracy.net.au>.

⁵¹⁵ C Ruiz, *A 'subversive Disneyland' at the end of the world*, [web blog], 5 July 2010, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.theartnewspaper.com>.

⁵¹⁶ M Boland, 'Numbers are up for museum gamble that continues to defy tourism odds', *The Australian*, July 16, 2011.

MONA's attitude to controversy is in direct opposition to the AGNSW with Walsh justifying his unusual thematic choices as an attempt to: '... shock and offend ... I care about sex and death ... If I had Goyas or Picasso's or Caravaggio's or Van Gogh's, it would still seem like I was interested in sex and death. All galleries are, or should be.'⁵¹⁷ Walsh, who maintains 'most curation is bullshit'⁵¹⁸ and doesn't believe '... the Louvre is the definition of culture ... Wikipedia is ...',⁵¹⁹ criticizes museums for seeing their role as educators that enlighten the visitor, 'instilling faith' by considering them an 'empty vessel that has to be filled'.⁵²⁰ Instead Walsh regards MONA as reflecting a scientific paradigm: 'gradualism would be a better metaphor, learning by increments through guesswork and experiment, but with constant attempts to falsify ... a museum that you discover gradually ... an un-temple, which means it has to be concealed'.⁵²¹ MONA is designed as a place of exploration, where the curator doesn't prescribe taste; it is through discussion generated in response to his displays of disturbing images that knowledge and understanding is promoted.⁵²² These include displays that provoke strong audience reactions: Stephen J. Shanabrook's 2008 *On the Road to Heaven the Highway to Hell*, 2008, a sculpture of a suicide bombers' mutilated body cast in chocolate, and Gregory Green's 2005 *Bible Bomb #1854 (Russian style)*, a mixed media "bomb" in a Bible and several other works which use the Qur'an and Torah (figs 46-49).



Fig 46 Exterior views of MONA with *Cabinet of Curiosities Box* in foreground. Source: <http://www.mona.net.au/past-exhibitions>



Fig 47 Theatre of the World display MONA 2013. Source: <http://www.art-almanac.com.au/2013/02/theatre-of-the-world/>

⁵¹⁷ M Siegel, *MONA, a Museum at the End of the World*, 2012, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.businessweek.com>.

⁵¹⁸ G Anderson, *Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art finally opens*, 2011, retrieved 20 January 2013, <<http://au.artshub.com.au>>.

⁵¹⁹ Siegel, op. cit.

⁵²⁰ A Lohrey, 'High Priest: David Walsh and Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art', *Society*, December 2010-January 2011, retrieved 20 January 2013, <<http://www.themonthly.com.au>, 2010>.

⁵²¹ *ibid.*

⁵²² Ruiz, op. cit.



Fig 48 *On the Road to Heaven the Highway to Hell* Stephen Shanabrook 2005 MONA. Source: <http://www.mona.net.au/past-exhibitions>



Fig 49 Gregory Green's mixed media 'bomb' in a Bible (*Bible Bomb #185*), Koran and Torah 2005 MONA. Source: MONA catalogue L Ryan

There have been other individual international exhibitions that also stand out as opposing this risk-aversion stance: the politically provocative *Without Boundaries: Seventeen Ways of Looking* (MOMA, 2006), *Turkish Delight* (Kunsthalle Museum Vienna, 2007), a statue depicting a naked woman wearing only a headscarf (fig 50); and *Treasures of Palestine* (Powerhouse Museum, 2004) and *Palestine 1948* (Amsterdam, 2008), both triggering debate concerning the Palestine-Israeli conflict.



Fig 50 Olaf Metzel *Turkish Delight* sculpture wrenched from its pedestal 2007 while on display at the Kunsthalle Museum Vienna. Source: Kunsthalle Wien public space 2007.

Conclusion

Discussions during this chapter have concentrated on the degree to which cross-cultural understanding was successfully promoted via the aesthetic experience and agency of the museum object at this first site of display of the touring AoIE. The differing viewpoints and dispositions of various disparate cultural, religious, social groups stakeholder groups involved in the Sydney show (the visitor, the institutional representative and the community leader) were considered after extensive interviewing of participants. Limitations of the methodology utilised in this thesis (especially the reliability of curatorial/institutional opinions and audience recollections) has been acknowledged and reflected upon when forming conclusions and making recommendations. Further, the related issues of the politics of display, representation and perception, community consultation, and 'risk management' have been investigated and argued within this site of display and shown to be common and significant concerns and dilemmas in the broader museum world.

Based on this site-specific data, this study recommends that for art displays to change negative and stereotypical viewpoints museums must take into consideration the potency of discourse generally, and media coverage in the wider public sphere in particular. Additionally, research findings suggest that for displays of cultural objects and images to achieve their goals of negating biased and sensationalized 'images' and promote cross-cultural understanding they need to be complemented by cultural activities that engage different audiences in dialogue at communal events in 'ordinary spaces' on the level of 'everyday multiculturalism' that assist in providing rich and powerful contexts to the object on display in cultural events such as the AoIE. Alternate activities such as local and regional festivals, Mosque open days, communal dinners, cinema and television events, theatrical performances and comedy all have the potential to become arenas where cross-cultural understanding can occur and where more meaningful and permanent bridges can be built across cultures and within communities.

This chapter also involved investigations concerning the opinions and attitudes of the exhibition audience compared with those of curators and museum professionals in regard to 'risk management', especially how their perception of risk and the mechanisms they employ affect their display strategies in the contemporary museum space. As these

discussions have highlighted and other studies confirmed,⁵²³ institutions of first modernity such as the AGNSW have difficulty in finding a 'happy medium' if they are structuring their practices and policies around their 'imagined audience' or 'vision of the visitor'. This is especially the case with the AGNSW where the middle-aged, well-educated, white female is the target audience.

However, catering to the 'typical' visitor often draws criticism and accusations of appealing solely to the more educated visitor and charged with 'elitism' and being potentially 'exclusionary'. Alternatively, if the museum attempts to engage a broader audience demographic, they are in danger of being blamed for engaging in 'patronizing' behaviour and 'dumbing down' content if they design displays that appear to be catering to the relatively ignorant visitor.⁵²⁴ Following Bauman, one possible solution to this dilemma is for museum professionals to make the transition from acting as 'legislators' to that of 'interpreters'. Rather than seeing their role as intellectuals and cultural mediators' deciding what knowledges the public should know, Bauman maintains it is essential that importance be placed on the agency of audiences and the wider public as partners in creating and evaluating exhibition content and display strategies.⁵²⁵

It is obvious that museums such as the AGNSW have, like MONA and St Mungo's, the broader social remit to promote reflectivity in their audiences but are more concerned that being seen as too politically aligned or polemic may jeopardize their desired role in society and perceptions of their displays. Art and cultural displays do have their roles to play as mediators and safe arenas for discussions of sensitive issues, not just places to appreciate the 'beautiful' object devoid of interpretation and understanding that social, political, religious and cultural backgrounds bring. As Cameron suggests if museums are viewed as 'complex, open systems, as part of networks in global flows, as platforms for interactions along with the idea of the reflective, active, citizen'⁵²⁶ and see 'controversy' as something 'productive ... rather than something that has to be controlled and minimised'⁵²⁷ they have the capacity to remain trusted yet topical, relevant and viable social institutions. In the case of the AoIE in Sydney, the curatorial process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation,

⁵²³ Ang, 2005, op. cit.,

⁵²⁴ S MacDonald, 2002 op. cit., p. 80.

⁵²⁵ Z Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*, Cornell University Press, 1987, pp. 38-40.

⁵²⁶ Cameron, 2010, op. cit., p. 68.

⁵²⁷ *ibid.*, p. 69.

disruption and transformation of a this travelling group of objects lacked an integrated approach which respects the multi-dimensional context of museum practices. This resulted in the failure to find a balance between the aesthetic goals of Khalili's program relying on object agency and more socio-political goals of the interpretive approach that considers the external agency and impact of discourses and debates circulating in the wider public sphere.

The following chapter explores the second venue of the AoIE, Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). As the introductory chapter briefly discussed, the trade in and display of Islamic artifacts and the nascent Middle East art market is increasingly becoming a topic of debate worldwide. Chapter four concentrates on the role the AoIE played in kick-starting the UAE art market in 2008, its attitude to promoting cross-cultural understanding via the museum display and the consequences for Muslim communities and countries in negotiating new relations between the cultural institutions of Islam and the western art world. In particular, the search for a new national identity based on art and cultural endeavours are highlighted and the role of Eurocentric museum practices in museums that are being planned and constructed in the UAE evaluated.

Chapter Four

Rethinking national identity: On becoming a 'global centre for cultural enlightenment'

This is not just about tourism; it is also about global dimensions. We believe the best vehicle for crossing borders is art. And this region is in need of some artistic initiatives.

MUBARAK AL MUHAIRI, 2008.

Abu Dhabi is simply buying a cultural identity rather than developing it.

ROBERT KLUIJVER, INTRODUCTION TO THE GULF ART WORLD

This chapter concentrates on the AoIE's second venue of display: Gallery One, the Emirates Palace, Abu Dhabi in 2008. The importance of Khalili's exhibition in launching the UAE into the international art market is discussed and evaluated, especially in light of the region's increasing reliance on cultural tourism as the preferred avenue for a successful financial future. Furthermore, it is through education, art and culture that the UAE, especially Abu Dhabi and Dubai, plan to remake their national identities and position 'Islam' and the 'Arab/Muslim' in a more favourable light internationally. The impact of exhibitions such as the AoIE which deploy objects of art and cultural significance to promote wider agendas (such as nation building and identity formation, economic stability and elitism) is explored for the controversies, disagreements and debates that are generated concerning museum globalization and conformity when economics, politics, culture and art collide.

More specifically, this chapter questions whether the desire for individual identity is a universal phenomenon and whether or not such a trend is superseded in the UAE by the ruling elites' need to maintain their governance over all aspects of social, economic and cultural life of their people. Further, what the implications and consequences of this for local populations, international visitors, and the role the AoIE played in promoting cultural tourism and museum building is central to the following discussions and debates.

The making of a modern nation

It has been barely forty years since the formation of the UAE. Today its diverse society of wealthy citizens, local Emiratis and foreign populations (including large expatriate communities) are re-evaluating their national identity and redefining the place of cultural heritage in their contemporary lives. All seven emirates (Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras Al Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman and Umm Al Quwain) realise their region's reliance on fossil fuels to sustain their economies is limited and therefore economic security for the long-term must be found elsewhere in commodities other than natural resources. Cultural tourism has become the preferred avenue for economic diversification, especially in the UAE's biggest two states: Dubai and Abu Dhabi (covering five and eighty seven per cent of the region respectively).⁵²⁸ For example, Dubai boasts both the world's tallest building (The Khalifa Tower, fig 51), the Dubai Mall (the largest entertainment and shopping destination on the planet, fig 55, 56), with plans to construct indoor ski slopes, a subterranean hotel, a \$4 billion dollar theme park and an 'elite' island project called *The World* (fig 54). Abu Dhabi, on the other hand, hosts The Red Bull Air Race and Formula One racing competitions, numerous nature, cultural and adventure tours along with an array of national and international musical, artistic and creative events like the annual Abu Dhabi Arts festival (figs 52, 53).⁵²⁹

⁵²⁸ R Kluijver, *Introduction to the Gulf Art World*, 2012, Gulf Art Guide website, retrieved 4 May 2014, p. 60, <http://gulfartguide.com/g/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Contemporary-Art-in-the-Gulf-for-print.pdf>.

⁵²⁹ E Doherty, 'The Ecstasy of Property: Collecting in the United Arab Emirates', Mejcher-Atassi and Swartz, op. cit., p. 183.



Fig 51 The Khalifa Tower Dubai. Source: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_tallest_buildings_in_Dubai



Fig 52 Abu Dhabi Film Festival poster 2014. Source: <http://www.cairoscene.com/ViewArticle.aspx?Aid=14269-Egypt-to-Shine-At-Abu-Dhabi-Film-Festival>



Fig 53 Dubai Food Festival poster 2014. Source: <http://www.dubaicalendar.ae/en/event/events/dubai-food-festival-2014.html>

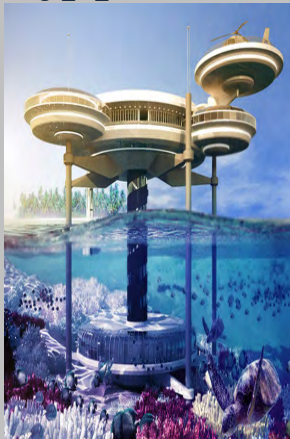


Fig 54 *Water Discus Underwater Hotel*. Source: <http://www.likefun.me/see-dubai-from-inside/>



Fig 55 Indoor ski slope Dubai Mall Dubai. Source: <http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/Information/Mediacentre/Downloads.aspx?page=6>



Fig 56 Indoor aquarium Dubai Mall Dubai. Source: <http://www.thedubaimall.com/en/Information/Mediacentre/Downloads.aspx?page=6>

However, art expert and historian Emily Doherty maintains that becoming a ‘global community’ as an international tourist destination coupled with an influx of foreign workers can contribute to a feeling of ‘identity loss’ at the individual, community and national level;⁵³⁰ especially as Emiratis make up only twenty per cent of the population with eighty-

⁵³⁰ *ibid.*

nine per cent of all residents are non-citizens.⁵³¹ Speaking at an Abu Dhabi conference in 2010 Associate Professor of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, Kavita Singh suggested that the UAE is adopting a common nation building strategy, especially in the post-colonial era, by constructing museums as a way to affirm identity.⁵³² Furthermore, tourism at both the local and international levels is crucial to the viability and maintenance of these identity-building institutions and the problem of negative portrayals of the Middle East by Western media needs to be counteracted for cultural tourism to become a successful economic strategy. The majority of observers agree that it will be an ongoing challenge for the UAE to project the Arab and Muslim world to international audiences through art and culture rather than religious fanaticism and terrorist activities.⁵³³

Tourism has often been portrayed as 'a journey to and in places, identities and experiences'⁵³⁴ but contemporary theorists posit that identity has become elusive in modern times. As chapter one suggested, identity (individual, community, national) is not 'universal' but shifts and alters according to historical and cultural contexts. This means that the 'coherent and bounded world' where museums were symbols of nation no longer necessarily applies.⁵³⁵ These observations are arguably true of the European museum historical trajectory, but is this modern quest for individual identity universal and is such a trend superseded in the UAE by the ruling elites' desire to maintain their governance over all aspects of social, economic and cultural life of their people? Can government controlled institutions in these nascent non-European nations establish cultural entities capable of

⁵³¹ To qualify for Emirati citizenship ancestry needs to be linked to blood ties predominantly from Iran, Arabian Peninsula, East Africa and Baluchistan, with leadership of all Emirates hereditary and absolute monarchies (often described as an 'autocracy'). Traditional Emirati culture is heavily influenced by Persian and Arabian culture especially in architecture especially and folk arts including dancing and singing. However, recent disputes have arisen over a redefining of who is a citizen in a fast-changing contemporary society and naturalization of expatriates has generated heated debates. See K Alexander, 'What being an Emirati truly means', *gulfnews.com*, 13 May 2011, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/what-being-an-emirati-truly-means-1.806971>; M Habboush, 'Call to naturalise some expats stirs anxiety in the UAE', *Reuters.co.uk*, 10 October 2013, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://uk.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=UKBRE99904J20131010>. United Arab Emirates, 'Religion', *Global Security.org*, 19 November 2014, retrieved 1 December 2014, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/gulf/uae-religion.htm>.

⁵³² Doherty, op. cit.

⁵³³ K Adrian von Roques, 'An Investigation of the situation of Contemporary Arab Art Today', *Art Market*, 2009, p. 128, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume5/artmarketing/An%20Investigation%20of%20the%20Situation%20of%20Contemporary%20Arab%20Art%20Today.pdf>.

⁵³⁴ D Crouch, N. Lubben, *Visual culture and tourism*, Berg, Oxford, New York, 2003, p. 6.

⁵³⁵ S Macdonald, op. cit., pp.1, 3.

embodying their unique national identities in the twenty-first century? What approaches are the UAE taking in this identity building and reinventing process that aspires to represent all sectors of their local and national populations? Are the new museums in the UAE developing their own museological models or are these institutions in essence Middle Eastern replicas of the Guggenheim and Louvre emulating Eurocentric museum practices and policies? Importantly for this study, how does the significantly wider role the 2008 AoE played in launching the UAE on the road to becoming ‘a global centre for cultural enlightenment,’⁵³⁶ impact upon the (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation of a this travelling troupe of objects? Displayed in an entirely different context and exhibitionary space, is Khalili’s mandate relying on object agency to promote cross-cultural understanding applied as directly or are the socio-political aspects of the interpretive approach that considers the external agency and impact of discourses and debates circulating in the wider public sphere considered more vital to achieving broader and more far-reaching goals?

The first set of issues explored in this chapter concentrates on the private and public individuals, institutions and organizational bodies involved in the exhibition, in terms of both their rhetoric and subsequent actions that reveal a high level of governance over every aspect of the travelling show alongside an analysis of the exhibition itself. Discussions will explore the influence of several prominent individuals and agencies united by a common goal and question the validity of their desire to promote artistic and cultural development by educating all sectors of their diverse public and secure a viable economic future for their nation.

⁵³⁶ Director general of ADACH Mohammad Khalaf Al-Mazrouei quoted in *Middle East Online*, 22 January 2008, retrieved 4 July 2013, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/>



Fig 57 At the Opening of the Exhibition "Art Of Islam, Treasures from the Nasser D Khalili Collection, Khalili and His Highness Sheikh Mohammad Bin Zayed Al Nahyan Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Emirates Palace Hotel, Abu Dhabi 22 January - 22 May 2008
<http://www.nasserdkhalili.com>



Fig 58 Emirates Place Hotel Abu Dhabi. Source:
<http://www.luxuo.com/most-expensive/11-million-dollar-christmas-tree-trouble.html>

Nurturing an artistic and cultural psyche

The AoIE made its debut in the Middle East in 2008, running for three months (22 January-22 April) at Gallery One in the Emirates Palace, under the patronage of HH General Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (fig 57,58). The exhibition attracted an audience of over 61,000 local and international visitors of many nationalities and wide-ranging age groups. Visitors included: members of the Abu Dhabi ruling family, royalty and political leaders from overseas (Crown Princess Victoria of Sweden; Prince Andrew, Duke of York and Prince Michael of Kent from the UK; Jordan's Princess Zein bin Al Hussein and Saad Hariri, MP and Lebanon's head of the Future Parliamentary Bloc); and nearly 9000 school, college and university students.⁵³⁷

The travelling exhibition was enlarged after the Sydney show, from 320 to over 500 artifacts from the Khalili collection, many of which were being displayed for the first time. Educational programs including a symposium and lectures by leading experts on Islamic arts/crafts and archaeology and a workshop series on calligraphy, Persian painting and ceramics accompanied the display. Similar to the Sydney AoIE, the didactic focus was promoted in rhetoric from the authorities and the media but this time there appeared a

⁵³⁷ TDIC press release, 'Over 61,000 visit Abu Dhabi's 'Art of Islam' Exhibition UAE capital's international arts debut earns widespread acclaim', *TDIC*, 1 May 2008, retrieved 4 July 2013, <http://www.tdic.ae>

greater range of tangible outcomes demonstrating curatorial decision-making considering wider socio-political imperatives.

For example, the education program at the Abu Dhabi venue also included an *Arts of Islam Education Room* within the Emirates Palace complex providing opportunities to learn about Islamic art and culture for visitors of all ages that included workshops, publications and computer-based educational materials. Guided tours of the exhibition were offered to schools and university student groups, community clubs and individuals.⁵³⁸ Lee Tabler, CEO of the Tourism Development and Investment Company (TDIC), who hosted the program in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH), commented: 'this program was highly successful in focusing the attention of the regional arts scene and in stimulating wider arts discussion within school and college campuses throughout the UAE'.⁵³⁹ Many teachers enthusiastically endorsed the exhibition, including secondary English and humanities teacher Marilyn Roberts from the Australian school of Abu Dhabi. Roberts visited with her Year Ten class of fourteen year old pupils, and 'could not speak highly enough of the exhibition' commenting:

... It really was a very engaging experience with pupils interested in everything ... pupils later shared with their parents who also became excited by it ... They were encouraged to ask questions and were just amazed by the whole subject. Would like to see more of this type of exhibition.⁵⁴⁰

Similarly, Gary Corrigan, a teacher from Abu Dhabi's Institution of Applied Technology who also visited the exhibition with Year Ten students observed:

... it [the exhibition] was really, really good ... the exhibition instilled a great deal of pride in them for their own Islamic culture and I think it made them realize that Islamic culture really has a place on the international cultural map.⁵⁴¹

⁵³⁸ M Karam, 'Abu Dhabi's Arts of Islam exhibition ends successful showing', *Business Intelligence Middle East*, 4 March 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.bi-me.com/main.php?id=19826&t=1>.

⁵³⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁴⁰ B Salter, 'Over 30,000 visit 'Arts of Islam' exhibition in six weeks 'Treasures of Nasser D. Khalili collection'', *ArabianBusiness.com*, 12 March 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, http://www.arabianbusiness.com/press_releases/detail/14149.

⁵⁴¹ *ibid.*

However, with an absence of wide-ranging visitor responses and personally collected empirical data due to limitations of time, language and cultural protocols, this reliance on perspectives and opinions supplied by interested stakeholders, (particularly government officials and employees), must be viewed critically. An analysis of the politics of display and the contextual background of the show sheds some light on these reservations.

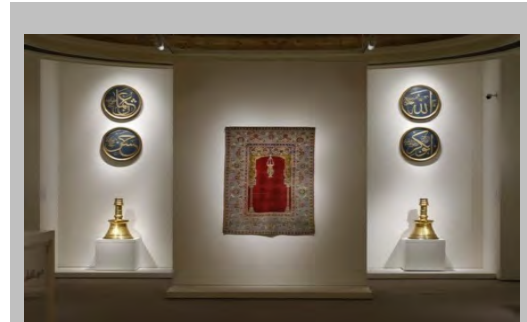


Fig 59 *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Gallery One Emirates Palace Hotel Abu Dhabi 2008.

Source:

<http://www.khalili.org/collections/category/1#exhibitions/51>

The venue for this display was not a traditional museum space but located inside a seven-star luxury hotel in central Abu Dhabi on the shores of the Arabian Gulf. The Emirates Place is the largest hotel in the world and boasts a 1.3-kilometer private beach, eighty-five hectares of garden and five restaurants with each visitor assigned their personal butler and maid service. Gaining admission to the Palace Hotel requires travelling through a series of 'gatekeepers' that are clearly designed to eliminate 'unwanted' visitors to the hotel complex. At the time of the AoIE, the gated private winding road that led to the reception area was lined with banners advertising the exhibition to encourage audience attendance. However, due to the elite nature of the venue this was on offer only to those of a privileged or select societal class: wealthy emirates, selected school groups or international tourists. Therefore, the rhetoric from officials that this was an educational and cultural experience for all emirates can be viewed skeptically. As interviews in neighboring Qatar will confirm, these gallery spaces sponsored by the UAE's ruling classes are the forerunners of monumental institutions designed to attract a certain class of regional visitor or international tourist rather than local working class sections of society.

The layout of the exhibition space reflected that of Sydney AoIE with a lack of labeling, contextual background information and a concentration on the aesthetic appeal of the works on display. Again white walls and spaces sectioned off with panels intersecting to form corridors to direct visitors through the two thematic sections of the exhibition. There was a single entrance and exist but glass vitrines and pathways were more free flowing and less ordered than the previous venue, favouring a zigzagging pattern of object placement that included sloping platforms for large textiles at eye level. The emphasis was on

minimalism and lacked the Islamic decorative elements of the Sydney display. With a predominantly Muslim population (especially in the sections of society that this event would have attracted) the thematic emphasis was on religious aspects of the objects rather than the secular character of the previous venue. The use of consistent illumination, rather than darkened environments with spot lit objects, reflected the influence of wider social and religious mores on curatorial decision-making confirming a shift from the 'exotic' beautiful object to that of a more devotional nature.

Following this emphasis, Khalili stated that the exhibition was inspired by the saying 'truly God is beautiful and loves all beauty'⁵⁴² and was praised by a British newspaper as a way of 'Healing the World with Art'; a sentiment Khalili and others in the museum world have been shown to share in terms of the long established art historical/art curatorial faith in the ability of art to transcend boundaries. ⁵⁴³ The show was designed by Colin Morris Associates in London and deviated from the Sydney exhibition by having two distinct sections: religious and secular (commissioned works from the sovereign and ruling classes) (fig 59).⁵⁴⁴ Khalili commented:

... objects from the various regions of the Islamic world displayed side-by-side, clearly demonstrating the unifying characteristics of Islamic art on the one hand, and its distinctive regional variations on the other⁵⁴⁵ ... This collection plays a significant role in promoting greater understanding between people of different cultures and faiths and increasing awareness of the rich contributions of Islamic cultures to world art ... It is highly appropriate that its first Middle East showing should be in Abu Dhabi which is now internationally recognised as a strong proponent of the arts.⁵⁴⁶

In a lengthy article about Khalili's life and work in an Arab journal (*Arabian Knight*) in 2008, Khalili believed the success of the show was due to the Arab audience and is reminiscent of his belief that his Sydney exhibition was beneficial to Australian Muslim communities:

⁵⁴² Qur'an 32:7.

⁵⁴³ J Stourton quoted in M Gayford, 2004, op. cit. See introduction for discussion on the role of art as a healer of the world maintained by museum directors James Cuno and Philippe de Montebello.

⁵⁴⁴ There were eight zones within these two sections: Islam, the Holy Koran, Prayer and Pilgrimage; Science and Learning; Adaption and Renewal-the early Islamic period; the Splendor of Baghdad-the medieval period; Phoenix Rising-the Mongols, Ilkhanids, Mamluks and Timurids and the Age of Empires-Ottomans, Safavids, Mughals and Qajar. It was open daily but Tuesday was reserved for female visitors only (N D Khalili, quoted in 'Abu Dhabi hosts Khalili Islamic art treasures', *Middle East Online*, 22 January 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, retrieved <http://middle-east-online.com/english/?id=23991>)

⁵⁴⁵ ibid.

⁵⁴⁶ TDIC press release, op. cit.

... I'm really proud that I had something to do with bringing an understanding and message to the people of the region where these objects were produced. With the development of Saadiyat Island in Abu Dhabi people are taking culture very seriously. I commend them for what they are doing for culture. I'm sure that within three or four years they will become one of the largest contributors to culture in history ... I consider my contribution as a gift from one member of the family to another.⁵⁴⁷

Further reinforcing a sacred dimension rather than the secular emphasis of the AGNSW Sydney, the Abu Dhabi show singled out the religiously inspired watercolour painting of Makkah, created in 1843 and claims to be the earliest known visual record of the holy city, as a highlight of the display (fig 60). This image was also displayed on banners, in brochures and on the catalogue cover, with the illustrated catalogue (published in both Arabic and English) based heavily on the Sydney catalogue. Entrance was free to the exhibition but any donations were directed to the arts program of the Emirates Foundation which advertised itself as: 'a philanthropic organization based in the UAE which was created with the vision of implementing strategic projects that benefit the UAE nation, particularly the countries youth'.⁵⁴⁸ This focus on educating Emirati youth rather than the general population is significant for the exhibition's purpose and the agency of the objects in this new venue in terms of nation building and identity formation and will be discussed in more detail later in the chapter.

There were two closely related government bodies and one private agency (with close links to the government) that were involved in the staging of the AoIE: Tourism Development and Investment Company, Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage and Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority (ADTA). Research data suggests that the AoIE was considered a 'highly appropriate' event for 'inspiring educational endeavours ... nurturing a national psyche of arts appreciation' and establishing 'global cultural credentials' for the



Fig 60 Catalogue for *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Abu Dhabi 2008. Source: <http://www.khalili.org/collections/category/1#exhibitions/51>

⁵⁴⁷ Arabian Knight, op. cit., pp. 60-61.

⁵⁴⁸ Middle East Online, op. cit.

UAE, marking their entry into the international arts exhibition circuit.⁵⁴⁹ This cultural ambition was backed by Sheikh Sultan Bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan, chairman of ADACH and chairman of TDIC, who had sent a team to Australia in 2007 to view the Sydney exhibition and decided that hosting a display of the Khalili Collection would be an ideal first step towards establishing the cultural district in the 'Islamic tradition', outlining the importance of TDIC's ventures culturally and educationally particularly in regard to the AoIE:

this is an inclusive exhibition ... a physical demonstration of our determination to transform the UAE capital into a global cultural centre and a major step forward in what will be a sustained educational program aimed at nurturing a national awareness of art appreciation and encouraging a new stream of career developments for Emiratis ...⁵⁵⁰

The Emirate's deputy chairman of tourism, director general of ADTA and managing director of TDIC, Mubarak Al Muhairi expanded this notion of the power of this exhibition and considered it as an excellent way to prepare the local population and international visitors for the UAE's 'cultural renaissance ... this is not just about tourism; it is also about global dimensions ... we believe the best vehicle for crossing borders is art. And this region is in need of some artistic initiatives.'⁵⁵¹ The director general of ADACH Mohammad Khalaf Al-Mazrouei reiterated these views, focusing on 'preserving [our] heritage' for 'future generations ... The Khalili exhibition is an opportunity for us to recognize that by building edifices of culture, heritage and art ... [we are] reflect[ing] the vision of our leadership in the education of generations to come'.⁵⁵²

The three agencies involved in promoting and managing the AoIE in Abu Dhabi involved many of the same high profile figures and therefore, it was unsurprising that their rhetoric was complementary. However, it appears TDIC, a Collection Entity and specially chosen public art collections group, was the main organisation responsible for the running of the exhibition. This agency was created to manage the development of real estate assets held by the government of Abu Dhabi with ADTA whose primary objective was to increase tourist and business visitor numbers.⁵⁵³

⁵⁴⁹ Mubarak Al Muhairi quoted in Karam, op. cit.

⁵⁵⁰ Middle East Online, op. cit.

⁵⁵¹ Mubarak Al Muhairi quoted in H Fattah, 'Celebrity Architects Reveal a daring Cultural Xanadu for the Arab World', *The New York Times*, retrieved 29 April 2014, <<http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/arts/design/01isla.html?>>

⁵⁵² Middle East Online, op. cit.

⁵⁵³ TDIC press release, op. cit.

However, TDIC's mandate to promote tourism and trade is at odds with declarations from official sources maintaining that this cultural and artistic Renaissance is inclusive of all Emirati citizens and is out of step with Khalili's desire for his Islamic art objects to be part of a larger cultural project that views their agency as promoting cross-cultural understanding among all people. This criticism is reinforced as Abu Dhabi is seen as embarking on the 'world's largest single art-and-culture development project in recent memory' with the twenty-seven square kilometres *Cultural District of Saadiyat Island or Manarat Al Saadiyat*.⁵⁵⁴ The aim is to create a premier tourist centre and international art destination by attracting older, more educated and wealthier cultural tourists. Besides the three main museums (Zayed National Museum, Guggenheim and Louvre Abu Dhabi) the cultural precinct will include a maritime museum, hotels and resorts for up to 125,000 people, marinas, golf courses and possibly a Yale University art school with programs in dance, drama, art and architecture. In particular, models of the museums reveal the monumental scale of this endeavour and the cutting-edge technology utilised by the designers and developers to realise their vision of a 'global centre for cultural enlightenment' (figs 61-64).⁵⁵⁵

However, Abu Dhabi's desire to construct 'universal temples to culture' with a local focus is evident in statements from curators supervising both the planned Louvre and the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi museums respectively: 'We want this to be a collection of masterpieces that make sense together, that have a soul and that will form a dialogue with different civilisations ⁵⁵⁶... we are searching for pieces that will provide a balance between the global and regional art world'.⁵⁵⁷ This is in line with the UAE's plan for nation building that reaches beyond foundational infrastructures to build a 'cultural life' for its population. As Doherty has argued, art museums and their collections exemplify 'material wealth' that is part of the 'value system' of capitalist societies and are indicators of success nationally and internationally.⁵⁵⁸ Abu Dhabi's cultural development is part of a new beginning for this emerging nation, and a way to enhance their reputation through the attainment of art and knowledge.

⁵⁵⁴ Fattah, op. cit.

⁵⁵⁵ *ibid.*

⁵⁵⁶ Laurence des Cars quoted in Doherty, op. cit., p. 185.

⁵⁵⁷ Susan Davidson quoted in Doherty, op. cit., p. 186.

⁵⁵⁸ Doherty, op. cit., p. 186.

In this respect, the AoIE in 2008 was seen by TDIC as:

... the first official outreach for an exhibition to reach out to the public from our side, and to involve them, and I think if we can compare visitor numbers I think the change is drastic from what it was then to now the audience has grown ... it was the first time I have seen something of that scale being brought here to Abu Dhabi, and putting it in context with the rest of the program and what else was to follow, I think it was a great stepping stone ... Before you would find small exhibitions in galleries or that type, but it would be fair to say this is the first exhibition of this magnitude...⁵⁵⁹

It is clear from these discussions that the purpose of the AoIE in the eyes of the organizers was to kick-start both the art market in the UAE and introduce the idea of art and culture as the preferred avenue for economic success and a reformed national identity to their populations. All those involved viewed the AoIE as achieving its aims and as a resounding success. The furthering of other cultural enterprises (especially the Saayidat Island project) is regarded as ensuring not only Abu Dhabi but also the entire region of a secure future. However, the embracing of the universal museum model in the Middle Eastern context requires examination, particularly for its ability to incorporate global and local interests and the long-term effects of this cultural endeavour. The following section focuses on the Abu Dhabi Guggenheim and the Louvre and the contentious and topical debates that these satellite museums have generated within the region and globally. Importantly, discussions will query whether the 'experience' versus 'interpretative' museological dilemma will be as problematic for these future venues for displaying Islamic art and culture as it has been shown to be for the AoIE.

⁵⁵⁹ Transcript L Ryan and HO, KS. 2012, lines 44-7, 119-21, 141-3.



Fig 61 Guggenheim Museum model Abu Dhabi.
Source:
http://www.abudhabiinformation.info/abu_dhabi_islands.html



Fig 62 Louvre Museum model Abu Dhabi. Source:
http://www.abudhabiinformation.info/abu_dhabi_islands.html



Fig 63 Zayed national Museum model Abu Dhabi.
Source:
http://www.abudhabiinformation.info/abu_dhabi_islands.html



Fig 64 Centre for Performing Arts model Abu Dhabi.
Source:
http://www.abudhabiinformation.info/abu_dhabi_islands.html

The 'Universal' museum

The private and public agencies directly involved in these enterprises are naturally promoting a positive spin on long-term effects. For example, TDIC representatives maintain they are developing their own ways in the realm of cultural development:

... we make sure that whatever is happening here is completely adapted to the language of the people and the community and then reaches out to the world. We are not for this whole idea, we are not importing culture, it is sort of taking the expertise, some of these countries like France and England, they have been in this field much longer than us so why not work together to develop something that is good for here.⁵⁶⁰

The role the AoIE played is seen as significant in attempting to set the stage for this development of local museums as previous discussions have revealed. But is Khalili's faith in the transformative power of the aesthetic object seen by the UAE as crucial to educating and encouraging cross-cultural understanding in their own diverse local populations or is the universal nature of these institutions embedded in wider social, political and economic realities of a newly emerging modern nation competing on the global stage? While linked to the 'universal' values and aspirations of institutions such as the Louvre and Guggenheim,

⁵⁶⁰ Ryan and HO, op. cit., lines 335-339.

many believe these institutions are reflecting the identity of their populations and geographical locations:

... you walk in and you see these pieces, the representation of Buddha and then Christ or the Qur'an and it's just that dialogue of religions and cultures... this is a different museum from that in France obviously, it has its own unique attributes. However, it is following that universality.⁵⁶¹

Debates are being fought over the motives and agendas of these 'universal' museums such as the Guggenheim and the Louvre and whether they are part of the homogenization process that these 'global' institutions bring to their outposts. Indeed many question whether these institutions are designed as revenue raising enterprises first and foremost. Museums are viewed as being on the borders of both globalization and the art world and play central roles as institutional mediators of culture,⁵⁶² sharing Khalili's belief that they possess the capacity to transcend boundaries and have universal appeal and values. However, art's 'universality' can create tensions when countries desire their individual local, state and national identity to be represented and celebrated. Critics have referred to this global museum project as the most recent example of the 'exchange between nations of wealth and nations with cultural prestige';⁵⁶³ representing yet another form of contemporary 'cultural Imperialism'.⁵⁶⁴

The Guggenheim is the most obvious example of how museum management practices such as generating income through 'brand name selling' are aligned to business models and corporate sponsorship. Seen as a creative intervention that establishes its museums and manages them for a significant fee,⁵⁶⁵ the Guggenheim collection is a substantial 'cultural commodity'.⁵⁶⁶ It is expanding and circulating its image through its satellite museums to 'improve their collection ... [and] operational efficiency ...',⁵⁶⁷ stressing that individual museum 'collections have different provenances and different

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.*, lines 188-202.

⁵⁶² *Rectanus*, *op. cit.*, p. 171.

⁵⁶³ K Taylor, 'Abu Dhabi Lures Western Museums,' *The New York Sun*, 1 February 2007, retrieved 28 April 2014, <http://www.nysun.com/arts/abu-dhabi-lures-western-museums/47795/>.

⁵⁶⁴ V Newhouse, *Towards a New Museum*, USA, Monacelli Press, 1998, p. 259.

⁵⁶⁵ Interview with T Krens in K Bradley, 'The Deal of the century', *Art in America*, July 1997, p. 52.

⁵⁶⁶ *Rectanus*, *op. cit.*, p. 180.

⁵⁶⁷ Interview with T Krens in B Diamondstein, *Inside the art world: Conversations with Barbaralee Diamondstein, Artists, Directors, Curators, Collectors and Dealers*, Rizzoli International Publications Inc., New York, 1994, p. 150.

ownership structures' but are 'essentially unified under one curatorial organization ...'⁵⁶⁸ Despite this singular 'curatorial organization',⁵⁶⁹ Thomas Krens, director of the Guggenheim Foundation, maintains these satellite institutions are not just replicas of the New York museum but 'constellations' with their own but independent identity that allows for 'cross-fertilization'.⁵⁷⁰ The speed and reach of these Guggenheim satellite museums has already crossed many borders including Bilbao in Spain, Berlin and Las Vegas and many more are being planned besides the Abu Dhabi site as fig 65 illustrates.



Fig 65 Map showing Guggenheim museums worldwide. Source: <http://www.guggenheim.org>

In their prospectus published by the Saadiyat Island Cultural District Abu Dhabi authority, this view of 'cross-fertilization' is reinforced when it states that the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi aims to:

move beyond a definition of global art premised on geography by focusing on the interconnected dynamics of local, regional, and international art centres ... [by] acknowledge[ing] and celebrat[ing] the specific identity derived from the cultural traditions of Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates, as well as comprising the Middle East, even as it pioneers a novel, visionary model that will redefine the art-historical canon.⁵⁷¹

Despite these aspirations and assurances, some commentators question whether local curatorship will be allowed to develop practices and policies independently of this central management or become merely an opulent warehouse for the New York collection? The reputation of the Guggenheim appears to be falling into disrepute according to critics, especially with exhibitions such as the Giorgio Armani fashion show slammed by *The New York Times* as 'surrendering the museum's dignity' and the Art of the Motorcycle exhibition

⁵⁶⁸ Bradley, op. cit., p. 53.

⁵⁶⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁰ Newhouse, op. cit.

⁵⁷¹ Saadiyat Cultural District Abu Dhabi, Exhibition booklet, saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae

(sponsored by Harley Davidson) considered commercially motivated.⁵⁷² Director of the Tate Gallery Nicholas Serota has queried: ‘... to what extent the Guggenheim is still part of the art world. For an artist, it used to be one of the best places to show their work. Now it does the Aztecs and shows which are turning into a general kunsthalle’.⁵⁷³

The proposed Guggenheim Abu Dhabi, which has been described as ‘a medieval cathedral and pharonic’, is believed by Krens to be an agreement between TDIC and the Guggenheim Foundation that is like a ‘... marriage ... it’s just a smart thing for everybody ...’⁵⁷⁴ However, doubts are raised whether these ventures can go beyond tourism concerns and foster cross-cultural understanding between nations.⁵⁷⁵ It is true that one of the basic tenants and values of the ‘universal’ museum is that of encouraging cross-cultural understanding to promote the belief of a common humanity that Khalili’s maintains is central to his own displays of Islamic art and culture. However, in Krens’ ‘empire building’ quest the development of local identity becomes questionable and makes many in the museum world uncomfortable considering his idea of ‘world culture’ now and in the future:

... Let us project well into the next century. Will such a thing as local culture exist? You have to come to the conclusion they will not. And this is not about me liking or not liking local culture and tradition. It is that the forces of culture are out there. I don’t believe our objective is to stand in the way of eroding culture ... Will there be a culture on a local level? Probably not. Will it be recognizable in terms of traditional characteristics? Probably not either. There will be a world culture out there; there is already a world culture out there.⁵⁷⁶

The Louvre and its global plans are little different as they are now embarking on the same model of globalization, museum revenue building and brand exposure as the Guggenheim Foundation. For example, although Abu Dhabi may be their first satellite museum, the Louvre has already exhibited nine art displays in a new wing at the High Museum of Art Atlanta, Georgia.⁵⁷⁷ The mandate to represent local and regional communities is being doubted in light of the thirteenth and most recent exhibition to be shown by Louvre Abu Dhabi prior to opening in 2015: *Birth of a Museum*. While sourcing

⁵⁷² J T Suau, *The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao: Cultural Tourism, Urban Renewal and Political Risk*, MA Thesis, American University, Washington, 1999.

⁵⁷³ *ibid.*

⁵⁷⁴ Interview with T Krens quoted in Taylor 2007, op. cit.

⁵⁷⁵ S Ostling, ‘The Global Museum and the Orbit of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York’, *The International Journal of the Humanities*, vol.5, 2007, p. 92.

⁵⁷⁶ Interview with Krens, New York, 24 June 1998 (J T Suau, op. cit.).

⁵⁷⁷ Beatty and Betard, 2005, in Ostling, op. cit., p. 93. The loan is for a three year period for a fee of \$10 million and as part of the agreement The High Museum of Art will advise the Louvre on marketing, fundraising and business strategies.

their display items from societies and cultures of the world, this exhibition will highlight ‘universal themes and common influences ... to illustrate similarities arising from shared human experience transcending geography, nationality and history’ and was exhibited in Paris in October 2013.⁵⁷⁸ *The New York Times* has criticized the Louvre for its association with the Emirates and the \$520 million dollars paid by Abu Dhabi Authorities for the right to use the esteemed French museum’s name and another \$750 million dollars for works from its Paris collection, accusing the institution of ‘selling its soul’⁵⁷⁹ by forging ‘a partnership with a minuscule oil-rich emirate with 1.6 million people and no cultural tradition.’⁵⁸⁰

However, some believe it may be a degree of ‘quid pro quo’ between the two nations:

For France the agreement signals a new willingness to exploit its culture for political and economic ends. In this case, it also represents something of a payback: the United Arab Emirates has ordered 40 Airbus 380 aircraft and has bought about \$10.4 billion worth of armaments from France during the last decade.⁵⁸¹

The museum development has attracted protest from the museum sector itself, with a petition objecting to the deal signed by 4,650 museum experts, accusing the Louvre of acting ‘more like a profit-maximizing corporation than as a protector of and educator about the world’s, and particularly France’s, art’.⁵⁸² On the other hand, commentators like Maymanah Farhat,⁵⁸³ criticizes the petitioners, believing this ‘colonial turnabout is fair play’:

Much of the opposition to the proposed Abu Dhabi Louvre lament that the French public will be deprived of its heritage. Three out of eight of the departments that structure the Louvre collection contain art from the Middle East and North Africa and are categorized as such: “Near Eastern Antiquities,” “Egyptian Antiquities” and “Islamic Art.” If this latest transaction with Abu Dhabi does in fact indicate a move to exploit France’s patrimony, then it must be acknowledged that the “French culture” being disputed over is not purely French nor is it devoid of a ruthless colonial history. In theory then, according to French opinion, it is perfectly acceptable to exploit non-French peoples and cultures for economic gain, where as everything French is somehow sacrosanct and must be guarded from the tentacles of globalization.⁵⁸⁴

⁵⁷⁸ L Kaaki, ‘Connecting cultures: Louvre Abu Dhabi, *Arab News*, 2012, retrieved 20 July 2013, www.arabnews.com.

⁵⁷⁹ C Milliard, ‘Controversial Louvre Abu Dhabi Flaunts its Collection’, ‘Birth of a Museum’ exhibition’, *Blouin Artinfo*, 2013, retrieved 10 January 2014, <http://uk.blouinartinfo.com>.

⁵⁸⁰ A Riding, ‘The industry of art goes global’, *New York Times*, 28 March 2007, assessed 4 May 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/433535986?accountid=36155>.

⁵⁸¹ Millard, op. cit.

⁵⁸² *ibid.*

⁵⁸³ Editor of *ArteNews* and a contemporary Arab art expert.

⁵⁸⁴ L Madsen-Brooks, ‘Mega-Museums in Abu Dhabi-cultural Imperialism in reverse?’, *museum blogging*, 2009, retrieved 20 July 2013, < <http://museumblogging.com>>.

Since 2008 when the AoIE launched the UAE into the international art market, disagreements and dissent has simmered and erupted into major disputes. Though its promoters and major stakeholders considered the AoIE an undeniable success, the display itself was not without controversy concerning Khalili's relationship and negotiations with these museums and his collection. Recently Khalili was involved in a court case with a former associate, Dubai-based businessman Farbod Dowlatshahi, who claims the philanthropist was attempting to broker a long-term loan or sale of his Islamic art collection to a museum in Abu Dhabi. Khalili's lawyers deny this claim, stating that there was never any intention to sell the collection but Khalili might have done so 'under certain strict circumstances that would ensure an enduring legacy in a public museum (which circumstances never materialised).' There was an agreement signed in 2008 by Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoun Al Nahyan on behalf of TDIC to obtain a valuation of the collection for a possible purchase, but the deal was cancelled when the GFC (Global Financial Crisis) deepened. Unsurprisingly, Khalili also denied Dowlatshahi's assertion that it he was responsible for arranging the 2008 AoIE in Abu Dhabi.⁵⁸⁵ Khalili's involvement in this dispute and possible financial incentive may have compromised the AoIE at this venue, highlighting the influence co-producers, partners and sponsors can exercise in these shared cultural enterprises. Further, incidences such as the above reinforces the interconnectedness of the macro and the micro level of societal discourse and debates and the potential impact of the wider public sphere on local ventures such exhibitionary displays.

The situation becomes increasingly complex and contentious when it comes to balancing the demands of powerful western investors and institutional bodies with that of local Middle Eastern players in this high-stake game of artistic and cultural development. With so many private, public and national interests vying for dominance, commentators opinions have become polemic: oscillating between regarding these epic museum projects as embodying universal and cross-cultural potential on one hand, and neo-colonial profit-driven entities on the other. To add to these controversies, disagreements continue unabated between museum professionals and scholars over the implications of museum globalization and conformity when economics, politics, culture and art are combined.

⁵⁸⁵ Adam, op. cit.

Global values or religious censorship?

This is especially the case with issues concerning freedom, human rights and censorship when it comes to traditional Islamic doctrine. Some critics warn that conventional Islamic doctrines may influence these new museums rapport with local communities especially since there is 'no tradition in Islam of museums in the Western sense'.⁵⁸⁶ Heated disputes can occur even in relatively 'enlightened' regions in the Arab-Muslim world like the UAE, jeopardizing art and cultural development. For example, many fear attempts to ban museums displaying artworks that depict the prophet Mohammad (which was controversial in the AoIE in Sydney according to Muslim visitors) may be advocated by more moderate Sunni Muslims, joining the ranks of those who practice a pure form of Islam (such as Salafists and Islamists) traditionally opposed to such imagery.⁵⁸⁷

In terms of the AoIE in Abu Dhabi, TDIC representatives felt that although there was some friction over depictions of religious figures especially Mohammad and some nudity in artworks, it was not extreme enough to warrant censorship:

... personally ... I don't believe there should be a depiction of prophet Mohammad, but I wouldn't say don't put it in the exhibition ... you think about all of the paintings of Picasso or any other artist that has nudity there, so that might offend anybody, personally we might think in a different way but shouldn't stop ... I was aware that some people didn't like it ... [visitors were] not leaving the exhibition ... Nothing dramatic.⁵⁸⁸

Museums such as the Guggenheim indicated early that they were not interested in offending any religious sectors of society. Krens stated in 2006 that the display of religious subjects or nudes was not planned: 'Our objective is not to be confrontational, but to be engaged in cultural exchange'.⁵⁸⁹ Conversely, Mubarak Al-Muhairi was quoted as stating: 'in principle, there are no restrictions [on exhibiting nudes and religious themes] ... but both sides will agree on what is shown'.⁵⁹⁰ In April 2013, a top overseer of the Louvre Abu Dhabi reiterated that they considered 'no artistic subject off limits but will not *shock for the sake*

⁵⁸⁶ Furnish quoted in Wagner, 1981, op. cit.

⁵⁸⁷ *ibid.*

⁵⁸⁸ Ryan and HO/KS, op. cit., lines 255-68. This was similar to the AGNSW curators perspective concerning censorship of works in the exhibition and that no sectors of the community were offended; however without visitor interviews this research is unable to ascertain whether this was also the case with the Abu Dhabi exhibition.

⁵⁸⁹ Interview by the Guardian Newspaper with Krens 2006, quoted in R L Wagner, 'Abu Dhabi's outsized cultural ambitions', *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 February 2012, retrieved 10 July, 2013, <<http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=256670>>.

⁵⁹⁰ Quoted in *The New York Times*, 2007, Wagner, *ibid.*

of shocking', with the curatorial director of Agence France-Museums confirming 'there are no *sensitive issues* that are out of bounds'. It appears their approach in 'our globalized time' is to 'seek cultural connections as well as its rifts and misperceptions'.⁵⁹¹ A minister from the initial French delegation that travelled to Abu Dhabi confirmed this perspective by stating that this museum development would 'foster cultural dialogue between East and West'.⁵⁹²

It has been suggested that the Zayed National Museum will display Islamic art (such as Islamic calligraphy, life of the Prophet and the Qur'an) if restrictions are placed on exhibiting Arab and religious themed objects. However, it would be unwise for these institutions originating from the West to decide to exhibit the work of contemporary Western artists only. As American academic and author Vali Nasr observes:

Islamic conservatives only begin to make noise if Western culture makes inroads into local culture ... that's not happening now. One possible benefit of the museum is attracting Muslims from the Muslim world. This would potentially impact the region, but the Guggenheim must touch a broader cross-section.⁵⁹³

Nevertheless, even if museums exercise 'intellectual responsibility' by exhibiting regional historical artifacts and thereby reducing 'religious-based cultural barriers', extremist views may predominate debates. Islamic expert Timothy Furnish warns Salafists may call for the closure of museums and destruction of monuments (as they have threatened to do in Egypt) if they believe these institutions are glorifying the age of *jahaliya* or 'age of ignorance' which preceded Islam. On a calmer note, Nasr directs our attention to Iran and its flourishing arts culture as a possible 'role model':

There was the Shah's art festival and film festival, and the Queen had the Museum of Contemporary Art in Tehran ... there was no resistance on moral grounds, but it served the local population and it was not for tourism. It made sense at the time because it reached out to the local population. Because of that, Iran has a healthy arts culture and world-class film industry.⁵⁹⁴

Other concerns over censorship issues have included: an Arab reporter inquired during a press conference if museum visitors would be protected from 'pornography'; and a French journalist questioned whether the museum had adequate safeguards in place against threats from 'Islamic extremists' involving the Louvre Abu Dhabi or its collection.⁵⁹⁵

⁵⁹¹ B Murphy, 'Abu Dhabi Louvre Museum offers peek at growing collection ahead of 2015 opening', *The Associated Press*, 2013, retrieved 20 January 2014, www.theprovince.com.

⁵⁹² Quoted in McClellan, op. cit., p. 52.

⁵⁹³ Wagner, 1981, op. cit.

⁵⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁵ *ibid.*

There has also been disquiet regarding the museums' ability to display all types of world art in an environment that is not always open to new ideas. For instance, *Artworld Salon*, reports nudity and homosexual content will be censored and that 'Emirates will not allow entry to the Guggenheim Abu Dhabi to people holding Israeli passports'; and *Culturegrill* asks: 'Is it kosher to establish a museum named for a Jewish founder in a country that doesn't recognize Israel?'⁵⁹⁶

Although institutions such as the Louvre, Guggenheim, Smithsonian, New York University, UCL London and Leicester University UK are all engaged in advising and mentoring new museum professionals in the UAE, there is apprehension over whether museum staff will have adequate training in the care of these priceless works of art. As discussion has highlighted, it is questionable whether the new museums will embrace both official and unofficial ethical procedures that regulate museums worldwide. Key canons of Western museum ethics such as 'freedom of artistic expression' may be sacrificed to satisfy local cultural traditions and religious mores,⁵⁹⁷ especially since an autocratic ruling elite tightly governs the region. The existence of such restrictions and barriers reinforces the view that the 2008 AoIE may have been subjected to a greater degree of external pressure to present the display with an emphasis on the sacred rather than the secular nature of objects on display. This again illustrates the impact of the wider public sphere on the process of the (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation of a this travelling troupe of objects.

Similar arguments are dividing communities in other regions of the Middle East. For example, in March 2012 a display of wax statues depicting much-loved Shiite Muslim clerics were exhibited in Najaf, Iraq. The intended purpose of these statues was to express homage to this city's invaluable role to cultural development, but was declared by Sunni Muslims, and even some Shiite clerics, as idolism and heretical. These groups were warning 'the pre-Islam era of paganism is returning' as it is haram (religiously forbidden) to create human and animal depictions in art. However, other Shiites, including clerics, visited the exhibit out of 'curiosity' and were 'impressed' with the real-life likeness of the statues. As Qassim Abdulsadda, an activist in Najaf commented: 'It is good to preserve the heritage of Najaf in this

⁵⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ Madsen-Brooks, *op. cit.*

way by showing this generation and generations to come the scholars who had a great contribution to the history and culture of Najaf'.⁵⁹⁸

It is interesting to compare the attitude of the TDIC representatives with their belief that depictions of the Prophet in the AoIE were uncontentious, with the simmering debates already happening at both the local and global level over similar representations in these new museums. This calls into question the reliability of information and opinions given by government employees in this study and draws attention to the limitations of data that does not include a range of visitor responses. On the other hand, perhaps the transient nature of travelling groups of objects allow for a wider range of museological practices and policies of display than those available to curatorial staff associated with permanent exhibitions? This is an issue that will be discussed further in the next chapter exploring the Paris venue of the AoIE.

Regardless of comparisons with European sites of display, the dilemma over figural depictions in art (especially nudes and images of the Prophet) have continued unabated for centuries and are likely to be persistently problematic in a Middle Eastern context. It is unclear whether spokesmen for the Louvre and Guggenheim consider issues surrounding censorship as a major obstacle or not; by deferring to each other they are effectively sidestepping the issue. The politics of display will be played out as the containers to showcase these newly contentious and controversial works are built and the public audiences (visitors and critics alike) make their voices heard. There are theoretical and cultural precedents however, that make predications regarding the social acceptability and economic viability of these new museum projects possible.

The impact of old and new western museologies

As museums are effective as sites of persuasion, their cultural artifacts and carefully curated spaces are considered an ideal medium to construct and celebrate cultural and national identity. After the events of 9/11, discourse surrounding the need for universal values, a common humanity and faith in the power of art objects to heal individual and community pain was re-ignited. Many still held the belief that the authentic or 'real' object was a vehicle of transformation and the museum was the arena for cultural difference to be

⁵⁹⁸ Associated Press, 'Iraq Notebook: wax statues in Shiite holy city prompt awe by fans, cries of heresy by critics', 2012, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraq-notebook-wax-statues-in-shiite-holy-city-prompt-awe-by-fans-cries-of-heresy-by-critics>.

displayed and cross-cultural understanding to occur to counteract the ‘homogenizing effects of global economic and cultural centralization’.⁵⁹⁹

This desire to represent distinctive local and national characteristics rather than a globalized cultural identity is not a recent phenomenon. Bennett remarks that museums have always been part of the globalization process and the ‘flows of information, people and ideas.’⁶⁰⁰ The impact of globalization on museums has accelerated in recent times due to social networking and community curation via the Web, especially in urban areas that are progressively more ‘cosmopolitan’ as a result of ‘cultural tourism’.⁶⁰¹ Bennett, however, suggests that these institutions still remain firmly under the control or ‘governance’ of private groups and national, civic or local governments.⁶⁰² Museum builders influence and are influenced by community and national discourses but are conscious of the need to incorporate international tourism, trade and global perspectives at the expense of their own populations.⁶⁰³

There is also historical precedent in the Middle East for museums to be considered universal symbols of civilisation and a general reliance on Western policies, practices and management regimes. For example, when Pakistan gained independence in 1947 there was a museum building frenzy inspired by and modelled upon Harvard’s museum studies program with the conviction that ‘the number of museums in a country is taken as an indication of the cultural level that a country has reached’. The ‘value’ of museums in this sense is a common sentiment; one shared by the global community in their empathy and support e.g., to help rebuild the National Museum of Iraq in Baghdad that was devastated during the invasion in 2003. A National Museum guard is quoted as lamenting: ‘It was beautiful ... The Museum is civilisation’.⁶⁰⁴

Duncan maintains this ambition to ‘establish global cultural credentials’ is typical of non-Western nations desire to construct ‘Western style’ museums as a means of indicating to the West ‘their political virtue and national identity’ that they are ‘a reliable political ally, imbued with proper respect for and adherence to Western symbols and values ... therefore recognizably a member of the civilised community of modern, liberal nations.’ She cites

⁵⁹⁹ Clifford, 1988, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

⁶⁰⁰ Bennett, 2006, op. cit., p. 47.

⁶⁰¹ *ibid.*

⁶⁰² *ibid.*

⁶⁰³ McClellan, op. cit., p. 28.

⁶⁰⁴ *ibid.*, p. 6.

examples of Western-style museums (such as the \$7 million Contemporary Art museum in Teheran) that were erected by the Shah of Iran in the 1970s. This museum displayed mainly Post-Second World War American art and the majority of employees were American-educated, to 'complete the facade of Modernity he [the Shah] constructed for Western eyes'. The museum's principal curator, Robert Hobbs, believed the museum and its acquisitions were regarded by the Royal family as 'simply one of the many instruments of political propaganda'.⁶⁰⁵

As Duncan convincingly argues:

... Museums can be powerful identity-defining machines. To control a museum means precisely to control the representation of a community and some of its highest, authoritative truths ... [and] those who best understand how to use art in the museum environment are those on whom the museum confers this greater and better identity.⁶⁰⁶

What community is represented and who decides and defines identity is always debatable.⁶⁰⁷ Indeed, as discussion has shown, representing national identities through these universal and global museums is contested and controversial terrain. If museums are playing a central role in constructing national identities through their art and cultural displays they need to construct a view of themselves which includes all its population, no matter how diverse.⁶⁰⁸

Importantly in the case of the UAE, where museums are engaging in promoting cross-cultural understanding, the 'dynamics' of social class relations need to be considered. As the politics of display associated with the staging of the AoIE in Abu Dhabi has demonstrated, education through exposure to art and culture is not always available to all sections of society. The influence of the wider social, political and economic imperatives can exert greater influence than local community needs, desires and expectations. Drawing on Hage, Bennett argues that art galleries and museums aid 'cosmopolitan formations ... [that] binds together international intellectual and cultural elites in shared practices and values,

⁶⁰⁵ C Duncan, 'Art Museums and the ritual of citizenship', in Karp et al, 1991, op. cit., p. 89. A less emotive term than 'political propaganda' would describe such endeavours as instruments of cultural diplomacy that deploy soft power through art objects. There is an array of literature on museums and cultural diplomacy including H Kim, 'Cultural Diplomacy as the Means of Soft Power in an Information Age', 2011, retrieved 25 May 2015, http://www.culturaldiplomacy.org/pdf/case-studies/Hwajung_Kim_Cultural_Diplomacy_as_the_Means_of_Soft_Power_in_the_Information_Age.pdf.

⁶⁰⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁰⁷ *ibid.*, p.101.

⁶⁰⁸ H Morphy in Karp et al, 2006, op. cit., p.472.

but often at the expense of widening divisions between those elites and other classes within national polities'.⁶⁰⁹ As Bennett warns:

The more museums prioritize their role in relation to what might from one perspective be viewed as global public spheres, or from another as international tourist networks, the greater the risk that they might forget their civic obligations in relation to the spheres of local and national governance.⁶¹⁰

In seeking to preserve national heritage, inequalities between individual and community groups can become greater (especially where high-end tourism exacerbates divisions between the rich and poor), resulting in the intensification of deep-seated bitterness and increased incidents of protests, bans and acts of violence. An observation by Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett is illustrative of the problems Western tourism and Islamic fundamentalism poses to heritage sites and museums.⁶¹¹ She agrees with Simon Jenkins from *The Times* in London concerning the massacre of tourists at Queen Hatsheput's Temple, Luxor, Egypt, in 1997:

Islam is threatened by imperialism even more menacing to its dogma than the political imperialism of the 19th century. Mass tourism is the agency of this aggression. The tourist is not a neutral bystander in the religious wars now being fought across the Islamic world. He is a participant. The Temple of Queen Hatsheput ... no longer "belongs" to Egypt but to the world. It is being restored by European archaeologists with UNESCO money. To the fundamentalist, Luxor is a cultural colony, occupied by the armies of world tourism.⁶¹²

Fundamentalists may not be the only sectors of society hostile and suspicious. As discussions have illustrated, many are sceptical that this aspiration to become a 'global centre for cultural enlightenment' is in reality the desire for economic rewards (benefiting only the wealthy) which cultural tourism will bring when oil revenue ceases in the not-too-distant future. In 2013 a record one billion tourists travelled internationally, and Abu Dhabi authorities are developing strategies designed to attract tourists and establish themselves as a 'tourist destination that will have culture, shopping and nature resorts where people can experience our culture'. To this end, ADTA is encouraging tourism in crucial markets including the UK, USA, Italy, Australia, China, France, Germany, India, Russia and Saudi

⁶⁰⁹ Bennett, 2006, op. cit., pp. 64-5.

⁶¹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 65.

⁶¹¹ B Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 'World Heritage and Cultural Economies', in Karp et al, op. cit., 2006, pp. 187-88.

⁶¹² S Jenkins, 'Hysteria calls the shots', *The Times*, London, 19 November 1997, p. 22, retrieved 4 May 2014, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/printviewfile?accountid=36155>.

Arabia.⁶¹³ For example, symbiotic partnerships between Australian and the Middle East to promote tourism benefiting both countries have included: the recent Qantas and Emirates airlines merger designed to replace Singapore with Dubai as the preferred gateway to Europe with Qantas offering competition entries every time you shop at participating Australian stores with the major prize a luxury family holiday in Dubai; and the Qatar government airline Etihad has teamed up with Virgin Australia for similar reasons and advertises 'sweeteners' such as free tickets to dance performances at the Sydney Opera House (who is also a partner) if certain flights are booked.⁶¹⁴

Many commentators argue there are significant problems for the Emirates long-term plans of reinventing themselves via cultural tourism: there is an over-estimation of future audiences for these monumental cultural institutions that the UAE is building; an overly conservative attitude by world standards towards artistic and cultural development; and that Abu Dhabi, in particular, is 'simply buying a cultural identity rather than developing it.'⁶¹⁵ Furthermore, the fluidity of art's boundaries created by 'cultural globalization' can increase appreciation and participation in the 'creative process', but critics warn against the dominance of 'money and image' and commercial enterprises (gift shops, restaurants, block-buster shows) as 'art as business devalues art.'⁶¹⁶ Conversely, museums are successful in attracting audiences across eras, distances and cultural divides and their associations and partnerships with the leisure and tourist industry do not necessarily diminish their value, relevance or viability. Often it is actually increased with the overlapping of public spheres and 'spectator desire'.⁶¹⁷ Additionally, museums as trusted societal institutions are in a position to imbue value and shape popular perceptions of heritage which cultural tourism relies on to attract regional and international visitors. Curatorial decisions made concerning the positioning and framing of museum objects regarding their historical and social context rather than their aesthetic dimensions can therefore alter an audience's perception.

⁶¹³ L Gutchter, 'Abu Dhabi in the spotlight for key tourism event', *The National*, 2013, retrieved 10 July 2103, www.thenational.ae.

⁶¹⁴ *ibid.*

⁶¹⁵ Kluijver, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

⁶¹⁶ Riding, *op. cit.*

⁶¹⁷ A Huyssen, 'Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass medium', *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, Routledge, New York, 1995, p. 17.

As Bennett observes:

No matter how strong the illusion to the contrary, the museum visitor is never in a relation of direct, unmediated contact with the “reality of the artifact” and, hence, the “real stuff” of the past. Indeed this illusion, this fetishism of the past, is itself an effect of discourse ... [artifacts are] placed in an interpretative context in which it is conformed to a tradition and thus made to resonate with representations of the past which enjoy a broader social circulation ...⁶¹⁸

Whether these museums will eventually liberate themselves from the governance of Western models or simply emulate the Eurocentric practices of the Guggenheim, Louvre and British Museum remains a moot point.⁶¹⁹ As illustrated, hot debates are raging over whether these museums in the UAE will be as universal in their values and ideals and still as local as they predict they will be. Despite Abu Dhabi being considered one of the more ‘progressive’ places in the Arab and Muslim world, many are nervous of nations that appear to promote anti-Semitic policies and continue to practice unequal gender laws. Cross-cultural exchanges through permanent and temporary art displays like the AoIE in 2008 will undoubtedly play a role in promoting greater ‘cultural openness’ between Muslim and Non-Muslim nations but marginalized groups within these communities may not be valued or considered worthy of representation (such as artwork by women and Bedouin arts) and may be excluded from these universal museums which favor rare and ancient artifacts or modern global art.⁶²⁰

Public and private agencies obviously share Khalili’s faith in the power of art and culture to serve a civic purpose but this also makes them a desirable medium through which to govern populations. These objects that have been chosen to transform mindsets regarding cultural heritage and imbue a sense of identity and belonging and promote individual, communal and national pride, can potentially become selective and exclusionary themselves through the curatorial process that manipulates and mediates the aesthetic experience. Despite many critics arguing that the notion of the civilizing and transformative affect of the aesthetic experience to encourage ‘enlightenment’ which Khalili and the promoters of art and cultural enterprises in the UAE is quixotic, there are those in the

⁶¹⁸ Bennett, 1995, op. cit., pp. 146-7, 87.

⁶¹⁹ There are other facets relevant to this discussion that can be considered such as issues concerning cultural hybridity, museums and globalisation. See MM Kraidy, ‘Hybridity in Cultural Globalization’, *Communication Theory*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2002, pp. 316-339, accessed 25 May 2015, < <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2885.2002.tb00272.x>>

⁶²⁰ Madsen-Brooks, op. cit.

museum profession who share this belief. For example, Danielle Rice, while admitting museums are too occupied with preserving 'art as property' and conceding that audiences will eventually make their own 'informed decisions', regards the role of the museum educator as one of facilitating '... pleasure though enlightenment ...'⁶²¹

It is clear museums can be part of this new vision of national and global identity, acting as indicators of international wealth and status through their displays of art and knowledge but when the ruling elite exerts such tight control (especially over educational institutions) how 'democratic' and 'universal' can these institutions ever be? Despite the UAE's attempts to reinvent themselves as a modern, progressive state with cutting-edge technology and architectural monuments to artistic and cultural heritage the power and reach of the Supreme Council of Rulers illustrates an autocratic system that operates virtually unchanged since the UAE's inception as the federation of seven emirates drawn up by the British as they withdrew from the Persian Gulf in 1971.⁶²²

This Middle Eastern situation is in direct contrast to the trajectory of European museums that had been transformed into places of public education by the late nineteenth century.⁶²³ This western development, along with the emergence of the modern nation-state, helped in redefining a new, democratic approach to 'social relations'⁶²⁴ aimed at transforming the individual from 'subject' to 'citizen', replacing the Prince's power (which the Royal gallery represented) with that of the state now embodied in institutions such as the public museum. Therefore, the museum became a 'site of a symbolic transaction between the visitor and the state...' facilitating the public's 'experience of citizenship'.⁶²⁵ As discussions have highlighted, the promotion of citizenship through the public museum is

⁶²¹ P Wright quoting D Rice, 'The Quality of Visitors' experiences in Art Museums', P Vergo, (ed.), *The New Museology*, Reaktion Books Ltd., London, 1989, p. 135.

⁶²² For detailed history of the UAE see: J Kechichian, *A Century in Thirty Years: Shaykh Zayed and the United Arab Emirates*, Middle East Policy Council, 2000; M Mursi 'Abd Allāh, *The United Arab Emirates: a modern history*, Croom Helm, 1978. For the current political situation especially between the UAE and USA see: K Katzman, 'The United Arab Emirates (UAE): Issues for U.S. Policy', *CRS Report for Congress Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress*, March 18, 2013, <pc.state.gov/documents/organization/207800.pdf>.

⁶²³ This new role of the collection in the museum setting created a new social space whose crucial role was to better the working class via the improving influence of the middle class. Art was considered a resource that possessed the power to produce civic reform. Through programs of self-improvement, the museum object was radically reshaped so that the educational function transformed the object into both an epistemic and governmental artifact, directed at whole populations via mass education programs of civic formation (Bennett, 1995, op. cit., pp. 28, 33).

⁶²⁴ C Duncan, A Wallach, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History* vol. 3, no.4, December 1980, p.456.

⁶²⁵ *Ibid.*, p.457.

unlikely to be part of the museum experience in the UAE, especially those in the Saayidat Island Cultural Precinct.

This investigation's research data suggests that without significant changes to this top-down system of governance and 'Princely power', the region's rapid and redefining nation-building program may not achieve its aim to encourage citizens to embrace the vision of a future based on cultural and artistic development. Furthermore, in these new global museums in the UAE, especially Abu Dhabi, the social, cultural and economic gulf between wealthy and poor Emirati citizens could be increased by these new institutions that aim at promoting cross-culture understanding. Governments, private/ public institutions and industry/tourism bodies need to be receptive to the demands and needs of individuals and institutions to be able to negotiate positive outcomes so all entities involved in these projects can feel equal cultural and economic representation. Undoubtedly the AoIE was designed to kick-start the UAE's artistic and cultural 'Renaissance' in the UAE in 2008 but these cultural projects need to benefit and include all local, national and international public rather than target and cater exclusively to the financially and culturally elite.

Collaborations between international institutions such as the British Museum, the Louvre and Guggenheim can potentially assist in redefining and transforming the national identity of a region but if driven primarily by economic, military and political motives as some commentators have suggested their credibility as 'global centres for cultural enlightenment' is questionable. It may be the case that economic considerations are paramount and foremost in the minds of the authorities despite their rhetoric indicating otherwise. This would effectively mean simply swapping a reliance on oil revenue to that of museum building, without a genuine commitment to developing art and culture for the benefit of local communities. Moreover, despite being one of the most liberal of the Gulf countries the UAE's Muslim community (estimated to be ninety-six per cent of the population)⁶²⁶ and their religious leaders will undoubtedly exert a powerful influence over what is allowable in terms of the politics of display in these new museums. These decisions will ultimately impact upon the diversity of visitors (local, regional and international) that will attend both permanent and travelling shows.

⁶²⁶ Global Security.org, op. cit.

Importantly, one of the main foci of the long-term plan of the region has included educational programs taught in satellite institutions from western nations directed at UAE citizens. The following discussions reveal the risks involved to local populations (especially Emirati youth) in terms of participation in educational programs and inclusion in the cultural institutions of the near future if the emulation of Western-style museological models and systems of practice are not modulated to suit local contexts. This aim resonates with that of the AoIE in 2008 that investigations have criticized for catering to elitist sectors of Emirati society and international travellers. Representatives from TDIC involved in the Abu Dhabi show will be shown to express the same desire to educate the youth to become cultural ambassadors of tomorrow, but if this process is ultimately neo-colonial, autocratic, elitist and tokenistic, the reality of a redefined and reinvented national identity based on education-for-all through the arts and culture appears even more unlikely. The following discussion canvasses opinions on this contentious and debated issue in light of arguments circulating in the wider public sphere, particularly in terms of who has the most to gain (and lose) from these large-scale cultural enterprises.

Promoting national identity through education

The investment in educating future generations through cultural developments in the arts is posited as a high priority for the UAE, especially in Abu Dhabi. Zaki Nusseibeh, ADACH vice-president and board member of other Abu Dhabi cultural projects, echoed ADAH and TDIC spokesmen by emphasising that these cultural ventures are:

... part of Abu Dhabi's plans for the cultural and educational development of its young people, and its goal is to build bridges to the world, balancing its traditions and heritage as an Islamic and Arab country with a truly global cultural outlook that embraces the world.⁶²⁷

Art collections in the private sector share this perspective, believing they have a crucial role to play in altering parental attitudes to art as a profession and a valuable non-profit place to build local and national identity.⁶²⁸

⁶²⁷ Doherty, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

⁶²⁸ *ibid.*

This attitude is evident in interviews with TDIC representatives concerning the AoIE and their priority to educate young Emiratis in arts appreciation and the museum profession:

...[Museums are] very anxious that they educate a young section of local people from Abu Dhabi ... For example, when we had the [AoIE] exhibition, they brought some young people who were interested in the arts and they became like docents ... I spoke to these young people and they were very excited, not just about Islamic art but about any other sort of exhibitions that might come ...⁶²⁹

Is there sufficient evidence to support the premise that governments are educating their populations in the appreciation of the arts and training their own local Emirati youth to become the museum professionals of tomorrow? There are projects such as the Abu Dhabi Ambassador Program that trains Emiratis to become future 'tourism ambassadors',⁶³⁰ and educational institutions in the UAE (the New York University Abu Dhabi, Zayed University and Higher Colleges of Technology) that have introduced certification programs and degrees in museum management and museum studies.⁶³¹ However, these projects and programs are not necessarily targeting local Emirati and Arab youth. For example, the prestigious New York University Abu Dhabi campus is training some of the most 'talented [students] in the world ... [to become] pioneers ... who strive to make their own mark on a more knowledgeable, productive, responsible, just, and peaceful globe.'⁶³² This is certainly an aspiration in line with current discourse but with its graduating class in 2016 hailing from sixty-five countries, with all courses taught in English and no quota guaranteeing Emiratis are allocated a substantial number of places to ensure their role as educational and cultural ambassadors of the future, this is unlikely to be achieved.⁶³³ The level of dependency between the western universities and their new campuses in the UAE is questioned by some commentators, believing this is an incentive for Western institutions to remain on 'good terms' with the ruling families in the Emirates.⁶³⁴ There is also the allegation this has led to instances of 'academic self-censorship;' however, many others argue that the majority students are happy to be studying in a comparatively 'liberal' institution by Emirati

⁶²⁹ Ryan and HO/KS, op. cit., lines 465-500.

⁶³⁰ V Bharadwaj, 'Cultural Jewels in the Gulf,' *The New York Times*, 2012, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/arts>.

⁶³¹ NYU Abu Dhabi University & College in UAE, New York University, retrieved 10 July 2013, <nyuad.nyu.edu>;

⁶³² *ibid.*

⁶³³ N Ouroussoff, 'Building Museums and a fresh Arab identity,' *The New York Times*, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/11/27/arts/design/27museums.html>.

⁶³⁴ Kluijver, op. cit., p. 63.

standards and feel local circumstances are taken into consideration within these universities.⁶³⁵

The desire by the UAE states, especially Dubai and Abu Dhabi, to remake their national identities through education, art and culture that has been under discussion appears two-fold: an attempt to redeem the 'tarnished' image of Arabs internationally while laying the foundations for a modern society within the limits of Islam.⁶³⁶ Besides promoting a more positive attitude towards Muslims and Islam generally, there is the aspiration to fashion a 'latter-day Silk Road', where the UAE nations are influential economic and cultural centres positioned between the rising powers of China, India and the West. These countries are conscious, however, of the alienating effect that the implementation of Western-style cosmopolitanism (like those adopted by Tehran and Cairo) can have on other Arab nations that has helped promote the escalation of radical fundamentalism.⁶³⁷ The aim is to counteract this trend by inspiring national pride and 'opening up the minds' of young Emiratis to become global citizens rather than religious extremists. As Khalili stated when asked if his Islamic art collection would influence terrorism, exposure to 'beauty' would alter mindsets:

... Many extremists think Islam is against art, since it copies God's creations, but through this exhibition you can find out how mistaken they are ... Beauty has always played a major role in Islam. In the Quran, some passages urge people to meditate on God's creations.⁶³⁸

The civic role of events such as the AoIE to alter mindsets and deter perpetrators from committing acts of terrorism is debatable on several levels. The complexities of representation and interpretation of displays particularly the effect of cultural and social norms and values in influencing the aesthetic experience (that was discussed in detail in chapter two) is problematic in any situation. In the context of the UAE, despite historically practicing a traditional but moderate and non-political interpretation of Islamic doctrine and having generally been successful in counteracting Islamic terrorism, concerns prevail that a number of terrorist plots originate from or travel through the UAE with financial backing from undisclosed or unknown sources. For example, two of the nineteen 9/11 hijackers

⁶³⁵ *ibid.*

⁶³⁶ Ouroussoff, *op. cit.*

⁶³⁷ *ibid.*

⁶³⁸ E Mohammed, 'Collector says education key to understanding Islamic art', *Gulf News*, section 8, 24 January 2008, retrieved 20 July 2013, <www.gulfnews.com>.

were UAE residents with another living there, and the organizers of the operation had regularly passed through the UAE.⁶³⁹

In terms of regional security, while Western nations have considered UAE states (especially Dubai) as potential terrorist targets, local security experts have considered the risk of an attack less likely when compared to Yemen and especially Saudi Arabia, who are considered 'pro-Western puppets'.⁶⁴⁰ For example, during the Desert Storm Campaign Dubai refused to allow Western coalition forces to use its facilities. Additionally, terrorists would be 'shooting [themselves] in the foot' by targeting the UAE, effectively jeopardizing their own money laundering operations as they rely on the Emirates status as a centre for international tourism, finance and commerce.⁶⁴¹ However in December 2012 a 'deviant group' was uncovered and in April 2013 several 'Arab nationalities' were arrested and accused of planning terrorist acts as part of an al-Qaida-linked terrorist cell in response to the Israeli-Palestinian and Syrian conflicts. Incidents such as these run the risk of affecting national and well as international security.⁶⁴² It appears individual terrorists and their networks are hard to locate and monitor making their potential impact on regional and international security difficult to assess.

Despite the desire to educate their youth to become 'cultural ambassadors' of the future, it is unclear how successful these endeavours will be in the long-term. Educational programs are touted as inclusive, aimed at promoting national identity and belonging but whether Emiratis will be at the helm of these new institutions and the effectiveness of de-radicalization programs in counteracting the growing appeal of terrorist groups for disillusioned and isolated youth is questionable. Importantly, these projects may not bring significant and sustainable economic and cultural benefits for all of their citizens equally, therefore perpetuating the dominance of elite sectors of society at the expense of its the less fortunate members.

⁶³⁹ 'United Arab Emirates,' *The World Almanac of Islamism*, 2011, retrieved 20 July 2013, <http://almanac.afpc.org/united-arab-emirates>.

⁶⁴⁰ R Elliott, 'Dubai: Terrorist Target?', *Security Management*, 2013, retrieved 20 July 2013, <http://www.securitymanagement.com>

⁶⁴¹ Elliott, op. cit.

⁶⁴² VOA News, 'UAE arrests Al-Qaida-Linked Terrorist Cell', *Voice of America*, 2013, retrieved 20 January 2013, <http://voanews.com>.

Cultural tourism, education and understanding: Cui bono?

There are already significant concerns regarding the creation of these museums dedicated to advancing art and culture. For example: possible abuses of migrant construction workers building these museums have been raised by human rights groups worldwide; and although these exhibitions and museums are being planned and built with Emirati oil money, they are being shaped primarily by foreigners (like Iranian-born Khalili who has resided in the West for over three decades) who will take their financial rewards home when their contracts are up. Despite the aspiration to train their own Emirati population as museum professionals and consultants, Abu Dhabi especially employs a variety of architects, museum directors, curators and experts. The notion that this societal embrace of global culture will become just the latest example of contemporary 'cultural colonialism'⁶⁴³ is a plausible concern; an outcome that would not be in the best interests of the general population and counter-productive to the stated aims of the region's representatives.

There are many in the UAE however, who believe local and national interests are given top priority in these impressive and fast-moving cultural ventures. Sean Gaffaney, senior project manager of the Zayed National Museum, for instance, feels the benefit of collaborations with 'high-profile partners' such as the British Museum's 'focus on quality ... [and] teams on the ground are in place to ensure there's a real local flavour'.⁶⁴⁴ Art collector and gallery owner Charles Pocock maintains Abu Dhabi is 'easing local populations into these grand projects ... [by] having exhibitions regularly ... allow[ing] the local population enough time to absorb and process the shows giving them some idea of what to expect when the museums open'.⁶⁴⁵ Furthermore, by showcasing their own civilisation's artifacts 'where they rightly belong' it eliminates the need for the region's people to travel abroad to 'experience their own culture and history', which Pocock thinks is 'simply preposterous'.⁶⁴⁶ In a similar vein, Abu Dhabi economic consultant Mo'ath Hussein argues the new museums will allow '... easy access to all types of art ... as not many [local] art lovers can afford trips to Europe'.⁶⁴⁷

⁶⁴³ Bharadwaj, op. cit.

⁶⁴⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁶ *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁷ Wagner, 2012, op. cit.

Conversely, critics argue that there is scant support for the suggestion that building museums will cultivate a strong sense of cultural identity among Emiratis or promote a flourishing local art market.⁶⁴⁸ According to Vali Nasr,⁶⁴⁹ Abu Dhabi is attempting to ‘buy international prestige’ through its massive museum building program but is ‘failing to invest in the culture of the region and serve the needs of the local population’. The problem, Nasr maintains, is that these ‘cultural centres are not developed ... the local culture is very wealthy but not mature enough to engage in an arts culture. Dubai, for example, has its film festival but does not have a local film industry ...’ Furthermore, though American institutions are being embedded in these Middle Eastern societies there is not the necessary infrastructure to support local culture, as the New York Abu Dhabi campus example suggests.⁶⁵⁰

The staging of artistic and cultural ventures involving local communities is a persistent and reoccurring dilemma that was initially highlighted in discussions of the AoIE in 2008. However, there is evidence that home-grown artistic production and patronage coupled with foreign participation can co-exist and receive widespread acclaim. Prior to its re-scheduled opening in 2015,⁶⁵¹ Saadiyat Cultural District’s exhibition centre has been displaying exhibitions since 2009 at various venues around Abu Dhabi (particularly Gallery One at the Emirates Palace where the AoIE was shown in 2008) as part of a comprehensive series of public and educational initiatives designed to ‘nurture an awareness and appreciation of art among the capital’s residents and visitors’.⁶⁵² One of the largest and most prestigious cultural events is the annual four-day Abu Dhabi Art Fair (organized by TDIC and ADACH) that boasts a ‘multicultural’ program involving exhibitions, film screenings, panel discussions and workshops with artists designed for families in an area called the ‘Art Zone’ and for adults in the Majilis, an exclusive VIP Zone.⁶⁵³

⁶⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁶⁴⁹ US based professor of international politics, Tufts University, Massachusetts, and senior fellow of foreign policy at the Brookings Institute.

⁶⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁶⁵¹ The planned completion date was originally 2012 but delayed due financial problems associated with the GFC.

⁶⁵² *Saadiyat cultural district Abu Dhabi* publication of Saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae, 2012.

⁶⁵³ J El Heloueh, ‘Abu Dhabi Art 2011: 50 prestigious and innovative galleries participate in this year’s edition’, *Art Daily*, 18 November 2011, retrieved 22 November 2014, <http://artdaily.com/news/51846/Abu-Dhabi-Art-2011--50-prestigious-and-innovative-galleries-participate-in-this-year-s-edition#.VHLiRBaD6hc>.

His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Tahnoon Al Nahyan (chairman of TDIC, ADACH and ADTA) opened the event in 2011 stating the fair:

... offers a truly global perspective. Since the inception of Abu Dhabi Art three years ago, Abu Dhabi has become a recognised destination for both international collectors and for those nearer to home, and some of the world's leading galleries take to broaden their market reach and international reputation.⁶⁵⁴

The event had been held at Gallery One in 2009 and 2010, but in November 2011 this popular show found a new home: the UAE pavilion from World Expo 2010 in Shanghai China. On the art fair's opening night the main attraction was the UAE pavilion itself; covering an area of 3,500 square metres with a height of 20 metres it had been transported 6,546 kilometres in 24,000 stainless steel individual parts to Saadiyat Island. Over two floors, 50 galleries comprise this multipurpose exhibition space, which was designed from the beginning to be demountable and relocated back in the UAE after Expo finished on October 31, 2010.⁶⁵⁵

The Managing Director of TDIC, HE Mubarak Al Muhairi, commented on the pavilion's arrival as marking: '... the next step in the island's journey to become a hub for cultural, architecture and educational excellence.'⁶⁵⁶ The architectural firm *Foster + Partners* was responsible for designing and constructing the pavilion (and the proposed Zayed National Museum), and considered this a project 'where all the stars aligned ... We had a rock star architect ... Good client, good budget, had enough time to do it and the [financial] freedom'.⁶⁵⁷ Senior Partner, Gerard Evenden described the pavilion and the success of the project in terms of the UAE's national image, heritage and future aspirations:

... Inspired by the way the cities of the UAE rise from the desert, the pavilion will emerge to form a natural counterpoint to Abu Dhabi's urban landscape and a landmark for Saadiyat Island ... it will represent the UAE on a world stage and highlight the UAE's progressive stance on sustainability⁶⁵⁸ ...⁶⁵⁹

⁶⁵⁴ *ibid.*

⁶⁵⁵ A Seaman, 'UAE's Shanghai Expo pavilion coming to Saadiyat Island', *The National*, retrieved 9 Jan 9 2011, <http://www.thenational.ac/news/uae>.

⁶⁵⁶ TDIC news archive, 'UAE's Iconic World Pavilion to Relocate to Saadiyat Island', 2011, retrieved 10 January 2012, <http://tdic.ae>.

⁶⁵⁷ Conversation Ryan and Scarrow, UAE pavilion, September 22, 2010, line 365-77.

⁶⁵⁸ TDIC news archive, *op. cit.*

⁶⁵⁹ Seaman, *op. cit.*

Displaying its newly redesigned cultural and national identity at a World Exposition⁶⁶⁰ was an essential part of the UAE's cultural 'renaissance' and economic revival that relied on projecting the image of a stable, progressive and thoroughly modern nation to a global audience. This emphasis on new technologies and latest developments is a hallmark of national pavilions at World Expositions and the UAE pavilion demonstrated a variety of original environmental strategies, especially its complex golden shell that was created by a two metre triangulated grid of steel that allowed for diffused light to enter the building and illuminate it nightly (fig 66).⁶⁶¹ Importantly, the pavilion was not only the first to be recycled but was the only national pavilion to be relocated from an international expo site since they began in 1851 with the Great Exhibition in London.⁶⁶²



The significance of these attempts prior to the completion of the Saayidat island project is considerable. Temporary shows such as the AoIE may have attracted selective groups and individuals but annual displays of art and culture like the Abu Dhabi art fair have a greater chance of involving diverse community groups from the local population. This is in line with recommendations suggested in discussions concerning the success of the Sydney AoIE to promote cross-cultural understanding when local festivals and community-run events complement exhibitions of art and culture outside of the museum environment.

⁶⁶⁰ World exposition, Universal Exposition and World Fair were titles given variously to these events and are considered interchangeable in this chapter.

⁶⁶¹ El Heloueh, op. cit.

⁶⁶² Seaman, op cit.

Both the tourism industry and the governing bodies in the UAE have been clearly 'testing the waters' with their new reliance on artistic and cultural development and reactions have overwhelmingly been positive.⁶⁶³ Undoubtedly reputation-enhancing opportunities have been taken-up at international forums such as expo 2010 and created at home through crowd-pleasing events like the annual Abu Dhabi Arts Festival. Their aim to educate both their local population and international audiences in preparation for the grand openings of their flagship museum complex is therefore ambitious, far-reaching and on-going.

However, Expo 2010 revealed some persistent features of 'exoticism' that hark back to the *Cairo Street's* (fig 67, 68, 69) and *Tales of the Arabian Nights* (Figs 70-71) displays at expositions and international fairs in Paris (1889) and Chicago (1893). Although beyond the scope of this thesis, it is questionable if the new identity and global image that the UAE was attempting to project ran the risk of becoming mired in representations of a timeless, static and monolithic culture that Expo 2010 was resurrecting and thus reinforcing. These visual comparisons with historical and modern recreations illustrate the persistence of stereotypical images of the 'mysterious East' and 'dangerous other' advanced by Orientalist writings and rhetoric that Said and his followers so vigorously opposed discussed in chapter two. Reinforcing previous analysis, cutting-edge technology and sleek architectural designs may signal a nation embracing the modern world on one level, but if this image is undermined by an ever-present 'ethnic imaginary', a new vision is impossible to promote and maintain into the future.

⁶⁶³ This opinion is based on fieldwork conducted at 2010 Shanghai Expo. Although formal interviews were not possible and despite the large number of visitors the pavilion attracted, the UAE expo Facebook site contains a variety of positive responses regarding visitor experiences and opinions of the pavilion (see Andrea Zsuzsa Ignacz Maashaallah, Graca Helder, Alyaa Almansoori, UAE Expo Facebook site, retrieved September 25, 2010, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/EXPO-2010-UAE-PAVILION/152490360364>). The pavilion itself won numerous international awards and was voted one of the 'Top Ten' pavilions at the event (Wam, 'UAE pavilion rated *Top Ten* at Expo 2010', 28 July 2010, *Khaleej Times*, retrieved 20 November 2014, http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/theuae/2010/July/theuae_July681.xml§ion=theuae). Visitor numbers for the festival have been increasing and the 2014 event attracted was over 17,000 (<http://Otimes.com/modern-contemporary-artabudhabi>). For a recent reviews of Abu Dhabi Arts festival see <http://www.theculturist.com/home/review-abu-dhabi-film-festival-2011.html>;



Fig 67 Source: *Cairo Street* international fair in Paris 1889. Source: <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/slideshows/exposition-universelle-de-1889.html>



Fig 68 Source: *Cairo Street* international fair in Chicago 1893. Source: <http://www.nga.gov/content/ngaweb/features/slideshows/exposition-universelle-de-1889.html>



Fig 69 *Arab Street* Middle Eastern section Expo 2010 Shanghai China. Source: L Ryan



Fig 70 Middle Eastern Dancers Paris Exposition 1889. Source: http://www.amaradances.com/amara_articles/IntrotoUS_Chronicles.pdf



Fig 71 Caracalla Dance Theatre presents a dance production *Two Thousand and One Nights* Expo 2010 'Lebanon dazzles visitors with art feast.' Source: Expo2010.net <http://shanghai.cultural-china.com/html/Latest-news-on-World-Expo/201006/24-5917.html>

It is important to mention rival artistic and cultural enterprises in neighbouring Middle Eastern nations, especially Qatar, which is seen as the UAE's main competitor for Islamic artifacts in the quest to gain prominence in the regional and international cultural sector and art market. Driving competition further, both nations are concentrating on the development of public educational programs and professional training. The former head curator at the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (fig 72), Michelle Walton, discussed how the museum was training two Qatari curators (hoping for more to follow) and felt they were 'pioneers in an area that had never had much culture before'.⁶⁶⁴ Despite journalists and articles criticizing their museum for encouraging elitism and international audiences that discussions in this chapter have levelled at the AoIE, their main focus audience is the local population especially 'workers' and school children with their advertising campaigns aimed at this demographic. However, it appears this museum is shifting the focus from the aesthetic experience to that of understanding and interpretation that the AoIE favoured, as the mission of this Doha museum in the curator's eyes was to 'go far beyond showing pretty things ... you can have these items and they can be the most beautiful impressive objects you have seen but if you know nothing about it they are worthless really' (fig 73).⁶⁶⁵ In addition, Walton maintains art works should not be removed from their historical, political and social context as:

... you want that connection, it is there in the history, the culture. It's there for every object, with the transformation of the objects as they move from media, they move across borders, as they move from one people to another in a certain kind of understanding and I think that is also the richness of Islamic art.⁶⁶⁶

⁶⁶⁴ Transcript L Ryan and M Walton, 2012, line 62.

⁶⁶⁵ *ibid.*, lines 241-44.

⁶⁶⁶ *ibid.*, lines 277-81.



Fig 72 Exterior view of Museum of Islamic art Doha Qatar. Source: <https://gees7.wordpress.com/2012/12/03/540/>

The curator emphasized that the museum was ‘very firmly grounded in the idea that Islamic art is many different cultures, different people, different religions, different ideas ... and this is coming from the very top ...’⁶⁶⁷ She also commented that they are often ‘... packed full with people from Saudi Arabia, from the Emirates ... people from the Middle East’⁶⁶⁸ and museum professionals attending a conference/exhibition called *Art Dubai* in Doha annually.⁶⁶⁹



Fig 73 Display of mosque lamps Museum of Islamic art Doha Qatar. Source: www.schott.com/architecture/english/references/doha-museum.html

⁶⁶⁷ *ibid.*, lines 315-17.

⁶⁶⁸ *ibid.*, lines 115-17.

⁶⁶⁹ *ibid.*, lines 230-35.

It appears, therefore, that the UAE's governing bodies are not the only agencies promoting art and culture with similar aspirations and focus in the region as a way to ensure a sustainable local and national future. Khalili has commented on the region's development and its wider relationship to global politics: 'All of this, from the Louvre to Qatar, has happened because of 9/11 ... you open the newspaper every day, and all you read about is what is wrong with Islam. It is time for people to understand what is right with Islam.'⁶⁷⁰ Further, Krens believes it is 'plausible' that these cultural projects are improving the profile of Islamic culture globally but cautions:

These situations are complicated ... at what point do you make a distinction between national cultural pride and sharper political calculations? There is always a financial perspective. A situation like Abu Dhabi speaks to all of these concerns and more.⁶⁷¹

Opinions like Krens' are highly influential and point to the power of western institutions and the impact they are having on current developments and future governance of these lucrative ventures. In the institutional discourse regarding art museums and their role in shaping identity and promoting belonging among its community members, the query remains whether a Western perspective is likely to dominate cultural growth generally and curatorial practices and policies specifically. Local influences need to make significant inroads and carve a permanent place in these monumental artistic and cultural developments aimed at global audiences. Focusing on educating the Emirati youth as future 'cultural ambassadors' is a noble aspiration that the proceeds from the AoIE in Abu Dhabi via the Emirates Foundation contributed to developing. However, this outcome can only be achieved if local contexts and the needs of Emirati citizens are as central to museum projects as cutting edge architecture, economic viability and status on the world stage appear to be.

⁶⁷⁰ Khalili cited in S Bayliss, 'A positive understanding of Islam', *ARTnews*, 1 January 2008, retrieved 24 November 2014, <http://www.artnews.com/2008/05/01/a-positive-understanding-of-islam/>.

⁶⁷¹ Krens cited in Bayliss, *ibid*.

Conclusion

Conscious of the consequences of the tragic events of the last decade (9/11, Bali, London, Madrid etc.) Middle Eastern nations such as the UAE have been engaged in a balancing act designed to avoid any connections with Islamic radicalism, whilst maintaining their cultural identity as members of the Islamic or Arab world. Many believe the UAE is making a wise choice by promoting itself as a technologically savvy, culturally diverse and safe holiday destination to capture the attention and tourist dollar of international visitors.

Through this nation-building process, cultural agencies are reforming and redefining their roles, such as the newly incorporated Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority (TCA Abu Dhabi replacing ADTA and ADACH) that boldly claims its responsibilities 'range from preserving the past to shaping the future; from nurturing the local economy to promoting Abu Dhabi as a destination worldwide.'⁶⁷² The AoIE in 2008 was viewed as the start of this change of direction, focusing on art and culture rather than natural resources and opening up the Middle Eastern art market for regional collectors (individual and institutions), an activity that was traditionally dominated by Western agencies.

Although the development of museums are part of the UAE's strategy of reinventing itself, there is a risk of becoming storehouses for international wealth and status unless a new, democratic ideal replaces the autocratic approach of the ruling elite. The history of the museum in the west is entwined with a trend toward liberal democratic institutions, and even collaborations with international museums such as the Louvre or the Guggenheim, cannot transform the national identity of the UAE if economic, military and political motives are the prime driver. Similarly, religious constraints on what museums are permitted to display will ultimately affect visitor demographics and the reputation of UAE as a centre of global culture generally.

When ADACH director Mohammad Khalaf Al-Mazrouei proclaimed they were transforming the region into a 'contemporary cultural beacon' based on the preservation of their 'past cultural heritage' there appeared an acknowledgement that the promotion of a new national and cultural identity requires an understanding of the historical past. However, the UAE faces an enormous challenge to preserve Intangible heritages and

⁶⁷² J Thomas, 'New tourism authority to replace two agencies for Abu Dhabi', *the.national.ae*, 10 February 2012, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://www.thenational.ae/business/travel/new-tourism-authority-to-replace-two-agencies-abu-dhabi>.

collective memory to create a genuine sense of belonging through recording oral histories and broadening appreciation and knowledge of the historical legacy of the Emirates to its local, national and international audiences.⁶⁷³ The situation is compounded by archaeological and historical museum initiatives taking second place to these monuments to modernity based on European models.

Adding to this complex situation, the UAE is acutely aware of the problem of preserving cultural heritage while not reinforcing the monolithic and static stereotype of Islamic culture as frozen in time and space.⁶⁷⁴ The image of the Islamic and Muslim world internationally is made precarious by recent terrorist activities in the Middle East generally despite attempts to alter global public opinion. Accusations of aiding terrorism (especially 9/11) has led to attempts by regional governments to ban any organizations that may be labelled terrorist groups in an attempt to appease their foreign allies such as USA and UK. However, the UAE's poor record of political rights and civil liberties shows no sign of improving as the disputes and protests over the building of Saayidat island project reveals.

If these problematic situations continue to exert pressure on museological decision-making in the UAE, the reliance on the aesthetic and religious dimensions of objects on display will become mandatory as the only 'acceptable' practice and policy of display to avoid controversy and ensure institutional viability. This situation will leave little room for the process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation to create new and dynamic assemblages of works that can educate local communities in the appreciation of art and culture and promote understanding. The external social, political and economic imperatives will dominate and satisfy the desires of elite regional and international visitors and Khalili's mandate to promote cross-cultural understanding among a common brotherhood through the aesthetic experience will have again had less impact than he anticipated.

⁶⁷³ Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, *Cultural Mandate*, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://tcaabudhabi.ae/en/culture/Pages/cultural-mandate.aspx>.

⁶⁷⁴ To this end, programs designed to protect modern heritage buildings of cultural and historical significance have taken on new importance to the processes of modernization ('Cultural Programs & Heritage Festival Committee-Abu Dhabi launches 'Turathuna' ('Our Heritage'), 10 June 2014, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, op. cit.; 'TCA Abu Dhabi organises first GCC Heritage & Oral History Forum', 14 September 2014, Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, ibid). Further reading: A Chabbi, HM Mahdy, 'Virtuous circle or vicious cycle? Modern heritage and development in Abu Dhabi, ICOMOS Paris 2011 Conference, 2014, http://openarchive.icomos.org/1111/1/1-1-Article7_Chabbi_Mahdy.pdf; A Zeynep, *International heritage and historic building conservation: Saving the world's past*, Taylor and Francis, Hoboken, 2013, p. 144. For a list of heritage buildings and cultural attractions in Abu Dhabi see VisitAbuDhabi.ae website, <http://visitabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx>.

This situation demonstrates the weakness of relying on object agency alone without consideration of the value contextual backgrounds can provide to audiences. In autocratic societies such as in the UAE control is in the hands of the elite whose rhetoric concerning 'cultural enlightenment' has to shown to be questionable on many levels. Future research may confirm whether this is the case, however, unless access to a wide-range of museum audiences is possible the limitations of relying on institutional opinions and perspectives that this study has experienced will provide only limited and biased empirical data.

Many contemporary museums struggle for economic security when relying on cultural tourism to ensure a viable future. This is part of the identity crisis that museums are confronting, as they are competing with other tourism economies that 'privileges experience, immediacy, and what the industry calls adventure.'⁶⁷⁵ Besides being spaces where national identity is constructed, these cultural events can be places of 'popular culture, consumerism and the pursuit of pleasure'.⁶⁷⁶ It is clear the UAE envisages itself as a place of 'dune buggies and decent hotels ... racing cars, horse riding and swimming'⁶⁷⁷ as well as a 'centre for cultural enlightenment.' If the world can disassociate from the perceptions of Islam and the Muslim/ Arab world as inimical and arcane, a more nuanced understanding of the cultural complexities of these emerging nations may have a better chance of developing. Only time will tell if the Emirati youth of today can become the 'cultural ambassadors' of tomorrow and effect the desired changes to national identity that is inclusive of its diverse populations and acknowledged by its global audiences.

The following two chapters take on a new direction, as the Paris and Amsterdam venues of the AoIE are situated within nations that have a long and complex history of challenging societal issues especially concerning the legacies of colonial pasts. The role of museums in negotiating the problems of multiculturalism, human rights, equality and inclusiveness is particularly problematic for France with its collections of 'colonial booty' to rehouse and re-present and unwanted historical narratives to be disrupted, transformed and rewritten. The museological debate between 'experience' versus 'intpretation' is again crucial to displays of art and culture, in discussions of both travelling groups of objects like the AoIE and other more permanent assemblages.

⁶⁷⁵ B Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage*, University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1998, p. 7.

⁶⁷⁶ Witcomb, op. cit., p. 17.

⁶⁷⁷ Ryan and Scarrow, op. cit., lines 197-201.

Chapter Five

Colonial legacies in a post-colonial world: egalitarianism, laïque and inclusiveness

Secularism is one of the great successes of the Republic. It is a crucial element of social peace and national cohesion. We cannot let it weaken.

PRESIDENT JACQUES CHIRAC, DECEMBER 2003

Colonialism of a bygone era is replaced by a whole new French brand of condescension. It is the old noble-savage argument. Heart of darkness in the city of light.

MICHAEL KIMMELMAN, *NEW YORK TIMES*

France's colonial history is an unwelcome legacy, a reminder of past sins and an ongoing source of societal tension for the French government. Ethnographic museums played a central role in the colonization process, as it was through their displays that the ideologies and philosophies of the colonial state were embodied and projected. French anthropologists and adventurers returned home with 'exotic' artifacts and objects for ethnographic research from their colonies in the East and public museums showcased these 'treasures' to their own populations and international audiences to engender national pride and assist in their imperial nation building process. The colonial narratives and national discourses embedded in these displays emphasized the imperial successes of their nation in its overseas exploits, beneficial to both colonizer and colonized, as 'inferior peoples' would 'progress' through the gift of modernity' brought by the Western power.⁶⁷⁸ In the museum collection, these objects become effective tools of persuasion, as those who possessed them imposed upon the artifacts and the cultures they represented 'their own histories ... entail[ing] a shift in power and status of the object and of those formerly and presently associated with it.'⁶⁷⁹ The public museums and their colonial collections, therefore, became 'the self-appointed keepers of other people's material and self-appointed interpreters of

⁶⁷⁸ A Sauvage, 'Narratives of colonisation: The Musée du quai Branly', *reCollections reCollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia*, vol. 2, no. 2, September 2007, retrieved 10 May 2014, <recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol-2-no2/papers/narratives-of-colonisation>.

⁶⁷⁹ M Ames, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, UBC Press, Vancouver, BC, Canada, 1992, p. 144, retrieved 9 June 2014, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/sydney/Doc?id=10141390&ppg=161>.

others' histories'⁶⁸⁰, conveying the authority of the state through their capacity to possess and exhibit national heritage.⁶⁸¹

The museums that had been allocated the task of representing the nation functioned most effectively as ideological instruments of French state power and were in Paris: the *Musée du Louvre* (the Louvre Museum) and two ethnological museums: *Musée de l'Homme* (Museum of Man, MH) and *Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens* (Museum of Arts and Oceanic Africans, MAAO). These ethnological museums shared a common heritage, as they either inherited colonial collections or were institutions originally part of the *Musée d'Ethnographie du Trocadéro* constructed for the 1878 International Exposition. Significantly, the establishment of the MH signalled the move towards a scientific approach to ethnography that coupled with expeditions and collecting of artifacts in the French colonies, produced a 'fieldwork-museum-laboratory' situation. This state of affairs promoted relations between the French state and their colonial outposts in West Africa and Indo-China especially in terms of governance when migrations to France began in earnest.⁶⁸²

Furthermore, the MH avoided displaying the objects as primitive and exotic colonial booty by concentrating on the ordinariness and everyday qualities and cultural/ritual uses of the artifacts, in line with the museum's function as an excellent pedagogic and civic tool for governing populations.⁶⁸³ Envisioned as a 'museum of humanity', the MH's aim was to combat 'scientific racism' that was gaining popularity once again in France and Germany.⁶⁸⁴ Despite this desire to represent the diversity and equal placing of cultural and racial groups, Alice Conklin questions whether the French populace's faith in the Imperialist cause superseded such attempts to discredit theories of racial difference and evolutionary hierarchies.⁶⁸⁵ As Daniel Sherman suggests at the MH: 'The privileged position remains that of the Western observer, whose superiority enables the museum's rearrangement of indigenous objects within the context of profoundly unequal relations of power/knowledge.'⁶⁸⁶

⁶⁸⁰ Ibid., p.140.

⁶⁸¹ S Amato, 'Quai Branly museum: representing France after empire', *Race & Class*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2006, p. 50.

⁶⁸² Bennett, 2013, op. cit. p. 89. For a more detailed analysis see the above publication pp. 88-107.

⁶⁸³ Ibid., p. 101.

⁶⁸⁴ A Conklin, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2013, pp. 136,144.

⁶⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 188.

⁶⁸⁶ D Sherman, 'People's Ethnographic: Objects, museums, and the Colonial Inheritance of French Ethnography', *French Historical Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2004, p. 686.

With decolonisation, however, exhibiting these historically loaded ‘spoils of war’ became problematic, especially as many of the migrants flooding into France were from former colonies, predominantly the Maghreb.⁶⁸⁷ The necessity of reconfiguring colonial narratives has impacted on the politics of display in terms of re-presenting and re-contextualizing objects, becoming highly controversial and debatable topics for museology. The choice to exhibit these collections through highlighting their aesthetic qualities, rather than any historical, social or religious contexts, is particularly contentious especially when attempting to address issues such as cultural diversity. As Elise Dubuc and Laurier Turgeon have argued: ‘Museums in general, and ethnographic museums in particular, are places where the majority group’s limits of tolerance for various minority groups are measured.’⁶⁸⁸

This is especially with the case with new state funded museums such as the *Musée du quai Branly* (MQB), *Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration* (French National Museum of Immigration, CNHI or Cité) and the relocated *Musée National des Arts et Traditions Populaires* in Paris to the *Musée des Civilisations de l’Europe et de la Méditerranée* (Museum of Civilization in Europe and the Mediterranean, MCEM) in Marseilles. This chapter focuses on two of these museums-MQB and Cité-and the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), where the AoIE was displayed in 2009-2010. The IMA, being a French public and private entity in partnership with the Arab world, operates under different circumstances to the MQB and Cité; a situation that will be shown to have a profound impact on its politics of display and its public reception.

In the following discussions, comparisons are made between the three institutions in regard their reaction to immigration issues and the implementation of France’s multicultural policies. Each institution’s capacity to reorganize collections and re-negotiate French colonial legacy in a post-colonial world is discussed in terms of their particular background; design and use of technology; politics of display; permanent and temporary exhibitions; visitor experiences/responses; professional and public reactions. During these investigations analysis of the three institutions is conducted and several crucial questions raised in order to understand and evaluate these museums and their displays of art and culture.

⁶⁸⁷ The Maghreb is the Arabic name given to Muslims from North West Africa, mainly Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and occasionally Libya (retrieved 19 May 2014, <http://www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/maghreb>.)

⁶⁸⁸ E Dubuc & L Turgeon, ‘Musees d’ethnologie: nouveaux défis, nouveaux terrains’, *Ethnologies*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2002, retrieved 9 June 2014, <Academic OneFile>

Firstly, how successful are these institutions in dispelling dualistic oppositions between 'primitive' and 'civilized', 'French' and 'immigrant', 'European' and 'Other', and ultimately, 'us' and 'them'? Are these museums engaging in a critical reconsideration of their colonial past and reassessing French national identity through displays of art and culture that represent all their citizens, especially those from socially and economically disadvantaged (predominantly Muslim) migrant backgrounds? Importantly, how is the debate between 'experience' versus 'interpretation' in wider public sphere discourses impacting upon both temporary and permanent assemblages on displays in this context? Is the IMA representing French Muslim and Arab identity effectively through displays of Islamic artifacts and how influential are travelling shows such as the AoIE? Lastly, are these temporary exhibits more effective in solving the 'identity crisis' that the contemporary French public sphere is confronting when compared to museums (such as MQB and Cité) that are carrying the burden of colonial baggage?

In order to assess the museums' capacity to meet these demands, a discussion of European attitudes generally towards multiculturalism and immigration policy developments (and France in particular) is essential to an understanding of how institutions operate within local and global discourse and contribute to perceptions and behaviours in relation to Muslims and Islam.

Multiculturalism in Europe today

Despite vigorous debates and policy developments concerning multiculturalism and citizenship during the 1990s, the events of September 2001 and subsequent bombings in Madrid (2004), London (2005) and Boston (2013) have led many to believe we are experiencing a 'crisis of multiculturalism.'⁶⁸⁹ These escalating acts of terrorism have increased perceptions of Islam as directly linked to violent attacks on the Western democratic way of life, promoting harsher attitudes in migration debates and policy development generally.⁶⁹⁰ Nations with a long history of migration (France, Britain and the Netherlands) have considered their multicultural policies as failing to integrate migrants and are increasingly advocating an 'assimilationist approach' to counteract growing dissent

⁶⁸⁹ T Modood, A Triandafyllidou & R Zapata-Barrero, *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*, Routledge, London, New York, 2006, p. 1.

⁶⁹⁰ *ibid.*

among their populations.⁶⁹¹ Many commentators consider the integration and participation of Muslims, in particular, as the greatest challenge for multiculturalism in Western Europe today. According to Modood, the task requires a reassessment of two key areas: ‘... from socio-economic disadvantage and discrimination in the labour market at one end, to constitutional status or corporate relationship with the state at the other.’⁶⁹²

Research suggests there has been a recent shift from encouraging ‘diversity’ and ‘assimilative cultural demands’ from migrant communities to a concentration on ‘language skills, knowledge of national culture, citizenship rituals’ in government policies.⁶⁹³ The polemic views of current debates surrounding multiculturalism illustrates the necessity of considering religion as a system of belief that shapes individual and group identity and directs political choices, especially for migrants who often oppose the ideologies of the dominant culture and its institutions. A comprehensive, longitudinal study in 2004 concluded that ‘the experiences of growing up in less secure societies will heighten the importance of religious values.’⁶⁹⁴ These findings lend weight to Modood’s argument that the central issue affecting Muslim migration is the predominance of religious attachments as the foundation for identity formation, cultural values and norms, community organization and political alliances.⁶⁹⁵ Modood maintains that demands for cultural diversity from Muslim groups is no more menacing to liberal nation-states than other claims, however, others warn that Islam and civic society may be ultimately incompatible and result in communities divided by religious affiliations.⁶⁹⁶

Charles Taylor, for example, raises the issue of religion as in ‘mainstream Islam there is no question of separating politics and religion’ with Muslims recognizing liberalism in the West as an ‘organic outgrowth of Christianity’.⁶⁹⁷ Conversely, Tariq Ramadan maintains that it is essential to consider Islam as a religion when discussing the place of Islam in the

⁶⁹¹ *ibid.*

⁶⁹² *ibid.*

⁶⁹³ Statham P, Koopmans, R, Giugni, M & Passy, F ‘Resilient or Adaptive Islam?: Multiculturalism, Religion and Migrants’ Claim-Making for group demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France’, *Ethnicities*, 2005, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 427-459, retrieved 12 May 2014, <etn.sagepub.com>.

⁶⁹⁴ P Norris, R Englehart, *Sacred and Secular: Religious and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004, p. 19.

⁶⁹⁵ Statham et al, *op. cit.*

⁶⁹⁶ *ibid.* For the most prominent theory supporting this opposition to multiculturalism and predicts its evitable failure in the European context see Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, 1996, Simon and Schuster.

⁶⁹⁷ C Taylor, ‘The Politics of Recognition’, A Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University Press, New Jersey, p. 62.

European context as ‘... Islam is, first and foremost, a divinely revealed religion with a belief in its own universal validity, a way of life, a concept of life and death, and not merely the cultural characteristic of a specific population coming from countries outside Europe.’⁶⁹⁸

French-style secularism versus religiosity debate

That issues surrounding Islam and Muslim communities need to be taken seriously by the French government is obvious. Out of the seventeen million Muslims in Western Europe, six and a half million are residing in France, (representing ten per cent of the country’s sixty-six million and making it the largest Muslim population in Europe),⁶⁹⁹ with the majority emigrating from the Maghreb.⁷⁰⁰ France’s colonial past⁷⁰¹ and tradition of recruiting migrant workers has strongly influenced their immigration history. Despite the economic benefits of French migration, policy choices (especially after the Second World War) were responsible for the ethnic minorities dilemma that would prove to have long-term consequences for the political system.⁷⁰² As Patrick Ireland remarks: ‘The French government’s selective, uneven treatment of the various national communities within the immigrant population was reinforcing the collective, ethnic identity of each.’⁷⁰³ Since the

⁶⁹⁸ T Ramadan, ‘To be a European Muslim’, Leicester, Islamic Foundation, p. 188, quoted in Statham et al, op. cit., p. 429.

⁶⁹⁹ This is only an estimate taken from surveys and polls as the official collecting of statistics relating to race or religion is prohibited in France since 1872 (S Kern, ‘The Islamization of France in 2013’, *Gatestone Institute*, 6 January 2014, retrieved 16 May 2014, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4120/islamization-france>).

⁷⁰⁰ Statham et al, op.cit.

⁷⁰¹ French colonisation began in 1605 in North America, followed by the West Indies and West Africa in 1624; but it wasn’t until France focused their Imperialistic activities in North African (Algeria 1830, Tunisia 1851, and Morocco 1911) that Africa was colonised on a larger scale. Adding to the increasing flow of migrant workers after World War Two, decolonization of former French colonies (most African colonies gained independence in the 1960s) saw migration to France rose dramatically. Of interest, after the eight year, bloody Algerian War of Independence (1954-62) approximately two million former French Algerians or ‘black feet (*‘pieds-noirs*)’ migrated to France. Included in these immigrants were 100,000 pro-French Muslim Algerians (*harkis*) who had fought in the Algerian War of Independence. As the Algerian ‘conflict’ was not recognized as a ‘war’ until 1999, attaining French citizenship (and state pensions) was a long and difficult process for the descendants of both *pieds-noirs* and *harkis*’ (Focus Migration, *France*, retrieved 20 May 2014, <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/France.1231.0.html?&L=1>). The negative impact of the French colonisation on Algerians continued after independence. It is generally agreed that de Gaulle signed Algeria’s independence in 1962 in response to violent opposition from settlers fighting to retain Algeria as French. After decolonization violence continued in Algeria especially in the 1990s when an Islamist party won elections and were deemed null and void by the Algerian secular, French-backed regime. A bloody civil war ensued, killing more than 100,000 people. Algerians who had immigrated to France were left traumatized, distrustful and angry. (I Collier, ‘Liberty, equality, fraternity: redefining ‘French’ values in the wake of Charlie Hebdo’, 13 January 2015, *The Conversation*, retrieved 6 February 2015, <http://theconversation.com/liberty-equality-fraternity-redefining-french-values-in-the-wake-of-charlie-hebdo-36066>).

⁷⁰² P Ireland, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity: Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1994, p. 31.

⁷⁰³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

mid 1980s, there have been increasing societal tensions and unrest in many of the poorer, outer Paris suburbs (banlieues) exacerbated by the rise of popular ring-wing political parties (especially the *Front National* led by Marine Le Pen⁷⁰⁴). With the economic well being of the country in mind, France's immigration policy since the 1990s has become increasingly restrictive and integration of migrants from the Maghreb states has become a focus of ongoing policy reform and racial tension. In particular, the introduction of the zero immigration policy in 1976-2002, that restricted family reunions and employment for foreign university graduates, resulted in numerous protests especially in 1996.⁷⁰⁵

The 2005 and 2007 riots, in particular, highlighted deep divisions within French society. Many government officials and public commentators linked the rioting with Muslim separatism, polygamous practices and illegal migration rather than the consequence of complex underlying tensions related to economic and social exclusion, racial discrimination and French social integration policies.⁷⁰⁶ In both instances, rioters were predominantly unemployed teenagers with North African/Muslim backgrounds from destitute housing estates reacting to the death of young men from their communities in events related to French policing. In public statements, President Sarkozy declared a policy of 'zero tolerance' to urban crime, refusing to consider these incidents the result of 'a social crisis', labelling rioters as 'racaille' ('rabble' or 'scum') in 2005 and the work of criminal 'thugocracy' in

⁷⁰⁴ Le Penn and her associates adopted the differentialist expression *Droit à la différence?* arguing it was 'the "real" French who had the right to be different and preserve their own "identity" from unwanted admixture' (R Brubaker, 'The return of Assimilation?', C Joppke, E Morawska (eds.), Palgrave Macmillan, Hampshire, New York, 2003, p. 44-45).

⁷⁰⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁰⁵ In response to unrest in 2005, the 2006 Law of Equal opportunities (loi pour l'égalité des chances) was designed to reduce discrimination and promote integration of young immigrants in to the workforce by legislating that business' with more than fifty employees were required to use anonymous resumes (no photograph, address, gender, origins or name) when advertising positions. To compliment this law a new department was established- the office for social cohesion and equality of opportunity (Agence nationale pour la cohésion sociale et l' égalité des chances, ANCSEC) (Focus Migration, op. cit.) This new policy was also in response to research that suggested employees were less responsive to resumes where the applicants had African names and that some French employers employed an abbreviation system in their databases identifying applicants by either a French flag (BBR meaning Blue White Red and White/French) and NBBR (Not Blue White Red indicating not French/White). Paradoxically, the Article 4 clause of 2005 law (that was later repelled by Chirac) advocated the teaching of only the 'positive role' of French colonialism, especially in North Africa, and provoked intense controversy from a large number of French and Algerian politicians, academics, historians and the public (SOS Racisme, 'Discrimination, Presentation' cited in J Poliscanova, 'What went wrong with multiculturalism in france?' *Global politics*, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.global-politics.co.uk%203/multiculturalism%20France.html>).

⁷⁰⁶ P Sahlins, 'Civil Unrest in French Suburbs, November 2005', *SSRC*, 24 October 2006, retrieved 25 May 2014, <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>.

2007.⁷⁰⁷ Others, such as Ousman Kobo, consider these events as proof of the demise of social policy and French Republican principles: ‘the 2005 riots in France are the hallmark of a triple failure: a failure to assimilate, a failure to integrate, and a failure to globalize.’⁷⁰⁸

Islam as a religious foundation underpinning identity formation, beliefs and lifestyles is particularly problematic for France, because of its principle of *laïcité*⁷⁰⁹ or secularism (separation of religion and the state/government). To the French *laïcité* is essential to modernity, perceived as an ‘active movement from a community ruled by the church to a society ruled by law.’⁷¹⁰ Since the European Enlightenment,⁷¹¹ the secular state has been seen as an ‘agent of movement’ emancipating the individual from religious restrictions to become functioning members of a civil society.⁷¹² Therefore, religion is part of the private rather than the public sphere, represented in French society through educational programs and religious organizations and institutions.⁷¹³

However, can a secular society be religiously neutral and yet acknowledge the equality of all religions? Mohood queries whether modern universal secularism has the capacity or desire to incorporate the pre-Enlightenment cultures they have historically opposed: ‘is the Enlightenment big enough to tolerate the existence of pre-enlightenment

⁷⁰⁷ J Mackenzie, ‘Sarkozy says “thugocracy” behind French Riots’, *Reuters*, 9 November 2007, retrieved 24 May 2014, <http://www.reuters.com>.

⁷⁰⁸ F Bernault, ‘Colonial Syndrome: French Modern and the deceptions of History’, in *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, C Tshimanga, D Gondola & P J Bloom (eds.), Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN, USA, 2009, p. 120.

⁷⁰⁹ *Laïcité* was a 1905 law (introduced after widespread anti-Semitism among government officials was revealed in the Dreyfus affair) originally designed to protect the state from religious influence particularly from the Catholic Church. The law aimed to prevent direct funding of religious groups, but recognized the freedom to practice any religion and display religious symbols. However, in recent times *laïcité* has become ambiguous in terms of the division between state and religion. In a response to this dilemma, the 2004 Stasi Commission report (Rapport au Président de la république) confirmed that *laïcité*: ‘ensures that groups or communities of any kind cannot impose on individuals a belonging or a religious identity. *Laïcité* protects everyone from any pressure, physical or moral, justified by a religious prescription. The defence of individual freedom against any proselytise action completes today the notion of separation and the neutrality that at the core of the concept of *laïcité*’ (R Kastoryano, ‘French Secularism and Islam: France’s headscarf affair’, Modood et al, (eds), op. cit., p.60).

⁷¹⁰ Modood et al, op. cit., p. 166.

⁷¹¹ Numerous nineteenth-century philosophers including Comte, Spencer, Durkheim, Weber, Marx and Freud supported the belief that religious observance would decline with the rise of rationality, industrialization and secularism. Charles Wright Miller succinctly argued in 1959: ‘... Once the world was filled with the sacred – in thought, practice and institutional form. After the Reformation and the Renaissance the forces of Modernization swept across the globe and secularization, a corollary historical process loosened the dominance of the sacred. In due course, the sacred shall disappear altogether, although except, possibility, in the private realm’ (C Wright Miller, *The Sociological Imagination*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1959, pp. 32-33).

⁷¹² *ibid.*

⁷¹³ *ibid.*

religious enthusiasm, or can it only exist by suffocating all who fail to be overawed by its intellectual brilliance and vision of man?'⁷¹⁴ This a dilemma for France, as civil society relies upon a degree of shared ethics, norms and values and, as a nation's demographics change, the political nature of the society must alter to continue functioning.⁷¹⁵ As many have argued (Rex 1986, Habermas 1994, Norris and Inglehart 2004) even in highly secularized societies private and public spheres invariably become entangled as religions contain historical legacies that remain influential in directing worldviews and delineating cultural zones.⁷¹⁶ Indeed, taking an uncompromising stance on the division of public/private spheres may privilege the dominant majority at the expense of the migrant minority group.⁷¹⁷

The perception that Muslims are making politically, culturally and theologically unreasonable demands in response to feelings of exclusion and alienation is an outcome of this situation. Research suggests that the tensions between the French state and its Muslim population are of ongoing concern due to their opposition to religious symbols of any kind in the public sphere and its distrust of Islam and its political potential.⁷¹⁸ A study based on data collected in 2009, reveals that French Muslims have lower assimilation rates (attachment is higher to their original culture than host society and culture) because they feel excluded by the governmental system and also by French society on a 'taste-based' discrimination, as they are easily identifiable as Muslims by dress or name. The study found this situation directly affects the success of economic integration of Muslim migrants into housing, marriage or labour markets.⁷¹⁹ In terms of housing, for example, research reveals the majority of French migrants are over-represented in some areas. Statistics reveal that eighty-one per cent of the population are non-EU members living in housing areas with typically sub-standard housing and infrastructure, high unemployment and poor police relations with residents.⁷²⁰ The issue of the place of Islam in French society in terms of integration is further complicated according to findings from a detailed study in 2011, that

⁷¹⁴ T Modood, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*, Edinburgh University Press, Bodmin, 2005, p. 112.

⁷¹⁵ *ibid.*, p. 169.

⁷¹⁶ P Norris, R Inglehart, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁷¹⁷ Modood et al, p. 170.

⁷¹⁸ For details of research investigating the how liberal states policies accommodate the demands of migrant groups in terms of religious and cultural difference see Stratham et al, *op. cit.*, pp. 427-459.

⁷¹⁹ C L Adida, D D Laitin & M Valfort, *Muslims in France: Identifying a Discriminatory Equilibrium*, October 2012, p. 31, retrieved 12 May 2014, <<http://ftp.iza.org/dp6953.pdf>>

⁷²⁰ M Castellan, M Marpsat & M F Goldberger study, 1992, cited in A C Hargraves, *Immigration, 'Race', and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, Routledge, London, 1995, p. 72.

suggest the ‘New French’ (migrants of Maghreb, African and Turkish origin) are as ‘French as anyone else ... the *particularities* of the New French *do not have an strong affect on their attitudes* ... [and] *are far from being on the margins and estranged from French society and its principles and values* ...’⁷²¹

Additionally, some commentators argue that French-style civic universalism and its naturalization laws intended to ‘make Frenchmen out of foreigners,’⁷²² coupled with the state’s strongly secularist nature, is responsible for minimal policy development targeting social marginalization embedded in ethnic and cultural diversity.⁷²³ Others blame the failure of multicultural policies for current immigration problems. However, both pro and anti-multiculturalists appear motivated (in terms of governance) to preserve the nation state as a cohesive and unified entity when confronted with issues of cultural diversity.⁷²⁴ There is a certain consensus that there is a ‘plurality of multiculturalism’ as Joppke and Lukes argue: ‘there is no multiculturalism *tout court*; there are only specific, context-dependent multicultural problematiques.’⁷²⁵ For example, the majority of France’s multicultural programs and projects are directed at foreigners, usually guest workers and postcolonial immigrants. The role of multiculturalism, in these instances, is deployed in a ‘civic’ role to redefine these migrants as ‘people without culture’ as their ‘ethnic nationhood ... [is] too closely associated with a particular culture.’⁷²⁶ Therefore, the problem of multiculturalism is seen as ‘a very specific mode of perceiving, experiencing and evaluating both the existence of communalized cultural difference and the inability of the state to nationalize this difference.’⁷²⁷ The ‘religious enthusiasm’ of some Muslims (particularly second generation youths) and sense of belonging to a transnational Islamic community that is perceived as transcending the national ties of their host countries is one of the major problems facing not only France, but governments globally.⁷²⁸

⁷²¹ S Brouard, V Tiberj, *As French as Everyone Else? A survey of French citizens of the Maghreb, Africa, and Turkish origin*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2011, pp. 113, 114. Italics used are that of the author.

⁷²² Ireland, op. cit., p. 32.

⁷²³ Statham et al, op. cit., p. 431.

⁷²⁴ G Hage, ‘Analysing Multiculturalism Today’, *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, T Bennett, J Frow (eds.), London, California, Sage Publications, New Delhi, 2008, p. 496.

⁷²⁵ C Joppke, S Lukes, ‘Introduction’, *Multicultural Questions*, Oxford, Oxford university press, 1999, p. 16.

⁷²⁶ *ibid.*

⁷²⁷ Hage, op. cit., p. 492.

⁷²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 504-505.

L'affaire Foulard

The 'headscarf affair' (or 'l'affaire foulard') was one of the most controversial and persistent issues surrounding Muslims and Islam that France had to confront prior to the AoIE in 2009. The fact that this dispute was centred on the school environment is significant, as historically, the French public education (along with the army) are 'agents of political socialization',⁷²⁹ associated closely with their assimilation philosophy and naturalization policies. This is evident in wider governmental policies such as the granting of citizenship to all third-generation migrants, or at adulthood, all second-generation migrants. This formula was based on the belief that after completion of school and obligatory military service, all national differences would have disappeared.⁷³⁰

In 1989 three schoolgirls were excluded for wearing headscarfs to their public school in the Parisian suburb of Creil, contradicting the European Convention on Human Rights and France's own national ideology based on *laïcité*.⁷³¹ A similar incident in 1994 intensified debates, especially when in 2004 a new law made it a criminal offence to wear or display 'conspicuous' signs of religious affiliation in public schools (fig 74). President Jacques Chirac in his December 2003 address to the nation had foreshadowed the ban when he warned: 'Secularism is one of the great successes of the Republic ... it is a crucial element of social peace and national cohesion. We cannot let it weaken.'⁷³²

Following this announcement, 3,000 demonstrators protested in Paris, triggering global protests from European and North American cities in early 2004. The demonstrators were questioning the legality of the law in terms of international human rights, where religious practices can only be curtailed if they endanger the rights and safety of other fellow citizens. As French protestor Betayeba Hayet argued: 'We live in a country that is supposed to defend human rights, and to practise one's religion is a human right.'

⁷²⁹ Ireland, op. cit., p. 32.

⁷³⁰ R Hansen, 'Citizenship and Integration in Europe', Joppke & Morawska, op. cit., pp. 97-98.

⁷³¹ J Poliscanova, op. cit.

⁷³² CBC news, 'Indepth: Islam France's hijab ban', *CBC Online*, 7 September 2004, retrieved 25 August 2010, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/islam/hijab.html>.



Fig 74 Demonstrators protesting against headscarf ban in Paris 2004. Source: http://www.mtholyoke.edu/~kupfe22r/classweb/fugu/France/Headscarf_Affair.html



Fig 75 Poster advocating the banning of the Burka Paris 2010. Source: www.lepenpaca2010.com

This opposition to the new laws was not a view held by all the public. French opinion polls suggested an increasing intolerance towards Muslims and Jews, evident in growing numbers of physical assaults against migrants of non-European background and the desecration and destruction of synagogues and mosques.⁷³³ Furthermore, French television broadcast many hostile and alarmist reports describing veiled students as representing ‘Islamic fundamentalism’ (*intégrisme islamique*), ‘anti-intellectualism’ (*obscurantisme*), and ‘green fascism.’⁷³⁴ As Pierre Tévanian has observed, this perceived attack from religious groups on the public institution of education central to the French constitution rapidly escalated from ‘questions of social stigma, humiliation, and marginalization in the school system to become a vague, disembodied debate about the headscarf and Islamic fundamentalism.’ It is important to note that although the law was largely supported by French political elites and conventional media, it did not win wide support in civil society: ‘At the beginning of the campaign, 45 per cent of French citizens were opposed to a ban on the headscarf at school (49 per cent supported it); and only 22 per cent supported the expulsion of a student who refused to remove her headscarf.’⁷³⁵

⁷³³ Ireland, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

⁷³⁴ P Tévanian, ‘Conservative Revolution within Secularism: The Ideological Premises and Social Effects of the March 15, 2004, “Anti-Headscarf” Law’, Translated by N Baldinger, Tshimanga et al, p. 187.

⁷³⁵ *ibid*, p.188.

Many rightly felt these new laws targeted Muslims particularly due to their religious obligations and dress codes and feared it might expose women to contempt, resentment and violence from within their communities and discourage female attendance at schools.⁷³⁶ Just a few months before the AoIE was shown in Paris in 2009, the Islamic veil issue was again making headlines with French President Nicolas Sarkozy calling for the banning of the full veil (niqab) because it was ‘not welcome ... [as it was] a sign of subservience and debasement’ for women and represented a threat to the state’s secular ideals and gender equality laws.⁷³⁷

These debates revolve around the fundamental moral rights and principles of tolerance, personal liberty, the right to difference, freedom of religion, women’s liberation and sexual equality.⁷³⁸ This has led to a questioning of the basic principles of the French Republic and its national ideological stance as ‘egalitarian, *laïque*, inclusive’ for its foundation for societal cohesion that has characterized their nation-state.⁷³⁹ For many this confirms the belief of Islam’s ‘incompatibly with the West ... [that it is] impossible for Muslims to assimilate universal values and/or integrate into French society ... [and that] Islam rejects secularism.’⁷⁴⁰ Others are more critical, arguing that the welfare state and the Republic are at grave risk of being dismantled, warning of ‘the end of national societies.’⁷⁴¹ As posters circulating in the real world and online demonstrate (fig 75) such sentiments are widespread and create societal divisions at both the local and global level.

Riva Kastoryano contends that a 2006 poll found the ‘headscarf affair’ was revealing of attitudes towards citizenship, especially its association with identity politics.⁷⁴² Undoubtedly, the ‘headscarf affair’ revealed the tensions and power plays between French authorities, institutions and immigrant Muslim groups as the Republican state law was

⁷³⁶ *ibid.*

⁷³⁷ A Chrisafis, ‘Nicholas Sarkozy says Islamic veils are not welcome in France’, *The Guardian*, 23 June 2009, retrieved 4 May 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/june/22/Islamic-veils-speech-france/>>. In 2011, the full veil (niqab) was banned and resulted in rioting in 2013 when police attempted to arrest a woman wearing the niqab. Furthermore, there is currently discussion that the French government is considering banning the headscarf in some professions including private nurseries (Kastoryano, *op. cit.*, p. 57). These societal and ethnic tensions, though on a larger scale, are similar in nature to those that surrounded the Sydney AoIE in 2007 with the Cronulla ‘riots’ and the Howard government’s response that ignored the underlying racial discrimination problems at the time.

⁷³⁸ Kastoryano, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

⁷³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 58. The French term *laïque* means non-denominational, public or secular (retrieved 10 June 2014, www.oxforddictionaries.com/translate/french-english/laïque).

⁷⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁷⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁷⁴² *ibid.*

perceived as being challenged by community or societal law based on the Qur'an.⁷⁴³ In many respects Tévanian's comments are particularly astute concerning French Secularism and the 'headscarf affair' as a reaction against its fundamental principles representing: '... the transition from a rational to a religious conception of the secular ... from libertarian to "securitarian" secularism ... from democratic to totalitarian logic ... from egalitarian to "identitarian" secularism ... Secularism today is frighteningly similar to religious doctrine.'⁷⁴⁴

However, there have been efforts by the government to recognize the rights of Muslim communities that do not conform to the French understanding of *laïcité*. According to Modood, the creation of the 2003 Conseil Français du Culte Musulman was the culmination of attempts by the French government since 1990⁷⁴⁵ to establish a national Muslim council that included representatives from the French Muslim community and French government officials. Some council positions are elected while others are appointed and its main purpose is to arrange chaplains for the prison and army, organize 'halal' food certificates, co-ordinate pilgrimages and establish prayer rooms and mosques.⁷⁴⁶ Despite its lack of recognition from large numbers of French Muslims, scant influence on government policy making (deemed a religious council only), civil society and French media reporting, it is an example of the desire to create 'institutional linkages.' This development is similar to Germany's moderate secularism stance that has included the meeting of Muslim groups with high-level government officials during Islamkonferenz every year since 2006.⁷⁴⁷

Considering this fractious environment and need for societal 'calm' in dealing with the Muslim/Islam 'problem', what role do cultural institutions, such as museums, contribute to promoting positive attitudes towards the Muslim/Arab world through displays of Islamic art and culture? Did the AoIE make a substantial impact on altering mindsets and combating negative stereotypical through their travelling troupe of ancient artifacts? Was Khailili's

⁷⁴³ *ibid.*

⁷⁴⁴ Tshimanga et al, p. 189, 190.

⁷⁴⁵ In response to the headscarf affair, there were attempts from the government consult with Islamic organizations in order to undermine the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. In 1993 Charles Pasqua, the new Minister of the Interior, began a project to promote the establishment of French Islam, unaffected by foreign influences. At the opening of a mosque in Lyon in 1994 Pasqua encouraged the building of a 'moderate' Islam harmonious with French Republican philosophy: 'We need to treat Islam in France as a French question instead of continuing to see it as a foreign question or as an extension into France of foreign problems ... It is no longer enough to talk of Islam in France. There has to be a French Islam. The French Republic is ready for this' (M A Schainp, 'Minorities and Immigrant Incorporation in France: The State and the Dynamics of Multiculturalism', p. 215, in C Joppke, S Lukes, (eds.), 1999.

⁷⁴⁶ Statham, *op. cit.*, p. 433.

⁷⁴⁷ Modood, *op. cit.*

mandate to promote cross-cultural understanding through the the aesthetic experience sufficient in this instance, considering the problems the AoIE faces in the previous two sites of display? The following section discusses the IMA in terms of its goals, institutional practices and policies and the importance of travelling displays (such as the AoIE) in their effort to promote greater understanding between East and West and contribute to reconciliation between France's disparate communities.

The IMA: Building bridges

An international collaboration

The IMA is a partnership between France and twenty-two Arab countries,⁷⁴⁸ with the mission: to promote and enhance awareness, understanding and knowledge of the contribution of the innovations and inventions, language and culture of the Arab world; develop cultural exchanges, cooperation and communication (especially in science and technology); and build 'a bridge between East and West' by encouraging dialogue and positive relations between France, Europe and the Arab World.⁷⁴⁹ IMA curator Eric Delpont confirms that the museum was created in response to France's concerns about immigration and national identity in the 1980s. Additionally, the popularity of Islam as a religion in France today has made knowledge of Islam and Muslims a cultural question.⁷⁵⁰ Brahim Alaoui⁷⁵¹ maintains this '*globalizing* concept enables links to be established between the different functions and activities, and conveys an image of dynamic continuity'.⁷⁵² Alaoui believes the museum is the heart of the Institute and is 'shaped' by their temporary exhibitions, as this is the most successful avenue through which their mission to 'build a bridge East and West' can happen.⁷⁵³

The display of temporary exhibitions is especially important to the IMA due to the extensive Louvre expansions, promised artifacts were withdrawn, prompting their decision

⁷⁴⁸ Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen (IMA website, retrieved 1 June 2014, www.imarabe.org/)

⁷⁴⁹ IMA website, retrieved 1 June 2014, www.imarabe.org/

⁷⁵⁰ Transcript L Ryan and E Delpont, 2011, lines 26-30.

⁷⁵¹ IMA Director of the Museums and Exhibitions and Head of the Contemporary Art Department in 1999 (B Alaoui, 'An ongoing dialogue: the Institute of the Institute of the Arab World in Paris', *Museum International*, UNESCO, Paris, vol.51, no. 3, 1999, p. 38). Of note, Alaoui was dismissed by the IMA for 'gross misconduct' in 2007 for misusing funds. For more details refer to IMA website www.imarabe.org/node/1474.

⁷⁵² *ibid.*

⁷⁵³ *ibid.*

to concentrate their museum activities more on 'dissemination' rather than 'conservation' while they build their collection.⁷⁵⁴ Large spaces are devoted to these temporary exhibitions, dedicated to displaying art from particular countries, with more specialized themes concentrating on 'archeological periods' and the arts of Islamic civilizations.⁷⁵⁵ Alaoui stresses that exhibitions dedicated to modern and current Arab art are central to the IMA to 'create an awareness of the contemporary prolongations of Islamic art and its impact on the plastic arts in East and West alike.'⁷⁵⁶

The IMA admits it faces a difficult task due to the 'rejection and withdrawal into isolation ... and an historical logic of mistrust' that has characterized the encounters and exchanges between Europe and the Arab world. Alaoui concedes that 'Arab cultural continuum is rarely understood' and its contributions to arts and science have remained relatively unknown even 'concealed.'⁷⁵⁷ He believes that through 'valorizing the Arab cultural heritage and identifying, through presentation, research and debate, the factors that make for solidarity and tension', the IMA can create unity between cultures and promote an understanding and appreciation of the diversity of the Arab-Muslim world⁷⁵⁸. Furthermore, through exposure to and contemplation of Islamic artifacts the visitor will understand the meaning and aesthetics of objects (both secular and sacred) and therefore understand the Muslim world of today.⁷⁵⁹ It is worth mentioning that these sentiments echo Khalili's belief in the reforming power of universal aesthetic experiences through exposure to the 'beautiful' art object that is the fundamental to his mission of promoting cross-cultural understanding.

It is important to note that Institutions such as the IMA are significant departures from earlier national institutions especially ethnographic museums such as the MH and MAAO that preferred policies focusing on the collection and exhibition of typical objects, selected for their ordinariness and representativeness rather than for their aesthetic

⁷⁵⁴ *ibid.*, p. 39.

⁷⁵⁵ Countries and exhibitions include: Syria, *Memory and Civilization*; Sudan, *Kingdoms on the Nile*; Yemen, *In the Country of the Queen of Sheba*; Lebanon, *The Other Shore*. Highlighting Islamic civilizations: ceramics in *Secret lands of Samarkand*; textiles in *Colours of Tunisia*; carpets, *Presence of the East in the West* and *Silk and Gold, Maghreb Embroidery*; and areas in which the Arab world have played a dominant role (Medicine in the Days of the Caliphs) and ethnographic events (*Memory of Silk, Palestinian Dresses*) (*ibid.*)

⁷⁵⁶ *ibid.*

⁷⁵⁷ *ibid.*, pp. 39-40.

⁷⁵⁸ *ibid.*, p. 40.

⁷⁵⁹ *ibid.*, p. 42.

properties. Therefore, despite protests from many quarters objecting to the preference for aesthetics over anthropological dimensions in museum displays, the choice of aesthetic criteria for these new and reformed museum displays in spaces such as the IMA (and later MQB and Cité) represented a trend away from didactic instruction towards aesthetic contemplation.⁷⁶⁰

The French government supported the aims of the IMA as was evident in the opening speech at the museum in November 1987 by then President François Mitterrand. While acknowledging the Arab/Muslim world's contribution to science, the arts and humanities, Mitterrand spoke of France's:

willingness ... to offer friendship, love and respect for other peoples ... [despite] so many struggles and confrontations ... especially when one considers the rise of Islam in Spain, the most prestigious and exciting sources of culture we have come to know and incorporate into our own concepts ...⁷⁶¹

It is clear the IMA was seen by both the French government and the Arab nations and representatives involved as an early attempt to address the issue of immigration, especially in regard to Muslims and Islamic faith, and their assimilation and integration into French society.

Architect Jean Nouvel, who was later to create the MQB in 2006, designed the IMA. Breaking with traditional French museum architecture, the IMA was opened in 1987 to much acclaim for its design and technological innovations. The building is considered visually stunning and innovative through its use of hi-tech glass walls composed of 30,000 mechanical metallic 'eyes' (suggestive of intricate Arabic designs and patterns as fig 76 illustrates) that dilate or retract depending on changing external light to illuminate the museum's interior spaces and control internal temperatures.



Fig 76 Facade of Institut du Monde Arabe Paris showing catalogue covers photograph of the *Arts Of Islam* Exhibition 2009-2010 integrated into the metallic panels. Source: Khalili.org

⁷⁶⁰ S Price, *Paris primitive, Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly*, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 2007, p.p. 88-97.

⁷⁶¹ IMA website, op. cit.

Designed as a multidisciplinary space (with the museum at its centre) the permanent exhibition is spread over three floors and includes ancient artifacts and contemporary artworks (mainly from the French colonies of Tunisia and Morocco) and areas for temporary exhibitions. There are multimedia stations throughout the exhibition space providing further information on artifacts as well as a digital library⁷⁶² and auditorium for seminars and conferences. The museum boasts a diverse public program showcasing art and culture from the Arab world: film, music, dance, photography, visual arts, workshops for young people, and courses in Arabic civilization and language. For example, school children can combine an excursion visit to the local Mosque nearby when they visit the IMA.⁷⁶³

Importantly, IMA also publishes a quarterly journal, *Qantara* (Arabic for gateways) and a related website *Mediterranean Heritage: Crossing of East and West* (retrieved through the Mediterranean Qantara Portal). This project is part of the Euromed Heritage Program aimed at:

contribut[ing] to mutual understanding and dialogue between Mediterranean culture, through the enhancement of the cultural heritage ... transcend[ing] the differences between East and West ... [by] overcom[ing] the traditional antagonism between Muslim and Christian worlds ...⁷⁶⁴

The *Qantara* website focuses on cross-cultural analysis to promote a 'common sensibility, or a shared identity' through highlighting similarities and connections between over 1500 objects, sites and monuments from the medieval and modern eras in terms of linkages and movements of ideas, techniques, shapes and materials. Furthermore, the project includes an art book, a series of documentary videos (in English, Arabic, Spanish and French) and a travelling multimedia exhibition.⁷⁶⁵ These inclusions extend the possibility of cross-cultural encounters for museum visitors and confirms the recommendation made in both the Sydney and Abu Dhabi displays that providing a networks of associated activities outside the museum space can have a greater chance of achieving Khalili's mandate and like-minded others to use object agency to transcend cultural differences and encourage a common brotherhood of mankind.

⁷⁶² The digital library includes electronic cataloguing of its entire collection in conjunction with the Library of Alexandria, Egypt, IMA website, op. cit.

⁷⁶³ Alaoui, op. cit. p. 41.

⁷⁶⁴ IMA website, op. cit.

⁷⁶⁵ *Qantara* website is supported by a team of two hundred art specialists, curators, researchers and historians of Islamic and European studies.

The politics of display and the importance of travelling shows

The IMA does appear to consider the addition of contextual information (social, historical, political) in ways that the previous museum spaces displaying the AoIE did not, viewing these aspects as important part of their displays. They do not avoid controversial issues for fear of producing negative reactions:

... Our aim is not to make an idealistic view of the Islamic civilization saying this is the best and the better of the world ... labels say something related to history or social background. For instance, just after September 11, we had an exhibition about Saladin but the exhibition was already planned much before these traumatic events indeed, but it was just a coincidence, and at the exhibition we expanded the relation between the Ayyubid Dynasty and the crusaders ... But actuality his exhibition has not been very popular ... I don't think they didn't want to come because of the situation and it didn't draw more attention than another exhibition done at the same time.⁷⁶⁶

Curator Eric Delpont expanded on the IMA view of contentious topics, believing that the current expansion of many Islamic departments in major museums (Paris Louvre, Pergamon in Berlin, David Collection Copenhagen, V & A London, Met in New York) indicated confidence in presenting Islamic exhibitions: '...I'm not sure in Europe and even in the States, that Islam is regarded with caution when planning an exhibition. For instance, we are lending some pieces next year for touring exhibition in the USA which will be displayed in four different museums.'⁷⁶⁷

However, the IMA have never exhibited Orientalist painting, (especially with their background of colonial imperialism in Algeria and Morocco) but have engaged in school-based programs that included works by French Orientalist artists and believed such programs were beneficial:

Orientalist painting as such we never did because this is maybe a kind of censorship, we would be very cautious because again we don't want to insist on a way of seeing with the Oriental world and for instance, last year the Museum d'Orsay made an exhibition about Gerome but we had a partnership with them for the pedagogy schools ... because the class went to see the exhibition, then they came here to the institute to see our collection and to see how the Islamic works had been perceived by Gerome and what was true and what was mainly reconstructed.⁷⁶⁸

In Delpont 's view, there was a place for Orientalist exhibitions in Arabic countries and that contemporary appropriations based on Orientalist works were important,

⁷⁶⁶ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 361-272.

⁷⁶⁷ *ibid.*, lines 389-392.

⁷⁶⁸ *ibid.*, lines 410-419.

especially the work of women artists. Such views resonate with Middle Eastern art market trends and UAE's promotion of artistic production by women discussed in the last chapter:

Orientalist painting is for the collector of the Arabic peninsular, a kind of quarry of golden age which has never existed in itself ... maybe a way to exist in the thickness of history ... You will notice that this Orientalist collection only occurs in this kind of countries, not Islamic countries, which have a long history of, like in Syria, or Egypt ... Actually if you look at the works of young contemporary artists, sometimes they refer to this Orientalist painting but, not as a kind of joke, but as something which ... [is] Re-appropriated and they take also distance from it, and they are expressing through other media than painting ... And the women artists are generally more interesting through the different exhibitions I had the opportunity to see. It's not provocative ... it's coming from ... themselves and what they have been bred and they are transforming this. But they don't think themselves as being Arabic or Muslim artists. ... they take the liberty to refer or not to the civilization to which they are supposed to belong⁷⁶⁹

The debate on whether displays of non-European art in the museum setting should include contemporary works is a moot point, especially for displays of Islamic art and culture. Historically the inclusion of contemporary art from the Middle East in many collections has been problematic. Like Khalili, the majority of prominent collections have focused on acquisitions of traditional and medieval objects to the exclusion of contemporary art, which is viewed as being global rather than national or ethnic art.⁷⁷⁰ Furthermore, auction houses often label these art works as 'contemporary Islamic art' which risks continuing the essentialisation of Middle Eastern art as monolithic, static and always religious, perpetuating the tradition of excluding non-western arts from contemporary art museums.⁷⁷¹

Despite these debates, many museums are responding to audience research which reveals that the inclusion of contemporary art works makes 'historical objects more relevant to the public'.⁷⁷² There is the belief that by highlighting 'patterns of global experience' and facilitating a 'visual dialogue' this may create a 'tension' by exposing the visitor (especially for audiences who believe Islamic and Arab art to be only medieval and solely decorative) to issues of contemporary cultural production.⁷⁷³ Such an environment is fostered by institutions such as the IMA whose displays have the possibility of encouraging reflection on

⁷⁶⁹ *ibid.*, lines 430-451, 455-462.

⁷⁷⁰ S Weber, 'The Role of the Museum in the Study and Knowledge of Islamic Art', *Islamic Art and The Museum*, B Junod, G Khalil, S. Weber, G Wolf, (eds.), Saqi, London, 2012, p.27.

⁷⁷¹ V Beyer, 'Preliminary Thoughts on the Entangled presentation of "Islamic Art"', B Junod, et al, op. cit., p. 96.

⁷⁷² S Lanwed, 'The Aesthetic Approach' in *Islamic Art and The Museum*, B Junod, et al, op. cit., p. 203.

⁷⁷³ *ibid.*

contemporary representations of Middle Eastern cultures that could foster new insights and promote cross-cultural understanding.

Despite controversy, it is clear the IMA is keen to host temporary displays that address the sense of alienation and removal those migrant communities feel towards their past and present places of residency through the representation of Islamic artifacts. How did the AoIE fit within the overall plan of the IMA to promote cross-cultural understanding? What comparisons can be made with the previous Sydney and Abu Dhabi shows especially regarding the sacred/secular debate, figurative depictions, audience reception, and media coverage?

Three important exhibitions prior to the AoIE in 2009 seem to have set a precedent in terms of acknowledging their Algerian and Arab communities and their countries' valuable contributions to art and culture. In 2003 there were two major exhibitions about Algeria that the IMA considered highly successful and in 2005 the IMA displayed an exhibition that showcased the Arab sciences. This show proved to be problematic, however, inside the Institute and outside it as it dealt with perceptions of Islam:

... at first it was considered a very difficult subject by everybody inside the institute. But this is certainly the exhibition which people talked much about it, both in France but also in the Islamic world. Why? Because it was about the question of Islam and progress, also there was much debate on this question because between the integrity of Islamic and people saying Islam is not a positive of progress, of modernity.⁷⁷⁴

Michael Rogers has commented that collections are reflections of the collecting practices of their owners and that public museums (unlike private collections and museums) are sometimes 'grid-locked' by institutional guidelines and 'moving objects in a museum is a bureaucratic nightmare'.⁷⁷⁵ He maintains:

... the distinction between public collections and private collections is the public collectors concentrate on specific categories. They choose whether they want to buy something or not. Public museums have a different acquisition mechanism – for example seventy per cent of the British Museum's collection is by bequest.⁷⁷⁶

⁷⁷⁴ *ibid.*, lines 277-288.

⁷⁷⁵ N Randall, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

⁷⁷⁶ *ibid.*

The IMA has benefited from this general policy of major public museums being unable to display private collections, especially when the personalities of the collectors may not satisfy public institutional criteria:

... we had an exhibition of Islamic collection belonging to a Saudi guy. Because the status of the institute is different from the national French museums, which are generally very reluctant to display private collections as they don't want to cushion or give value to a collection which could be sold in the future ... Here we are more open minded if I can say. And we have always exhibited pieces belonging to private collections. Either mixed with other loans inside temporary exhibitions or as an exhibition in itself...⁷⁷⁷

This freedom to approach private collectors for temporary exhibitions has given the IMA an edge over other French public museums, allowing for more contentious and sensitive subjects to be addressed through their displays sourced from Middle Eastern collections. This situation was the ideal environment for Khalili's travelling AoIE in 2009.

After the success of the exhibition in Abu Dhabi, the 500-object display travelled to Paris in 2009 for the first time, where it was shown at the IMA from 6 October 2009-14 March 2010. The exhibition was curated by Eric Delpont and Aurelie Clemente-Ruiz, both from the IMA and was designed by the Paris architect, Didier Blin. Khalili Collection advisers reiterated that this venue, as with the previous shows in Sydney and Abu Dhabi, would have the freedom to exhibit the artifacts as suited their particular museum space: 'the exhibition space determines how we present the objects ... not the people'⁷⁷⁸ ... it is very important the objects speak to each other ... the purpose of the design is to bring this out.'⁷⁷⁹

The IMA was a late addition to the AoIE's initial touring schedule. The museum had originally organized an exhibition of works from Libya but when relations between Libya and Europe deteriorated, the decision was made to cancel the exhibition. As the IMA had previously displayed some of the Khalili Collection and as they were aware that the collection was touring, the curators felt assured they could secure the show and that it would be successful.⁷⁸⁰ There was a strong desire to host an exhibition of Islamic art as the opening of the Louvre's new Islamic wing (that had been closed for nearly three years) was imminent and it was 'a good idea to have a real show of Islamic art before all those works were displayed and it was also to announce the future of Islamic art in Paris, at the Louvre

⁷⁷⁷ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 328-336.

⁷⁷⁸ N Nassar, Khalili Collection curator, quoted in Randall, op. cit., p. 25.

⁷⁷⁹ M Rogers, honorary Khalili Collection curator, Randall, op. cit., p. 27.

⁷⁸⁰ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 57-65.

and at the Institute.⁷⁸¹ Interestingly, the power of the Louvre remains despite these new exhibitionary sites according to one of its representatives Daniel Soulie. It appears that when the Islamic collection became a department the Louvre became responsible of all the Islamic objects preserved in France. The Louvre's role was as a 'resource' for institutions dealing with Islamic art throughout France and this development was regarded as significant on both an administration and political level.⁷⁸² Further, the aim of this new Islamic wing/department was to put the 'I' back into Islam that reinforced their secular stance: 'Islam can be written in two ways in French, with a small "i" means religion, with a capital "I" meaning civilization.'⁷⁸³



Fig 77 Display of ceramics with calligraphic designs at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe 2009-2010 Paris. Source: Khalili.org



Fig 78 Display of calligraphic artworks at the *Arts of Islam* Exhibition Institut du Monde Arabe Paris. Source: Khalili.org

At the IMA the collection was displayed in three rooms with a vibrant and dynamic colour scheme (dark blue, almond green and rich red) and unlike Sydney and Abu Dhabi, the artifacts were not only arranged chronologically, but were divided into three main thematic sections with an emphasis on a particular technique: calligraphy.⁷⁸⁴ The curatorial decision

⁷⁸¹ *ibid.*, lines 70-77.

⁷⁸² Transcript L Ryan and D Soulie, 2013, lines 84-90.

⁷⁸³ *Ibid.*, lines 107-109.

⁷⁸⁴ The first section titled 'Faith, Wisdom and Destiny' investigated the relationship between art and the sacred through displays of the Qur'an, the holy sanctuaries in Medina and Mecca, tomb and mosque furnishings, talismans, science and learning. Section two-'Court Patronage'-explored representations of royal and princely 'splendours' in the Islamic world: royal portraiture, the Universal History of Rashid al-Din, the Shahnamah of Shah Tahmasp, spectacle and ceremony, and palace treasuries. The last room titled 'A Universe of Forms and Colours' was dedicated to 'traditional' and 'innovative' Islamic art: calligraphy as both a decorative motif and

to focus on calligraphy was due to its proliferation in the Islamic world as Delpont explains: 'No theory other than aesthetic calligraphy reached us ... calligraphy belonged to the education of the honest man, and there are copies of the Koran calligraphy by princes ...'⁷⁸⁵ (figs 77,78). Calligraphy (meaning 'beautiful writing') as a technique is significant because of its importance to Muslims as the written word represents the 'divine message' of the Qur'an.⁷⁸⁶ Supported by the Arabic saying, 'Purity of writing is purity of soul', the master calligrapher held a position of status in Islamic society as only an individual of 'spiritual devotion and clear thought' could master the art form.⁷⁸⁷ Due to the prevalence of aniconism (the banning of figural depictions), the use of calligraphy in Islamic art developed into a multifaceted art form valued for its religious, secular and purely decorative qualities.⁷⁸⁸

Therefore, the Paris display of the AoIE took on yet another form through the process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation of a this travelling troupe of objects. Similar to the first show, the emphasis was on the secular dimensions of artifacts (perhaps resonating with racial/religious tensions in both societies) but unlike both Sydney and Abu Dhabi there was the absence of chronological ordering. The thematic focus of 'Faith, Wisdom and Destiny,' 'Court Patronage' and 'A Universe of Forms and Colours' were comparable arrangements to the other displays but were different in significant ways. While Sydney had emphasised the secular dimension of works, their display emphasised objects the aesthetic qualities and did not comment on the issue of faith

as an art form, 'pleasure of the senses', geometric and interlace motifs, 'nature transformed' through the arabesque, floral and scroll decoration, animal and figural depictions and the meeting of East and West (Khalili Foundation website, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://khalili.org/events>).

⁷⁸⁵ A Salcede, 'Khalili Collection: the unsung masterpieces', *lintermede*, 16 February 2010, retrieved 3 October 2011, <http://www.lintermede.com/exposition-arts-de-i-islam-collection-khalili-ima.php>.

⁷⁸⁶ C Herrington, 'Arts of the Islamic World: a teachers guide', *Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*, 2002, p. 21, retrieved 14 December 2014, <https://www.asia.si.edu/explore/teacherResources/islam.pdf>.

⁷⁸⁷ 'The primacy of the word in Islam is reflected in the virtually universal application of calligraphy. Writing is given pride of place on all kinds of objects--objects of everyday use as well as entire wall surfaces, mosque furniture, the interiors and exteriors of mosques, tombs, and al-Ka'ba, the most famous sanctuary of Islam. But like the icons of most other faiths, script also represents power. Its preeminent use is the writing of the divine message of the Qur'an, of course, which endowed it with extraordinary strength and transcendent significance ... Arabic calligraphy is a primary form of art for Islamic visual expression and creativity. Throughout the vast geography of the Islamic world, Arabic calligraphy is a symbol representing unity, beauty, and power. The aesthetic principles of Arabic calligraphy are a reflection of the cultural values of the Muslim world.' (Yasin Hamid Safadi cited in 'Arabic calligraphy', *Iman Reza (A.S.) Network*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?print=4202>).

⁷⁸⁸ Herrington, op. cit.

in any way. However, in Paris there was an obvious secular perspective on the question of Islamic faith, questioning notions of art and the sacred. Rather than highlighting the rare and ancient Korans as previous displays had, at the IMA the journey of the Hajj was portrayed as a secular activity to a holy place. The aim was to allow western visitors access to objects that would normally be reserved for the faithful: the *kiswa*, the embroidered curtain that adorns the Kaaba in Mecca depicting images of the veiled or blank face of the prophet with a halo and illustrates the journey of the Hajj; essential but dangerous objects required for the journey (daggers, swords, weapons, shields); and framed Hajj certificates that are received when Muslims complete their pilgrimage. The curator Eric Delpont explained the emphasis was on everyday life, 'daily pleasures of man and women ... [so that] another image of Islam ... not just religion and forbidden practices ... so a more human side is revealed.'⁷⁸⁹

The last two sections concentrating on form and colour and the techniques of calligraphy strengthened this aim to focus on the secular dimensions of the object rather than any religious aspects. This environment itself reinforced the 'form follows function' plan with high contrast sections of primary coloured walls and panels, with objects simply framed and grouped into geometrically and aesthetically pleasing arrangements, again under spot lights dramatizing artifacts through the juxtaposing light and dark spaces. This installation departs from the 'white cube' installations of Abu Dhabi and Sydney with its inclusion of decorative features reminiscent of Islamic, particularly Mosque, architecture. While wider social and political commentary may have impacted this arrangement of objects at the IMA in ways that were absent in Sydney and Abu Dhabi, it still the aesthetic dimensions of the objects extended into the exhibition space that dominated the practices and politics of display yet again.

Two works from the AoIE at the IMA are worthy of closer investigation as they support previous analysis concerning the problems surrounding pictorial depictions in Islamic art works and the multifaceted use of religious script on secular items, highlighting calligraphic script as an artistic device to side-step Islamic prohibitions. The works are a mosque lamp (Syria or Egypt, fifteenth century AD) and a calligraphic composition in the form of a lion (Ahmed Hilmi Ottoman Turkey, 1913). Both works were considered important

⁷⁸⁹ Khalili website, op. cit.

to the exhibitionary sites as the mosque lamps were allocated a separate, prominent display site and the calligraphic lion was regularly chosen to represent the AoIE in general publications and in media releases. Therefore, they also illustrate the concentration on 'beautiful' stand-alone star objects that has been a consistent feature of this travelling troupes of objects and allows another opportunity to probalematize curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/ didactic modes of display when the museums mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture. However, due to not physically attending the show and the lack of exhibition visitor data, interpretation of these objects is limited to analysis by the researcher of their of agency in this particular site of display.

The mosque lamp under examination was made during the Mamluk period when its sultans and emirs commissioned Islamic lamps of elaborately enamelled and gilt glass to light religious buildings in Cairo (mausoleum, mosque, public fountains and schools) as testimony to their wealth and piety (fig 79).⁷⁹⁰ Their function was mainly symbolic (alluding to 'Allah's guiding light') and was adorned with a variety of inscriptions. In this case verse 35, 'Light', from the surah *al-Nur* is repeated in three separate panels around the circumference: 'God is the light of the heavens and earth. The parable of his light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the Lamp enclosed in glass.'⁷⁹¹ With their Quran'ic inscriptions and non-figural calligraphic decoration, these lamps were intended for religious use, however, there are lamps from this period that also served secular purposes in royal residences and homes of elite citizens.⁷⁹² Furthermore, mid-nineteenth century European collectors considered these 'exotic' items as highly prized acquisitions and few lamps remained in Cairo by 1880. As a consequence, manufacture of mosque lamps for decorative use in European homes began in 1865 with comte de



⁷⁹⁰ The Wallace Collection, 'Treasure of the Month - September 2004 A mid-14th-century Islamic glass mosque lamp from Cairo (XXVB94)', *Wallace Collection website*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.wallacecollection.org/whatson/treasure/38>.

⁷⁹¹ Rogers, op. cit., p. 201.

⁷⁹² E Shovelton, 'Discover Islamic Art-virtual Museum', *Museum with No Frontiers*, retrieved 14 December 2014, http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;uk;Mus01;24;en.

Nieuwerkerke commissioning Philippe-Joseph Brocard to replicate a Mamluk lamp for mass production.⁷⁹³ The multiple uses of these lamps is confirmed by the former curator at the Islamic Museum, in Doha Qatar:

... the mosque lamp was just a lamp ... they were in mosques but they were also on the street, in the tombs, in Byzantine churches, they were in the catacombs ... this form was all over the place ...⁷⁹⁴

To lend weight to this argument, the Louvre considers mosque lamps as secular first and religious second as their purpose generally is 'to give light' to an interior: 'why should we speak of religion in front of a lamp? ... although we play on the aesthetic strengths of an object ... sometimes religion is important to explain as when you understand the religious context you also understand the political ...'⁷⁹⁵ The display at the IMA can be seen to follow similar curatorial practices and policies of display with the inclusion of this lamp in their first thematic section that juxtaposed notions of the secular and the sacred functions of objects. The undisputed multi-faceted nature of the Mosque lamp evident in wider public discourses influenced the IMA's curatorial decision to question this object's dual sacred and secular dimensions that was beyond the scope of previous venues of the AoIE.

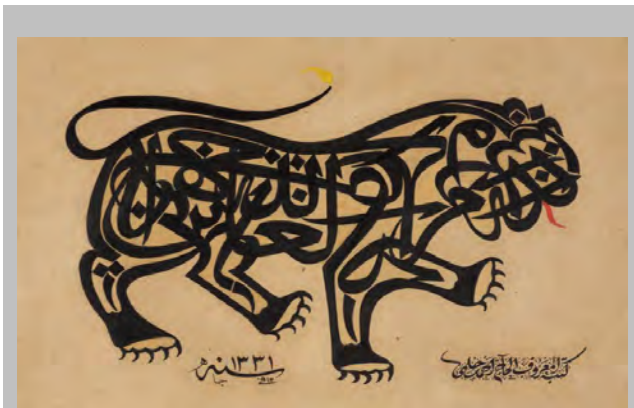


Fig 80 Zoomorphic Lion on display at the Arts of Islam Exhibition Paris 2009-2010. Source: Khalili.org

The second example is a later and more obvious use of abstracted calligraphic script to create pictorial imagery. Called *Zoomorphic Calligraphy*, this practice became popular when taboos banning religious iconography had lost momentum in the early twentieth century (fig 80).⁷⁹⁶ Taking the form or

shape of an animal (in this case a lion) Turkish calligrapher Ahmed Hilmî has used ink and watercolor on paper to transform phrases and words into a figural depiction by wrapping, elongating and rotating cursive Thuluth calligraphic letters. The innovation refers to 'Ali' (fourth Sunni caliph, Muhammad's son-in-law and first male to embrace Islam) who

⁷⁹³ The Wallace Collection, op. cit.

⁷⁹⁴ Ryan and Walton, op. cit., lines 757-773.

⁷⁹⁵ Ryan and Soulie, op. cit., lines 115-116, 347-348, 423, 389-390.

⁷⁹⁶ 'Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East', *Islamcity.com*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <https://www.islamcity.com/mosque/ihame/Sec10.htm>.

Muhammad bestowed the title 'The lion of God'.⁷⁹⁷ All Muslims revere Ali, however, Sh'ite Muslims believe him to be the Prophet's true successor. Features of the lion are highly symbolic: the five claws represent God, Muhammad, Ali and his son's Husayn and Hasan and the animal's red tongue bestows on Ali the right to speak on Muhammad's behalf.⁷⁹⁸

The inclusion of such a revered religious personage coupled with the form of a majestic creature such as a lion may have allowed the artist greater freedom to employ a more imaginative, creative and innovative approach to Qur'anic verse without fear of harsh reprisals. In any case, the very existence of such figural imagery in manuscripts and on glass lamps highlights the blurring of boundaries in regard to the labelling of religious and secular artworks that the AoIE representatives choose to downplay throughout the various exhibition venues. Although the Abu Dhabi AoIE gave equal consideration to religious dimensions of the artworks, it confirms that the tendency of museums such as the AGNSW to avoid religious themed displays (especially Islamic ones) is not necessarily justified if social, political, cultural and religious contexts are taken into consideration by exhibition organizers and relayed via textual, visual or aural information to their audiences. This behaviour on the part of the the AGNSW may be justified, as although it appears Sydney audiences were content with the secular emphasis of the show, one Muslim visitor commented that all 'all art is inspired by God and all works that carry inscriptions based on the Koran are religious objects'⁷⁹⁹ therefore to consider any such object secular was denying its true and original function. However, in French society the separation of church and state is a fundamental aspect of national identity, therefore, the overriding influence from the public sphere would be to de-emphasise the religious dimensions of an object in favour of the functional character of the artifact. The IMA's portrayal of the Hajj as a secular rather than religious activity, which has been discussed earlier in this chapter, confirms this tendency.

Overall, it is clear that site-specific contexts and differing audiences are taken into account when making curatorial decisions and reflect shifting local and global circumstances to varying degrees at each venue of the AoIE. While all three venues used little beyond factual labelling to inform their audiences, when compared with both the Sydney and the

⁷⁹⁷ Rogers, op. cit., p. 249.

⁷⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁷⁹⁹ Ryan and R Ansari, op.cit., lines 118-123.

Abu Dhabi displays, the assemblage of travelling objects in Paris illustrates a slight but significant shift away from the purely 'experience' approach to incorporate aspects of interpretation to enhance appreciation and understanding.

Curatorial opinions and public reactions

As in Sydney and Abu Dhabi, the exhibition was shown in conjunction with a wider range of associated events: lectures, calligraphy workshops, educational programs for school children and musical performances. As this research was unable to conduct interviews with audiences who attended the Paris AoIE this section is reliant on the opinions of the curatorial staff and public reactions to the show detailed by the media at the time. According to the IMA, the school programs were seen as particularly successful for both Muslim and non-Muslim students:

... among these classrooms you have people from different origins, and you can have Muslim, but who don't belong to the Arabic world, in the real sense of the word. So it was very interesting also to see their reaction to what was displayed ... [we were] very glad because it was the first time with nearly no critique at all ... just people saying how interesting it was to discover Islam in a different way of what is usually said about Islam in the media.⁸⁰⁰

Following previous curators of the AoIE and appearing to ignore the potential of objects such as discussions of the mosque lamp and calligraphic lion has highlighted, Delpont viewed the display as enabling visitors to 'see the human side of Islam ... not religion, not what is forbidden...' Similarly, Ruiz responded that it was important to 'avoid any polemics' over the exhibition, stressing the 'educational value of showing the breathtaking diversity of Islamic art ... [as] there a lot of misunderstandings about the culture'.⁸⁰¹ Ruiz emphasised, however, that importantly the exhibition ends at the 'very heart of the art - the figurative representation of human beings, naturalism and the remarkable calligraphy.'⁸⁰²

⁸⁰⁰ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 156-163.

⁸⁰¹ Khalili Collection website, op. cit.; D Brown, 'Gold-leafed Korans, gems, carpets and calligraphy in historic Paris shows', *Rfi English, Culture in France*, 18 October 2009, retrieved 2 April 2011, <http://www.english.rfi.fr/culture/20091017-gold-leafed-korans-gems-carpets-and-calligraphy-historic-paris-show>.

⁸⁰² Ruiz cited in Brown, op. cit.

Despite objects with calligraphic messages such as ‘everything belongs to God’, there appeared no problem with the majority of display items represented as secular in nature:

... what we wanted to show the visitors, that Islamic art, even though it is called Islamic, is not just related with religion ... I think the visitors understood what is religious and what is not and it's not in conflict ... nobody complained about the fact that we consider that most of the production was profane and not creating with direct practice of religion⁸⁰³

This situation is similar to the Abu Dhabi show where negative comments were rare, singling out the Sydney display so far as the only contentious venue. However, it must be remembered that interview data of Muslim audience responses were only obtained in Sydney where exhibition curators also viewed the AoIE as not inoffensive to any museum visitors. There may well have been sections of the Emirati and French communities that were uncomfortable with images and sacred/secular distinctions.

In terms of the exhibition having the potential to create conflicts with what is being taught in the Mosques, for example, Delpont felt that Muslims were being exposed to another perspective that was unproblematic:

... for the visitors who had been told this way of seeing religion, they discovered something that is in fact different to what could be said in their environment. And this was a very interesting perception of the exhibition ... [Muslims in traditional dress] came and it was very interesting to observe their behaviour inside the exhibition, because they were as much interested with the profane field of art. I mean they enjoyed the first part of the exhibition dedicated to religion, but they had as much pleasure with the rest of the exhibition.⁸⁰⁴

This reveals a degree of awareness of the multiple contexts of artifacts by the curatorial team. Despite this acknowledgement, however, labeling and information concerning works remained purely factual and alternate multifaceted narratives did not accompany any artifacts on displays.

In his speech at the exhibition opening, Khalili reiterated his own view and reflected IMA philosophy regarding the importance of cultural events such as the AoIE: ‘It’s time for the world to wake up and acknowledge how much Islam has contributed to the cultures of the world. And how much the West owes to Islamic artists,’⁸⁰⁵ adding ‘cultural exchanges

⁸⁰³ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 235-236, 245-246.

⁸⁰⁴ Transcript, op. cit., lines 259-269.

⁸⁰⁵ Khalili cited in Brown, op. cit.

are as effective as political action.⁸⁰⁶ This faith in the power of art to alter behaviours and perspectives is reinforced by Delpont's impression of the show's opening night: 'Mr Khalili was astounded at the opening ... The people there, some 2000 people, were unusually contemplative. It's the first time I've ever seen such behavior at a show. It was a peaceful, serene gathering. No chatting on mobile phones etc. ...'⁸⁰⁷

This interest in the exhibition seems to have continued. The IMA was pleased with the exhibition attendance figure of 100,000 during the six-month display period, as competition is always strong due to the large number of museums in Paris.⁸⁰⁸ It was felt that temporary exhibitions were more popular, 'working very well' in reaching 'other people coming from the immigration milieu ...'⁸⁰⁹ The AoIE was particularly appealing to Muslims as the exhibition was shown just before the annual pilgrimage to Mecca: 'it was very easy to reach the audience, and even some visitors came and they made like a fake pilgrimage, because for them it was a kind of substitute.'⁸¹⁰ Importantly, due to the high population of North African immigrants in France, curators maintained some visitors discovered Islamic civilisation as a wider phenomenon:

They (North Africans) don't know the history of the Islamic era in general. They have a good knowledge of the religious principles, they have a rather good knowledge of the history of their own country, but they lack this transversal vision sometimes and this was very interesting with the Khalili collection ... So they were very surprised with some of the pieces which were on display, and through the commentaries that visitors left ... it was very interesting because for some of them it widened their vision of even their own religion or civilization, so it was a very interesting feedback for us.⁸¹¹

Curatorial opinion suggests that the wider exhibition audience also appeared to appreciate and gain a wider understanding of Islam: 'And people, non-Arabs, non-Muslim, said the pleasure they had to discover something that they didn't know in fact, and Islam was recognized as something not only a religion, but also a civilization, which is what is important.'⁸¹²

⁸⁰⁶ E Couturier, 'The Arabian Cultures of David Khalili', *Parismatch*, 3 December 2009, retrieved 10 March 2011, <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Actu/Les-Mille-et-une-cultures-de-David-Khalili>.

⁸⁰⁷ Randall, op. cit., p. 27.

⁸⁰⁸ Ryan and Delpont, op. cit., lines 111-113.

⁸⁰⁹ *ibid.*, lines 115-118.

⁸¹⁰ *ibid.*, lines 120-127.

⁸¹¹ *ibid.*, lines 143-146, 133-137.

⁸¹² *ibid.*, lines 181-184.

In terms of the reaction from the general public, Delpont felt an important factor in successfully transmitting their aim of cross-cultural understanding was Khalili's personality and presence, especially in the wide and overwhelmingly positive press coverage detailing his collection and collecting practices:

And we also tried to underline that Islam ... shared with other religions and has some common characters⁸¹³ ... the personality of David Khalili is very illustrated, and for the media we were much asked about David Khalili and who he is, how did he manage to have this collection ... we have had good press for this exhibition, from *Le Monde*, which is the main newspaper in France ... also on the radio and TV ... even TV's from England⁸¹⁴

Similar to the Sydney show, many media articles referred to the exhibition in terms of its diversity and cross-cultural dimension discussing specific works (the Mongol filigree saddle was also repeatedly mentioned as an exhibition highlight), describing Khalili as an 'Iranian-born Jew' consistently. Khalili's definition of Islamic Art and its cross-cultural, multi-faith collaborations were regularly used in articles, with one reviewer adding that 'there are numerous works in Islamic style produced by, or for, non-Muslims however.'⁸¹⁵ As alluded to earlier in this discussion, like the Sydney show the secular nature of many art objects was reinforced throughout articles, with opinions ranging from statements of fact, the art being 'respectful of religious principles' to encouraging an 'exhortation to tolerance as it shows that Islamic art is for the most part profane, figurative and multicultural.'⁸¹⁶

The AoIE with its emphasis on calligraphy, court art and religious worship was equally well received by the French public. The media, as in the Sydney and Abu Dhabi exhibitions, overwhelmingly endorsed the show, pointing to its diversity and cross-cultural aspects of the artifacts. The focus on the aesthetic aspects of the artifacts at the IMA drew few critics, but their curatorial staff admits they are culturally 'sensitive' and do not hesitate to include historical, social, religious and political contexts to promote visitor understanding as the curatorial decision to pose a potentially contentious issue when juxtaposing secular and sacred objects in the same thematic space demonstrates. However, following the same policy of the previous venues to include only factual labeling to accompany objects and highlighting the an object's form and function (calligraphy as an artistic technique) has

⁸¹³ *ibid.*, lines 184-187.

⁸¹⁴ *ibid.*, lines 198-200.

⁸¹⁵ G Faussart, *OCU onculture.eu*, 14 December 2009, retrieved 16 December 2009, r <http://OCUonculture.eu>.

⁸¹⁶ A Tarquini, 'Exhibits: Islamic art treasures on display', *ANSAMED*, 6 October 2009, retrieved 19 October 2009, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/WorldHistory-L/.../6580?var=1>.

revealed potential opportunities to increase awareness and promote cross-cultural understanding through the inclusion of important but often-controversial contextual information were still avoided or not ever considered.

The same catalogue developed for the Abu Dhabi exhibition was on sale at the Paris exhibition. This appears to have been an 'irritation' for one reviewer, who points out to his readers that the altered Paris exhibition layout does not correspond to the catalogue which had been designed around the earlier Sydney and Abu Dhabi exhibitions, but concedes it suggests that there are 'different ways of presenting Islamic art.'⁸¹⁷ The writer also observes that while the visitor will certainly learn both what 'unites' and divides the Islamic art world criticizes the display for presenting a 'kind of catch-all category ... which in reality are quite miscellaneous items.' The article views the essential aim of the exhibition as 'suggest[ing] ideas about the nature and identity of Islamic art' and highlights the cross-cultural and multi-religious nature of many artefacts, with special reference to the ever-popular Jami'al tawamkh series by Rashid El- Din and its images of the Prophet Mohammad.⁸¹⁸

One newspaper, *The Independent*, published a review of the exhibition praising the collector for his 'saintly' task as an 'ambassador of Islam' to display this collection that 'has no home ... [with] its purpose to travel and amaze ... [promoting] an Islamic rather than a Western point of view ... [while] balance[ing] hard scholarship and beautiful things ... [but has an] apparently wilful lack of focus'. He advises the visitor to 'prepare to be wowed, but to be wowed cleverly.'⁸¹⁹ The writer finds several aspects of the display problematic: from determining what artifacts 'count' as masterpieces (a 'highly charged process, open to accusations of cultural bias'); to questioning the 'usefulness' of the term Islamic art, suggesting if there was ever an exhibition titled 'The Arts of Christianity' it would 'quite properly raise eyebrows.'⁸²⁰

Despite these negative responses, the AoIE was received favourably overall as curators, audiences and media commentators suggest. Being a joint collaboration with numerous Arab nations with majority Muslim populations, the IMA has an advantage over

⁸¹⁷ D Tresilian, 'Visions of Islam, Al-Ahram Weekly, 16 December 2009, retrieved 17 December 2009, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2009/976/cul.htm>.

⁸¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁸¹⁹ C Darwent, 'Van Gogh's letters: The artist Speaks, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam The Arts of Islam, Institut du Monde Arabe', *The Independent*, 8 November 2009, retrieved 9 November 2009, <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/reviews/van_g...>.

⁸²⁰ *ibid.*

other French public museums, especially since there is little colonial baggage associated with its displays due to the Louvre's expansions and withdrawal of the offer to lend significant works. At this point several questions needed to be asked. How does the politics of display at the IMA compare with the strategies employed by former colonial museums and their collections in their quest to reconstruct national narratives to suit post-colonial times? The emphasis on contextualized aesthetic experiences of the IMA generally and the AolE's focus on chronological, thematic and technique-based displays is not an unusual approach for an art museum, but does it work in other institutional settings such as those collections that were previously deemed anthropological or ethnographic? Or is the tendency to focus on the aesthetic aspects of objects on display designed to avoid important conversations about the implementation of neo-colonial policies by contemporary governments? These questions will be investigated and assessed through the following discussions focusing on the politics of display of both permanent and temporary exhibitions at MQB and Cité and visitor experiences, curatorial perspectives and public reactions.

Musée Quai Branly: reconciling or rewriting a colonial past?

The MQB is a museum devoted to the arts and civilizations of Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. Eleven-years in the planning and with a state investment of 232.5 million euros and an operational budget of 44 million euros alone for the 2006 financial year, this project was obviously considered a serious venture by the French government.⁸²¹ As fig 81 illustrates, the goal of architect and museum designer Jean Nouvel was to create:

'a place marked by forest and river symbols and by an obsession with death and forgetting⁸²² ... nestled in the landscape and awaiting discovery⁸²³ ... 'creat[ing] the illusion of a place without walls that could cradle these "primary" arts and allow their poetry to shine through⁸²⁴ ... [by] disappearing behind the sacred objects that it contains.'⁸²⁵

⁸²¹ J Romnicianu, 'The new Branly Museum of Paris', *The Independent*, 9 June 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://independent-bangladesh.com/news/jun/09/09062006fr.htm>.

⁸²² Tresilian, 2009, op. cit.

⁸²³ J Glancey, 'How does your gallery grow?' *Guardian Unlimited*, 26 June 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/0,,1806019,00.html>

⁸²⁴ S Gough Henley, 'Indigenous art on the Seine', *The Age*, 19 November 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://www.theage.com.au/news/france/indigenous-art-on-the-seine/2006/11/16/116326670>.

⁸²⁵ Tresilian, 2009, op. cit.

Nouvel was unwavering in his expectation that his museum ‘must not impose itself on non-Western art but help highlight its historical richness and its magical and religious importance.’⁸²⁶ In this sense, care has been taken to present contextual and interpretative information such as the original meaning and purpose of the object with reference to encounters between Europeans and non-Europeans and the role of European collectors.⁸²⁷ However, as discussion will reveal the politics of display at the MQB did not make such ‘encounters’ a priority and were often completely overlooked and absent from both their permanent and temporary displays.

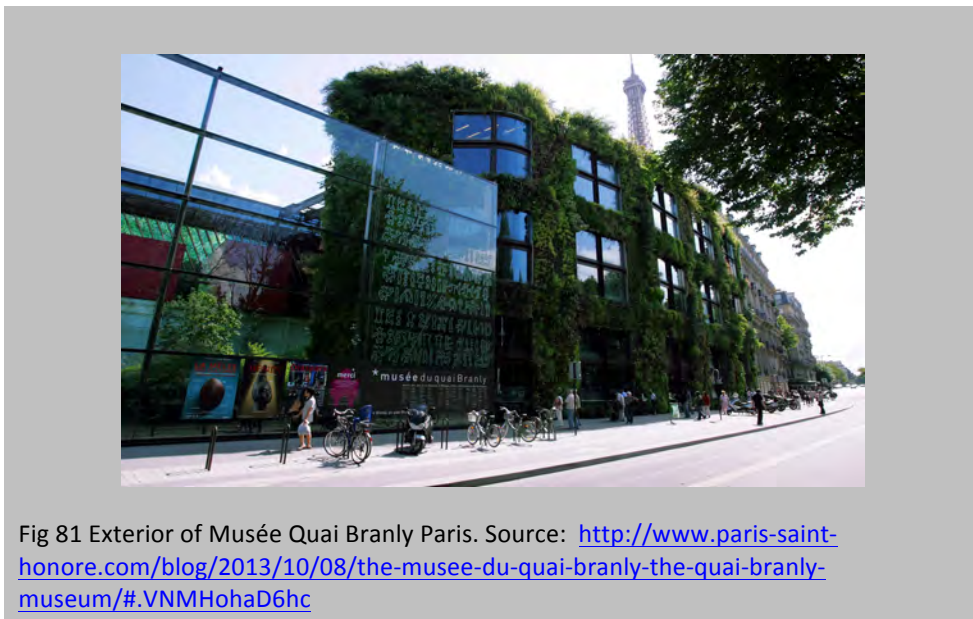


Fig 81 Exterior of Musée Quai Branly Paris. Source: <http://www.paris-saint-honore.com/blog/2013/10/08/the-musee-du-quai-branly-the-quai-branly-museum/#.VNMHohaD6hc>

This vision for the museum was a passion for the former French president Jacques Chirac. MQB was opened in June 2006 (not without controversy) with Chirac announcing the museum aimed to:

Render justice to extra European cultures and to recognise the place that their artistic expression occupy in a cultural heritage ... Breaking a long history during which the expressions have been looked down upon, it will give a just place to arts and civilisations that have been too long ignored or poorly understood, giving dignity back to peoples too often humiliated and oppressed⁸²⁸ ... [by] promoting among the public at large, a different, more open and respectful view, dispelling the clouds of ignorance, condescension and arrogance which in the past have often nourished distrust, contempt and rejection.⁸²⁹

⁸²⁶ *ibid.*

⁸²⁷ *ibid.*

⁸²⁸ D Tresilian, ‘Museum of the oppressed’, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, June 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2006/801/cu2.htm>.

⁸²⁹ A Sauvage, ‘Musée Quai Branly’, Université de Paris 4 Sorbonne, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/index.php?id=1&L=1>.

Therefore, Chirac's vision for the MQB was to redress Imperial attitudes towards former colonial peoples and alter the French public's mentality about their colonial past through state-funded museum displays. Following recommendations of a 1996 report⁸³⁰ commissioned to 'study the most appropriate means for giving primitive art its rightful place in French museums', the future museum had a triple task: 'to conserve and exhibit the collections, to stimulate research, and to develop an educational function.'⁸³¹

Chirac's rhetoric and justifications for his new museum drew much skepticism especially the accusation of being a neo-colonial project. In the petitions that the project provoked and in the media, Chirac's enterprise was seen as an act of 'presidential imperialism' rather than 'managerial imagination.'⁸³² The *London Times* accused the French President of portraying himself as a 'defender of global culture' then implying 'that the collections were in Paris purely by serendipity, rather than by the efforts of some of the most voracious Colonial collectors in European history. It is an attempt to rewrite history in concrete.'⁸³³ A New York reviewer posed the question 'Do pre-Columbian Mayan figures and 19th century African masks, for example, have anything in common beyond needing a fine display window in Paris?'⁸³⁴ Another argued that the new museum still maintained the categories of 'the West and everything else' and the colonial attitude of the West as 'championing the virtues of the Other.'⁸³⁵

Clifford maintains Chirac was translating 'neoprimitivism into the language of universal human rights' and questions how the institutions motto 'where cultures converse' ('Lā ou dialoguent les cultures') will actually happen.⁸³⁶ He argues: 'Cultures don't converse: people do, and exchanges are conditioned by particular contact histories, relations of

⁸³⁰ The commission was headed by Jacques Friedmann with an array of distinguished French museum specialists: director-president of the Louvre, Pierre Rosenberg; Museums of France director Françoise Cachin; Musée d'Histoire Naturelle director Henry de Lumley; and eminent anthropologist, Claude Lévi-Strauss (Amato, op. cit., p. 56).

⁸³¹ *ibid.*

⁸³² J Clifford, 'Quai Branly in Process', *October Magazine*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, October Magazine Limited, October 2007, p. 8.

⁸³³ L Radnofsky, 'Reviews roundup: Musée du Quai Branly', 26 June 2006, *Guardian Unlimited*, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/reviews/story/0,,1806442,00.html>.

⁸³⁴ *ibid.*

⁸³⁵ E Rothstein, 'French Museums Atone for a Colonial History', *The New York Times*, 26 November 2011, retrieved 15 June 2014,

<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/docview/906045422?accountid=36155>.

⁸³⁶ Clifford, 2007, op. cit., p. 5.

power, individual reciprocities, modes of travel, access, and understanding.⁸³⁷ Similarly, Dias in querying the agency of other cultures that France seeks to represent, suggests that this strategy of ‘dialogue between cultures can also symbolically solve sensitive political questions.’⁸³⁸

Even at the opening there were rumbles that the MQB was ‘a neo-colonial project of prestige that hides its true nature behind idealistic vocabulary.’⁸³⁹ In the public debates that followed, mirrored in the influential French newspaper *Le Monde*, Sarah Amato argues ‘decolonisation is conflated with Parisian urban concerns and the nature of the collection.’⁸⁴⁰ The newspaper regularly raised fears about the location of the museum on previously free urban space maintaining ‘the location and the collections are mired in difficulty.’ Through articles in *Le Monde* academics and curators variously supported or condemned the project. Some argued that ‘we must create something that isn’t a return to the 1930s’ and ‘must not be an alignment of closed boxes, but a play of mirrors authorising the most diverse identifications, the most varied narratives.’⁸⁴¹ However, in defense of the museum Martin emphasized ‘It is the first time in along time that a museum has been asked to talk about something other than national cultural identity.’⁸⁴²

Discussions and criticisms such as these suggest that MQB shared Khalili’s faith in the agency of objects and his mandate to promote cross-cultural understanding through the aesthetic experience and had the same limited success as we have seen in the AoIE in both Sydney and Abu Dhabi. The IMA’s decision to provoke possible controversy with the secular focus of their themed section ‘Faith, Wisdom and Destiny’ sets it apart from curatorial decisions made at museums such as the MQB. However, the presence of wider public discourses debating the place of colonial booty made curatorial staff cautious and more comfortable if they concentrated on the aesthetic rather than the hot bed of criticism they would surely have faced if they confronted more contentious social, political, religious and cultural issues in their newly (re)presented, (re)contextualized, disrupted and transformed

⁸³⁷ *ibid.*, p. 16.

⁸³⁸ N Dias, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

⁸³⁹ D Pappers, ‘Farid Belkahia on the Musée Quai Branly in Paris’, *The Power of Culture; Current Affairs*, October 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://powerofculture.nl/uk/current/2006/october/belkahia.html>.

⁸⁴⁰ *ibid.*

⁸⁴¹ *ibid.*, pp. 60-61.

⁸⁴² Glancey, *op. cit.*

objects. However, as the discussions that follow demonstrate the curatorial decision to favour ‘experience’ over ‘interpretation’ was an equally hard road for MQB to follow.

The aesthetic versus ethnographic dilemma

The MQB certainly has its critics also when it comes to its approach of elevating the aesthetic over the ethnographic, in the name of multiculturalism and acknowledgement of cultural diversity. Commentators argue this strategy can obscure and even silence debates concerning colonial pasts.⁸⁴³ In fact, the administrative and scientific council committee of the Musée d’Histoire Naturelle (MHN), headed by Lumley, felt presenting ethnographic objects as aesthetic art objects without sufficient contextual information was ignoring their original purpose and importance as cultural artifacts.⁸⁴⁴ A more extreme statement from the MH reflected their adherence to colonial discourse in respect to ‘primitive’ cultures: ‘Man and nature are inseparable.’⁸⁴⁵

Moreover, some working groups involved in the project were unsure of how to implement this new curatorial approach to former objects regarded as ‘ethnographic’. In fact, the Oceania and Asia working party were concerned that the Musée de Guimet’s recent re-interpretation of their Asia collection in the aesthetic display model might compete with MQB in the display of similar objects.⁸⁴⁶

Agreeing with the Louvre’s emphasis on aesthetic display, an MQB spokesperson confirmed this aesthetic reconnaissance approach was aimed at transforming notions of ‘primitive’ art and encouraging respect and recognition for their equal place in modern societies. The term ‘primif’, along with the highly contentious ‘arts premiers’, was a moot point in many debates. For example, the MQB used the word ‘primif’ throughout its website information while stating one of their prime aims was to eliminate the term ‘primif’ from their vocabulary with their website confirming the word ‘obsolete in France.’⁸⁴⁷

⁸⁴³ McGill in Amato, op. cit., pp. 46-65.

⁸⁴⁴ Amato, *ibid.*, p. 57.

⁸⁴⁵ *ibid.*

⁸⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 58.

⁸⁴⁷ *ibid.*

Friedmann (who was head of the initial report recommending a museum)

questioned the definition of *arts premier*:

How do we delimit the arts called *premier*? How do we reconcile the aesthetic and ethnographical approaches to the project, a problem that is not recent, but that has been a subject of debate since the beginning of the century? Which museological project should we conceive?⁸⁴⁸

Deciding on a less controversial title ('quai branly' is the area of the river Seine where the museum sits), Martin confirmed that using words such as 'tribal' or 'primitive' were excluded by the planning committee and titles such as 'Musée d'Arts Premiers' was not seriously considered as 'it, too, suggests a western point of view.'⁸⁴⁹ These rejections were seen as in keeping with the museum's philosophy advocated by art historian and Chirac's friend Jacques Kerchache who maintained 'no hierarchy exists among the arts just as there is no hierarchy among people.'⁸⁵⁰ This attitude is reflected in the substantial inclusion of other aesthetic based experiences like musical, dance and theatrical performances designed to counteract the static nature of the museum's permanent displays and decolonize cultures that are often viewed as 'dead' rather than contemporary, dynamic and vibrant modern civilizations.⁸⁵¹ However, although many of the additional programs that MQB hosts are seen as embedded in 'networks and audiences of world music and transnational indigenism' is this enough to compensate for the lack of emphasis on the globalizing forces of colonialism, past and present politics of display and the dynamism of contemporary culture and art? Viewed in this light, the MQB can be accused of failing to embrace current practices and as marginalizing and distancing indigenous populations from former French colonies from both their own heritage and homeland, and their adopted nation.

This debate has simmered since the beginning of the project. The Director of the anthropological laboratory at the MH was particularly scathing of the museum, labelling the project 'racist ... colonial ... scandalous by its lack of scientific and educational credibility, by the dismantling it implies, and by the important misappropriation of taxpayer funds.'⁸⁵² A comment from the research director at Maison de l'Archéologie et de l'Ethnologie de

⁸⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 58-59.

⁸⁴⁹ Glancey, *op. cit.*

⁸⁵⁰ *ibid.*

⁸⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 59.

⁸⁵² *ibid.*, p. 61.

Nanterre (CNRS), Dominique Michelet, seemingly favoured a return to traditional national historical display with an aesthetic dimension when he suggested that the museum should exhibit only objects of pre-European contact (as they are more 'authentic') in an ahistorical manner.⁸⁵³ Clifford summed up succinctly what he considered the museum's 'absences':

Histories of the cultures in question, from deep archaeological time through colonial changes to their present social and artistic life; histories of the objects themselves, collecting practices, markets, prior sites of display and changing meanings; local, national, metropolitan and transnational contexts for currently changing practices of signification- how the objects, and the forms of art and culture they embody, *make history*.⁸⁵⁴

In a similar vein, Dias finds the MQB emphasis on sensory and emotional engagement problematic as it presumes non-western objects are inherently spiritual and contain a form of 'primitivism aesthetics'.⁸⁵⁵ She argues that MQB employs an 'homogenizing process, by valorising art as a feature common to all cultures as a way of overcoming their colonial legacy and present immigration tensions:

By stressing the equal worth of world cultures, Branly attempts to palliate government policies and social exclusions. In other words, a visible place at Branly is equated with the invisibility of migrants in French social and political spheres ... [the Museum's role is] to exonerate society for its failure to deal with peoples and cultures whose objects are in museums devoted to the diversity of cultures.⁸⁵⁶

Many others joined in the debate. One *New York Times* critic commented that MQB's approach to display 'strips away contexts and claims the objects in the name of western aestheticism. Each culture's individuality is erased; history is scarcely noticed; the object purpose and vaguely mentioned'.⁸⁵⁷ Anthropologist Alban Bensa labelled MQB as 'kitsch ... panexotic ... reinforce[ing] widespread popular stereotypes in France about primitives living in nature, dreams and the irrational'.⁸⁵⁸ He added 'This denial of history, emphasized by an architecture that's unwilling to deal with both the colonial past and current North/South relations, strikes me as a central flaw in the Quai Branly Museum'.⁸⁵⁹

⁸⁵³ *ibid.*, p. 62.

⁸⁵⁴ Clifford, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁸⁵⁵ Dias, *op. cit.*, pp. 304-305.

⁸⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 307.

⁸⁵⁷ Rothstein, *op. cit.* p149

⁸⁵⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁵⁹ Bensa cited in Price, *op. cit.*, p. 151.

Similarly, Benoit de L'Estoile criticized the museum for its attempt to simply pay tribute to past civilisations:

... The museum needs to confront history, not just by adding dates here and there, nor by depicting societies the way they were before the conquest, but by placing front and centre the question of historicity ... Instead of trying to erase this past by the magic of a generous recasting, it should be making people aware of all that silently conditions their perceptions.⁸⁶⁰

Lisa Rochon added her voice of dissent:

...the museum of primitive arts is a scandalous and necessary aberration that drags its jagged edge over the lousy, looting history of the French colonial era ... offers an aesthetic experience that is by turns exhilarating and jarring. Pathos and disjointed narratives are its chief preoccupations ... the museum attempts to open the book on what adventurers, colonialists and scientists brought home from peoples forced to submit ... And herein lies the great dilemma of the museum -- its very existence is an assault on aboriginal peoples around the world.⁸⁶¹

Interestingly, Price quotes Dutch curator at the MQB Nanette Snoep's suggestions concerning the issue of the absence of colonial histories: 'This was a presidential project, so every effort was made to avoid risks, to prevent anything critical being said ... the problem is President Chirac didn't make the inclusion of colonial history a mandate of this museum.'⁸⁶²

Politics of display and public reactions

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, the MQB inherited its collection from two colonial institutions established in the 1930s: 250,000 objects from the former *Musée de l'Homme* (MH) and 25,000 items from the *Musée des Arts Africains et Océaniens* (MAAO). Adding to criticisms already raised, many commentators saw this as presenting major problems for several reasons that further complicated the aesthetic versus the ethnographic dilemma. Firstly, there was discussion that regardless of what display format was adopted it would be impossible to avoid displays that didn't have a 'colonial appearance' as these collections (that were considered unrepresentative as they favoured African artifacts) would always be viewed as examples of French colonization. Furthermore, making curatorial decisions regarding their display would be difficult as ethnographic methods practiced by the French had been fairly disorganized and suited the political aims

⁸⁶⁰ Cited in Price, op. cit., p. 174.

⁸⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁸⁶² *ibid.*, pp. 174, 219.

and values of colonialization rather than French nationalism back home.⁸⁶³ Unsurprisingly the issue of repatriation of cultural artifacts, acquired through colonial plundering, arose repeatedly. When dealing with claims to artifacts MQB head of international relations Séverine Le Guével relied on the principle of *lâcité* as justification for their collection '... we do not take into consideration any claim based on religion or ethnicity ... the museum is not a religious space.'⁸⁶⁴

To introduce the public to the cultural project and as a precursor to this new museological approach to re-displaying colonial objects, an 'antenna' of the MQB collection had been open to public view since 2000 at the Louvre. Named the *Pavillon des Sessions*, 120 'masterpieces' were displayed from four non-European, former French colonial regions: Africa, Asia, Oceania and the Americas. Chirac's intention was clear: to restore these 'fine arts (*les arts premiers*), these distant arts (*ces arts lointains*) to their rightful place in France's museums.'⁸⁶⁵ To Chirac, the Louvre, followed by MQB, were institutions that could rectify these cultural and artistic injustices. The Louvre especially was 'more than simply one of the great museums of the world. It is also, like it or not, the dispenser of prestige, a renown from which it would be unfair to exclude whole civilisations.' Additionally, the Louvre 'as an emblem of culture ... a place of symbolic consecration' would be enthusiastically embraced by these civilizations as France 'frees' their cultural artifacts from the confines of ethnological display and their 'primitif' status, literally and metaphorically restoring their 'genius' to the centre of the France's cultural sphere.⁸⁶⁶

This imperialist and paternalistic attitude of Chirac's final presidential museum project reinforces the belief that MQB's concentration on the aesthetic approach to display, that resonates with Khalili's inspiration behind the AoIE, would find it difficult to provide true equality and cultural representation for France's former colonies without the inclusion of contextual backgrounds and historical narratives illustrating the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. The following discussion highlights the polemic nature of displays (both architecturally and culturally) at the MQB and the range of controversial and often harsh reactions they elicit from audiences and the public generally, reiterating and

⁸⁶³ Sauvage, August 2007, op. cit.

⁸⁶⁴ Cited in Price, op. cit., p. 123-124.

⁸⁶⁵ *ibid.*, p. 47.

⁸⁶⁶ *ibid.*, p. 48.

reinforcing many of the views from academics, critics and the media over the issue of aesthetic versus ethnographic display arrangements already discussed.

Visitors to the MQB are encouraged to plan their own routes and wander through centrally placed exhibition cases positioned at odd angles, connecting the 3,500 artifacts on display through 'cross-cutting' themes designed to disrupt the traditional museum experience.⁸⁶⁷ Nouvel's 'magical world' is created through theatrical lighting, with surfaces in earth coloured tones and fluid, continuous darkened spaces that dematerialize the ceiling.⁸⁶⁸ The interior consists of a series of interlinking spaces described by Nouvel as 'a snake or a lizard into which you walk and discover not so much a building as a territory – a zoo really.'⁸⁶⁹ Not everyone held the designers view as Jeremy Harding comments: 'the serpent is kitsch, an aesthetic embarrassment that simply elevates a clunky failure of taste into an error of judgment.'⁸⁷⁰ As Martin argues in defense of their innovative approach, MQB 'is making theatre, not writing theory ...', criticizing those who view Western aestheticism as a type of colonialism that conceals ethnography and history: 'the priests of contextualization are poor museographers.'⁸⁷¹ Criticisms of the internal architectural features and display formats can be viewed as a personal preference but this study's central premise of the need for contextual and background information and narratives disagrees with statements such as Martin's and directly challenges the notion of the universality of the aesthetic experience (especially with strong colonial overtones) as the sole agency capable of connecting disparate museum audiences.

⁸⁶⁷ The museum has 300,000 objects in reserve therefore display only a fraction of their holdings. Items can be viewed online, however, via online multimedia information is accessible from one hundred and fifty multimedia screens and twenty interactive terminals on all three levels of the museum ranging from: the most simplistic on level one (sixty three-minute long programs); intermediate level on the second floor (twenty interactive programs containing specialist/expert/ local peoples viewpoints and knowledge); to the most sophisticated on the top floor (image walls, holographic projections and three-hundred and sixty degree visualization). The museum's entire collection has been digitized and the multimedia library contains 650,000 iconographic documents, 3,000 review titles and 300 electronic periodicals, and 182,000 monographs.⁸⁶⁷ The museum's website contains relevant visitor information, reference to scientific websites, links to chat rooms, blogs, forums, library of on-line publications and sign language programs for sensory handicapped visitors. (Musée Quai Branly website, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/index.php?id=76&L=1>).

⁸⁶⁸ M Kimmelman, 'A Heart of Darkness in the City of Light', *The New York Times*, 2 July 2006, retrieved 4 June 2014, www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/arts/design/02kimm.html.

⁸⁶⁹ Chrisafis, 'Chirac eyes his legacy as indigenous Paris museum opens', *Guardian Unlimited*, 21 June 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,1802174,00.html>.

⁸⁷⁰ J Harding, 'At Quai Branly: Jeremy Harding on Jacques Chirac's Museum', *London review of Books*, vol. 29, no. 1, 4 January 2007, retrieved 10 December 2014, www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n1.

⁸⁷¹ *ibid.*

As the IMA's approach to displays generally and the AoIE specifically has demonstrated in their decision to concentrate on secular dimensions of religious events and artefacts, deciding to include potentially controversial material as part of their practices and policies of display was welcomed by the broader public. However, to achieve these goals institutions must also be prepared for critical and often virulent condemnation from commentators who hold widely differing views. For example, while the majority of media outlets were generally supportive of the MQB, some publications took the opposite view.⁸⁷² Even in publications that would broadly be supportive of the MQB, some reviewers were harsh: one commentator's impression was of a museum that was 'chaotic and condescending';⁸⁷³ with another writer admitting that while 'new projects always get trashed' in Paris, reactions to Quai Branly have 'seemed worse than most.'⁸⁷⁴

After MQB's opening the barrage of criticisms from all quarters continued especially within France. Historian Giles Manceron warned that the 'jungle theme still risked perpetuating colonial stereotypes', with *Newsweek* news journal arguing 'the jungle metaphor is so overdone and it's just seems silly, or condescending'⁸⁷⁵ (fig 82, 83). The *La Monde* newspaper was undecided; while calling the display format 'spectacular' it found some visitors felt the museum was 'too dark, cluttered and lacking in explanation of objects' often resulting in 'headaches and eye-strain from the darkened rooms'⁸⁷⁶ ... making interpretative material hard to read.'⁸⁷⁷ Several reviewers described the MQB as 'aggressively aestheticizing' and there were numerous complaints about the difficulty in finding labels, art works were 'too solitary' and the catalogue cumbersome and expensive leaving the visitor 'hungry for information.'⁸⁷⁸ Sally Price observed how visitors were 'struck at how much the labels projected a vision of "ethnographic present", a vision that grew out

⁸⁷² Supportive magazines and newspapers included: *Le Figaro*, *Le Monde*, *Figaro magazine*, *The Washington Post*, *Time Europe*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Guardian*, *Newsweek*, *The Wellington Dominion Post*, and *The London Review of Books*; and those more critical included *The New York Times*, *The Times*, *The Independent*, *Vancouver Globe and Mail* and *Libération*. (AA Shelton, 'The Public Sphere as Wilderness: Le Musee du quai Branly', *American Anthropological Association*, 2009, p. 1.)

⁸⁷³ Kimmelman, op. cit.

⁸⁷⁴ Goddard cited in Price, op. cit., p. 177.

⁸⁷⁵ Radnofsky, op. cit.

⁸⁷⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁷⁷ Tresilian, 2009, op. cit.

⁸⁷⁸ Cited in Price, op. cit., p. 61.

of early anthropological reports in which “authenticity” resided in an unchanging pre-contact past.’⁸⁷⁹



Fig 82 Interior display at Musée Quai Branly Paris.
Source: <http://75.agendaculturel.fr/musee-du-quai-branly>



Fig 83 Interior display at Musée Quai Branly Paris.
Source: http://www.nytimes.com/2006/06/22/arts/design/22-quai.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

In a similar vein, another commentator suggested that the focus on ‘vegetation’ and the ‘cave-like’ atmosphere promoted viewing the objects in terms of ‘darkness’ and ‘nature’ in an unsuccessful attempt to dispel the familiar ‘primitivism’ and European civilization argument.⁸⁸⁰ Michael Kimmelman from *The New York Times* was particularly scathing of the MQB, describing the museum as a place where ‘colonialism of a bygone era is replaced by a whole new French brand of condescension ... it is the old noble-savage argument. Heart of darkness in the city of light.’⁸⁸¹ (fig 84). In response to Kimmelman a letter to the editor went further: ‘...I agree with Kimmelman that the museum tries to do too much. A smattering of objects from Africa, Australia, Asia and the Americas cannot come close to adequately reflecting the many civilizations ... They define the mission of the museum as demonstrating the great differences between the West and the rest of the world.’⁸⁸²

⁸⁷⁹ *ibid.*, p. 175.

⁸⁸⁰ *ibid.*

⁸⁸¹ Kimmelman, *op. cit.*

⁸⁸² S Kovacs, ‘Letter to the Editor: A new museum in Paris’, *International Herald Tribune*, 8 July 2006, retrieved 10 December 2014, <<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/docview/318767748/7F6ADD86373B4A9CPQ/34?accountid=36155>>.



Fig 84 Totemic figures from Oceania on display at the Musée du Quai Branly Paris.
Source: Kimmelman article
http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/arts/design/02kimm.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0

Price succinctly sums up the MQB's emphasis on the mysterious and exotic: '...ethnographic specifics (native meanings) are eschewed on the grounds of secularism, but (French) stereotypes of primitive religion are maintained fully intact.'⁸⁸³ This perception is echoed in one visitor from the Inuit ethnic group who poignantly wrote in a letter to the editor of the *Le Nouvel Observateur* after his visit to the museum: '... I was filled with hope of finding a presentation of all the civilisations of the Inuits, and I came away with the feeling of having been parked in a big reservation for savages without culture who can't be mixed in with the great civilisations of the world that are presented in other museums ...'⁸⁸⁴

On the other hand, some sectors of the French public had initially viewed the MQB more favourably; a claim supported by the museum's ability to attract 151,000 visitors in its opening month.⁸⁸⁵ Martin maintains, from his observations, about forty per cent of visitors, often young, with African, Polynesian or other diasporic backgrounds, are drawn to the displays celebrating artistic and cultural inheritances as 'they speak to them' especially of common subcultures⁸⁸⁶. Comments like: 'The museum is proof that this culture [Senegalese] is being taken seriously ... we [Algerians] feel more comfortable here ...'⁸⁸⁷ For many visitors it appeared to be an 'emotional journey' to former homelands important to younger

⁸⁸³ Price, op. cit., p. 157.

⁸⁸⁴ 'Jo' cited in Price, op. cit., p. 173.

⁸⁸⁵ Sauvage, August 2007, op. cit.

⁸⁸⁶ C Brothers, 'For Some, A Museum Hits Close to the Heart', *International Herald Tribune*, 17 August 2006, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/17/arts/17iht-branly.2514868.html>.

⁸⁸⁷ *ibid.*

generations: ... It is important for our son to know this too ... This museum, it's the proof that this culture is being taken into account ... You see things from the Incas, from southern Africa, but we are not used to seeing things from the Maghreb in a museum.'⁸⁸⁸ The museum's 'novelty' and 'diversity' is what Emmanuelle Messika, a museum employee of Tunisian, French and Polish background, believes is its appeal: 'I have the impression that there are more people from other backgrounds here than at the Louvre or the Centre Pompidou ... You could almost say that something is starting to shift in France.'⁸⁸⁹

Conversely, other visitors were undecided and questioned France's colonial past: 'Whether for beauty, value or curiosity, all the objects that belonged to us and our ancestors were pillaged ... [however] what is positive is that they have assembled all that in one place.'⁸⁹⁰ Another visitor from Tunis commented on the impossibility of viewing such artifacts in her own country: 'it makes me realise that on the African continent there's nothing left, and everything that was a treasure can be found in this museum.'⁸⁹¹

Temporary exhibitions: an exception

As discussions have suggested, the public (especially the media and academia) was highly critical of the permanent displays at the MQB especially their exclusion of native voices and colonial histories. However, this was not necessarily the case with their temporary exhibitions as their very temporality often allows a freedom to tackle more challenging and controversial topics. Generous space is allocated for travelling shows at the MQB with half of the museum space (three separate sections) dedicated to such displays. Of the sixty-two temporary exhibitions staged since its opening topics related to Muslims and Islam have included: *Regarding the Other* (2007), *Ideqqu-Artwork of the Berber Women* (2007), *Presence African* (2009-10), *Women in Orient, seen by Christian Lacroix* (2011) and *The Phillipines: Archipelago of Exchange* (2013). This is an unusually small number considering the large communities that align themselves with Islamic doctrines and lifestyles. A short analysis of two exhibitions from the list above highlights both the successes and problems that can arise when exhibitions seek to represent non-European cultures through a western lens.

⁸⁸⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁸⁹ *ibid.*

⁸⁹⁰ *ibid.*

⁸⁹¹ *ibid.*

An exhibition shown in the same period as the AoIE in 2009-2010, received a positive reception from the public, despite tackling a more challenging and controversial topic. The temporary exhibition *Présence Africaine* directly addressed an African movement that was active in resisting colonial domination of non-European cultures. Presenting the topic as ‘a forum, a movement, a network’, the exhibition’s central reference was the literary and cultural journal *Présence Africaine* established by Alioune Diop (a Senegalese intellectual) in 1947. The exhibition included audiovisual and sound recordings, archival documents, photographs and art objects to convey the importance of *Présence Africaine* as a dissemination tool that provided an avenue for black intellectuals and writers to ‘reclaim their cultural and historic identities that the colonial context negated or “exoticized”.’ Importantly, this exhibition promoted a movement that French colonialism would have sought to dismantle and silence. According to Chirac, displays such as this have the potential to give some ‘dignity back to peoples’ and maintained ‘too often humiliated and oppressed⁸⁹² ...’ in ways that the permanent displays at MQB were unable to achieve. However, this is not always the case as a more recent temporary show at MQB in particular stood out for its contradictory and potentially contentious stance on Islam and Muslim women.

In 2011 the exhibition *L'Orient Des Femmes Vu Par Christian Lacroix* (Women in Orient, seen by Christian Lacroix) was displayed at the MQB. This show was three years in the making and displayed 175 traditional garments and accessories from the Near East (North Syria to the Sinai peninsula). French designer Christian Lacroix in association with the MQB’s Head of the North African and Near East collections Hana Chidiac selected the items on display. The exhibition was heralded as a tribute to ‘femininity’ and ‘hymn to oriental women ... humble and anonymous’ that had ‘their own individual personalities, aesthetic sensibilities and emotions’.⁸⁹³ The show was designed to ‘honour the timeless fashion of the Middle-East’⁸⁹⁴ through ‘exploring the aesthetics of women’s clothing as art ... not only

⁸⁹² Tresilian, June 2006, op. cit.

⁸⁹³ Musée Du Quai Branly website, retrieved 15 December 2014, <<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/programmation/exhibitions/last-exhibitions/women-in-orient.html>

⁸⁹⁴ CCTV, ‘Christian Lacroix exhibition graces Paris’, *CCTV.com.English*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/cultureexpress/20110210/105368.shtml>.

as a way of dressing, but also as a language, and as social, geographical and religious markers.⁸⁹⁵

The visitor route was to be a 'poetical perambulation ... flamboyant and fun ... beyond the social and political disruption'.⁸⁹⁶ Many visitors felt the exhibition was an effective fusion of two worlds:

Pairing flamboyant Lacroix with anthropological expert Chidiac was brilliant and together they present a culturally relevant and historically accurate program. The exhibition succeeds in its goal of paying homage to Middle Eastern women more typically represented in the West as silenced victims. To the contrary, Lacroix's exhibit proves female artisans of the Fertile Crescent were muses to men who built ancient empires and even modern French fashion empire.⁸⁹⁷

However, the fashion aspect of the display was reinforced by the prominent role of the famous designer (Chidiac considered herself his 'guide'⁸⁹⁸ and chose Lacroix to avoid 'another ethnographic parade')⁸⁹⁹ emphasizing 'good design' rather than a 'geography lesson'.⁹⁰⁰ Following the aesthetic focus of the MQB, the emphasis was on the beauty of the costumes (suspended from ceilings along a darkened pathway to highlight vivid colouring fig 85) to show a 'different face of the Eastern woman ... a new, lively aesthetic look' that has been 'progressively abandoned' due to the imposition of 'globalization and religion ... as the *burqa* has become political tools with its dark costumes'.⁹⁰¹ This perspective was echoed in another article that began with the statement: 'Once upon a time before the black chador of the Islamic fundamentalists and the western dress of the American shopping mall ...'⁹⁰² (fig 86). Therefore, the dominant discourse surrounding the show advanced negative connotations associated with traditional Islamic dress and Muslims, despite Chidiac stating 'Islam never imposed the veil upon its women. If there is one thing we should convey, that would be it.'⁹⁰³

⁸⁹⁵ Musée Du Quai Branly website, op. cit.

⁸⁹⁶ *ibid.*

⁸⁹⁷ D Wiederhoft, 'Christian Lacroix tribute to Muslim women at Brnaly Museum', *Bonjour Paris*, 2011, <http://www.bonjourparis.com/story/christian-lacroix-tribute-muslim-women-branly-muse/>

⁸⁹⁸ *ibid.*

⁸⁹⁹ Musée Du Quai Branly website, op. cit.

⁹⁰⁰ C Paris, 'When Bethlehem was the "Paris" of fashion', *colleensparis.com*, 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.colleensparis.com/2011/02/when-bethlehem-was-the-paris-of-fashion/>

⁹⁰¹ *ibid.*

⁹⁰² C Paris, 'When Bethlehem was the "Paris" of fashion', *colleensparis.com*, 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.colleensparis.com/2011/02/when-bethlehem-was-the-paris-of-fashion/>.

⁹⁰³ Musée Du Quai Branly website, op. cit.

Furthermore, the language throughout the exhibition resurrected colonial rhetoric (particularly Lacroix's) that alluded to 'Arabian Nights' imagery especially words such as 'exotic',⁹⁰⁴ 'fascination and repulsion', 'irresistible attraction', 'magical world with ill-defined borders',⁹⁰⁵ 'legends and fantasies', 'ancient designers' and 'simple women'.⁹⁰⁶



Fig 85 Interior display of costumes exhibited at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musée Quai Branly Paris.

Source: <http://www.bonjourparis.com/story/christian-lacroix-tribute-muslim-women-branly-muse/>



Fig 86 Young Bedouin Tribe Tiyaha image on display at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musée Quai Branly Paris. Source:

<http://www.bonjourparis.com/story/christian-lacroix-tribute-muslim-women-branly-muse/>

Statements included: 'They [the garments] inhabit a colourful world where, bathed in warm and comforting light. The designer's imagination is projected into a dreamlike East ...'⁹⁰⁷ Adding to this, the items on display were predominantly from the last nineteenth century onwards and narratives from the women who created the garments were notably absent. Instead textual information referenced the experiences of European travellers in the twentieth century who were surprised by the 'splendour and admiration' of the cultural artifacts they encountered: 'They expected to see the clothes of poor peasants women, but they discovered the costumes of opera ballerinas'.⁹⁰⁸ As mannequins on display indicated, this was a lofty and fanciful aspiration, requiring a truly imaginative mindset on the part of

⁹⁰⁴ *The Brunei Times*, 'Allure of oriental costumes on display in Paris museum, *bt.com*, 15 February 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.bt.com.bn/art-culture/2011/02/15/allure-oriental-costumes-display-paris-museum>.

⁹⁰⁵ The magazine *Inside the Museum*, 'Women in orient seen by Christian Lacroix', *Gazette Drouot International*, no 1, 2011, p. 58, retrieved 14 December 2014, Musée Du Quai Branly website, op. cit.

⁹⁰⁶ Musée Du Quai Branly website, op. cit.

⁹⁰⁷ *ibid.*

⁹⁰⁸ Jacques Weuersse, 'Paysans de Syrie et du Proche Orient', Paris, Gallimard, 1946 cited on Musée Du Quai Branly website, *ibid.*

the visitor (fig 87). To complete the fantasy scenario, black and white ‘exotic’ films, sepia-tinted photographs depicting belly dancing and ‘giggling, joyful, smiling faces’⁹⁰⁹ of women, Oriental portraits, scattered Persian rugs (that Chidiac called ‘flying carpets’)⁹¹⁰, contributed to the intended ‘oriental atmosphere of the exhibition’⁹¹¹ and ‘lyrical recreation of a lost women’s world.’⁹¹² Missing, of course, was any comparison to contemporary female designers in the Middle East and Europe who are gaining prominence for establishing thriving businesses that are distinctly and unapologetically Islamic.⁹¹³

From investigations into both the permanent and temporary displays at the MQB, it becomes clear that the museum’s mandate to ‘define the national ‘self’ and the non-national, non-Western ‘other’⁹¹⁴ was never going to be easy to achieve despite Martin arguing that MQB is a ‘much needed “political instrument”’⁹¹⁵ that will help France solve its persistent societal problems (particularly the rise of Islam and disadvantaged migrant youth). However, in this case, the promotion of the aesthetic at the expense of the historical contexts is seen as maintaining the ‘curiosity/ethnography/aesthetic’ triangle and embedding the colonial paradigm further in the minds of the public.⁹¹⁶ Portraying the works of non-Europeans in a jungle setting harks back to the colonial cliché of an ‘exotic ... dark continent’ that is ‘still savage, exuberant, dangerous and primitive.’⁹¹⁷ Curatorial decisions influenced by governmental rhetoric has attributed a ‘static’, ‘frozen’ and ‘timeless’ quality to non-European cultures on display, denying them the capacity to be dynamic, vibrant and living entities.



Fig 87 Mannequin on display at *Women in Orient* Exhibition 2011 Musee Quai Branly Paris. Source: <http://www.bonjourparis.com/story/christian-lacroix-tribute-muslim-women-branly-muse/>

⁹⁰⁹ *ibid.*

⁹¹⁰ Wiederhoft, *op. cit.*

⁹¹¹ EGE, ‘Women in orient, seen by Christian Lacroix’, *ege we create more than carpets*, retrieved 14 December 2014, [http://www.egecarpets.com/inspiration/projects/project-details-page/women-in-the-orient--christian-lacroix-\(fr\).aspx](http://www.egecarpets.com/inspiration/projects/project-details-page/women-in-the-orient--christian-lacroix-(fr).aspx).

⁹¹² S Menkes, ‘Women in the Orient’, *The New York Times*, 2 December 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/programmation/exhibitions/last-exhibitions/women-in-orient.html>>. http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/12/fashion/12iht-rorient12.html?_r=0.

⁹¹³ Sites include: Islamic Designhouse, Rayannes Design, Muslima Wear, Shurr Islamic clothes, Nabira Islamic Clothing.

⁹¹⁴ Sauvage, September 2007, *op. cit.*

⁹¹⁵ A Chrisafis, ‘Chirac leaves controversial legacy with monument to African and Asian art’, *Guardian*, 7 April 2006, retrieved 10 May 2014, www.guardian.co.uk/france/story/0,,178871,00.html.

⁹¹⁶ Sauvage, September 2007, *op. cit.*

⁹¹⁷ Chrisafis, 2006, *op. cit.*

Historian Gilles Manceron maintains colonial pride is still strong in the minds of the French public, because ‘the official discourse which never tells them otherwise,’ as surveys in 2006 revealed.⁹¹⁸ This attitude is reinforced when it became known that MQB had no plans to implement restitution programs or policies for disputed colonial artifacts, especially from their immense African collection. There may be some successes in temporary exhibitions at MQB’s ample exhibition space such as *Présence Africaine* but as analysis of displays such as *Women in Orient, seen by Christian Lacroix* has revealed neo-colonial practices and rhetoric are often still part of curatorial decisions and the politics of display despite statements indicating otherwise.

As discussions of the IMA and MQB have highlighted, exhibiting artifacts as art objects from collections intended for aesthetic contemplation, requires certain curatorial practices and policies of display that are often problematic and open to criticism. The IMA’s choice to include some narratives but exclude others that would enhance cross-cultural understanding through an emphasis on form and function over interpretation and the MQB’s unabashed revival of oriental fantasies and reinforcement of colonial discourses are pertinent examples. It appears potentially rewarding new directions cannot always compete with traditional curatorial attitudes and practices.

Further, compared to the IMA wide-ranging displays, the MQB’s concentration on ‘aesthetic universalism’ can be seen as valueless and unimportant if contemporary artworks are excluded in favour of displays limited to only nineteenth century artifacts.⁹¹⁹ Through such exclusions, post-colonial strategies of decolonization are overlooked, preferring traditional colonial rhetoric outlined in chapter two. By ignoring the possibility of a space beyond colonial contact and a two-way interchange of cultures, contemporary artists are denied the ability to develop hybrid practices (akin to Bhabha’s concept of a ‘third space’) and participate equally in the art world and global cultural sphere.

An investigation of Cité is next discussed where the inclusion of textual, archival or governmental documentation in these displays is shown to demand a slightly different curatorial approach. With similar aims and goals to IMA and MQB, Cité’s focus on presenting the history of French Immigration has proven equally as controversial and

⁹¹⁸ *ibid.*

⁹¹⁹ M Alivizatou, ‘The politics of ‘arts premiers’: Some thoughts on the Musée du Quai Branly’, *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008, p. 53.

complicated in terms of curatorial decision-making. With the restrictions placed on permanent displays and temporary exhibitions perceived as more likely to be successful in achieving aims, discussion and analysis will now focus on how displays at this newest museum, dedicated to chronicling French immigration history and tasked with reducing community tensions through encouraging cross-cultural understanding and their struggle to balance 'experience' and 'interpretation', compares with other cultural institutions.

Cité: integration, cohesion and 'Frenchness'

Background: chronicling France's immigration history

Cité was opened in 2007 with the mandate to address societal unrest and tensions concerning immigration by changing 'perceptions of immigration' and promoting 'social cohesion.'⁹²⁰ From the outset the museum united both sides of politics. Initially proposed in 1989 by Zair Kedadouche (right-wing activist, lecturer, ex-footballer) and left wing historian Gérard Noiriel,⁹²¹ they formed the *Association pour un Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration* (Association for a Museum of the History of Immigration), with the intention of addressing the absence of French migration history through acknowledging migrant experiences.⁹²²

The project fell out of favour in the 1990s but the victory of the football World Cup's multi-racial team in 1998 led to a reconsideration of the project. However, a 2001 study assessing the feasibility of the project cautioned that, historically, the French public had shown little interest in social museums and 'to identify the future centre with a museum would amount to the *patrimonialisation* of immigration, as if it belonged to the past and was no longer an active process.'⁹²³ Furthermore, the study was concerned that the intensity and prevalence of immigration issues (so prominent in debates and media stories) and the creation of a centre/museum for immigration might suggest to the public that immigration is a social problem that needs remedying.⁹²⁴ Despite these recommendations

⁹²⁰ M Stevens, 'Immigrants into the Citizens: ideology and Nation-Building in the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration', *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008, p. 57.

⁹²¹ Noiriel's seminal and widely-acclaimed work *Le Creuset français. Histoire de l'immigration (XIXe-XXe siècles)* [The French melting Pot. History of Immigration (19th-20th Centuries)], emphasized the contributions of immigration on the French constitution and contemporary society generally (N Heraud, 'The Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration: site of transmission and public education', *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008, p. 105.

⁹²² *ibid.*, pp. 59-60.

⁹²³ F Servole, 'The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration and its public: images, perceptions and evolutions', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 111-112.

⁹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 113.

and warnings that an immigration museum was a ‘dangerous taboo’,⁹²⁵ a 2004 report from former Minister of Culture Jacques Toubon resulted in the announcement that a museum or ‘centre of history and living memory with a cultural vocation’⁹²⁶ would be created.⁹²⁷

Toubon emphasized that the project was reliant on a ‘participatory partnership’ model between government, private and community agencies with the mission to promote immigration as contributing ‘to our [French] national identity and European society ... [as] [H]istory shows that immigration is not a confrontation with strangeness’.⁹²⁸ However, cracks in these collaborations and conflicts of interest appeared early.

The network of partners, for example, was unfairly weighted: forty per cent of members were involved in other cultural and artistic institutions, five per cent from historical organizations and only four per cent from ethnic community groups.⁹²⁹ As Mary Stevens has suggested it is clear that the establishment of a museum dedicated to immigration was beneficial for the government at the time, though there was some distancing from the cross-party alliance early on that foreshadowed future tensions. Inherent contradictions are present in statements on radio programs by Toubon on 13 January and 9 October 2007 respectively: ‘... Cité is a political act ... that expresses a certain political will ...’ followed by ‘Cité is not a political instrument or a propaganda tool, Cité is a scientific, educational and cultural establishment.’⁹³⁰

Divisions among the committee members culminated in the resignation of Noiriél and seven colleagues in 2007 from the official committee in protest against President Sarkozy’s decision to create *The Ministry for Immigration and National Identity*, because it undermined the fundamental aim of Cité to alter perceptions of immigration.⁹³¹ Other commentators argued that this new ministry was not ‘just overseeing immigration ... [but

⁹²⁵ A Chrisafis, ‘France’s first immigration museum opens’, *The Guardian*, 10 October 2007, retrieved 12 May 2014, <http://theguardianonline.com>.

⁹²⁶ Toubon cited in F Grognet, ‘How to Reconcile the Irreconcilable: the place of ethnology in the Museum of the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration’, *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 52

⁹²⁷ Hérauld, op. cit., p. 60.

⁹²⁸ J Toubon, ‘The Political Genesis of the Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration’, *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 10, 9.

⁹²⁹ A Arquez-Roth, ‘The Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration: a place for partnering and networking’, *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 91.

⁹³⁰ Stevens, op. cit., p. 60-61.

⁹³¹ N Delalande & I Jablonka, ‘Immigration, knowledge and power. An interview with Gérard Noiriél’, *la vie des idées*, 27 May 2008, retrieved 10 May 2014, <laviedesidees.fr>.

was] establishing the criteria for “Frenchness”.⁹³² With increasing tightening of social policy relating to migration and civic rights, opposition and disunity resulted in both the President’s and the Minister for Immigration’s absence from Cité’s opening ceremony, as they feared a potentially hostile and politically damaging reception from groups of activists and immigrant communities⁹³³ who planned to attend the event.⁹³⁴

The consequences of contentious inherited pasts and their impact upon the politics of display are significant and enduring. Museums are increasingly relied upon to promote cultural diversity as social policy is curtailed by the judicial system and more restrictive laws are passed, as discussion of the French system has highlighted. This has accentuated the appeal of projects such as Cité for the French government as:

[I]t [the museum] enables the state to reassert its authority in a sphere where it is losing its grip and *at the request* of those whose discourse, in questioning the national narrative, potentially posed the greatest threat to state authority, to whom it now appears to be granting a concession.⁹³⁵

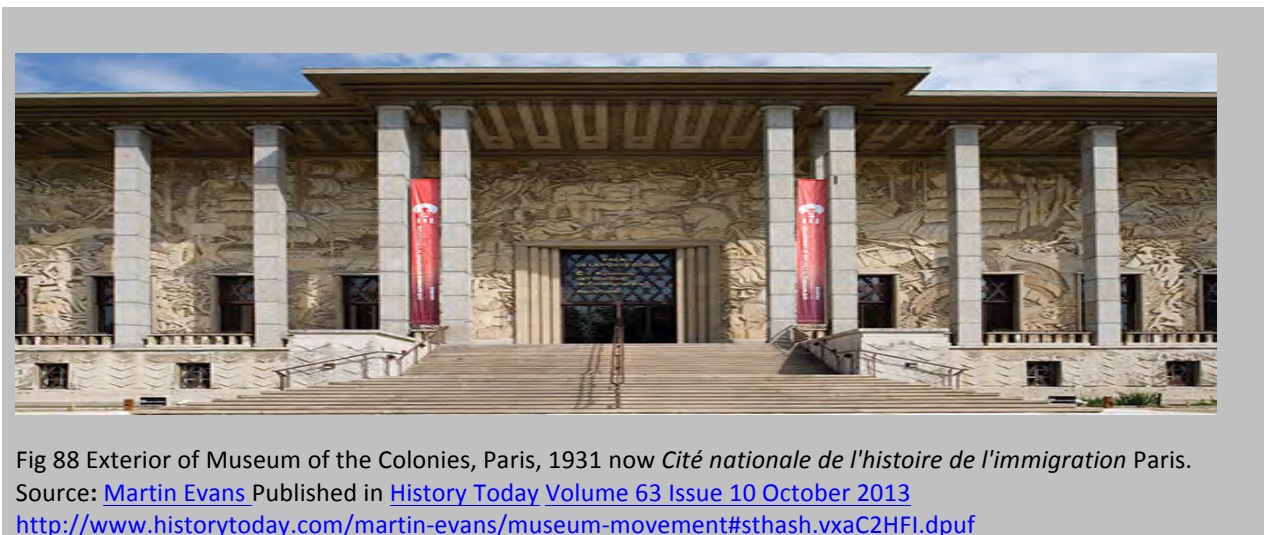


Fig 88 Exterior of Museum of the Colonies, Paris, 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris. Source: [Martin Evans](http://www.historytoday.com/martin-evans/museum-movement#sthash.vxaC2HFI.dpuf) Published in *History Today* Volume 63 Issue 10 October 2013 <http://www.historytoday.com/martin-evans/museum-movement#sthash.vxaC2HFI.dpuf>

The choice of location for this unique national space was particularly problematic. The 2004 report recommended the former *Palais de la Porte Dorée* (Palace of the Colonies), as the ideal location to represent French immigration history. This monumental Art Deco building was constructed for the International Colonial Exhibition in 1931 and then housed a

⁹³² R Zaretsky, ‘What does it mean to be French?’, *Le Monde diplomatique*, English Edition, December 2010, retrieved 10 June 2014, <mondediplo.com>.

⁹³³ There had been intense public discussions and demonstrations by human rights groups concerning contentious policies such as the suggestion of making DNA testing mandatory in all applications for family reunion from immigrants (Chrisafis, 2007, op. cit.)

⁹³⁴ Stevens, op. cit., p. 68.

⁹³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 63.

sequence of ethnographic collections⁹³⁶ accumulated from colonial outposts (especially in Africa) that was later moved to the Musée du Quai Branly in 2006 (fig 88). The building's large-scale, life-size friezes and frescoes constitute an epic example of colonial propaganda and iconography: the positive and civilizing mission of the French colonizer (who is overseeing but is not physically represented) through dense depictions of the colonized workers engaged in agricultural tasks, craft making and mining (figs 89, 90). The whole colonial enterprise is represented as a harmonious and beneficial exchange between the metropolitan France and its colonies of Africa, Madagascar, America, Indochina and Oceania. Designed with the exotic allure of *A Thousand and One Nights*, this building was described by a French writer in 1931 as a '... fairy-like vision ... the garden of colonial marvels, rustling each evening, prodigious lace of fire and liquid architecture, translates a magnificent lesson of energy and human solidarity within an atmosphere of dreams.'⁹³⁷



Fig 89 Painted murals depicting North Africa, Museum of the Colonies, Paris, 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris. Source: <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft8x0nb62g;chunk.id=d0e4162;doc.view=print>



Fig 90 Bas-relief depicting North Africa, Museum of the Colonies, Paris, 1931 now *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration* Paris. Source: <http://publishing.cdlib.org/ucpressebooks/view?docId=ft8x0nb62g;chunk.id=d0e4162;doc.view=print>

Despite its overwhelming colonial connotations, this became an ambivalent space that was considered an 'ideal' opportunity to reassess French identity with the hope that:

its [Palace of Colonies] décors, preserved and enhanced, will maintain a coherent discourse not only on our colonial past-parallel and without confusion to that of the new Cité – but also on our post-colonial present, a field that has difficulty emerging in France.⁹³⁸

⁹³⁶ The site has housed the 1935 Musée des Colonies (Museum of the Colonies), Musée d'Outre-mer (Museum of Overseas Territories) in the 1960s and the Musée des Arts d'Afrique et d'Océanie (Museum of the Arts of Africa and Oceania) from 190-2003 (D Jarrassé, 'The Former Palace of the Colonies: the burden of heritage', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, p. 58).

⁹³⁷ J Trillat cited in Jarrassé, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹³⁸ Jarrassé, op. cit., p. 64.



Repères and 1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition: Professional opinions and public concerns

With no pre-existing collection, the design brief of the Cité's permanent exhibition space *Repères* (Benchmarks or Milestones fig 91) was to create an 'interpretation centre' intended 'to give some markers to those who want to understand this great demographical and social adventure that was, and still is, immigration in France' through an educational perspective aimed at both children and the wider public.⁹³⁹ The challenge has been to accommodate the internal pressures from museum staff wary of the states integration and assimilation agenda that may potentially exclude artistic works that contest these policies. At the same time, the museum has been required to acknowledge and address the requests from community groups and organizations to include their narratives and experiences in terms of the legacy of colonialism.⁹⁴⁰

Museum staff were confident that through displays emphasizing the positive influences of French immigration, Cité would become an arena that confronts the nation with 'an important part of its history which it has preferred to forget'⁹⁴¹ promoting critiques of colonial epistemological, stereotypical narratives of the 'Other'.⁹⁴² However, immigration specialists were concerned audiences might view colonization and immigration as part of

⁹³⁹ Heraud, op. cit., p. 105, 106, 108.

⁹⁴⁰ *ibid.*, p. 63-64.

⁹⁴¹ Chrisafis, 2007, op. cit.

⁹⁴² Labadi, S, 'The National Museum of Immigration History (Paris, France), neo-colonialist representations, silencing, and re-appropriation', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2013, p. 316.

the same process, recommending clarification and contextualization of sculptures, frescoes and colonial iconography to avoid confusion.

Despite this warning, factual information has only been provided in the visitors 'mini guide', lacking any critique or deconstruction of the colonial propaganda, dominant ideologies and explanations of alternative histories. Carol Ann Dixson considers descriptions of the structure offered by the museum information systems as signifying 'domination and superiority of France over its empire', sidestepping the detail that 'valorisation of France's colonial project is built in to the very fabric of the palace.'⁹⁴³ Similarly, Sophia Labadi regards this 'silencing and reflective void' as France's unwillingness to accept its colonial past and the decolonization process, contrary to the museum's aim to promote 'social cohesion'.⁹⁴⁴

Numerous other commentators have pointed to major flaws particularly in the permanent exhibition. From the first descriptive panel, the museum states this permanent display concentrates on the group rather than the individual migrant journey: 'Indeed, beyond all differences, those who settled in France since the nineteenth century through the same trials, have experienced the same decisive experiments, have formed the same hopes'. This emphasis on passive group narratives rather than active individual migrant experiences (despite the original commitment for displays to be sixty per cent individual memories/narratives)⁹⁴⁵ is widely criticized for negating any interrogation of French government laws that discriminated against specific countries especially the cheap workforce the colonies provided the French.

Furthermore, artworks that suggest migrants are 'temporarily' settling in France reinforce negative views (perpetuated by French media) that these groups are always in 'transit' and lack commitment.⁹⁴⁶ Similarly, limited and simplistic depictions of migrant contributions with a male gender bias (highlighting sport rather than artistic, economic, political or intellectual triumphs) alludes to colonial stereotyping and strengthen perceptions of immigrants as being less intellectual and able to secure 'white collar' employment. Little reference is made to sub-Saharan African migration and the absence of any information or discussion of interdependence or exchange between France and its

⁹⁴³ C A Dixson, 'Decolonising the museum: Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', *Race and Class*, Sage Journals, vol. 53, no. 4, 2012, p. 79, retrieved 23 May 2014, <<http://rac.sagepub.com>>.

⁹⁴⁴ Labadi, op. cit., p. 316.

⁹⁴⁵ A Arquez-Roth, op. cit.

⁹⁴⁶ Labadi, op. cit., p. 319.

colonies suggest a continuous one-way invasion of migrants who have little to offer their new country.⁹⁴⁷ Lastly, the absence of interactive devices or exhibits (which can provoke responses and question opinions and prejudices by promoting reflective thinking) leaves the dominant, official narratives unchallenged.⁹⁴⁸ These types of curatorial decisions go beyond favouring the aesthetic experience and attempt to include other narratives alongside their objects on display. However, it is clear more controversial historical and contextual materials are excluded from displays that have an agenda that promotes certain worldviews at both the local and global level at the expense of other equally valid perspectives. While this is not unusual or remarkable, it does illustrate that curatorial decision-making can be influenced by broader societal forces.

Despite such criticism, there are limited exhibition sections that deal with French colonialism and the consequences of decolonization. Of note to this study, was a display that concentrated on Muslim immigrants, highlighting the colonial attitude and paternalistic mentality towards Muslim communities, especially through the use of early twentieth century Muslim institutions to conduct surveillance and monitor individual and community movements.⁹⁴⁹ The exhibition addressed 'xenophobia without restraint' that post-Second World War African migrants experienced, the 'terrible repression' of nationalist movements during the Algerian War of Independence and debates surrounding 'the nationality code, powered by the now reoccurring questions about Islam.' Importantly, the last section '*Wesh Wesh? (What happened?)*', highlights the contradictions of the 'recognition of cultural pluralism and diversity ...[with] regular waves of tension and stigma ...', emphasizing that the 'the challenge for the new generation of all origins is to look at the past without amnesia or Manichean.'⁹⁵⁰

There is another small area of the permanent display that features singular migrant accounts. The donation or *Benefactors'* gallery adjoining the central exhibition space is a place where community members can donate objects related to their migration to France. However, the objects displayed in this space lack any real connection to pertinent and pressing issues experienced by current immigrants. According to Labadi, Cité's official

⁹⁴⁷ Dixson, op. cit., p. 80.

⁹⁴⁸ Labadi, op. cit., p. 321.

⁹⁴⁹ S Hall, 'Colonialism contested in the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', McGill University Department of Sociology, retrieved 10 May 2014, www.mcgill.ca/sociology/sites/mcgill.ca.sociology/files/sara_hall_cv.pdf.

⁹⁵⁰ *ibid.*

approach is obvious: 'to promote this French model of integration as the only way to reach social cohesion and inclusion, and to silence its shortcomings.'⁹⁵¹

This is in line with Mary Stevens' observations that colonialism was sidelined through practices and strategies of 'narrative flattening ... concession, deferral, disciplinary exclusion, disqualification ... outright censorship.'⁹⁵² Stevens argues that Cité's preference for contemporary art, the promotion of the aesthetic and its reliance on the subjective, personal encounters rather than understanding has a 'dehistoricizing effect that privileges personal experience over broad social issues.'⁹⁵³ For many, the reallocation of colonial collections under a new guise was as contentious as Cité's reclaiming of the Palace of the Colonies to house its collection of immigration artifacts and memorabilia.

As already suggested, some temporary exhibitions and events appear to target colonialism and the post-colonial immigrant more directly and, because of their temporal nature, can afford to address and engage more critically with controversial topics and themes.⁹⁵⁴ Since its opening Cité has displayed eleven temporary shows but discussion will concentrate on the first exhibition at the museum because it is revealing of the institution's early attempts to come to terms with its colonial histories and attract the diverse and larger audiences it hoped for.

⁹⁵¹ *ibid.*, p. 321.

⁹⁵² Stevens gives two revealing examples: a proposed plan for a section titled 'Colonisation et décolonisation' was 'reduced on the basis it would be addressed later' (Stevens, 2007, p. 237); and a curator was 'reassigned elsewhere due to her desire to emphasize the postcolonial experience in a particular part of the exhibit' (M Steven unpublished dissertation 2007, cited in S Hall, *op. cit.*)

⁹⁵³ *ibid.*

⁹⁵⁴ Later displays included: an exhibition on French and German immigration (*To each his foreigner? France and Germany from 1871 to today*) and *Lives in exile-France 1954-1962. Algerians in France during the war in Algeria* was accompanied by the film *Elise et la vraie vie*, which documents the dire living conditions and racism experienced by Algerian migrants in Paris during the Algerian war; an exhibition (*My suburbs-Patrick Zachmann-photographs 1980-2007*) focusing on immigration and identity issues faced by current Maghrebi communities in French banlieues; and a performance of *Chocolat*, a play investigating slavery and colonial France's racist ideologies (Servole, *op. cit.*, p. 115).



Fig 92 Poster for *1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* at Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. Source: Photograph: Nathalie Darbellay © Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Less than a year after its opening, the controversial *1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* was shown (fig 92). This exhibition was a collaboration between a curator, sociologist, immigration researcher and anthropologist (formerly from the MQB) with items from the MQB's vast collection of the 1931 Colonial Exhibition collection lent for the occasion.⁹⁵⁵ As already discussed, Cité had been criticized by many for not adequately addressing its colonial past and linking the consequences of colonization with immigration issues in its permanent displays. The overall display strategy for this inaugural show was to lead the visitor on a 'behind the scenes' journey of discovery to reconcile two contrasting

phenomena associated with the of the 1931 colonial exhibition in Paris: 'The glorification of the French colonial empire and its "civilizing mission" with the colonial exhibition at Bois de Vincennes on one hand; the presence of 3 million foreigners in France, making it the first country of immigration in the world, on the other.'⁹⁵⁶



Fig 93 Exhibition space for *1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* at Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration. Source: Photograph: Nathalie Darbellay © Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Eight exhibition rooms contained a variety of texts (general commentaries and personal narratives, maps, diagrams, catalogues), photographs, artworks and artifacts around major themes: the 1931 Colonial Exhibition as 'spectacle'; the repercussions of the colonial and foreign immigration 'crisis'; political affiliations and movements; status issues of citizenship, identity, belonging; policing and policy-

⁹⁵⁵ Hélène Lafont-Couturier, Laure Blévis, Claire Zalc and Nanette Jacomijn Snoep (Palais de la Porte Doree - Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris, '1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition', retrieved 16 December 2014, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/autour-des-expositions/1931-les-etrangers-au-temps-de-l-exposition-coloniale>)

⁹⁵⁶ *ibid.*

making; relationships to foreign ‘others’; and the participation of immigrants to France’s cultural and social life.⁹⁵⁷ The emphasis was on 1931 as a pivotal date in French history in terms of both colonization and immigration and tackled sensitive and contentious issues that many museums (such as the MQB in both its temporary and permanent displays) had been accused of ignoring (fig 93). However, did the exhibition’s stated aim to promote a deeper knowledge and understanding of the ‘invisibility of the stranger’ and ‘contradictions and silences’ surrounding past events, become part of the visitor experience and encourage solidarity among France’s diverse audiences?



Fig 94 François Kollar’s Moroccan Miner photographic display at 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition at Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration*. Source: Photograph: Nathalie Darbellay © Cité nationale de l’histoire de l’immigration

Evocative images such as François Kollar’s *Moroccan Miner* were intended to convey a social commentary on France’s stable, productive and united workforce along with the harsh, brutal and desperate conditions of immigrants who were simultaneously ‘ubiquitous ... [and] invisible.’ (fig 94) Equally, exhibit number 286 was a set of documents titled the *Naturalization Record of Henry Adam* detailing the German national’s ‘proper assimilation’

and the nearby *Nansen passport* identification card designed to track and limit the movements of immigrants from the colonies, especially those from Morocco and Algeria were intended to elicit individual and community reflection. However, such contemplations are eclipsed by the next corridor’s display of dazzling and intricate dioramas and superbly crafted wooden/ fiber Gabon masks and Dogon dancer costumes (both dubious acquisitions by colonial expeditions and later controversial displays at the 1931 Colonial Exhibition) that emerge from the semi-darkness to entrance the visitor (fig 95).

⁹⁵⁷ *ibid.* In addition, three separate one-day conferences covered issues such as: *Foreigners, immigrants. The artists of the School of Paris, "Hostile France." Xenophobia, racism, anti-Semitism and 1931, Aliens in the time of the Colonial Exhibition: discussion meeting with the curators of the exhibition.*



Fig 95 Exhibition space for 1931. *Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition at Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration*. Source: Photograph: Nathalie Darbellay © Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

These display strategies raise significant museological questions already debated concerning whether important and complex contextual issues are being obscured by the beauty of artifacts on display. In this case it was the 'spectacle' of Empire and celebration of a colonial workforce under the slogan 'It is with 76 900 men that France ensures peace and blessings of civilization to its 60 million people.'⁹⁵⁸ It is difficult to assess whether these display strategies designed to promote awareness of topical issues reflect or resonate with contemporary debates in the French public arena over continued inequalities and contentious migration issues that earlier discussions have highlighted. It is interesting, however, that the majority of Cité's subsequent temporary exhibitions have not covered histories or issues of immigration beyond 1962 and the current show *Fashion Mix* while showcasing the history of French fashion and the contribution of past and present designers of 'foreign' background, emphasizes the aesthetics of the garments on display that has uncanny parallels with MQB's focus in its 2011 *Women in Orient* exhibition.

Criteria of success: A valid and viable cultural enterprise?

For the first three months after its opening, Cité attracted a record 50,000 visitors. Unfortunately, this euphoria was short-lived. It appears that it is only the school groups and some teacher in-service training (2,000 teacher per year) that keep the visitor numbers at any viable level. Toubon himself admits there is a problem: '85,000 people came in 2009 ...

⁹⁵⁸ Musée de l'histoire de l'immigration, '1931, foreigners during the Colonial Exhibition', op. cit.

[now] 80% of the public [mainly students] do not pay ... it is true that I was predicting double this attendance ... [conceding] the case of a Spanish refugee attracts less people than a Rembrandt Self Portrait'⁹⁵⁹ Adding to this problem, Cité is not only in competition with a wealth of other museums in Paris for visitors, but is located above a popular aquarium that attracts crowds of around 250,000 per year. As a Cité staff member lamented: '90% visit the aquarium and 10% visit Cité ... Sharks beat North Africans ... we are disappointed.'⁹⁶⁰ Moreover, several guards have reported that many visitors, while commenting that the displays are 'beautiful ... [and] moving', find the route through the exhibitions 'disorientating' as the audioguide only provides twenty five per cent of the necessary information. Furthermore, text panels and labeling are 'difficult to read' with some panels peeling off the walls, often taking months to be replaced.⁹⁶¹

A museum dedicated to the history of immigration is 'complicated' and is at a disadvantage Toubon confesses: 'the French do not see immigration as positive ... the question of the suburbs and the debate on national identity does not help matters ... we have enemies and they lie.'⁹⁶² Others agree, including Philippe Joutard (an historian who worked on the initial project) who confirms 'the major problem is the low attendance' and former museum management employee Hélène Lafont-Couturier maintains 'Cité has opened too quickly.' A more critical comment comes from historian Pascal Blanchard who opposed the museum from the beginning: 'it is a ghost drifting museum!'⁹⁶³

Toubon does justify the museum's relevancy, however, by emphasizing that despite not attracting 'the crowds', their visitors showed a 'passion' for the place, especially schoolteachers.⁹⁶⁴ He realizes 'mistakes' have been made but insists this 'unique project' must be 'given time' and is committed to improving this situation by installing more interactive components to the museum exhibits in 2012. But he is adamant that the museum will not be 'targeting blacks and Arabs' to increase audience numbers: 'I will never do ethnic marketing!'⁹⁶⁵ Considering the enormity of its problems, Toubon may have to

⁹⁵⁹ M Guerrin, 'The Phantom Museum', *Le Monde*, 19 March 2010, retrieved 10 May 2014, http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2010/03/19/le-musee-fantome_1321510_3224.html.

⁹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

⁹⁶¹ *ibid.*

⁹⁶² *ibid.*

⁹⁶³ *ibid.*

⁹⁶⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁶⁵ *ibid.*

reconsider his tough stance. One visitor/journalist commented that in his three-hour visit, he counted only forty other people viewing the displays and when visiting Cité in late 2013 for this research project I was its sole patron in a four hour time period.

Not all public responses to Cité have been negative. For instance, initial objections were raised over a number of issues relating to the museum's practices and policies, which resulted in the reduction of less contested terminology: 'assimilation' became 'putting down roots' and 'communities' was replaced with the less contentious 'micro-societies.' The proposed tricolor logo resembling the national flag was also redesigned with a motif more symbolic of the union of the individual and collective identities. Importantly, displays included art works that challenge notions of belonging, the self and other through reference to post-colonial theory such as *La Zon-Mai*, an installation by artist Gilles Delmas and choreographer Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui.⁹⁶⁶



Fig 96 Poster for *Fashion Mix* exhibition 2014 at at *Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration*. Source: Phototgraph: Nathalie Darbellay © Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration

Furthermore, the use of multimedia does provide a more positive experience for both adults and children and may help fill the gaps that displays such as *1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* and *Fashion Mix* (fig 96) fail to provide. For example, a video installation detailing with atrocities committed during the Algerian War of Independence records the treatment of Algerians in their homeland and the racial stereotyping of Maghrebi immigrants once they migrated to France. The Cité website (which can be retrieved online) is a comprehensive and more nuanced attempt to explain historical, social and cultural aspects of

immigration: films, personal stories, digital library, pedagogic information, current news and events (conferences, musical performances, tours, temporary exhibitions), and project development (past, present, future).⁹⁶⁷ The website is more accessible to a wider, more

⁹⁶⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 64-66.

⁹⁶⁷ Official Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration website, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr>.

diverse public than the museum could ever hope to reach. This is evident, as within its first year the site logged in 30,000 visitors each month.⁹⁶⁸

The *Le Monde* newspaper applauded this new museum, entreating France to recognize the important role immigration has played in the formation of the nation: 'this museum bears witness that 'French identity' exists, but it has always been mixed.'⁹⁶⁹ Conversely, another newspaper discusses France's problem with its migrant history and current assimilation policies: 'French prejudice is rightly and readily mentioned, but not recent controversies over some immigrants' rejection of French values. The museum seems more unsteady about French culture than about immigrant cultures.'⁹⁷⁰

Interestingly, many consider that this was only time that Cité did fulfill its mission to empower the marginalized migrant and portray them as positive additions to the French nation, but it was not the result of any administrative or curatorial decision. Seven months after the AoIE closed in Paris in 2010, the museum was 'occupied' for four months by illegal French-speaking African working migrants (mainly from Mali) fighting against deportation from France due to severe administrative regularization laws.⁹⁷¹

Supported by numerous trade unions and civil society groups and 'tolerated' by museum staff, these illegal workers interacted with the press and the public, insisting since they worked (often in jobs few wanted), paid taxes and had health insurance so they qualified for permanent residency. Their slogan over the four months was 'we work here, we live here, we stay here.'⁹⁷² Eventually forced to move on when the museum closed for unplanned 'renovations', Labadi argues this incident was the only time Cité became:

The avant-garde place it was designed to be ... a move away from this cold historicisation and objectification of the immigration movement, as a permanent exhibition attempted to do, towards a memorialization of the immigration phenomena through direct recollection of individual trajectories of the occupying illegal workers.⁹⁷³

⁹⁶⁸ Servole, op. cit., p. 115.

⁹⁶⁹ Chrisafis, October 2007, op. cit.

⁹⁷⁰ Rothstein, op. cit.

⁹⁷¹ Labadi, op. cit., pp. 322-328.

⁹⁷² *ibid.*, p. 324.

⁹⁷³ *ibid.*, pp. 323-324. Labadi comments that at the date of writing her article (May 2013) there had been no changes made to the permanent exhibition that reflected more accurately the current situation faced by contemporary migrant workers or the inclusion of immigrant stories from those considered not 'corresponding to the French integration model' (p. 328).

Cité was considered to have the potential to re-position the marginalized immigrant by giving these figures ‘some markers of identity’ and the power and ability to ‘become emblematic and positive public characters.’⁹⁷⁴ With such a controversial setting and inherited collection, Cité has failed to attract the crowds of the MQB and its permanent exhibition *Benchmarks* is widely considered to present a general, unified and common migrant experience, devoid of singular personal stories that represent any alternate accounts of non-compliance with the French-style integration model. This avoidance of minority particularism has produced simplified, fixed narratives that ignore pressing contemporary immigration issues, an absence that was highlighted with the illegal worker occupation in 2010. Even the promise of brief departures from ‘safe’ displays such as the controversial *1931. Foreigners at the time of the Colonial Exhibition* in 2008, for example, clearly highlights how problematic it can become when attempts are made to increase understanding and knowledge of sensitive historical pasts by showcasing contentious yet spectacular architectural, archival, artifactual colonial acquisitions. The general avoidance by museums of difficult topics and sensitive issues that France is still grappling with is obvious by the conservative nature of more recent temporary displays such as *Fashion Mix* that reinforces the trend of considering risk-management as an overriding factor in curatorial decision-making.

One questions whether Cité management will heed the complaints and suggestions of its staff and visitors and transform itself into a cultural space with a greater potential to foster inclusiveness and accessibility. Suggestions such as consultations with external panels of experts (academics involved in identity, migrant history, disability, gender and religious studies, heritage professionals, cultural critics) and forums and debates that involve museum professionals and audiences in ‘multidirectional’ exchanges are all possible avenues of revitalization.⁹⁷⁵

The fact that both Cité and MQB are housing and exhibiting newly labeled objects that were previously either prominent displays of colonial power or part of ethnographic collections, has been shown to further complicate their exhibition potential. I agree with Amato who maintains that when ethnographic artifacts are treated as primarily aesthetic objects (especially at the MQB) their importance and worth in the European marketplace

⁹⁷⁴ Labadi, op. cit., p. 311-313.

⁹⁷⁵ Dixson, op. cit., p. 86.

increases because they become cultures capable of producing works of ‘genius’, transforming their status in Western evolutionary terms from being ‘primitive’ to ‘fully ‘civilised.’⁹⁷⁶ It must be also be acknowledged, however, that the ‘exotic’ object can be praised for its primitive ‘otherness’ and still be regarded as beautiful by Western standards.⁹⁷⁷ Svetlana Alpers notion of the ‘museum effect’ is seen operating as a ‘way of seeing’ applied especially to ‘primitive’ art where ‘all objects are turned into works of art’ by ‘isolating’ them for ‘attentive looking’ so they ‘transform into art like our own ... with a sense of human affinities and common capacities ...’⁹⁷⁸ In this way, museums turn cultural materials into art objects; and as art objects they can be classified, valued and ranked according to Eurocentric criteria of quality.

Conclusion: towards an inclusive society

Despite an array of differences, all three institutions under discussion in this chapter were charged with addressing an urgent national dilemma: how to reconcile the needs and expectations of migrant minorities within the French model of integration and secular universalism. France’s diverse migrant populations have expressed their demand for an end to discrimination, improved housing, more employment opportunities and better wages and French institutions have responded to the challenge with varying degrees of success. These persistent and far-reaching immigration problems with societal unrest have forced both public and private bodies to reassess how their colonial past is perceived and represented.

As already detailed, the right to practice religion, especially in the French public sphere, has generated much debate. Muslims (especially with religious affiliations) have been perceived as failing to integrate and assimilate into French society, preferring to form minority groups following Islamic doctrine and aligning themselves closely to their former homelands or that of their ancestors. Many commentators consider the divisions within French society have widened through the implementation of discriminatory multicultural

⁹⁷⁶ Amato, op. cit., p. 55.

⁹⁷⁷ That a culture can be seen as an ‘exotic Other’ yet praised as ‘genius’ producing ‘beautiful’ objects, is a paradox. As the ‘exotic ideal are the peoples and cultures that are most remote from us and least known,’ Muslims and Islam are prime candidates as knowledge of a culture is ‘incompatible with exoticism’ (T Todorov, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993, p. 265).

⁹⁷⁸ S Alpers, ‘A Way of Seeing’, in *Exhibiting Cultures: The poetics and politics of the museum display*, in I Karp, S Lavine (eds.), op. cit., pp. 26-27, 30, 31-32.

polices and restrictive immigration laws that have redefined the criteria for 'Frenchness', reinforcing the 'European' versus 'Other', and 'French' versus 'migrant' dichotomies.

Even though the IMA is a partnership between France and Arab nations while MQB and Cité are French public institutions, they all function as powerful symbols of nation building and patriotism. With differing focuses (IMA showcasing Arab and Islamic art, MQB exhibiting non-European artifacts from former colonies, and Cité dedicated to illustrating the history of French migration) it is revealing of current curatorial trends and politics of display that all three institutions have chosen to rely on the aesthetic approach as the basis for displays of their artistic and cultural objects. Cross-cultural understanding is a common goal, but permanent displays have proved highly problematic and contentious when historical, social and religious contexts have been sidelined in favour of the aesthetic experience of the 'beautiful' object that the AoIE so actively promoted. This suggests that by neglecting these societal dimensions, important issues from the wider public sphere, such as the French colonial legacy, were never effectively thematised. As a result, both MQB and Cité missed the opportunity to rebuke criticism of neo-colonialism through displays.

This is especially the case with museums carrying the burden of colonial collections, as accusations leveled against MQB and Cité for using the aesthetic approach to avoid confronting colonialism directly illustrates. As discussions have highlighted, this dilemma does not excuse the MQB and Cité for their failings. Since the 1970s the impact of post-colonial revisions of imperial accounts has influenced curatorial practices, shifting the focus from extoling a nation's past colonial victories (especially its evolutionary and racial hierarchies) to socially significant, pluralistic perspectives based on individual and community concerns.⁹⁷⁹ Many museums are collaborating with their Indigenous communities locally and internationally on issues such as conservation of artifacts and how best to display these objects in a culturally sensitive manner similar to the IMA's approach.

By their very nature, temporary exhibitions have a greater capacity to promote multiple (and often more contentious) perspectives than permanent displays. Relying on temporary exhibitions sourced mainly from Arab and Muslim lands and without the need to 'conserve' can concentrate on 'disseminating', displays at the IMA are able to showcase a wide-ranging collection of arts from ancient artifacts to modern installations. Unlike the

⁹⁷⁹ Sauvage, September 2007, op. cit.

MQB and Cité, the Institute was not deterred by controversial topics and not afraid of negative reactions from their audiences, as the two Algerian and Arab Sciences exhibitions reveal. To the contrary, evidence suggests visitor responses to these exhibitions were extremely positive in terms of cross-cultural understanding between French citizens and migrants and highly educational for North African migrants in relation to their own heritage and the wider Islamic diaspora.

Despite their obvious merit, touring shows do have some disadvantages when compared to permanent displays. Most significantly, the same temporality that allows greater curatorial freedom can work against the promotion of cross-cultural understanding, as it is impossible to attract all potential audiences, as visitors cannot return multiple times over a long period to a travelling exhibition. There is also the possibility that exhibiting more contentious or hybrid displays in temporary spaces can add to the perception that permanent displays are fixed, limited in scope and exoticized. However, the use of multimedia, present but not user-friendly at MQB and limited at Cité, is interactive and inclusive at IMA with its multi-lingual web and online features designed to promote global cross-cultural exchanges. Being able to connect to a global network of collections and exhibitions worldwide encourages visitors to explore virtually and compare experiences with a wider international community.

As many have argued⁹⁸⁰ liberal programs of cultural dialogue and recognition such as Mitterand's and Chirac's are central to modern forms of multicultural governance, in both neo colonial and post-colonial ways.⁹⁸¹ French-style Universalism and assimilation policies sit uncomfortably with recognition of and alliances with modern indigenous social organizations.⁹⁸² It is unsurprising, that France's colonial past, the precarious nature of the public's taste and the unstable global art market are reflected and often mired in difficult histories that influence 'great' collections. Dias and Clifford are accurate when they describe France's relationship with its past: 'far from being 'negotiated', 'reinvented' or 'forgotten', the colonial past is just transferred and re-written into a present global concern.'⁹⁸³

⁹⁸⁰ See E Povinelli, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*, Durham, Duke University Press, 2002; C R Hale, 'Does Multiculturalism menace? Governance, cultural rights and the politics of identity in Guatemala', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 34, 2002, pp. 485-524.

⁹⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁹⁸² Clifford, 2007, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

⁹⁸³ Dias, *op. cit.*, p. 309.

The role that travelling displays play in re-presenting and re-contextualizing objects and the disruption and transformation potential for the reconfiguration of narratives (especially national and colonial ones) cannot be underestimated. In the cases under discussion in this chapter, it appears the exhibitions that have the greatest success are those that are not afraid to incorporate social, historical, political and religious contexts alongside the aesthetic display, be it a permanent or temporary show.

This is certainly the situation with the IMA that, despite being established in the 1980s, continues to advance cross-cultural understanding actively and 'build bridges' through displays such as the AoIE, a goal that the MQB and Cité find difficult to achieve. These more recent institutions need to dispel the vision of 'first' cultures as exotic others or vanishing civilizations consigned to distant past, the domain of social scientists and connoisseurs.⁹⁸⁴ The perception of the 'noble savage' and 'others' living outside historical time, is a colonial story that requires serious rewriting. France appears yet to come to terms with its colonial past, whose violent conflicts are unacknowledged and unresolved in museum displays that continue to separate the 'primitive' non-European cultural artifacts from the 'civilized' Western world. What constitutes 'Frenchness' needs to reflect 'real' not 'imagined' individuals/communities and fair, equitable multicultural/immigration policies must predominate over empty, outdated colonial rhetoric. Only then will France's claim of an 'egalitarian, *laïque*, inclusive' society have a greater chance of becoming a reality.

Colonial legacies and issues surrounding multiculturalism, however, vary according to their context as the last venue for the AoIE demonstrates in the next chapter. Despite similar Imperialist and immigration histories, the Dutch situation differs from the French approach in many ways and offers an insight into a unique form of governance that has had unexpected and often unwelcome consequences, that have had widespread impact on the population of the Netherlands. Tensions and disputes have been problematic for governing bodies and cultural institutions alike, with many proposed solutions and implemented policies and practices becoming polemical, as discussions that follow reveal. Once again, the dilemma between the aesthetic experience in preference to interpretation is called into question, especially since this last venue for the AoIE is relies almost entirely on the agency of the 'beautiful' object to transcend all boundaries.

⁹⁸⁴ Clifford, 2007, op. cit., p. 19.

Chapter Six

Art and Moral Panics: the precariousness of the aesthetic

All of art is united by one element that is beauty. Beauty talks to you. It makes your heart sing.

NASSAR D. KHALILI

That which tolerates is not eligible for tolerance; that which is tolerated is often presumed incapable of tolerance.

WENDY BROWN, REGULATING AVERSION

The journeys end

In the European winter of 2010/2011, the De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery in Amsterdam (hereafter referred to as the DNKG) was the final destination for this travelling show (fig 97). The DNKG is set within the walls of a deconsecrated Gothic cathedral and the exhibition designer was Siebe Tettero, known for his work with the Rijksmuseum and the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. According to advertisements in the press, the exhibition aimed at highlighting:

The beauty and exquisite workmanship of Islamic art ... that Islamic art is a masterly expression, not of a single national culture or civilization, but of the many peoples joined by Islam for more than 1400 years. At the same time, the exhibition demonstrates the passion and expertise of Professor Khalili ... every piece is an ambassador for Islamic culture ... [and must be viewed] object as object ... [to establish a] neutral level ... a common history⁹⁸⁵

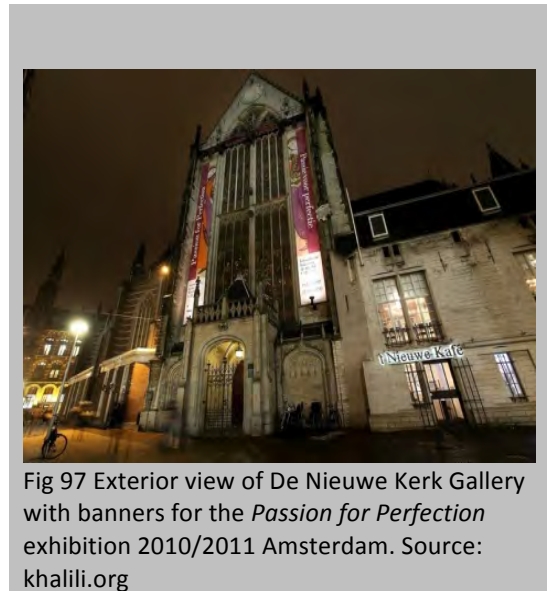


Fig 97 Exterior view of De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery with banners for the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition 2010/2011 Amsterdam. Source: khalili.org

The emphasis once again was on the highly diverse geographical and cultural aspects of the exhibition and that the works were not made specifically for religious purposes as Islamic objects 'artistic language is rooted in Islamic philosophy, often reflecting

⁹⁸⁵Tettero cited in C Ebers, 'Prof. Nasser D Khalili: Passion for Perfection, Amsterdam', Amsterdam exhibition video, *Khalili Trust Collection*, 2011, retrieved 10 August 2012, www.khalili.org.

local cultures and traditions ... there is also a strong emphasis on representations of humans and animals ... [which is] tolerated only in secular contexts.⁹⁸⁶

The curatorial team at the DNKG presented an installation-like display aimed at presenting each spot lit artifact as 'stand alone' aesthetic objects that appeared to 'float in space' in their darkened environment (fig 98).⁹⁸⁷ Khalili wanted to 'praise the artist not the collector ... [and] the peaceful co-existence of two diverse cultures', encouraging the 'element of surprise' and discovery through wandering.⁹⁸⁸ Marlies Kleiterp, director of exhibitions at the DNKG and the

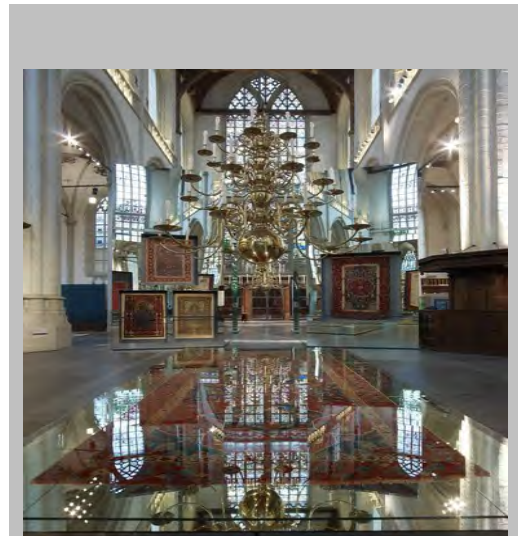


Fig 98 Interior view of De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery in Amsterdam with church architecture and mirror installation for the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition 2010/2011 Amsterdam. Source: khalili.org

Hermitage Amsterdam, described how the approach of this 2010 exhibition differed from previous displays that had been arranged in the traditional chronological, geographical and historical approach in a linear arrangement. In this instance, the exhibition concentrated entirely on the objects 'function and form' so that the visitor would 'admire the beauty of the collection, and admire the craftsmanship of the artists'; thus the show was aptly renamed *Passion for Perfection*. 'We present each object for its beauty, on its own. We do not focus on Islam as a (world) religion ... the function of the object determines if it is religious⁹⁸⁹ ... [regardless] we do not put the objects in any specific religious or secular context' the curator commented.⁹⁹⁰ This aim was explicit in the Sydney show with the exhibition organizers concentration on the aesthetic aspects of 'star objects' and to a lesser degree in Paris with the inclusion of thematic sections that challenged the categories of sacred and secular. In contrast, the Abu Dhabi display allowed

⁹⁸⁶ ND Khalili, 'Passion for Perfection: Islamic art from the Khalili Collections', *De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam*, retrieved 10 November 2012, http://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/#/en/pers/passie_voor_perfectie/persbericht.htm.

⁹⁸⁷ Tettero, cited in Ebers, op. cit.

⁹⁸⁸ Khalili, op. cit.

⁹⁸⁹ M Kleiterp cited in Ebers, op. cit.

⁹⁹⁰ H Nasab, 'A Collector's Passion for Perfection – De Nieuwe Kerk's Marlies Kleiterp on the Khalili Collection', *BlouinARTINFO*, retrieved 20 December 2010, <http://blogs.artinfo.com/museumviews/2010/12/20/a-collector-s-passion-for-perfection-de-nieuwe-kerk-s-marlies-kleiterp-on-the-khalili-collection/>

the religious dimension dominant in the public sphere to significantly impact the structure of the exhibition.

At this last venue these travelling troupes of objects have undergone the most dramatic process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualization, disruption and transformation, questioning the actual conceptual definition of the what constitutes a travelling display as opposed to a collection of disparate artefacts. The success of Khalili's displays of Islamic art and culture based on the belief that the agency of objects alone can transcend boundaries meets its final test in Amsterdam.

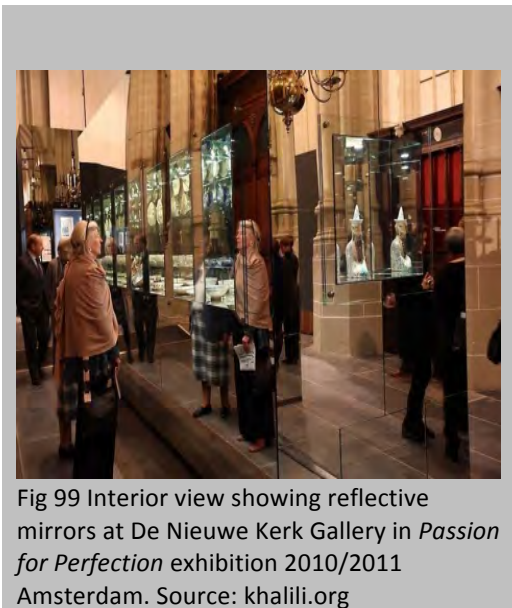


Fig 99 Interior view showing reflective mirrors at De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery in *Passion for Perfection* exhibition 2010/2011 Amsterdam. Source: khalili.org

According to Tettero, his task was to 'encourage dialogue between the objects and the church itself', but due to problems of scale (small objects in a huge church), establishing a 'narrative' proved difficult.⁹⁹¹ To solve this problem, showcases were covered with mirrors (1200 square feet in total) so the object could be viewed from multiple angles to 'encourage the visitor to examine them more intensely (fig 99).'⁹⁹² Church architecture was also reflected in the mirrored

surfaces enabling the Islamic artifacts to be in 'direct dialogue with the Christian symbols of this Gothic monument.'⁹⁹³ The curator commented that it was 'magic ... Bearing in mind that the art has been collected by a Jew closes the circle and stresses the connection between Islam, Judaism and Christianity.'⁹⁹⁴ Therefore the exhibition environment was designed synchronically so that viewer, the object and the environment were simultaneously experiencing an individual engagement with Islamic heritage through an intermingling of 'souls'. Ernst Veen, director of the DNKG and the Hermitage Amsterdam, enthusiastically stated 'they [the objects] are a real treat to the eyes and the heart',⁹⁹⁵ reinforcing Khalili's view that 'objects have a soul ... [and as the] eyes are the windows of

⁹⁹¹ Tettero cited in Ebers, op. cit.

⁹⁹² *ibid.*

⁹⁹³ *ibid.*

⁹⁹⁴ *ibid.*

⁹⁹⁵ Tettero cited in Ebers, op. cit.

the soul, visitors who come to the exhibition visually see how magnificent, how beautifully diverse this exhibition is ...'⁹⁹⁶

As further reinforcement of this synthesis of religions, Qur'ans were displayed near the altar area with other works grouped loosely under functional titles⁹⁹⁷ and a continuous forty-eight hour looped, taped reading of the entire Qur'an played throughout the exhibition to give a 'special atmosphere'; all of which the curator stated Khalili 'liked very much.'⁹⁹⁸ Khalili reiterated his now familiar rhetoric concerning this travelling show:

... [the objects are] beautiful art before [they are] Islamic ... [and are] passport[s] to pride and dignity [for Islam] ... and for the West to recognize, appreciate and give credit to Islamic culture ... [as most of the West] think of politics ... art is timeless and culture is universal.'⁹⁹⁹

Therefore, it appears that while the exhibition was emphasizing the diversity of form, function and beauty of the objects on display rather than any religious, historical, social or political contexts, a religious common ground was still hoped for through the aesthetic experience.

This chapter focuses on the role of the aesthetic experience in museum displays through an in-depth discussion of two artworks considered 'highlights' of the exhibition: *Jami' al-Tawarikh is Muhammad leading Hamzah and the Muslims against the Banu Qaynuqa*; and a Qajar enamel *Portrait Miniature of the Qajar ruler, Fath'ali Shah*. As the DNKG favoured the aesthetic approach above other formats, a discussion of literature and discourse surrounding these objects is necessary to reveal important, but in this case largely overlooked, narratives embedded in contexts other than the aesthetic, that is, religious, historical, cultural and political agendas. Curatorial attitudes and decisions regarding these aspects of display will be reviewed and assessed in light of the mandate to promote cross-cultural understanding between diverse audiences. The effect of and impact upon the specific circumstances of the DNKG and its location in Amsterdam and the Netherlands generally, require examination to fully understand the potential that the *Passion for Perfection* display offered in easing societal tensions that appear to have reached a crisis point by 2010.

⁹⁹⁶ Khalili Trust Collection, op. cit.

⁹⁹⁷ The themed groups were titled: delicate paintings, fine pen craft, glittering gems, chic applications, dazzling dishes, storing in style, splendid garments, and sumptuous decoration.

⁹⁹⁸ Transcript L Ryan & M Klieterp, 2012, line 55.

⁹⁹⁹ Khalili cited in Ebers, op. cit.

The Netherlands: colonisation to civic integration

A 2012 study found that one in very six people in the Netherlands has an immigrant background or a parent to whom it applies; a total of 3.5 million people or twenty-one per cent of the entire population.¹⁰⁰⁰ Almost one third of the Amsterdam population is foreign born and three in five school children are of immigrant origin, with the largest numbers of immigrants originating from (in descending order): Indonesia, Turkey, Surinam, Morocco, the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba, former Yugoslavia, Germany, Belgium and the USA.¹⁰⁰¹

The Dutch approach to immigration has resulted in multicultural policies that, thirty years on, the governing bodies consider 'ill conceived' and wish to distance themselves from. During the second half of the twentieth century, immigration was a mixture of relocating populations: former Dutch colonies (mainly Surinam, the Antilles and Indonesia- previously known as the Dutch East Indies) between 1945-1960s; 'guest workers' recruited from Morocco, Turkey and Southern Europe during the 1960s-early 1970s (leading later to family reunion migration); and asylum seekers and refugees since the late 1980s, especially from Africa and former Yugoslavia.¹⁰⁰² Within the space of sixty years, these sustained and complex migrations into the Netherlands transformed the nation from a society with a highly homogenous ethnic population to one of remarkable diversity.¹⁰⁰³ As a result of this dramatic demographic shift, tensions concerning immigration and ethnic minorities reached boiling point by the 1970s, when a series of terrorist acts (two train hijackings and a kidnapping from a school) by a group of young Moluccans ignited debates.¹⁰⁰⁴ These violent acts led to a reassessment of policy concerning immigration and resettlement of minorities resulting in revisions aimed at recognizing the permanent residence of some migrant groups and their integration into Dutch society.¹⁰⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰⁰ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p.3.

¹⁰⁰¹ H Entzinger, 'The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism', C Joppke, S Lukes, *Multicultural Questions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.

¹⁰⁰² Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 2.

¹⁰⁰³ E Vasta, 'From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilation in the Netherland', *Ethnic Racial Studies*, vol. 30, no. 5, 2007, p. 715-716, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870701491770>.

¹⁰⁰⁴ R Penninx, B Garcés-Mascareñas, P Scholten, 'Policymaking Related to Immigration and Integration: A Review of Literature of the Dutch Case', *international Migration, Integration, Social Cohesion (IMISCOE)*, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2005, p. 4, retrieved 7 July 2014, <dare.uva.nl/document/352322>. The Moluccans were originally a migrant cohort of former colonial soldiers from the Dutch East Indies who had been 'temporarily' residing in the Netherlands since 1951.

¹⁰⁰⁵ *ibid.*

The official political response to this ethnic unrest was the 1983 *Ethnic Minorities Policy (Minderhedennota)*, established to deal with guest workers from eight minority groups: Moroccans and Tunisians, Turks, Dutch Antilleans, Moluccans, Surinamese, South Europeans, Gypsies and refugees. These groups were singled out as they had previously been deemed temporary residents (i.e. most likely to return to their country of origin) and considered non-participants in mainstream Dutch society.¹⁰⁰⁶ This approach was adopted by the Dutch government based on the principle that due to their high-density national population, the Netherlands was obliged to provide only a limited number of welfare programs and temporary accommodation to migrants other than those from its former colonies. Therefore, these groups were encouraged to form separate, distinctly ethnic, government-funded institutions (in the areas of education, healthcare, training, social work, and broadcasting) and local government councils to represent minority needs at a national level.¹⁰⁰⁷ This process was called ‘pillarization’ (*verzuiling*) and was designed to encourage integration into Dutch society while retaining unique cultural identities for anticipated returns to countries of origin.¹⁰⁰⁸ The belief was that eventually the necessity for institutional pluralism would decline, with barriers fading till a ‘truly multi-ethnic society would develop, characterized by a mutual adaption of immigrant and Dutch culture.’¹⁰⁰⁹

The organization of society along ethnic lines had unforeseen consequences however. The process worked smoothly until the mass influx of asylum-seekers from many disparate countries flooding into the Netherlands made funding individual group infrastructure impossible. This situation was exacerbated by factional disputes and the dominance of elite groups of activists that had resulted in the poor conditions experienced by some ethnic communities remaining unchanged.¹⁰¹⁰ With multicultural policies failing to promote co-operation between groups and the promotion of a one-nation outlook, the result was

¹⁰⁰⁶ C Joppke, E Morawska, ‘Integrating Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States’, Joppke, Lukes, op.cit., p. 14.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁰⁸ *ibid.* Pillarization was a type of the late nineteenth century institutional pluralism, typical of Dutch (and Belgian) society that provided each major religious and ideological community with the funds to establish their own institutional and cultural bodies. Historically, southern areas of the Netherlands were traditionally Catholic and the northern Protestant (divided into Lutheran, Reformed and Dutch Reformed). In the case of ethnic minorities, this approach was not applied to all communities however, as the Chinese, for example, were not included as they were viewed as an integrating minority. Pillarization also advocated the incorporation of elite sections of the minority groups into the policy-making process.

¹⁰⁰⁹ H Entzinger, ‘Race, Class and the Shaping of a Policy for Immigrants; The Case of the Netherlands’, *International Migration Review*, issue 25, March 1987, p. 10.

¹⁰¹⁰ *ibid.* For example, by the end of the 1980s Moroccan and Turkish communities were reaching unemployment rates of forty per cent.

exclusion and segregation.¹⁰¹¹ Escalating socio-economic differences and increasingly diverse migrant populations culminated in the shift from multicultural state programs to a 'policy of obligatory integration ... [with] an emphasis on civic communalities'.¹⁰¹² The 1994 *Integration Policy* followed by the *Civic Integration of Newcomers* law in 1998 were aimed at 'mainstreaming' and 'common citizenship'¹⁰¹³ with its compulsory language classes and 600 hours of civic duties designed to 'insert' immigrants into Dutch society. This civic integration ('*inburgerings*') policy signalled the final demise of multicultural programs for immigrants. According to Dutch sociologist Han Entzinger (who was instrumental in the establishment of the policy), the law represented the firm belief that 'minimal shared convictions' was essential for any multicultural society to function.¹⁰¹⁴

By 2000 the integrationist approach was having some success (especially with second generation migrant children) and unemployment in these communities had fallen to ten per cent,¹⁰¹⁵ although many attribute this decline to the strong economic growth in the Netherlands during this period.¹⁰¹⁶ However, segregation was increasing in the education system generally and in the Islamic primary schools especially, many of which were considered as failing to meet Dutch institutional standards. During the 1990s schools became known as either 'black' or 'white', with some 'black' schools catering to ethnic groups exclusively.¹⁰¹⁷ Until this time publicly questioning immigration and ethnic policies had been 'taboo' as problems were usually determined through advisory committees formed with government and ethnic minorities' representatives.¹⁰¹⁸

However, by the late 1990s a 'silent majority' was encouraged to voice their discontent concerning immigration.¹⁰¹⁹ The catalyst for this break with tradition came from

¹⁰¹¹ H Entzinger, (unpublished manuscript) cited in C Joppke, E Morawska, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁰¹² *ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁰¹³ Penninx, Garces-Mascarenas, Scholten, op. cit., p. 5.

¹⁰¹⁴ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 15.

¹⁰¹⁵ Vasta, op. cit., p. 719. This view is reinforced by the fact that unemployment rates among immigrants of non-Western origin had risen again by 2001 to around thirty per cent.

¹⁰¹⁶ S Verbeek, S Groeneveld, 'Do "hard" diversity policies increase ethnic minority representation? An assessment of their effectiveness using administrative data', *IMISCOE Conference, Netherlands*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, vol. 41, no. 5, 2012, pp. 647-664, retrieved 5 July 2014, www.emeraldinsight.com/0048-3486.htm. This study is notable for its analysis of policy aimed at migrant populations in the Netherlands and the perceived successfulness of targeted programs especially in terms of integration into the mainstream Dutch workplace.

¹⁰¹⁷ R Koopmans cited in Vasta, op. cit., p. 722. Additionally, waiting lists at schools based primarily on ethnic background was found to be widespread.

¹⁰¹⁸ Penninx, Garces-Mascarenas, Scholten, op. cit., p. 6.

¹⁰¹⁹ Entzinger cited in Joppke, Morawska, op. cit., p. 71.

the then leader of the Liberal party, Frits Bolkestein, who sparked the first debates about non-integrating migrants, singling out the ever-increasing Muslim communities. Bolkestein claimed 'Islam was a threat to liberal democracy and a hindrance for integration of immigrants and immigrant integration should be handled with more courage.'¹⁰²⁰

The media and pivotal moments: separating fact from fiction

In terms of the media response, the first writer to gain prominence for questioning the government's 'official' positive rhetoric in regard to immigration and migrant resettlement policies was Labour Party member and publicist Paul Scheffer in his controversial article in 2000, *The Multicultural Tragedy*. Based on findings from the 1999 *Report on Minorities* by the Social and Cultural planning Office (SCP), Scheffer was scathing of immigration policies and politicians (especially from the Left) for their 'cultural relativism' that had pushed the nation's tolerance to the limit, especially in regard to Muslims and Islam.¹⁰²¹ He argued that these migrants did not or would not integrate into Dutch society and that their beliefs, values and norms were incompatible with the liberal traditions of the Netherlands: 'Those people do not speak our language, and follow other conventions ... there are cultural differences that are not susceptible to bending, rearranging and surrendering.'¹⁰²² Citing report predictions, he believed the situation was 'disturbing' as by 2015 fifty per cent of the population in the Netherlands four major cities (Rotterdam, Amsterdam, The Hague and Utrecht) would be 'foreigners'.¹⁰²³ Schaeffer urged an immediate re-assessment of immigration and integration policy as the present model based on multiculturalism was a failure because it 'increased inequality and contributes to a sense of alienation in society ... the multicultural drama that unfolds is also the biggest threat to social peace.'¹⁰²⁴

Three events galvanized popular support for Scheffer's perspective in the Dutch community: the terrorist attacks of 9/11 in 2001; and the assassinations of anti-Islam politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002; and broadcaster and filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004 (fig 100). These events were significant for different reasons: the Dutch aligned itself closely to

¹⁰²⁰ Penninx, Garces-Mascareñas, Scholten, op. cit.

¹⁰²¹ P Scheffer, 'The Multicultural Drama', *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January 2000, retrieved 10 July 2014, <http://pemstatistieken.nl/pem/nrch/s?oude-site.dossiers.Multicultureel.scheffer>

¹⁰²² *ibid.*

¹⁰²³ *ibid.*

¹⁰²⁴ *ibid.*

the US, so felt the attack as an assault on all Western liberal democracies (fig 101);¹⁰²⁵ despite Fortuyn's murder being committed by a Dutch animal rights activist (Fortuyn wore fur coats), many blamed left-wing policies for their immigration dilemmas;¹⁰²⁶ and in the days that followed Van Gogh's death at the hands of a Dutch-born Muslim fundamentalist of Moroccan background in retaliation against his film *Submission*, over 20 mosques and schools were vandalized (102).¹⁰²⁷



Fig 100 Dutch politician Pim Fortuyn (left,) Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh (center) Geert Wilders (right), leader of Freedom Party.

Source: <http://www.barenakedislam.com/2015/01/06/will-the-netherlands-be-hosting-the-next-anti-islamization-pegida-rallies/>

¹⁰²⁵ The events of 9/11 intensified situations that would otherwise have had little impact on Dutch society. For example, in 2001 a local imam openly condemned homosexuals, likening them to 'pigs'. There was a public outcry over these comments despite scant attention being given to previous statements from Muslims concerning their view of Western civilization as lustful, decadent and promiscuous (especially in regard to homosexuality and feminism) (P Sniderman, A Hagendoorn, *When ways of life collide: multiculturalism and its discontents in the Netherlands*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2007, p. 18).

¹⁰²⁶ Fortuyn, unlike Le Penn in France, did not advocate returning immigrants to their homeland but argued they needed to accept the Dutch values and norms. Because of Islam's unequal treatment of women and condemnation of homosexuality, Fortuyn referred to Islam as intolerant and a 'backward religion' using the Dutch term *achterlijk*, implying backwardness and stupidity. As a forerunner to Geert Wilders, Fortuyn appealed to right wing, mainly dissatisfied lower-educated young voters (S Storm, R Naastepad, 'The Dutch Distress', *New Left Review*, issue 20, March-April 2003, p.133-134; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, op. cit., p. 20).

¹⁰²⁷ Lastly, Van Gogh (who had a reputation for vulgarity and making offensive remarks about Muslims calling them *geitenneukers* (or 'goat fuckers') was shot and stabbed to death by a well-educated, second-generation, fluent Dutch speaker (referred to as Mohammad B.), who was offended by his film *Submission* which featured ex-Muslim refugee and then parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Controversially, the short film contained images of Ali's naked body covered with verses from the Qur'an. (Sniderman, Hagendoorn, op. cit., pp. 2-3; F Pakes, 'The ebb and flow of criminal justice in the Netherlands', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, issue 34, 2006, p. 151, retrieved 10 July 2014, www.sciencedirect.com)

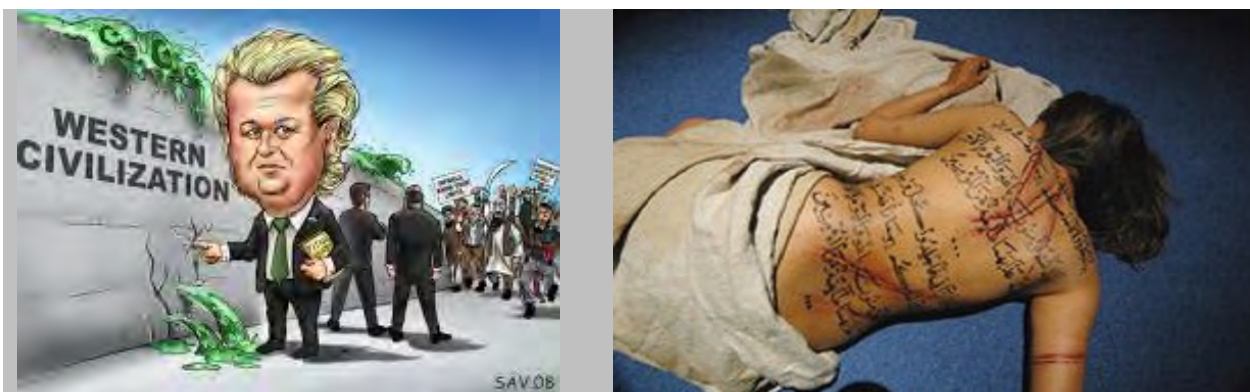


Fig 101 Satirical cartoon showing Wilders saving western civilization from the 'Muslim Hordes'. Source:

<http://sheikyermami.com/geert-wilders-we-are-at-war-war-has-been-declared-against-the-free-west/>

Fig 102 Still from Van Gogh's film Submission showing ex-Muslim refugee and then parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali's naked body covered with verses from the Qur'an. Source:

<https://shariaunveiled.wordpress.com/tag/theo-van-gogh/>

The overall impact of these events was the replacement of the integration model with an assimilative approach that was considered the most punitive in Europe. The new restrictions included: curtailing of family reunions; introducing pre and post-departure integration and language tests with fines for non-compliance; Dutch citizenship became more expensive and harder to obtain; and low-income people were prevented from settling in particular Dutch neighbourhoods.¹⁰²⁸ The high birth rate among these ethnic communities and the tendency to marry native Moroccans and Turks residing outside of the Netherlands further exacerbated the situation. Despite previously being encouraged to retain their cultural identity, the widespread view was that migrants were responsible for their slow rate of integration (especially Muslims) and now had to be forced to blend into Dutch society at an accelerated rate.¹⁰²⁹

Many agree with Han Entzinger who warns against 'fixed' models of integration, maintaining the Netherlands is a prime example of an approach to immigration that failed to account for the enduring and dynamic nature of immigration. As a result, their trajectory of national policy-making models since the 1950s has involved 'regular frame shifting': from exclusionist, multiculturalist, and integrationist to the present hard-line assimilationist model.¹⁰³⁰ Entzinger justifiably criticizes Scheffer and his promotion of the assimilationist

¹⁰²⁸ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰²⁹ ibid. The Dutch policy of individuals or groups being responsible for their own integration or 'self-sufficiency' (*'zelfredzaamheid'*) was now mandatory for Muslim immigrants (E Romeyn, 'Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Spectropolitics and Immigration', *Theory Culture Society*, 2014, vol. 31, no. 6, p77-101, retrieved 25 September 2014, <http://tcs.sagepub.com/content/31/6/77>., p. 85).

¹⁰³⁰ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., pp. 1,12.

approach in the Netherlands as ultimately ‘clash[ing] with its own principles of freedom and tolerance’ characteristic of liberal democratic nation-states.¹⁰³¹ Importantly, Entzinger speculates that Dutch societal changes are contributing to a ‘growing gap between facts and discourse,’ particularly when discussion concerns debates about Islam and Muslims. According to research conducted in 2009 by Marcel Lubbers and Mérove Gijssberts, fifty per cent of Dutch citizens surveyed felt there were ‘too many foreigners in the country’ and were against ‘persons of different ethnic culture as their neighbours.’¹⁰³² Crucially, the majority of participants believed the main cause of the majority of integration problems was the dominance of Islam even when statistics proved otherwise:

... [despite] hardly any Muslims among the latest newcomers to the country, many members of the native population continue to consider Islam and its perceived expansiveness and oppressiveness as the root of all evil. They see the presence of Islam as a threat to Dutch liberal and permissive attitudes on issues such as sexuality, equal rights, freedom of religion, and freedom of expression.¹⁰³³

Furthermore, other recent survey findings report that a negative attitude towards Muslims and Islam generally decreases with the attainment of higher levels of education.¹⁰³⁴ This evidence also indicates that lower educated Dutch citizens are less tolerant and more likely to be attracted to ‘populist arguments’ of right-ring anti-Islam parties such as Geert Wilders Freedom Party that grew to prominence during the 2006 elections and held the balance of power by supporting the coalition government between 2010-12.¹⁰³⁵ The power and politics of Wilders is an interesting case and illustrative of the uniqueness of Dutch political system. His stance is an unusual unique blend of the Dutch libertarianism and xenophobia: liberal views on homosexuality and women yet a conservative nationalism perspective that warns Dutch identity is under threat from Islam and immigration.¹⁰³⁶ His influence resulted in policies such as the government outlawing facial coverings (*kopvoddentax*), with Wilders demanding a ‘pollution Tax’ on headscarfs and a ban on building further Mosques.¹⁰³⁷ The burka ban especially was implemented ‘to protect the

¹⁰³¹ Entzinger cited in Joppke, Morawska, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁰³² Report cited in Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰³³ *ibid.*

¹⁰³⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰³⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁰³⁶ Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 42-43.

¹⁰³⁷ Wilders likens Islamic doctrine to communism, fascism (comparing the Qu’ran to Mein Kampf), and declares Western society superior to Islamic society. He further argues that ‘multiculturalism is dead ... the more Islam the less freedom ... [as] Islam is an ideology not a religion ...’ Wilders influence appears

character and good habits of public life in the Netherlands' as its wearing symbolized an incompatibility with European values, gender equality and was a security risk.¹⁰³⁸

Moral panics and zero tolerance debates

According to Entzinger, cultural rather than economic factors appear to have greater impact on opinions concerning Muslims and Islam in the Netherlands, with higher levels of immigration coupled with intensive media reporting accounting for the most negative attitudes among the Dutch population generally. Interestingly, this observer notes that during economic crises attitudes towards immigration improve generally as the media report less sensational new items, especially concerning Muslims and Islam.¹⁰³⁹ With media reporting exacerbating tense situations, many commentators warn against simplistic assessments of religious and ethnic affiliations among Muslims in the case of the Netherlands. While findings suggest that higher-educated first generation Muslims tend to be less religious than the second-generation. Overall, the higher educated Muslims identify less with their ethnic and religious communities. This confirms the generally held view that assimilation progresses through exposure to other cultures, rejecting the perception that religiousness is increasing among Muslims residing in the Netherlands.¹⁰⁴⁰

Despite such findings, levels of suspicion and feelings of 'mutual distrust' appear high for both Muslims and non-Muslims (especially among highly educated Muslims and low educated non-Muslims) and the incompatibility of these 'two worlds' is a widely held view.¹⁰⁴¹ Moroccan youth crimes in particular are seen as conclusive proof that multiculturalism in the Netherlands has failed.¹⁰⁴² Reporting of gangs of Moroccan youths robbery, vandalizing property and assaulting homosexuals in particular has drawn much

widespread, including Norwegian Anders Brevik, (right wing Christian extremist who shot seventy-seven people in Oslo in 2011 as a protest against multiculturalism and the spread of Islam), who mentions Wilders thirty times in his lengthy manifesto. Wilders views have international appeal and in the Australian political context arch-conservative South Australian senator Cory Bernardi has been criticized by moderates in his own party for extending an invitation to Wilders to visit Australia, resulting in Wilders controversial Australian lecture tour in 2013. (Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 10. See also J Van der Waal, W de Koster & P Achterberg, 'Stedelijke context en steun voor de PVV: Interetnische nabijheid, economische kansen en cultureel klimaat in 50 Nederlandse steden', *Res Publica*, issue 53, no 2, pp. 189-207).

¹⁰³⁸ Romeyn, op. cit., pp. 78, 88.

¹⁰³⁹ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 10. See also J Van der Waal et al, op. cit., pp. 189-207.

¹⁰⁴⁰ M Maliepaard, M Lubbers, M Gijsberts, 'Generational differences in ethnic and religious attachment and their interrelation. A study among Muslim minorities in the Netherlands', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 33, no. 3, March 2010 p. 468.

¹⁰⁴¹ Entzinger, 2013, op. cit.

¹⁰⁴² F Pakes, 2010, op. cit.

attention, contributing to the sense of streets being unsafe for the local Dutch resident. It is considered a 'social fact of today' that Moroccan youth are trouble for the police and the wider community,¹⁰⁴³ with terms like 'street terror' and 'beach terrorism' now common usage.¹⁰⁴⁴ Politicians increasingly refer to safety in negative terms, with 'insecurity' and 'crime' interchangeable notions reflecting the fears and feelings of the general community.¹⁰⁴⁵

Following the American model, the Netherlands has implemented a 'zero tolerance' policy towards the policing of ethnic minorities where 'virtually *all* social problems are judged along ethnic lines.'¹⁰⁴⁶ For example, in Amsterdam the use of a 'preventative stopping order' (*tegenhouden*) to remove a person either temporarily or deport them permanently without arresting or charging them of a crime is increasingly deployed. This 'banishment order' extends to individuals deemed 'nuisances' in places such as shopping malls, public transport and swimming pools, identified via surveillance footage.¹⁰⁴⁷ This 'Dutch Distress', according to Servaas Storm and Ro Naastepad, is part of neo-liberal globalization and its preoccupation with safety,¹⁰⁴⁸ succinctly summed up by Dutch criminologist René Van Swaeningen: 'Prevention now mainly means proactive intervention on the basis of risk profiles. Banishment is the new metaphor of this politics of public safety and the fears of the law-abiding citizen are the driving force behind it.'¹⁰⁴⁹ Extending this notion of risk in modern times, Garland suggests: '... risks that are socially constructed makes them no less real, but it does mean that they can be magnified and dramatized in the public imagination as projections of a structure of personal anxieties caused by the new uncertainties of social life.'¹⁰⁵⁰ This is akin to Beck's theory of risk management in second modernity that was initially discussed in chapter one in regard to how different museums approach controversy and risk management.

¹⁰⁴³ *ibid.*, op. cit., p. 113.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 39.

¹⁰⁴⁵ R Van Swaeningen, 'Public safety and the management of fear', *Theoretical Criminology*, 2005, p. 291, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://tcr.sagepub.com/content/9/3/289>.

¹⁰⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 292.

¹⁰⁴⁷ *ibid.*, p. 296.

¹⁰⁴⁸ S Storm, R Naastepad, 'The Dutch Distress', *New Left Review*, issue 20, March-April 2003, p. 147-149.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Van Swaeningen, op. cit., p. 303.

¹⁰⁵⁰ D Garland, 'The risk of risk', *Risk and Morality*, in R V Ericson & A Doyle (ed.), Toronto, Buffalo, University of Toronto Press, London, 2003, p. 78.

In the main cities (Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague) a third of the population are from ethnic minorities and nearly fifty per cent are under eighteen years of age.¹⁰⁵¹ With a higher than national average rate of unemployment,¹⁰⁵² criminality especially amongst Antillean and Moroccan youths in Amsterdam is particularly prevalent, and are considered more likely than native Dutch adolescents to be officially cautioned for their anti-social behavior.¹⁰⁵³ These groups of teenagers are regarded as 'nuisances' with street robbery (and in Amsterdam bike theft) being the most common offence and there is a high rate of re-offending.¹⁰⁵⁴ Popular media stories have included: seaside resorts being terrorized by groups of Moroccan youths; possible links between birth defects and inbreeding among Moroccans and Turks; suspicion of the controlling influence of imams that regularly return to Morocco for 'retraining'; threats against authorities (Zaltbommel's Burgomaster) and the need for extra personal security; and anxiety over the consistent warring between Malaccans and Moroccan youths.¹⁰⁵⁵ As a result, twenty-two towns have been labeled 'Moroccan municipalities' (*Marokkanengemeenten*) and are eligible for additional funding to combat problems with Moroccan youths.¹⁰⁵⁶ According to recent studies into this social problem, many of these youths are grappling with multiple identities (or 'rebellious transnational identity work'¹⁰⁵⁷) that continuously challenge and contest the boundaries of their place in society and the demands of maintaining their Islamic roots and integrating into mainstream Dutch society.¹⁰⁵⁸

In addition, non-Western migrants (even second and third generation) are not referred to as Dutch but are referred to by their ethnic background in the media, with their 'otherness' promoted by categorizing them as inferior, backward and dangerous

¹⁰⁵¹ Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 40.

¹⁰⁵² The Dutch population's rate of unemployment is 3.8 compared to 11.2 per cent for ethnic minorities. Furthermore, youth from ethnic minorities are detained for significantly longer periods of time than native Dutch offenders and there is an over-representation of non-White migrants in the prison system (Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 40-41).

¹⁰⁵³ L Brouwer, 'Islam as a symbol of protest: Reactions of Dutch-Moroccan youths on the Debate on Islam', Working Paper no 29, *Centre on Migration, policy and Society*, University of Oxford, Oxford Great Britain, 2006, p. 4. According to Pakes, ethnic youths are 2.5 times more likely to be detained by the police and 2.3 times more likely to be charged with an offence when compared to native Dutch of the same age (2010, op. cit., p. 114).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 149.

¹⁰⁵⁵ *ibid.*, p. 38.

¹⁰⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁵⁷ Pakes, 2010, p. 109.

¹⁰⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 4-6.

outsiders.¹⁰⁵⁹ Commonly used phrases to describe these youths include: ‘robbing Moroccans’, ‘stabbing Antilleans’ and ‘shooting Turks and Yugoslavs.’¹⁰⁶⁰ The widely published media reporting of the activities of these groups has become so pervasive that the Mayor of Amsterdam compared the level of interest as being on par with the wedding of the Queen’s son.¹⁰⁶¹ Lenie Brouwer argues that these disillusioned youths ‘perceive Islam as an attractive religion, as a symbol of pride but also protest, stimulated by negative associations with Islam and the social exclusion of Muslims in the West.’¹⁰⁶²

Therefore, Van Swaalingen appears accurate in his view that the portrayal of the Netherlands as a religiously tolerant, foreigner-friendly, permissive society is at odds with this intolerant, punitive approach to Muslims and Islam generally. There is the widespread feeling that this situation is pushing the Dutch’s level of tolerance to the limit and transforming their society from an inclusive to exclusive one, with the police viewing their role as ‘gatekeepers’ who keep the community safe from those ‘dangerous outsiders’ threatening their way of life.¹⁰⁶³

However research findings do not support this level of ethnic tension. Statistically, crime rates and influx of migrants has actually decreased since the 1980s.¹⁰⁶⁴ Entzinger cites a 2012 parliamentary report on integration that concentrates on factors such as housing, education, work and crime among Muslims and non-Muslim populations. The report found that employed migrants had similar opportunities to native Dutch citizens and the overrepresentation of migrants in particular suburbs was by choice, usually due to the desire to be close to friends and family.¹⁰⁶⁵ The conclusion was reached that, ‘In most cases immigrants have integrated remarkably well, and this has occurred in spite of public policies rather than as an effect of them.’ Additionally, despite the high crime rate among migrant youth who were ‘less optimistic’ than their native counterparts, ‘the majority of them are faring surprisingly well.’¹⁰⁶⁶

¹⁰⁵⁹ Brouwer, op. cit. This article contains some interesting interviews with the author and Moroccan youths that give valuable insights into the dilemmas these youths face on a constant basis. The role of Islam and rapper music as a protest against discrimination and exclusion for these youths is particularly illuminating.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Van Swaalingen, op. cit., p. 329.

¹⁰⁶¹ Brouwer, op. cit., p. 7.

¹⁰⁶² *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹⁰⁶³ Van Swaalingen, op. cit., p. 297.

¹⁰⁶⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁶⁵ *Netherlands Institute for Social Research Report* cited in Entzinger, 2013, op. cit., p. 10.

¹⁰⁶⁶ *ibid.*

Lending weight to these studies, many commentators believe sensationalized media reporting distorts reality, creating such a discrepancy between fact and fiction that populations become entangled in ‘moral panics’, ‘cultural traumas’ or ‘panicky debates’ concerning ethnic diversity and immigration issues.¹⁰⁶⁷ A ‘moral panic’ or ‘cultural trauma’ refers to the societal reaction to ‘the unexpected, the disturbing, the unnerving and the sudden.’ Certain ‘triggers’ can generate these responses at the local or minor level but can represent a larger more serious issue.¹⁰⁶⁸ Regarded as a classic study of this phenomenon was Stanley Cohen’s 1972 book, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*. According to Cohen, a ‘moral panic’ occurred when:

A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests ... Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes ... in legal and social policy or even in the way society conceives of itself.¹⁰⁶⁹

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda added to Cohen’s definition by adding five key features required for the phenomenon: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility.¹⁰⁷⁰ Importantly, although some critics believe the growing complexity of the moral order reduces, even eliminates, moral panics, Goode and Ben-Yehuda maintain its fundamental mechanisms, ‘the dynamics of hostility, denunciation, and disproportion – remain intact’, especially when Islam and Muslim migrants are the ‘folk devils.’¹⁰⁷¹

Populist parties and politicians such as Geert Wilders and his freedom Party and media reports (especially after the events of 9/11 and the murders of Fortuyn and Van Gogh) have consistently portrayed Muslims and Islam as the greatest threat to social, cohesion, national security and the welfare system. This perspective views the global Islamic community as a problem as Muslims consider themselves part of a global Islamic

¹⁰⁶⁷ Pakes, 2012, op. cit., p. 35.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Ibid., p. 36.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Cohen, op. cit., p. 1.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Goode, Ben-Yehuda, op. cit., pp. 37-43. Researchers who consider the Dutch are experiencing a ‘moral panic’ in relation to Muslims and Islam include: H Ghorashi ‘Ayaan Hirsi Ali: daring or dogmatic? Debates on multiculturalism and emancipation in the Netherlands’, *Focaal*, no. 42: 2003, pp.163-169; P Hervik, ‘Danish Cultural World of Unbridgeable Differences’, *Ethnos* vol. 69, no. 2 2004, pp. 229-246; G Mak, *Gedoemd tot kwetsbaarheid*, Amsterdam, Atlas, 2005; K van Nieuwkerk, ‘Veils and wooden clogs don’t together’, *Ethnos*, vol. 69, no.2, 2004, pp. 229-246; P Werbner, ‘The predicament of diaspora and millennial Islam. Reflections on September 11, 2001’, *Ethnicities*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2004, pp. 451-476.

¹⁰⁷¹ Goode, Ben-Yehuda, op. cit., p. 86.

community and reactions to events in other countries attracts similar responses from Muslims worldwide. For example, the international condemnation from Muslims concerning Danish newspaper cartoons published in *Jyllands-Posten* September 2005 depicting the prophet Mohammad (and later the 2012 film *Innocence of Muslims*) reveals the transnational character of the Islamic community. This emphasis on the group, rather than the equality of the individual, goes against not only the Dutch social order but reinforces for many in the West that Islam is incompatible with Western-style democracy, especially the right to freedom of speech.¹⁰⁷² Therefore, encouraged by politicians such as Wilder, globalism is seen by many as disrupting and eventually destroying the traditions of Dutch life. As Pakes argues the influence of Wilders in particular is toxic: '... whereas globalization seemingly brought about cosmopolitanism in the Netherlands, Wilders is the mouthpiece for a movement that craves localism and cultural essentialism.'¹⁰⁷³

Australian academic Ellie Vasta goes further by suggesting that the approach to immigration in the Netherlands has always included 'the existence of institutional discrimination based on a denied history and culture of racism.'¹⁰⁷⁴ Other commentators agree, including Entzinger who had raised the idea that the Netherlands was engaging in 'institutional racism' and its social nature in 1987. He argued immigrants were being discriminated against by a governmental system of rules and regulations 'based on the dominant cultural values of the society.'¹⁰⁷⁵ Furthermore, Vasta argues that the pervasiveness of 'everyday racism' has resulted in widespread 'practices of institutional racism' buoyed by a dominant discourse that reproduces and maintains the 'social exclusion' of ethnic minorities and immigrants.¹⁰⁷⁶ These racist attitudes are embedded and hidden in common and accepted societal practices that are similar to the French problem with cultural difference than first appears.

Agreeing with Van Swaingen, the notion of a 'tolerant' Dutch attitude towards society generally is seen as deceptive.¹⁰⁷⁷ Similarly, Dutch sociologist Hans Siebers describes

¹⁰⁷² Brouwer, 2006, op. cit. p. 1.

¹⁰⁷³ Pakes, 2010, op. cit., p. 117.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Vasta, op. cit., p. 727.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Entzinger, 1987, op. cit., p. 12.

¹⁰⁷⁶ Vasta, op. cit., p. 278.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 730.

the ‘cultural closure’¹⁰⁷⁸ of particular ethnic groups to mainstream society with their cultural identity becoming fixed and lead to discrimination. In the Dutch context, such groups, especially Muslims, are considered as ‘others’ and often dangerous outsiders who are increasingly separated from European norms and values. The history of ‘pillarization’ in the Netherlands forms the basis of this societal division along culturalisation lines and as Halleh Ghorashi suggests, the repercussions are most obvious with migrants from Islamic countries: ‘... they have been mentally fitted into a new pillar: the Islamic pillar.’¹⁰⁷⁹

This raises the issue of ‘tolerance’ and the heated arguments that surround its use. Of significance to this discussion are the theories of Wendy Brown who was introduced in chapter two. Following Foucault, Brown focuses on issues of governmentality that circulates in popular discourses signifying the ‘dispersed nature of modern governance.’¹⁰⁸⁰ In times of national crisis (such as 9/11) for example, the discourse of the state promoted the civic duty of individuals to encourage tolerance towards Muslims and those of ‘middle eastern’ appearance. In doing so it alleviated and deflected tensions through tolerance discourse, but also disguises the reinforcement of dominant groups norms and attitudes.¹⁰⁸¹ If tolerance discourses can ‘soften’ identity conflicts and claims, it can also contribute to the scapegoating and demonizing of certain ‘others.’¹⁰⁸² As Brown comments: ‘... the steady process of secularization and universalism promised by the Enlightenment metanarrative has been displaced by a backwash into tribalisms, localism, raging nationalisms, and fundamentalisms.’¹⁰⁸³ In a similar vein, American academic Esther Romeyn argues that a preoccupation with tolerance can lead to ‘the proliferation of technologies for evaluating deviations from it and the development of instruments securing compliance with it.’¹⁰⁸⁴ She draws a parallel with Dutch pedagogic and social disciplinary practices of the colonial *Ethical Policy* (*‘beschavings offensief’*) or civilising mission of the nineteenth century in the Dutch East Indies.¹⁰⁸⁵

¹⁰⁷⁸ H Siebers, ‘Discrimination and Cultural Closure at Work: evidence from two Dutch organizations’, *Culture Paradoxes of Cultural Recognition*, S Alghasi, T Hylland Eriksen, H Ghorashi, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Abingdon, Oxon, Great Britain, 2009, p. 92.

¹⁰⁷⁹ H Ghorashi, Alghasi et al, ‘Introduction’, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁸⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 79-80.

¹⁰⁸¹ *ibid.*, p. 84.

¹⁰⁸² *ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁸³ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁸⁴ Romeyn, op. cit., p. 80.

¹⁰⁸⁵ *ibid.*, p. 88.

Alternatively, research such as Paul Sniderman's and Louk Hagendoorn's in 2007 confirm that disagreements surrounding identity, tolerance, the values of liberal democracies and the influence of elite sections of society were present in the Netherlands before the events of 9/11.¹⁰⁸⁶ They promote tolerance, believing the 'benefits ... are large and the cost negligible. By contrast, they believe the material benefits of multiculturalism appear negligible and the costs high.'¹⁰⁸⁷ Additionally, evidence suggests multiculturalism accentuates differences of ethnic and religious identity that promote divisions, creating hostility towards minorities by increasing prejudice and fostering exclusionary practices.¹⁰⁸⁸ However, these prejudices work both ways because basic values remain fundamentally different (especially relating to women, childrearing and the family dynamics) between Muslim and the majority of Dutch citizens. According to their findings, barriers are mutually reinforced, as there is 'a desire of many Western Europeans to hold Muslims at a distance combined with a desire of Muslims to keep their distance.'¹⁰⁸⁹ This is despite data suggesting that although Muslims are seen as holding greater loyalty to their homeland rather than their host country, many Dutch believe they should be allowed continue their religious and cultural practices even if values and lifestyle are incompatible with traditional Dutch society.¹⁰⁹⁰

Tolerance as a strategy for governance and reducing societal unease in the Netherlands has a complex and checkered history. It is a topical issue with government agencies, community groups and the media because of the nation's struggle with social and cultural disunity. However, despite sustained negative media reporting and changing exclusionist and discriminatory policies over several decades, research presented in this discussion suggests that the vast majority of first and second generation migrants have gradually integrated into Dutch society. There is a key difference between migrants and Dutch citizens and it is a crucial one: the majority of migrants identify as Muslims and therefore have predominantly stronger religious affiliations when compared to the native Dutch population. This is a cultural as well as a religious divide that continues to promote

¹⁰⁸⁶ Sniderman, Hagendoorn, op. cit., p. 4.

¹⁰⁸⁷ *ibid.*, p. 134.

¹⁰⁸⁸ *ibid.*, p. 135.

¹⁰⁸⁹ *ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁰⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 11.

the 'us' and 'them', *autochtonen* versus *allochtonen* dichotomy.¹⁰⁹¹ If scapegoating of Islam and Muslims continues to constitute a 'moral panic' that socio-economically segregates and polarizes communities, how can suspicions and distrust be dispelled? Can cultural endeavours like the AoIE impact upon the sensational misreporting?

This can be problematic for places like the Netherlands that relies on Liberal philosophy and governmentality based on the social agreement to constrain conflict to the realm of debate and negotiation, and follow a general principle of non-interference, which excludes the exercise of violence, or other forms of non-rational domination. The demand for tolerance effectively places restrictions on our antagonism towards others. Cultural institutions, such as the museum, aim to develop and promote discussion leading to some degree of consensus through negotiation, providing a safe arena in which debate can flourish, free from the fear of retribution.

This travelling show has been consistently promoted as aimed at transcending boundaries to encourage cross-cultural understanding. Objects reflect the agency of their cultural producers and curatorial decisions concerning display impact upon the collection of objects, affecting their reception, possible interpretations and meanings. The attitude to display of the DNK concentrating on the beautiful obviously attracted crowds of visitors,¹⁰⁹² but how effective is this approach in meeting the mandate of encouraging conversations between diverse, and often ideologically opposed, cultures such as in the Netherlands with their unique style of governing based on Liberal philosophy?

The following discussion is based on case studies of two objects that were considered 'highlights' of the exhibition by the DNKG and the media. Their rich and complex histories will be examined, revealing their unique potential as vehicles for cross-cultural understanding that previous discussions have highlighted in various ways when discussing the installations at the three other venues where the Khalili collection was exhibited. Importantly, a final analysis of whether in this case curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/ didactic modes of display is the most successful approach when the museum's mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture.

¹⁰⁹¹ *Allochtonen* means 'not from here' with *Autochtonen* refers to those 'from here' (Pakes, 2010, op. cit., p. 112).

¹⁰⁹² Over the five months the exhibition was displayed attracted 75 000 visitors (Ryan & Klieterp, op. cit., line 141).

Narratives behind ‘beautiful objects’: Two examples

The DNKG stated ‘Every single object on display tells a story ... one piece tells more than three newspaper columns’; however, was the decision to focus exclusively on the individual object and its aesthetic qualities a prudent curatorial choice? The ‘stand-alone’ object is removed in time and space from its historical, geographical, cultural and religious context; it is also aestheticized and decontextualized often in an attempt to highlight the ‘purity’ of the rare artifact.¹⁰⁹³ Islamic art experts Moya Carey and Margaret Graves posit that re-presenting the Islamic artifact as a ‘star object ... Placed upon a pedestal’ in museum displays means ‘the unbroken object is almost openly characterised as a desirable commodity that is tempting the acquisitive beholder, not as an object with a history to relate to the inquisitive.’¹⁰⁹⁴

Each of the 500 objects on display at the DNKG had comprehensive and rich artistic and cultural backgrounds. This study has selected two ‘star objects’ showcased in the Amsterdam display to illustrate key issues that have been under discussion in other chapters and will be analysed in-depth: a manuscript with religious content (Rashid al-Din’s *Jami’ al-Tawarikh/ Compendium of Chronicles*),¹⁰⁹⁵ and a secular portrait (Portrait miniature of the Qajar ruler Fath’ali Shah). Both artifacts originated from Iran but are separated in time by over 600 years (1247-1318 AD and early nineteenth-century AD).

These two works were chosen as they are representative of the exhibition aim to display objects of outstanding beauty without any significant reference to their cultural, religious, social political or historical contexts. In support of these choices, many commentators considered that all the art works on display were ‘exceptionally beautiful,’ but the highlight was the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh*, with the portrait enamels from the nineteenth-century (such as the portrait miniature of Fath’ali Shah) regarded as a ‘breathtaking’ end to the exhibition.¹⁰⁹⁶ Khalili’s own love of these two works is clear, as the gift of a nineteenth-

¹⁰⁹³ Carey, Graves, op. cit., p. 9.

¹⁰⁹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁰⁹⁵ The *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* became part of the Khalili Collection in 1980 when it was purchased from the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland and had been on permanent display in the British Museum’s Kings Library (N D Khalili, ‘Foreword’, *The Compendium of Chronicles, The Nassar D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, vol. XXVII, J Raby (ed.), The Nour Foundation, London, 1995, p. 9).

¹⁰⁹⁶ Sources include islamicartsmagazine.com, ABNA.co, About.com, muslimvillage.com, *Arabian Knight Journal*, 2008, p. 64. This was not the first time objects from the Khalili collection had been displayed in the De Nieuwe Kerk as some items from the Khalili collection had been displayed in an exhibition with other works called *Earthly Beauty, Heavenly Art* in 1999/2000.

century Qajar pencil case as a child began his collecting of Islamic art and is regarded as having the most impressive collection of Qajar art in the world¹⁰⁹⁷ and he considers the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* one of the most important acquisitions of his entire general collection.

These examples are also salient in terms of their relevance to wider issues: depictions of Muhammad and idolatry; the deployment of cultural /artistic objects for political/ religious agendas especially in terms of nation building and international relations; and the persistence of colonial/orientalist attitudes towards 'native' hybrid art styles. A detailed account of the stories and provenance that accompanies these artworks and their journey through time and place, including its creators, various patrons and owners, is revealing of the value of contexts other than the aesthetic in the display of artistic and cultural objects in contemporary curatorial practices.

Dynasty and legitimation: the Jami' al-Tawarikh

The Ilkanid period (1247-1318 AD) ushered in a re-unification of Iran, both territorially and politically, and was an era where the arts flourished and diverse religious and sectarian trends predominated.¹⁰⁹⁸ As Sheila Blair has commented: 'In religion as in many cultural and artistic affairs, the Mongols were eclectic ... [it was a] time of extraordinary cross-continental exchange ... [producing artworks whose] transcendent beauty still speak to us today.'¹⁰⁹⁹ Western Europe and the Far East especially expanded pictorial inventories of Ilkanid artists beyond the reliance on iconographic schemas.¹¹⁰⁰ As the subject matter of illuminated and illustrative manuscripts expanded enormously compared to previous eras,¹¹⁰¹ older iconographic systems of representation had to be dramatically revised. The increased use of paper and wood block printing of texts¹¹⁰² (both

¹⁰⁹⁷ Transcript L Ryan and J Meyer (A), 2012, lines 11-13.

¹⁰⁹⁸ S Blair, 'Religious Art of the Ilkanids', in *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*, L Komaroff, S Carboni (eds.), The Metropolitan Museum of art, Yale University Press, New York, New Haven and London, 2002 p. 118.

¹⁰⁹⁹ Ibid, p. 105; R Hillenbrand, 'The Arts of the Book in Ilkanid Iran', in Komaroff, Carboni, op. cit., p. 133.

¹¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 141.

¹¹⁰¹ Subjects included: epics, fables, bestiaries, calendrical systems, encyclopaedias, philosophical works, lyric poetry and romantic prose (ibid).

¹¹⁰² B Gray, *The world History of Rashid al-Din: A study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript*, Faber & Faber Limited, London, 1978, p. 14. Rashid al-Din was well aware of the Chinese method of woodblock printing and its elimination of personal error in copies, and utilised this technique for the *Jami' al-Tawarikh*. This was a time saving and energy efficient process in reproducing copies of texts and Rashid al-Din authenticated each copy with a certification letter from the Kadis of Tabriz.

Chinese influences) meant the 'arts of the book' (or Islamic codex)¹¹⁰³ became a fashionable, highly collectible, portable, and readily available way to educate and disseminate knowledge and understanding of all aspects of Mongol history (cultural, political, religious) and its illustrious rulers.¹¹⁰⁴ Therefore, the main aim of these books was to emphasize and promote either heritage or religion.¹¹⁰⁵

One of the most significant and innovative works of this time was Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-Tawarikh* (Compendium of Chronicles), written in the thirteenth to fourteenth centuries in Tabriz Iran.¹¹⁰⁶ This compendium was the first history of the world seen through the eyes of the Mongol conquerors and was unique in its scope and research methods. This enormous and influential series of works was commissioned by Rashid al-Din Fadlallah (1247-1318 AD), a wealthy Jew who converted to Islam and gained a prominent position as vizier under the ruler Maḥmūd Ghāzān.¹¹⁰⁷ He was executed by rival political opponents in 1318 following Ghāzān's death.¹¹⁰⁸ Rashid al-Din was responsible for establishing the *Rab'-I Rashidi*¹¹⁰⁹ in Tabriz Iran: a multi-purpose funerary facility containing a scriptorium where

¹¹⁰³ The earlier form of the book was the codex, attributed to and spread by the Coptic Church. Each region developed its own distinctive decorative and structural style of codex in terms of binding and manuscript creation, including Islamic craftsman and the production of highly formalized and adorned Qur'ans and other illustrated manuscripts (L Hobbs, 'The Islamic Codex', *The Ultimate History Project*, retrieved 2 September 2014, <http://www.ultimatehistoryproject.com/the-islamic-codex.html>).

¹¹⁰⁴ Blair, 2002, op. cit., p. 141.

¹¹⁰⁵ *ibid.*, p. 137.

¹¹⁰⁶ This section of the Compendium is remarkable for both its actual dimensions and length (fifty-nine pages of thick paper 435 by 300 millimeters in size) making it one of the largest manuscript of its kind to survive from the Medieval period (S Blair, *The Compendium of Chronicles, The Nassar D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, vol. XXVII, 1995, p. 16).

¹¹⁰⁷ Maḥmūd Ghāzān, (born Nov. 5, 1271, Abaskun, died May 11, 1304), is considered the most notable of the Il-Khans (who were subordinate to *khāns*) to govern the Mongol dynasty in Iran. Ruling from 1295 to 1304, he is remembered for his conflicts with Egypt and the conversion of his state to Islam. Many believe Rashid al-Din was responsible for the fiscal reforms under Ghāzān's rule that were designed to protect the sedentary populations from the coercions of the nomadic aristocracy. These reforms, combined with the embracing of Islam, played a significant role in fusing the Mongols and Persians into one nation (A J Boyle, 'Maḥmūd Ghāzān', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, retrieved 12 August 2014, <<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232549/Mahmud-Ghazan>>). According to Sheila Blair many of Ghāzān's activities paralleled those of his counterpart in China, Klubilai, reinforcing the influence of Asia on Iran at the time and the cultural exchange occurring. For example, both rulers promoted theological discussions and debates, commissioned religious buildings, and chronicles of their dynastic rule (P, 'Religious Art of the Ilkanids', in Komaroff, Carboni, 2002, op. cit., p. 117).

¹¹⁰⁸ *ibid.*

¹¹⁰⁹ The *Rab'-I Rashidi* was a charitable foundation designed to meet the spiritual and physical requirements of both residents and visitors and besides the scriptorium included a Mosque, hospice and hospital and Rashid al-Din's tomb. It was an entire suburb in the north-east of Tabriz on the slope of Mount Valiyan and was considered the 'new arts centre of the Islamic East' by the end of the fourteenth century (W Ali, 'From the Literal to the Spiritual: The Development of the Prophet Muhammad's portrayal from the 13th Century Ilkanid Miniatures to 17th Century Ottoman Art', *Proceedings of the 11th International Congress of Turkish Art, Utrecht-*

works of art, especially manuscripts like the *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, were produced as a collective effort by research assistants, copied in Arabic and Persian and disseminated throughout Iran and the Arab lands.¹¹¹⁰ Because of Rashid al-Din's wide-ranging interest (horticulture, agriculture, theology and history) Ghāzān commanded him to compile a history of his reign that extended the existing works chronicling the history of the Mongol empire that Ghāzān's father Öljeytü had begun.¹¹¹¹ After he finished the first two books Rashid al-Din was ordered by Ghāzān's successor, Üljáytú (or Öljeytü) to finish the last two volumes (a history of the world and Islamic lands and a history of geography) but these manuscripts have never been located. There are two possibilities: either they were never written or perished in the destruction caused when the *Rab'-I Rashidi* and its scriptorium was plundered after Rashid al-Din's execution.¹¹¹² Most commentators regard Rashid al-Din as a visionary with an acute intellect and curious mind. However, Islamicist Basil Gray is critical of this 'man of great ambition and outstanding administrative gifts', considering him 'perhaps also grasping and unscrupulous.' He also felt his background (Iranian Jew) meant he was interested in incorporating stories from the bible in the Muslim commissioned manuscript.¹¹¹³

The *Jami' al-Tawarikh* originally (volume two, part two) comprised four sections, but only two parts or fascicles have survived (one owned by the Khalili Trust and the other residing in the Edinburgh University Library).¹¹¹⁴ These manuscripts were the most lavishly illustrated sections of the series and their very existence reflects Tabriz's cosmopolitan culture in the fourteenth century where the use of Arabic, Latin, Persian, Chinese,

The Netherlands, August 23-28, 1999, EJOS, IV, 2001, no. 7,

http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~gent0113/islam/downloads/ejos_4_7.pdf).

¹¹¹⁰ C Melville 'Jami' al-Tawarikh', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2008, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jame-al-tawarik>

¹¹¹¹ JM Rogers, 'The Arts of Islam; Treasures from the Nassar D Khalili Collection', *Art Gallery of New South Wales Publications*, 2007, p. 131.

¹¹¹² EG Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, (3 volumes) , TF Unwin, London, 1902, pp. 72-73. See this book for a detailed history of the life and works of Rashid al-Din vol. 3, ch. 2, pp. 68-104. Compare the writing of Robinson and Ali on this topic, as their accounts are conflicting: B W Robinson, 'Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 2, 1980, pp. 217, retrieved 13 August 2014, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25211170>>; Ali, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹¹³ Gray, op. cit., p. 21.

¹¹¹⁴ The original sections of the compendium project comprised four volumes: vol. 1: the history of the Mongols from Genghis Khan to Ghāzān's death; Vol. 2, pt. 1 and 2: Öljeytü's reign and a comprehensive universal history from Adam, the biblical patriarchs, ancient Persian kings to Muhammad and the caliphs; vol. 3: the 'Five Dynasties' of the Mongols, the Arabs, the Jews, the Chinese and the Franks; vol. 4: and a geographical anthology (ibid).

Mongolian and Sanskrit texts, along with illustrative material from Old Testament/ Gospel scrolls and manuscripts from China and Northern Europe, were commonly available.¹¹¹⁵ This is a valid observation as Tabriz was the Ilkhanid capital and considered the main metropolis of the modern world: ‘a multicultural, multi-confessional, political, and commercial centre that served as a bridge between you and East Asia ... Tabriz was thronged with European missionaries, Chinese officials, and merchants and diplomats from all over the old world.’¹¹¹⁶ While Rashid al-Din maintained that Muslim historiography was the ‘most authentic of all’ he realised the need to consult other sources (Chinese, Uighur, Arabic, Hebrew, Tibetan, Kashmiri, Frankish and Mongolian) for accuracy and comprehensiveness, as evident in his own words: ‘I queried and interrogated the scholars and the notables of the above mentioned peoples and made extracts from the context of [their] ancient books.’¹¹¹⁷

Since the main aim was the reproduction and distribution of these texts (a turnaround of six months), artists had to work closely with each other and conform to a ‘house style’ that favoured several compositional prototypes over meticulous detail and originality. The ingenuity of the artists in devising modifications to prevent repetition and monotony makes the finished works especially outstanding.¹¹¹⁸ British Orientalist Edward Granville Browne quotes Marc Étienne Quatremère (a French Arabist and Orientalist) on the importance of the chronicles: ‘... this excellent work, undertaken in the most favourable circumstances and with the means of performing it never possessed before by a single writer, offered for the first time to the people’s of Asia a complete source of universal history and geography.’¹¹¹⁹ According to historian Talbot Rice, at least twenty families of artisans, a Turkish painter called Qutuqbuga and at least one Chinese artist lived and worked at the *Rab’-I Rashidi*. He has identified four principal painters and a possible separate artist for the scenes of Muhammad’s life (‘Iram Master’, ‘Luhrasp Master’, ‘Tahmuras Master’, ‘Master of the Scenes from the Life of the Prophet’ and ‘Alp Arslan Master’) and at least two assistants through their particular styles. The author concludes

¹¹¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹¹¹⁶ Hillenbrand, 2002, *op. cit.*, pp. 145, 162.

¹¹¹⁷ Cited in T Allsen, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2001, p. 84.

¹¹¹⁸ Hillenbrand, 2002, *op. cit.*, p. 147.

¹¹¹⁸ Allsen, *op. cit.*, p. 85.

¹¹¹⁹ Browne, 1902, *op. cit.* vol. 3, ch. 2, p. 75.

that the ‘Master of the Scenes from the Life of the Prophet’ was a ‘Persian who, although a native idiom was evident in his style, had seen both Central Asian and Christian works.’¹¹²⁰ Rashid al-Din’s work was also acknowledged for its quality of craftsmanship and comprehensiveness and used by many later historians and scholars such as Faḡr-al-Din Banākati, Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi, Ḥāfeẓ-e Abru, and Mirḡānd and Ḳāndamir who were Timurid universal historians.¹¹²¹

The *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* manuscript paintings accompanied literary texts that included tales of a romantic nature and epic narratives embedded within mythical and historical contexts. The main purpose of these illustrations was to serve as pictorial devices to complement and enhance the written (and often spoken) word to convey certain ideologies or current events. For example, the first volume of the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* details the dynastic lineage of the Mongols from Genghis Khan to Ghāzān’s death as leading tribal families feared that their role in the ‘glorious past’ of the Mongol dynasties was being forgotten in Iran.¹¹²² Therefore, these manuscripts functioned as propaganda, symbolically advancing notions of national identity by promoting the importance of the dynastic legitimacy of the dominant elite in Iranian society and their religious, cultural or political agendas.¹¹²³

The ‘arts of the book’ became central to artistic production during the Ilkanid Period, but sections of the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* (especially depictions of Muhammad and his life to which an entire section is dedicated) are often considered outside the definition of ‘classical’ Persian painting due to their historical rather than romantic or epic focus.¹¹²⁴ However, the abundance of illustrated sections of the life of Muhammad, when compared with the other parts of the Compendium, reinforces the importance of promoting Islam to the masses even if this meant going against the trend. Further, despite the religious nature

¹¹²⁰ T Rice, *The Illustrations to the ‘World History’ of Rashid al-Din*, B Gray (ed.), Edinburgh University Press, 1976, p.3, 6.

¹¹²¹ Melville, op. cit.

¹¹²² Allsen, op. cit.

¹¹²³ C Gruber, ‘Questioning the ‘classical’ in Persian painting: models and problems of definition, *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, p. 1, retrieved 13 January 2014, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/gruber.pdf>. For further detail see: Melville, op. cit.; and Ali, 1999, op. cit. Another manuscript of equal importance was the Great Mongol *Shahnama* (book of Kings), known for its cross-cultural iconography, dynamism and innovative and creative approaches to subject matter, was also a tool of propaganda and used for political agenda. For further reading see: Hillenbrand, 2002, op. cit., pp. 155-167 for a comparison with the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh*; O Grabar, S Blair, *Epic images and Contemporary History: the Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London, 1980, for a comprehensive study.

¹¹²⁴ *ibid.*, p. 11. For an interesting and lengthy discussion arguing for the inclusion of manuscript work created during the Ilkanid Period as ‘classical’ Persian art see full article cited, pp. 1-25.

of these depictions with Muhammad as their central subject, these manuscripts were the product of royal courtly artistic production in a 'bio-historical' Ilkhanid style¹¹²⁵ and were never intended to decorate religious text such as the Qur'an or become icons or sacred art incorporated into Mosque architecture.¹¹²⁶ These princely residences became not only the main centres of artistic creativity due to royal patronage of the arts but places like Tabriz and the *Rab'-I Rashidi* became hubs for learning and knowledge dissemination.

The *Jami' al-Tawarikh* is proof of this endeavour to distribute knowledge of all kinds (religious, historical, philosophical, scientific, literary, and artistic) beyond the borders of Iran, as several versions existed and were copied in Arabic (being the earliest and most valuable version found to date), Persian and Turkish. The Mongols were thus acting as 'agents of empire' at home and abroad, reaffirming their power through 'mechanisms of intercultural [especially East-West] exchange ... constituting a quantum leap in Muslim knowledge of the region.'¹¹²⁷ In support of this view, the Arabic copy of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* appears to have been copied under the direct supervision of Rashid al-Din and is considered the most valuable of the versions with its subsequent owners (princes and emperors) adding seals, glosses and notes confirming this manuscript was a 'prized possession.' Both the Edinburgh Library sections and the Khalili Collection fragments of the Arabic versions of the Compendium remained in India until the nineteenth century when British colonial representatives of the East India Company (Colonel John Braille and John Staples Harriot respectively) acquired them. Harriot sold his fragment (that he had bought in 1813) to Major General Thomas Gordon who bequeathed the work to the Royal Asiatic Society in 1841 when he became a member.¹¹²⁸

¹¹²⁵ Gruber, op. cit., p. 17.

¹¹²⁶ Ali, 1999, op. cit., p. 4.

¹¹²⁷ Allsen op. cit., pp. 194, 202, 85.

¹¹²⁸ Blair, 1995, op. cit., p. 30, 36. As mentioned in an earlier footnote, the Khalili Foundation purchased the manuscripts from the Royal Asiatic Society in 1980.

Artistry, continuity and innovation

The work under discussion from the *Jami' al-Tawarikh is Muhammad leading Hamzah and the Muslims against the Banu Qaynuqa*, depicting the Prophet guiding his forces into battle in the name of Islam.¹¹²⁹ Battle scenes such as this are unusual depictions in manuscripts/narratives relating to the life of Muhammad with art experts Sheila Blair and Priscilla Soucek both arguing Rashid al-Din, as a Jewish covert to Islam, viewed these victorious battles of Muslim forces over Jewish settlements as significant.¹¹³⁰ In the case of the conflict at Banu Qaynuqa (a Jewish community near Medina), this was one of several treaties with the Muslims that Muhammad had revoked and the ensuing battle forced the Jewish inhabitants to desert their homes. Soucek maintains Rashid al-Din was not only indicating his 'support for Islam and rejection of Jewish traditions' but was 'designed to counter accusations of Jewish sympathies made by his enemies at the Mongol courts.'¹¹³¹ Considering his eventual execution due to fierce political opponents, this suggestion seems highly probable.

Furthermore, Rashid al-Din's use of pictorial traditions favoured by Christianity is evidence of a desire to show the supremacy of Islam over other religions. He had previously written several theological dissertations in part designed to demonstrate the preeminence of Muhammad and Islamic doctrine.¹¹³² In addition, the importance of this depiction is evident as 'the scribe copied the text on the preceding page verso in a V-shape, like a colophon, so that this illustration would fall on the top of the page.' Included in the text is God's support for the Muslim attack on the Jewish settlement that lasted fifteen days: 'If thou fearest treachery from any group, throw back [their covenant] to them, [so as to be] on equal terms. For God loveth not the treacherous' (XVIII, verse 58).'¹¹³³

The illustrated manuscript deserves a detailed description in order to reveal its significance, uniqueness, and its potential as an agent for promoting cross-cultural understanding (fig 103). An oblong frame and double red border encloses twenty-three lines

¹¹²⁹ It is interesting to note that earlier analysis of this manuscript illustration, especially by acknowledged expert Basil Gray, maintained that the leader in white was Hamzah not the Prophet due to the Arabic text above the depiction. However, later critiques (such as Blair and Soucek's) agree that the leader of the troops is consistent with traditional conventions in the portrayal of Muhammad (Soucek, op. cit., p. 201).

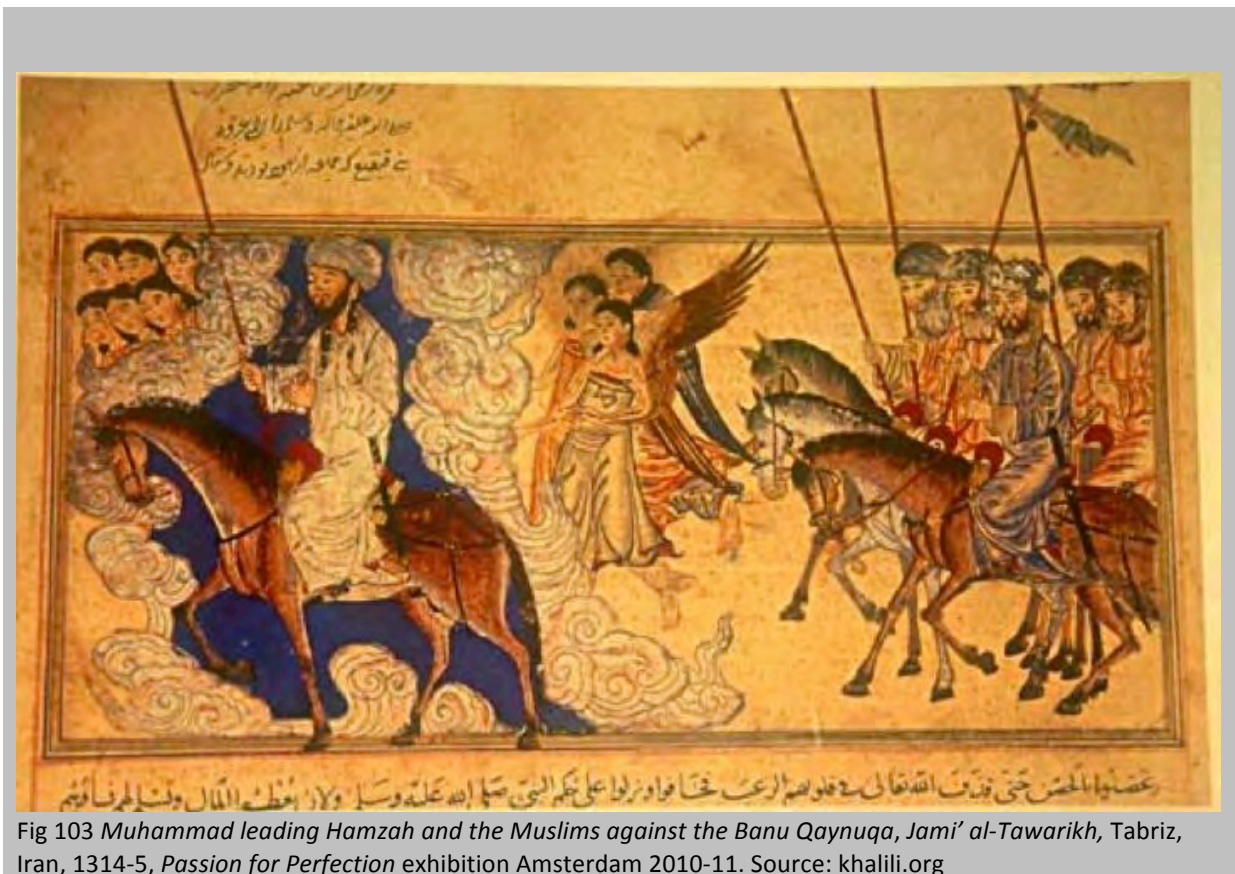
¹¹³⁰ Blair, 1995, op. cit., p. 56; P Soucek, 'The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated versions', *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, The College Art Association of America, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1988, p. 201.

¹¹³¹ Soucek, op. cit., p. 201.

¹¹³² Soucek, op. cit., p. 206.

¹¹³³ Blair, 1995, op. cit., p. 71.

of written Arabic 'naskh' text, divided into three sections below the illustrated images and a small section (three lines) of text above the figural depictions. Set against an azure blue background¹¹³⁴ and surrounded by clouds under the guidance and divine protection of nine bare-headed, curly haired, angelic bodies wearing Greek styled chiton garments (six leading and three watching from the rear), the Prophet is depicted on horseback separated from his army who follow behind him at a distance. Muhammad is identified by his dark plaited hair and beard (that was the established convention in earlier portrayals), wearing an opaque white robe and turban (symbolizing purity) that contrasts his red saddle, bridle and staff. His army is led by his uncle Hamzah (singled out from the soldiers by his red beard and blue hued garments) holding the Prophet's checkered white banner (*liwā*) tied to his lance. The remaining troops wear garments finely outlined in red to emphasis their drapery.



¹¹³⁴ The use of ultramarine blue from ground lapuz lazuli or 'azure stone' (a mineral from Afghanistan that was rare and expensive) was widely used in Western manuscripts for important features such as the robes of the Virgin Mary and other holy personages. The artists of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* may have been emulating the techniques of these popular and pervasive Western models (Blair, 1995, op. cit., p. 63).

The illustrative device of using strong colour, form and line to frame and therefore isolate the Muhammad from his army and Hamzah from his fellow soldiers has the effect of heightening their importance, especially set against the neutral, washed-out background. This highlighting of Muhammad is clearly both an artistic and educational device to advance his mission to actively promote Islam as the new state religion to wider audiences. This is what Hans Belting refers to when he states that in Islamic rhetoric images functioned ‘as an instrument of a supernatural power’, transmitting knowledge and promoting conversions to Islam.¹¹³⁵

The preference for strong, primary colours such as the red, blue and green of the main figures balanced with the subtle and nuanced tonal qualities of off-white, pink, grey and brown of the horses, clouds and landscape in this manuscript is distinctively Chinese.¹¹³⁶ These compositional and colour scheme choices were typical of manuscript painting at the end of the fourteenth century. Pigments extracted from minerals such as gold, silver and lapis lazuli (blue pigment), as seen in this example, were used extensively in manuscript illustrations, as were areas of vibrant, saturated color contrasted with larger sections of pale tones to emphasize particular details and create dynamism.¹¹³⁷ The use of gold leaf and gold sprinkling for outlines and borders especially (along with the preference for larger coloured paper such as the use of cream toned hue in this example) was a common practice in Chinese manuscript painting and continued to greatly influence artistic canons in later Islamic art production.¹¹³⁸

This approach to pictorial space is undoubtedly borrowed from Chinese techniques of manuscript painting: compositions contained within scroll-like, horizontal sections of paper where open spaces serve as a backdrops for images in motion rendered in ink, opaque and translucent watercolors with linear outlines to emphasize drapery. Furthermore, bands of clouds are common Chinese motifs and Muhammad’s facial features (calm expression, neatly trimmed beard, almond eyes) are more Chinese than his characteristically Arabic army and angels.

¹¹³⁵ H Belting, *Likeness and Presence: A history of the image before the era of art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994, pp. 47.

¹¹³⁶ Gray, op. cit., p. 23.

¹¹³⁷ NM Titley, *Persian Miniature Painting*, University of Texas Press, Austin Texas, 1984.

¹¹³⁸ For more details on this topic see: S Blair, ‘Color and Gold: The Decorated Papers Used in Manuscripts in Later Islamic Times’, *Muqarnas*, vol. 17, 2000, pp. 24-36, retrieved 24 August 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523288>.

However, cultural and artistic influences other than Asian are evident in these manuscripts. According to Michael Rogers, the use of gold and silver for facial features in these paintings is very 'un-Chinese' with 'elongated figures, expressive features and mannered gestures' closer to the late-Byzantine tradition.¹¹³⁹ The extension of red lances (held by Muhammad and his followers) beyond the pictorial border and into the textual space is also unique for the period and may be the result of innovative techniques by imaginative artists to create interest and diversity within the enforced compositional prototype. Additionally, the type of 'bunching' of compositional elements that is evident in the angels and the soldiers may be due to the speed of reproducing these manuscripts for distribution and part of the compulsory 'house style.' There are alternative views, however, suggesting that painting beyond picture frame is borrowed from Mesopotamian traditions of illustrated manuscript from the previous century such as the gospel book *Manafi al-Hayawan*¹¹⁴⁰ and figural crowding as a technique could also reflect the borrowing from Western European styles and artists (Christian and Jewish) and their depictions of biblical scenes.¹¹⁴¹ Whatever their influences may have been, the desire to 'communicate the essence of action'¹¹⁴² and a sense of 'barely contained energy' is viewed as part of the attempt to transform and revitalize Persian painting by the Ilkanid rulers for their propagandist and political agendas.¹¹⁴³

Additionally, probably due to both Öljeytü and Ghāzān's original Christian faith before conversion to Islam, Christian iconography (via pictorial and literary documents) was employed throughout this section of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* that concentrates on the history of Islam and the life of Muhammad. Examples in Khalili's collection include Abrahamic narratives and images shared by Muslims, Christians and Jews: Noah's Ark, Jonah and the Whale, Birth of Christ (including Mary, Jesus and Joseph), scenes from the life of other prophets and biblical characters such as such as Moses, Saul, Jacob along with illustrations of Buddha.¹¹⁴⁴ It has also been suggested that the choice to adapt elements of Christianity

¹¹³⁹ Rogers, op. cit., p. 131.

¹¹⁴⁰ Gray, op. cit., p. 23.

¹¹⁴¹ Hillenbrand, 2002, op. cit., p. 147, 149.

¹¹⁴² Blair, 1995, op. cit., p. 88.

¹¹⁴³ Hillenbrand, 2002, op. cit., p. 167.

¹¹⁴⁴ Links with the West are evident in Mongol policies and practices and marriages between Mongols rulers and western Princesses (especially during the Byzantine era) were not uncommon. Additionally, contact with Asia and adoption of artistic conventions (especially Buddhist philosophy) is evident particularly in the development of architectural styles. For more details see Talbot Rice, op. cit., pp. 3-4.

may be due to the scarcity of illustrated histories of the life of Muhammad.¹¹⁴⁵ Such depictions as seen in these works emphasizes the existence of sustained cross-cultural fertilization and use of differing religious systems of imagery that Khalili and the AoIE promoted so emphatically and consistently, linking multi-faith, artistically diverse artifacts from wide-ranging territories under the umbrella of arts of the 'Islamic' world.

Conversely, many commentators argue these works were not mere imitations or transferals of intact styles of artistic production from either Asia or Europe but highly innovative, artistically refined and complex synthesis of pre-Mongol, early Ilkanid, Chinese and Byzantine pictorial traditions, and multi-faith iconography and artistic practices. David Talbot Rice contends that the cross-cultural influences evident in *Jami' al-Tawarikh* did not 'constitute merely an artistic jumble, build up wholly on the basis of borrowing and mixing; rather they represent the first stages in the formation of a new and independent style ... distinguished by real artistic genius ...'¹¹⁴⁶ There are alternative readings, such as Soucek's who, while agreeing that the technique of applying silver to drapery and shading figures were new pictorial components, stresses that artists were emulating and repeating the work of their predecessors: 'the emphasis was on continuation of tradition, rather than innovation.'¹¹⁴⁷

Regardless of perspective, this new style of Mongol painting being adopted in Tabriz by the end of the thirteenth century was clearly influenced by a diversity of artistic and religious traditions from China and Central Asia (the *Rab'-I Rashidi* employed artists and models from these regions of various religious denominations including those of the Buddhist and Jewish faith), and was responsible for gradually altering the traditional Ilkhanid style.¹¹⁴⁸ In turn, this flourishing of Islamic art in Tabriz was widely distributed and significantly affected artistic production of other cultures and regions: 'East Asian elements absorbed into the existing Perso-Islamic repertoire created a new kind of artistic vocabulary, one that was emulated from Anatolia to India ...'¹¹⁴⁹

¹¹⁴⁵ Hillenbrand, 2002, op. cit.

¹¹⁴⁶ Rice, op. cit., p. 4.

¹¹⁴⁷ Soucek, op. cit., p. 66.

¹¹⁴⁸ Ali, 1999, op. cit., p. 2.

¹¹⁴⁹ S Yalman, 'Helibrunn Timeline of Art History, The Art of the Ilkhanid Period (1256-1353), Thematic Essay', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2000-2014, p. 1, retrieved 11 August 2014, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd_ilkh.htm.

This discussion has revealed a profusion of cross-cultural influences and their impact on the development of artistic traditions and that without this knowledge the potential for these objects to act as cross-cultural communication is diminished at the DNKG at the DNKG. This analysis supports the view that when cross-cultural influences are ignored a deeper understanding of the plurality and multitude of meanings that cultural and artistic objects can convey is reduced. A visitor's network of knowledge can be promoted when objects are displayed as interconnected so that interpretation and translation of layers of meaning in displays in the gallery space is possible.¹¹⁵⁰ An artifact isolated behind showcases with minimal contextual information provided is insufficient to communicate concepts necessary to create linkages and encourage knowledge acquisition. As German museum director Stefan Weber suggests the 'aura of singularity'¹¹⁵¹ of the unique aesthetic object limits contextual frameworks that privileges current appreciation rather than an object's social and temporal background. He maintains that Islamic art is often denied social and cultural pasts along with continuities and disruptions, that are typical of explanations of artistic changes in Western art.¹¹⁵² If promoting a shared human experience is the aim then an understanding of cultural, and artistic production and societal formation is essential.¹¹⁵³

Art and idolatry: A historiographical dilemma

The importance of the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* especially its depictions of Muhammad is significant to this study as it had been signalled as an issue with displays of Islamic art particularly in the Australian context. As this discussion highlights, there are many instances of figural representations in secular or courtly art (often only for private viewing), despite the *hadith* (sayings and deeds of the Prophet recorded by his followers) forbidding depictions of humans and animals in religious contexts or on sacred objects and the Qur'an warning that images can result in idolatry and detract from the contemplation of divinity.¹¹⁵⁴ For example, figurative art in Islam was not confined to the Mongol period in

¹¹⁵⁰ S Weber, 'A Concert of Things: Thoughts on Objects of Islamic Art in the Museum context', Junod et al, op. cit., p. 30.

¹¹⁵¹ Weber, 2012, op. cit., p. 36.

¹¹⁵² *ibid.*, p. 38.

¹¹⁵³ *ibid.*

¹¹⁵⁴ According to MB Piotrovsky, the Prophet objected to images for two reasons: for their potential as 'objects of worship and as manifestations of impious luxury.' However, the Qur'an has no explicit prohibition of images of the Prophet Muhammad or Allah but there are two passages that are suggestive: '[Allah] is the originator of the heavens and the earth ... [there is] nothing like a likeness of him' (chapter 42, verse 11); '[Abraham] said to his father and his people: 'What are these images to whose worship you cleave?' They said: 'We found our

Iran: the art works of the Shi'ite dynasty the Fatamids (909-1171 A.D.) portrayed humans and animals especially their ceramics; sculptural reliefs and friezes of animals and people on the monumental architecture of the Seljuk Turks; and the figurative miniature paintings of the Ottoman Empire reign from the fifteenth-nineteenth centuries.¹¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, many commentators including art historian Mika Natif have concluded that in the time of the Prophet himself and his direct successors (Rāshidlūm caliphs) figural depictions were not regarded as a threat or as idolatry.¹¹⁵⁶ It was not till the ninth century that attitudes altered, Natif maintains, and only then being 'pure' meant 'free' of images or idols. Importantly, she argues that this new direction was the consequence of a 'socio-political power struggle, and not a religious or spiritual one.'¹¹⁵⁷ For example, Natif argues tensions between the dynastic power of Umayyad and Abbasid rulers and theologians who strove to increase their status opposed their caliphs concerning their claims to 'religious authority'. This situation resulted in accusations of idolatry over the growing popularity of images of the Prophet and the caliphs on minted coins during the eighth and ninth centuries.¹¹⁵⁸

Yves Porter advances the notion that Muslim artists created archetypical images of animals and humans rather than realistic depictions in Persian manuscript painting in an

fathers worshipping them.' He said: 'Certainly you have been, you and your fathers, in manifest error' (chapter 21, verses 52-54). The Hadith (though not considered divine revelations) lends more weight to this ban as when multiple valid sources agree, the command is binding. There are many references to the depiction of human form but the strongest appears in the *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, no. 5268: 'Those who paint pictures would be punished on the Day of Resurrection and would be said to them: Breathe soul into what you have created.' Other references can be found at: *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 3, no. 5271; *Sahih Muslim*, vol. 4, book 29, ch. 1005, no. 5981; *Bukhari*, vol. 9, book 93, no. 646; *Bukhari*, vol. 8, book 73, no. 130; *Bukhari*, vol. 1, ch. 54; *Sunan Abu Dawud*, vol. 3, book 21, no. 3746 (M B Piotrovsky, 'Islamic Art: an Introduction', *Heaven and Earth: art from Islamic lands: works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection*, MB Piotrovsky & JM Rogers (eds.), Prestel, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, 2004, p. 20; BBC News, *Q and A: Depicting the Prophet Muhammad*, retrieved 9 August 2014, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4674864.stm; Religion Facts, op. cit.).

¹¹⁵⁵ Religion Facts, *Depictions of Muhammad in Islamic Art*, retrieved 9 August 2014,

<http://www.religiousfacts.com/islam/things/depictions-of-muhammad-in-islamic-art.htm>.

¹¹⁵⁶ M Natif, 'Concepts of Idol anxiety in Islamic Art', in Ellenbogen & Tugendhaft (eds.), 2011, op. cit., p. 42.

¹¹⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 43. David Freeman agrees with this perspective and also discusses claims of aniconism (*The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Responses*, Chicago, 1989, p. 80).

¹¹⁵⁸ P Crone, M Hinds cited in Natif, op. cit., p. 44. Natif sees parallels in the Christian world in Henri VIII's break from the Catholic Church. She also cites examples where the attitude towards imagery from Muslims has been ambivalent: Mughul India, where the minority Muslim group ruled over the predominantly Hindu population, tolerated and included imagery of multiple gods; the Great Mosque of Cordoba has many biblical characters and scenes in their Islamic works of art; Mehmed II retained mosaics with Christian iconography when he reformed the Mosque in 1453; and Muhammad himself did not destroy the paintings of Abraham and the Virgin and Child when he cleansed the Kaaba of pictures and statues (Natif, op. cit., p. 47).

attempt to defend themselves 'against a taboo placed on the image.'¹¹⁵⁹ This is a compelling argument, considering Muslim societies' intense interest in the natural sciences and medicine would have meant they were well aware of anatomical correctness. Thus the meaning derived from their representational schema may have carried more significance than realism. However, Porter also suggests that artists may have had choices in terms of depicting knowledge based on the Sufi belief in the duality or 'double nature' of form and meaning. Following this theory, images could be either depictions of interior/ esoteric (bāṭin) or exterior/exoteric (zāhir) information.¹¹⁶⁰ This would explain the preference for archetypes rather than realistic figural compositions as well as the aversion to shadowing in order to render 'a pure, bright luminous world beyond the reach of terrestrial sight ... [with 'divine' bodies painted] flat, almost transparent, without the forms of muscles, while *dīvs* [demons] are shown with heavy bodies, with muscles, hair and genitalia.'¹¹⁶¹

There were obvious variations to these archetypes as *Muhammad leading Hamzah and the Muslims against the Banu Qaynuqa* illustrates. For example, while facial expressions and body contours of all figures are flat and static with Muhammad rendered in a white, semi-transparent wash and his family and angels more colourful in red and blue outlines, the addition of hair on the head and face (especially braids on the Prophet) is more in keeping with depictions of *dīvs*. This lends weight to earlier observations that artists working on the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* were employing imaginative and innovative techniques to break monotonous and repetitive 'house styles' imposed upon them.

As Natif and Grabar succinctly observe:

On a cultural level ... the Islamic world had a much more complicated and sophisticated concern with religious or pious imagery than is usually suggested ... images were constantly present and active according to social, intellectual, or other areas of interest ... They could have been inspired by existing, real models of works of art from many different cultures, or perhaps they were mnemonic devices created in learned or popular rhetoric.¹¹⁶²

¹¹⁵⁹ Y Porter, 'From the "Theory of the Two Qalams" to the "Seven Principles of Painting": Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting', *Muqarnas*, vol. 17, 2000, p. 113, retrieved 10 August 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523293>.

¹¹⁶⁰ *ibid.*

¹¹⁶¹ *ibid.* Alternatively, other commentators argue that 'images are too powerful ... instead of establishing contact, images block communication with God' and 'stopping on the object itself' with the image and its creator being revered instead of the divine being and the image being 'idolized' instead (Assmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 25, 28; M Fumaroli, 'The Christian Critique of Idolatry', in Ellenbogen and Tugendhaft, *op. cit.*, p. 33).

¹¹⁶² O Grabar, M Natif, 'The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad', *Studia Islamica*, vol. 96, 2003, p. 36, retrieved 21 August 2014, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/stable/i271968>.

Islam is not alone in prohibiting images of gods and prophets as, according to their official teachings, Christianity and Judaism also agree that worshipping of images is a heinous sin and iconoclastic.¹¹⁶³ Jewish rituals do not use images and depictions of God but examples such as in the synagogue at Dura Europos Syria reveal exceptions to the rule and there exist abundant portraits of Jesus since the second/third century A.D. in spite of the Byzantine bishops and emperors of the eighth and ninth centuries arguing these images broke the Second Commandment.¹¹⁶⁴ Therefore, although all three Abrahamic faiths decreed images of prophets and gods were idolatrous, artists of these dominations painted a variety of figural depictions of divine beings in human form to illustrate biblical stories at various periods of history. Despite not being adhered to at all times, the general consensus for the present shunning of depictions of Muhammad (especially to Sunni Muslims) is the fear of worshipping these images as idols. As As'ad AbuKhalil maintains:

In the Holy Koran of Islam ... the one sin unforgivable is polytheism. The prohibition is intended to protect the faithful from that sin. The fear was that intense reverence for the prophet might if unrestrained cross over into worship ... the growing power of conservative faculties in Islamic universities also strengthened the old ban on depictions of the prophet ... so is the rise of Wahabis in Arabia. Their conservatism went so far they obliterated the prophet's tomb.¹¹⁶⁵

The view of some commentators on the repercussions of the ban in imagery has been harsh as French Orientalist William Marçais' comment in 1932 reveals: 'Among the Jews ... and certainly the Muslims, too, the religious interdiction [on imagery] has only confirmed an ineptitude that is ancient and possibly racial.'¹¹⁶⁶ This conservatism is not confined to the past as present commentators advocate the shift from images to the spoken word in keeping with the Arabic tradition of oral narratives. For example, German Egyptologist Jan Assman argues that 'the visible images must disappear to make room for

¹¹⁶³The bible states: 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God.' Second Commandment (Exodus 20:4-5). For further philosophical discussions relating to idolatry see: M Halbertal, A Margalit, *Idolatry*, trans. N. Goldblum, Harvard University press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1992.

¹¹⁶⁴ 'Satan misled men, so that they worshipped the creature instead of the Creator. The Law of Moses and the Prophets cooperated to remove this ruin... But the previously mentioned demiurge of evil...gradually brought back idolatry under the appearance of Christianity' (Iconoclast Council at Hieria, 754).

¹¹⁶⁵ As'ad AbuKhalil is a political scientist and visiting Professor at University of Berkeley California quoted in P Richard, 'In art museums, portraits illuminate a religious taboo', *The Washington Post*, retrieved 9 August 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302407_pf.html.

¹¹⁶⁶ Cited in K Scheid, 'The Study of Islamic Art at a Crossroads, and Humanity as a Whole', in Junod et al, (eds), op. cit., p. 93.

the word and the mental images it evokes' therefore not advocating the banning of images but 'the acquisition of iconic literacy.'¹¹⁶⁷ Conversely, there are others who have a more moderate view of imagery in Islamic contexts and agree with Khalili on the role of beauty:

Many extremists think Islam is against art, since it copies God's creations, but through this exhibition you can find out how mistaken they are ... Beauty has always played a major role in Islam. In the Quran, some passages urge people to meditate on God's creations.¹¹⁶⁸

Politics of display at the DNKG

Specific social, cultural and political situations, however, affect the display of these images and the reaction of particular communities. The violence, ethnic tensions and debates concerning freedom of speech following events such as the Salman Rushdie's 1988 *The Satanic Verses*, publication of satirical cartoon depicting the Prophet in the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* in 2005, and the *Innocence of Muslims* movie trailer in 2012, are contemporary examples of the global Muslim reaction to depictions of Muhammad, especially offensive and derogatory ones. As already discussed, the death of Theo Van Gogh over his film *Submission* has had dramatic consequences for Dutch Muslims. As one commentator has stated: 'To criticize the prophet Muhammad is as direct an attack as mocking or attacking the Koran, which is seen as the word of God or the sacred Scripture ... Muhammad is seen as the living Koran. His life Muslims are to emulate.'¹¹⁶⁹

The challenge to create and display images of the Prophet Muhammad is ever-present in all creative pursuits. There have been examples of acceptable accounts of the life of Muhammad such as the 1976 film *The Message* by Muslim filmmaker Moustapha Akkad, filmed from the perspective of the Prophet himself and contains no images or even the voice of the Muhammad.¹¹⁷⁰ Additionally, museums worldwide have artworks depicting Muhammad and curators have been dealing with the politics of displaying these artifacts with mixed reactions as this case study has shown in the comments from Muslims visitors viewing the AoIE in Sydney.

In this instance, the DNKG curator confidently stated that they had not received any complaints from the public concerning images of the Prophet. She maintained that, in her

¹¹⁶⁷ Assmann, op. cit., pp. 22, 31.

¹¹⁶⁸ Mohammed, op. cit., pp. 24, 29.

¹¹⁶⁹ John Esposito cited in E Weiner, 'Why Cartoons of the Prophet Insult Muslims', *npr*, retrieved 9 August 2014, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5196323>.

¹¹⁷⁰ Weiner, op. cit.

opinion, 'the objects were made by Muslim artists' and therefore were acceptable historically and any anger from the public could be vented at their public forums and debates.¹¹⁷¹ The gallery was not 'running away' from 'different and sometimes difficult topics' that they considered 'interesting and dangerous' such as Islamic dress, politics and religious restrictions/freedoms in open forums with politicians, community leaders and the public.¹¹⁷² This approach was to ensure there was a 'space to communicate'¹¹⁷³; a formula that did not attract negative responses from either the public or press. According to the curator these forums were not uncommon in exhibitions staged in the Netherlands, were well attended and had community support generally. Since they have a large Muslim community the DNKG conducts 'niche marketing so we always try and find people we are talking about', attempting to involve Muslim and non-Muslim communities in 'niche' tours focused on Islam, Christianity, Judaism or politics.¹¹⁷⁴

The placement of these religious or spiritual images that depict Muhammad in works of scientific, historical and epic nature by multi-faith artisans such as the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* are therefore significant and seen as permissible by mainstream audiences as Hillenbrand suggests: 'religious painting entered Islamic art by the back door, and this may well have helped to secure its acceptance.'¹¹⁷⁵ However, the DNKG curator did describe problems with human depictions in a 2002 Moroccan show and a recent Oman display. In these two instances, sponsors insisted that the gallery alter maps and texts at the request of the respective governments so that they were not 'telling difficult stories, although they are true and part of their history.'¹¹⁷⁶

Exhibitions that appeal to the senses through highlighting the magnificence and beauty of Islamic art and culture often do so in an attempt to counteract assumed contemporary prejudices such as racism, terrorism, authoritarianism and patriarchy.¹¹⁷⁷ In the case of *Passion for Perfection* the justification for their approach was that 'they had

¹¹⁷¹ Ryan and Kleiterp, op. cit., transcript lines 298-304.

¹¹⁷² *ibid.*, lines 399, 353, 378.

¹¹⁷³ *ibid.*, line 352.

¹¹⁷⁴ *ibid.*, lines 382-387.

¹¹⁷⁵ Hillenbrand, 2002, op. cit., p. 150.

¹¹⁷⁶ *ibid.*, lines 310-321.

¹¹⁷⁷ WMK Shaw, 'The Islam in the Islamic art history: secularism and public discourse', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, p. 1-2, retrieved 13 January 2014, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shaw.pdf>.

done so much Islamic religious exhibitions'¹¹⁷⁸ and wanted to encourage 'another positive part of Islam', and the aesthetic experience was considered the sole medium required for this to occur: 'people will not understand anything but come in and admire the beauty of the collection ...'¹¹⁷⁹ It was the 'passion of the artists' and the 'beauty of the object' (which the curator mentioned twelve times during our interview) that would bridge cultural divides as there was 'nothing to learn'; it was enough that the display exhibited 'Islamic art in a Christian church collected by a Jew'.¹¹⁸⁰

Despite these assurances, the curator admitted that there had been some complaints about the availability of information, as the gallery had only provided a small booklet/brochure with brief factual description of 100 objects and a limited number of didactic panels containing background details scattered around the exhibition space. When asked if they had surveyed visitor's opinions on issues concerning cross-cultural understanding the curator argued: 'we tried to evaluate this whole thing, but it is always hard to interview people that didn't come.'¹¹⁸¹

The desire to engage diverse audiences in discussions around sensitive cultural and religious issues is obviously of importance to the DNKG generally and the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition especially. It is also evident that the desire to both depict and shun figural compositions has influenced artistic production depending on the particular historical moment. As the existence of artifacts such as the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* confirm, a distinctive pictorial language and notion of figurative art developed by artists from Islamic lands. It is clear that during the Ilkanid Period there was a departure from the generally flat, linear compositions depicting human form that were adopted in order to avoid naturalistic depictions and accusations of idolatry.

In Safavid Iran and the subsequent Qajar dynasty, we again witness a significant shift in portrayals of human form against this ban on figural depictions.¹¹⁸² Further, the use of the artistic form for agendas other than aesthetic appreciation will be shown to be a common desire of monarchs and their Iranian courts in many eras. The rich narratives and histories that accompany these artifacts are detailed in discussions that follow, demonstrating what

¹¹⁷⁸ Ryan and Kleiterp, op. cit., lines 11-12.

¹¹⁷⁹ Ibid., lines 17-25.

¹¹⁸⁰ Ibid., lines 50-56.

¹¹⁸¹ Ibid., lines 176-177.

¹¹⁸² Natif, op. cit., p. 46.

is lost when current curatorial practices, like those at the DNKG, concentrate on the aesthetic dimensions of the works only. Further, when artworks are seen solely as aesthetic objects the criteria for value is based on Western artistic canons that fail to consider alternative and equally valid systems of representation.

Qajar painting: images of monarchy

The second work under discussion is a Qajar enamel *Portrait Miniature of the Qajar ruler, Fath'ali Shah*,¹¹⁸³ created in the early nineteenth century and signed by Ghulam Khanah-zad Baqir. Fath'ali Shah (reigning from 1797-1834) used royal portraiture as a form of 'imperial stagecraft',¹¹⁸⁴ commissioning court painters to produce numerous personal portraits (large oil paintings, vases, cups and miniature enamels) in majestic scenes of enthronement, and epic and heroic scenes of hunting and warfare.¹¹⁸⁵ Adopting a 'monarchical posture' Fath'ali Shah was keen to display (to both his subjects and influential neighbours) the glory and splendor of kingship; a 'royal image' radically different from the 'rugged simplicity' of his predecessor.¹¹⁸⁶

The Qajars were distinctive in Iran during the Muslim era for their deployment of figural depictions as tools of propaganda and for their unique obsession in portraying the canonical single-figure image.¹¹⁸⁷ Ruling Iran for nearly forty years in comparative tranquility, this second monarch of the Qajar dynasty brought a sense of majesty, elegance and refinement to court life through his opulent and ornamental imperial regalia, portraits and architectural works, commissioned religious and secular literature (especially poetry and illustrated manuscripts), enormous harems, and public events displaying his vast wealth.¹¹⁸⁸

¹¹⁸³ This enamel is typical of works from this era consisting of translucent and opaque enamel painted on gold sheet.

¹¹⁸⁴ J Raby, *Qajar Portraits*, Azimuth Editions, London, IB Tauris, London, New York, 1999, p. 11.

¹¹⁸⁵ For a comprehensive list of portraits of Fath'ali Shah and biographies of prominent court artists see: BW Robinson, 'The Court Painters of Fath'ali Shah', *Israel Exploration Society*, Jerusalem, vol. 7, 1963, pp. 94-105.

¹¹⁸⁶ According to Amanat, in order to legitimize and consolidate his dynasty, Fath'ali Shah had a thousand women in his harem and fathered more than sixty sons and forty-eight daughters, leaving more than a thousand descendants at his death and thereby creating a 'new ruling elite.' For a comprehensive account of his reign and an historical overview of Iran during the Qajar Epoch see : A Amanat, 'Qajar Iran: A historical Overview', *Royal Persian painting: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925*, LS Diba & M Ekhtiar (eds.), IB Tauris, Brooklyn Museum of Art, London, New York, 1998, pp. 14-29.

¹¹⁸⁷ Raby, op. cit.

¹¹⁸⁸ *ibid*, p. 19, 36.

Many have agreed with British art historian Basil Robinson's proclamation that 'Persia in the nineteenth century was a land of paintings, as never seen before or since',¹¹⁸⁹ with imagery of all genres designed to provoke admiration (even worship) from both the monarch's subjects and international audiences.¹¹⁹⁰ A detailed description is worth inclusion here to fully appreciate the power of such events:

There is no court where a more rigid attention is paid to ceremony than that of Persia ... The looks, the words, the motions of the body, are all regulated by the most strict observance of form. When the king is seated in public, his sons, ministers and courtiers, stand erect, with their hands crossed, and in the exact place of their rank. They watch the looks of the sovereign, and a glance is a mandate ... On extraordinary occasions nothing can exceed the splendour of the Persian court. It presents a scene of the greatest magnificence, regulated by the most disciplined order. There is no part of the government to which so much attention is paid to the strict maintenance of those forms and ceremonies, which are deemed essential to the power and glory of the monarch; and the high officers to whom his duty is allotted, are armed with the fullest authority, and are always attended by a number of inferiors who carry their commands into the prompt execution.¹¹⁹¹

Qajar art expert Layla Diba comments on the use of imagery (especially life-size portraits) by rulers in public ceremonies or positioned for veneration in shrines and mausoleums arguing that this practice is akin to idolatry. Similar to the ban on portrayals of the Prophet Muhammad, the acceptance and promotion of powerful figural depictions during Qajar Iran for propaganda and political purposes is further evidence that aniconism and iconoclasm has not always been adhered to in the Muslim world.¹¹⁹² Due to sheer numbers of portraits, Fath'ali Shah is undoubtedly regarded as the most commonly represented of the Qajar Kings.¹¹⁹³ Many have described images of Fath'ali Shah and his family as 'idealized nostalgia',¹¹⁹⁴ and this ruler's fondness for self-portraiture extended to his portrait appearing on a 'coin of the realm', making him the first Persian monarch since the Arab victory to achieve this status. Fath'ali Shah also revived the Achaemenid and Sasanian custom of depicting their 'hero-rulers' on monumental bas-reliefs on rock faces

¹¹⁸⁹ Robinson, 1963, op. cit., p. 96.

¹¹⁹⁰ LS Diba, 'The images of power and the power of images: Intention and response in early Qajar painting (1785-1834) in Diba, LS, & Ekhtiar, M (eds) 1998, op. cit., p. 40.

¹¹⁹¹ Raby cites Sir John Malcolm in 1815, op. cit. p. 10.

¹¹⁹² Ibid., pp. 41-45.

¹¹⁹³ Diba cites from travel writings of Charles Texier (1842) who encountered more than sixty portraits of Fath'ali Shah in Iranian province of Isfahan alone (Diba et al, 1998, op. cit., p. 176).

¹¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

throughout Iran using imagery designed to convey 'universal symbols of royalty and power.'¹¹⁹⁵

Acutely aware of the power of appearance, Fath'ali Shah was always meticulously attired, designing his own series of ornate, jeweled 'Kayanid' crowns, and unique, highly decorative, and elaborate ceremonial robes intended to emphasize his slender waistline.¹¹⁹⁶

Colin Meredith proposes that:

The eye of the masses had to be captured and retained and their visual sense assaulted by the spectacle of wealth, power, and splendor which approached their own vision of the celestial ... The Shah formed the center of a revolving pageant which he himself seemed to illuminate.¹¹⁹⁷

Robinson suggests that according to most accounts Fath'ali Shah '... was inordinately handsome, and his fine eyes, wasp-like waist, luxuriant beard and dazzling jewels [were] unfailingly noted by travellers and envoys who had the privilege of an audience'.¹¹⁹⁸ Another author who wrote of the attractive looks, charming and amiable character of Fath'ali Shah was Sir Robert Ker Porter, who asked for a portrait of the King to take back home. He described him as possessing 'indescribable, unaffected dignity ... his face seemed exceedingly pale, of a polished marble hue; with the finest contours of features; and eyes dark, brilliant and piercing ...'¹¹⁹⁹ However, although portraits of this ruler were intended to represent him as 'every inch a king'¹²⁰⁰ ... [and] the Shadow of God upon Earth,¹²⁰¹ Robinson also describes this 'picturesque monarch'¹²⁰² as 'incompetent, vain, avaricious, and

¹¹⁹⁵ BW Robinson, 'Persian Royal Portraiture', E Bosworth & C Hillenbrand (eds.), *Qajar Iran. Political, Social and Cultural Change 1800-1925*, Edinburgh University press, Edinburgh, 1983, p.298. Seven rock reliefs were constructed of Fath'ali Shah, his sons and grandsons in Fars, Kirmanshsh, Firuzkuh and Ravy between 1817-1833, carved with details of ornaments, crowns, imperial robes, weapons in combat scenes battling their enemies and wild animals (J Scarce, 'Ancestral themes in the art of Qajar Iran', Vernoit et al, op. cit., p. 237; Diba, 1998, op. cit., p. 41).

¹¹⁹⁶ Piotrovsky et al, op. cit., p. 154.

¹¹⁹⁷ C Meredith, 'Early Qajar administration: an analysis of its development and functions', *Iranian Studies*, 1971, issue 4, nos. 2-3, pp. 60, 61, retrieved 22 September 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00210867108701411>.

¹¹⁹⁸ Robinson, 1983, op. cit., p.297.

¹¹⁹⁹ RK Porter, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, etc., during the Years 1817-1820*, London, 1821, p. 325, 353.

¹²⁰⁰ *ibid*, p. 300.

¹²⁰¹ BW Robinson, 1963, op. cit. p. 94. Fath'ali Shah wished to be addressed as 'The Asylum of the Universe, the King of Kings, the Royal Possessor of Kingdoms, His Majesty the Shadow of Allah' (Robinson, 1963, op. cit., p. 97).

¹²⁰² Robinson describes portrayals of Fath'ali Shah as depicting 'the tall handsome figure, the majestic beard and the blazing jewels of the last Persian monarch who (in appearance at least) could take his place on equal terms beside Darius, Shapur, or 'Abbas the Great' (*ibid.*, 1963, p. 68).

vacillating¹²⁰³ with many scholars drawing attention to the economic and military failures by the end of his reign, even accusing the monarch of spreading ‘historical lies.’¹²⁰⁴ There were other commentators who also wrote in disparaging terms of the ruler referring to him as ‘a Bad King but a good thing.’¹²⁰⁵

In all depictions of Fath’ali Shah (whether life-size or miniature) the aim was to create and display a ‘dynastic image, at once imperial and tribal.’¹²⁰⁶ The miniature enamel under discussion (fig 104) depicts the ruler as relatively youthful and full-faced, with a short full, black, glossy beard and the Qajar symbol of beauty – the continuous, arched, darkened eyebrow. The ruler confronts the viewer directly, and by limiting facial contours and enlarging the whites of the eyes, the effect is mesmerising.¹²⁰⁷ He is resplendent in his impressive attire: from the ornate astrakhan hat (or aigrette) adorned with turban pin (from the early seventeenth century Mughal treasury)¹²⁰⁸ comprising black heron-like feathered plume interspersed with diamonds, rubies and emeralds, decorative armbands and epaulettes (shoulder straps) to his opulent flowing brocaded ceremonial dress interlaced with strings of pearls. From accounts at the time, his court was donned similar fashion with ‘young pages also dressed in satin robes and wearing at their belt daggers embellished with diamonds...’¹²⁰⁹

¹²⁰³ Robinson, 1963, op. cit.; Diba 1998, op. cit., p. 41.

¹²⁰⁴ Diba, 1998, op. cit. p. 35.

¹²⁰⁵ Writers included: ES Waring, *A Tour of the Sheeraz*, London, 1807; J S Buckingham, *Travels in Assyria, Media and Persia*, London, 1829; T Alcock, *Travels in Russia, Persia, Turkey and Greece in 1828-1829*, London, 1831.

¹²⁰⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁰⁷ Raby, op. cit., p. 11.

¹²⁰⁸ AGNSW, *The Arts of Islam*, op. cit., p. 279.

¹²⁰⁹ Pierre-Amédée Jaubert (1821) cited in Raby, op. cit., p. 10.



Fig 104 Qajar enamel *Portrait Miniature of the Qajar ruler, Fath'ali Shah, Iran, early 19th century* *Passion for Perfection* exhibition Amsterdam 2010-11. Source: Khalili.org

The effect was that of 'jewels ... so dazzling, that it was impossible to distinguish the minute parts which combined to give such a brilliance to the whole body.'¹²¹⁰ To the left of the figure is small, lobe-shaped teardrop cartouche (similar to the ruler's seal ring) with the engraved inscription 'The Sultan Fath'ali Shah Qajar.'¹²¹¹ The delicate facial features with refined curved eyebrows, comparatively small body frame with broader upper arms are typical of early nineteenth century painting tenets.¹²¹² Further, the inclusion of shaded looped drapery, finely patterned interiors and open spaced backgrounds are borrowed from European models.¹²¹³ Interestingly, while Robinson maintains the use of the frontal pose in the majority of portraits of the Shah is an influence Achaemenid pictorial imagery,¹²¹⁴ Raby

¹²¹⁰ BW Robinson, 'The Royal Gifts of the Fath'ali Shah', *Apollo*, lii, 1950, p. 66, 67.

¹²¹¹ S Vernot, *Occidentalism: Islamic Art in the 19th century*, IB Tauris Ltd., 2004, p.96.

¹²¹² LS Diba, 'An encounter between Qajar Iran and the West', in Vernot et al, op. cit., p. 283.

¹²¹³ Diba, 1998, op. cit., p. 170.

¹²¹⁴ Robinson 1963, op. cit., p. 97.

challenges this claim arguing this is more akin to European royal portraits (especially depictions of Napoleon) as there is 'no precedent for such an item in Iranian royal iconography.'¹²¹⁵

Bestowing prestige: Authenticity and imitation

Regardless of its influences, the portrait has been compared unfavourably with its Western counterparts, criticized for depicting the monarch as life-like but essentially stylized, with static, formal and passive features. However, it must be remembered that Fath'ali Shah wished to enhance his prestige among his European counterparts, not by appropriation and imitation, but through the development of a unique, iconic pictorial style that was visually striking. The main objective was to portray the ruler in dazzling, bejewelled attire that incorporated select elements of European fashion. The formality of pose, the ornate garments and lavish fabrics were part of a monumental 'compositional formula'¹²¹⁶ reinforcing both the pageantry and rigid ceremonial function of the Qajar court.¹²¹⁷ Authenticity and realism was sacrificed in favour of pictorial emphasis that is mainly semantic (prescriptive as opposed to mimetic or descriptive) highlighting the monarch's grandeur and maleness.¹²¹⁸ For example, except for changes in posture (sitting, standing, kneeling) this ruler never aged and wore almost identical ceremonial dress and royal insignia in portraits for over thirty years.¹²¹⁹

In support of the perspective, Diba further argues that the use of 'flatness and saturated colours ... rich materials and decorative patterning' is a return to seventeenth century Persian painting from the Ottoman and Safavids styles suggesting a cultural revival and a new, creative, authentic and original approach by Qajar artists.¹²²⁰ With particular reference to *Portrait Miniature of the Qajar ruler, Fath'ali Shah*, Mikhail Piotrovsky regards miniature enamels as having ' ... delighted the eyes of Western ... creating a completely original and charming school of painting.'¹²²¹

¹²¹⁵ Although no precise evidence of gifts of these type of portraits can be established Raby compares pictorial devices in a portrait by Mihr *Ali Fath 'Ali Shah Standing with a Sceptre* (1809-10) with portraits of Napoleon by Robert Lefèvre (1805) and François Gérard (1811) (see Raby, op. cit., pp. 11-13).

¹²¹⁶ AT Adamova, 'Art and Diplomacy: Qajar painting at the State hermitage Museum', Diba et al, op. cit., p. 70.

¹²¹⁷ Diba, 1998, op. cit., p. 39.

¹²¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 18.

¹²¹⁹ Raby, op. cit., p. 11.

¹²²⁰ *ibid.*, Vernoit et al, op. cit., p. 289; Diba, 1998, op. cit., p. 45.

¹²²¹ *ibid.*

As the artists responsible for such impressive and majestic depictions of powerful rulers, the role of the royal portrait painter in Qajar Iran was undoubtedly one of privilege and prestige. While many artists painted the monarch's portrait (Mîrzâ Bâbâ, 'Abdallâh Khan, and Mihr 'Alî) Baqir was considered to be an unusually versatile painter with unswervingly high standards of portraiture painting.¹²²² Robinson believed the artist Bâqir to be one of the monarch's 'ablest court artists in enamel ... meticulous and highly accomplished ... [whose enamels had] glowing colour, and a certain enduring naiveté.'¹²²³ In this portrait of Fath'ali Shah, Baqir has signed his name using the title *Ghulam Khanah-zad* ('slave born in the household') that many consider is unusual. However, Robinson maintains this can also mean 'craftsman in the royal workshops' and cites many other examples of Qajar enamels attributed to Baqir that bear this name.¹²²⁴ The status of the painter was heightened with the inclusion of their signature, with the ruler entrusting them with the mission to create and promote portraits of them in their absence.¹²²⁵

As Rogers suggests,¹²²⁶ painting was a costly pursuit and was overwhelmingly reserved for furthering the political agendas and glorification of monarchs and their courts in the majority of Muslim cultures. Manuscripts and murals especially were valuable for validating the claim of a monarch to rule. This role of painting as a powerful medium through which to extol 'Islamic imperium' was directed at the ruler's enemies (both outside and inside their court) and to convince their subjects of their dependability and claim to rule. However, since a substantial amount of these works were of a private nature (illuminated manuscripts in royal libraries and murals inside palaces) Rogers argues that their public validation was restricted.¹²²⁷

Although Iran avoided Western colonial domination (particularly from Britain and Russia), the nation was exposed to the influence of European diplomatic/military policies and practices and educational reforms. According to Ismael Hossein-zadeh, the strong

¹²²² AGNSW, *The Arts of Islam*, op. cit., p. 279.

¹²²³ BW Robinson, 'Qajar painted Enamels', in *Paintings from Islamic Lands, Oriental Studies IV*, R Pinder-Wilson (eds.), Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1969, p. 188, 189.

¹²²⁴ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 881.

¹²²⁵ M Ekhtiar, 'From workshop and bazaar to academy: Art training and production in Qajar Iran', Diba et al, op. cit., p. 57. Baqir was a lacquer painter who decorated enamelled bowls, spoons and a teapot with busts of the monarch strikingly similar to the example in question. He also collaborated with other artists like Mirza Baba and produced a lacquer cover for on illuminated manuscripts such as *Khamseh* of Nizami commissioned by the Safavid Shah Tahmap between 1539-1543, now in British Library (Raby, op. cit., p 28).

¹²²⁶ Piotrovsky and Rogers, et. al, op. cit. p. 37.

¹²²⁷ *ibid.*

desire for a closer relationship between the Qajar dynasty and the west is illustrated by the Constitution Revolution of 1906, where liberal-minded religious leaders joined secular political leaders to compel the Qajar dynasty to establish a 'modern constitution, to limit the powers of the monarchy and give Iranians parliamentary representation.'¹²²⁸ Other commentators, however, suggest that the Qajars viewed the West's diverse commercial, religious, social and cultural ideologies 'with a mix of complacency, fascination, and fear.'¹²²⁹ In terms of artistic developments, European pictorial techniques were 'imported' as the result of interactions between the West and East through warfare and trading. Similar to the Christian Crusades in the Middle Ages the interchange of skills of all kinds occurred, and in this instance, with a sense of European-style 'taste' that was evident especially among the Iranian elite.¹²³⁰ This was a reciprocal exchange however: while the East was including European methods, subjects and compositional elements (that became increasingly popular as the nineteenth century progressed), many Western painters incorporated an 'Orientalizing style' into their artistic repertoires.¹²³¹ This Westernization of painting became obvious in portraits of Fath'ali Shah's successors such as his grandsons Prince Muhammad Mirza and Muhammad Shah and Muzaffar al-Din Shah. These depictions (often copied from European royal portraits) became characteristically European in all respects: compositional elements, attire and painting techniques.¹²³²

Importantly, the royal *naqqāshkāneh* (house of painting) replaced the apprenticeship system with the Western practice of a staffed workshop (that increasingly included Western artists to train Persian craftsmen) introducing a new system integrating European techniques, styles and materials that challenged traditional methods and approaches and defined the 'royal aesthetic'. The introduced techniques included 'standardization, repetition, and adherence to the rules and concepts of the workshop' common to Western models of art education and production. In the case of Fath'ali Shah, the royal atelier or workshop was set up next to the monarch's throne to allow constant access to the ruler and expedite royal portrait painting.¹²³³ However, characteristic features

¹²²⁸ Hossein-zadeh, op. cit.

¹²²⁹ Amanat, op. cit., pp. 15, 20.

¹²³⁰ *ibid.*

¹²³¹ Piotrovsky et al, op. cit., p. 29.

¹²³² See AGNSW catalogue, op. cit., p. 279; Piotrovsky et al, op. cit., pp. 146-1610.

¹²³³ Ekhtiar, 1998, op. cit., pp. 50-57.

of the traditional *naqqāshkāneh* persisted despite the European tendency to ‘academize’ painting.¹²³⁴

According to Robinson, Fath’ali Shah’s aim was to revive the splendour of the seventeenth century Safavid era and to ‘diffuse a sense of the majesty of the king of Kings’ to its European neighbours through portraits of himself as he did not travel to Europe personally.¹²³⁵ This ruler understood the power of both the spoken word and the painted image to promote the impression of a transformed and dynamic Iranian empire.¹²³⁶ Fath’ali Shah was a poet himself, dispatching several copies of his *Dŵaʿān* (‘Collected Poems’) to European leaders and commissioned a history of the Qajar dynasty in the form of an epic poem, that were presented to at least five European diplomats and monarchs.¹²³⁷ According to Julian Raby, portraits sent to Europe served two functions: the diplomatic and the dynastic.¹²³⁸

To this end, many portraits of the ruler were taken home by the numerous European travellers and envoys that passed through Persia in the early nineteenth century and more than fifteen were sent as ‘diplomatic gifts’ to British, French, Russian and Indian rulers.¹²³⁹ The most prominent examples were: a large oil painting of Fath’ali Shah being displayed for almost the entire nineteenth century on the walls of the British Embassy in Tehran;¹²⁴⁰ another hung in the East India Company office, then later transferred to the former Viceroy’s House in New Delhi; and a miniature painting from the *Shāhinshāh Nāma*¹²⁴¹ (‘The History of the King of Kings’) presented to Sir Gore Ouseley by the monarch in 1812 that currently resides in the Bodleian Library, Oxford England.¹²⁴² Both the rock bas-reliefs and the paintings were idealized compositions and pictorial narratives deployed as propaganda devices designed to promote the authority of Fath’ali Shah the Qajar dynasty at home and abroad.¹²⁴³ Portraits of the monarch were considered by the West, however, to be

¹²³⁴ *ibid*, p. 62.

¹²³⁵ BW Robinson, ‘Persian painting under the Zand and Qajar Dynasties’, *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge MA, 1991, p. 874.

¹²³⁶ Raby, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹²³⁷ *ibid*.

¹²³⁸ *ibid*.

¹²³⁹ Diba, 1998, *op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹²⁴⁰ Robinson, 1950, *op. cit.*

¹²⁴¹ This work chronicled the highlights of Fath’ali Shah’s reign, including his predecessor’s battles against warring parties such as the Zands (Robinson, 1991, *op. cit.*, p. 885).

¹²⁴² Robinson, 1963, p. 98.

¹²⁴³ Scarce, *op. cit.*, p. 237.

reminiscent of ‘the idea of an Oriental potentate formed in the mind of most of us at an early age of the Arabian Nights and the stories of King Solomon in the Old Testament ... amply fulfilling all the qualifications demanded by the most exacting readers of Eastern romances.’¹²⁴⁴

While many commentators described the art works as being executed in a ‘fine nasta’liq hand’ and illuminated with frequent miniatures in the ‘Europeanizing style of the time’, reviews were mixed. They were deemed to display a certain ‘magnificence’,¹²⁴⁵ but were often considered of ‘uneven quality’ generally.¹²⁴⁶ It appears the closer the depiction came to emulating European techniques they more acceptable they were to Western audiences. Additionally, despite acknowledging that the tradition of royal portraiture spanned over 2,400 years with the era of Fath’ali Shah being regarded as the ‘golden age’ for Persian royal portraiture, Robinson follows other European critics in maintaining that artists while possessing ‘undeniable skill, though perhaps of restricted scope ... petered out in meretricious incompetence.’¹²⁴⁷ Robinson maintained, however, that despite:

... miniature painting dwindle[ing] into sterile imitations ... [that] were at first far from convincing ... as time went on they achieved a more authentic look, and the line between conscientious pastiche and deliberate forgery is often a more difficult line to draw.¹²⁴⁸

In other publications Robinson was less ambivalent, holding the view that despite the ‘all-pervading’ European influence and ‘much inferior work’,¹²⁴⁹ Qajar portrait artists ‘remained obstinately Persian in spirit and essence.’¹²⁵⁰

The array of differing opinions that have been illustrated so far draw attention to the nature of perception that impacts upon rulers, governments, institutions, critics and art lovers alike. Interpretation and attitudes can be enhanced or limited and there are often consequences if other specific contextual factors are overlooked during the curatorial process with displays such as the *Passion for Perfection* at the DNKG. Concentrating on the formal qualities of an object can become problematic as the object’s ability to function as

¹²⁴⁴ Robinson, 1950, op. cit.

¹²⁴⁵ An example of a more positive attitude towards miniature painting was the comment concerning an enamelled tea-service from American Minister S. G. W. Benjamin: ‘[it was] one of the most brilliant works in this art ever produced, whether in Persia or Europe’ (SGW Benjamin cited in Robinson, *ibid.*, p. 188).

¹²⁴⁶ *ibid.*, 1963, p. 68.

¹²⁴⁷ *ibid.*

¹²⁴⁸ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 888.

¹²⁴⁹ *ibid.*, p. 889.

¹²⁵⁰ Robinson, op. cit., 1991, pp. 870, 871.

‘art’ is restricted to the boundary of the visual, ignoring meaning as the product of two interwoven practices: ‘the culture of production’ and the ‘culture of perception.’¹²⁵¹ When artworks are placed in the museum context, there is an assumption of a certain level of critical sophistication (or cultural capital) from the viewer to form a basis for cross-cultural understanding to occur.¹²⁵² When there is an absence of narratives informed by literature and primary sources (like the associated texts and documents that my analysis has been based upon) a disconnection from the objects on display can result if the museum visitor lacks essential knowledge necessary for interpretation and understanding.¹²⁵³ Supporters of this view suggest that art made by societies dominated by Islamic doctrine are invariably viewed through ‘epistemological structures grounded in western modes of perception’¹²⁵⁴ and that this reduces the ability of the viewer to grasp original and significant narratives. When commentators for example, consider Qajar painting as purely ‘ornamental’ and ‘decorative’ or ‘inferior’ and ‘tasteless’, they are effectively favouring western systems of artistic practice that regard these artworks as lacking quality, meaning and depth.

This tendency to concentrate on the aesthetic qualities of objects is not new of course, as chapter two revealed in the discussion of Pope’s 1931 London exhibition and book *Introduction to Persian Art*, that aimed at displaying the beautiful, exotic, dazzling object in all its Oriental glory. This was despite attempts such as the 1910 Munich exhibition showcasing *Masterpieces of the Muhammedan Art* that strove, rather unsuccessfully, to educate the public through exposure to historical, social, religious and political contexts of artworks on display.¹²⁵⁵ Australian academic Wendy Shaw shares David Roxburgh’s sentiments when she comments: ‘Islamic art – even today – is supposed to dazzle its viewers into pleasure, mimicking the imagined pleasures of the harem, the bazaar, or other adventures in *A Thousand and One Nights*.’¹²⁵⁶ Exhibitions such as the DNKG that relied on

¹²⁵¹ Shaw, 2012, op. cit., p.5. The author is following Stuart Hall’s concepts of cultural capital and the production and reception of artworks. For further reading see S Hall, *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham, Media Series: SP no. 7, 1973, pp. 1-20.

¹²⁵² The curator admitted that works were accompanied by ‘the title and the date’, believing if further information was needed the visitor would consult the free booklet or purchase the catalogue (Ryan and Kleiterp, op. cit., lines 335-337).

¹²⁵³ Shaw, 2012, op. cit.

¹²⁵⁴ *ibid.* According to Nasser Rabbat, Western art history promoted a ‘hegemonic structure in the Foucauldian sense; that is, it discursively controlled the intricate network of epistemological and cultural conventions that produced and used art historical knowledge’(Islamic Art at a Crossroads?, iJunod et al, op. cit. pp. 79).

¹²⁵⁵ See appendix 3 for details.

¹²⁵⁶ Shaw, 2012, op. cit., p. 6.

terms such as 'beautiful', 'spectacular, and 'perfection'¹²⁵⁷ when promoting their exhibition can be seen as linking Islamic art with a 'mythical East' and Orientalist discourse rather than the polysemic nature of artifacts.

Hybridity and neo-colonialism debates

Many commentators have made reference to the erasure of works of Islamic art from the nineteenth century from the grand-narrative, including curators interviewed in this study. Exclusions are as revealing, if not more so, than those deemed worthy of inclusion as they indicate criteria requiring unpacking and investigation. As Graves outlines, Islamic art followed a 'distinctly organicist pattern' rather than a 'teleological narrative of progress' that positions art from the twentieth century and contemporary Islamic world separate from its historical context: 'The near-total occlusion of the nineteenth century has legitimized the creation of a completely separate model for looking at artistic production located after the apparent rupture delivered by modernity'¹²⁵⁸ a post-modernism without it's relevant modernism.'¹²⁵⁹ In a similar vein, Gruber argues artworks such as those from the Qajar period that were considered inferior and badly executed, functioned primarily to both reiterate contemporary religious and secular messages as well as maintain and renovate a long tradition of artistic heritage.¹²⁶⁰

As Islamic expert Finbarr Flood has observed, the drawing of artistic inspiration from an Iranian past and the practices of modern Europe (especially royal portraiture) was viewed unfavourably and seen as an inability to successfully assimilate European traditions.¹²⁶¹ In other words, European artists were demonstrating 'inventiveness' when they produced hybrid works while indigenous practitioners were demonstrating 'aesthetic decadence characterized by a loss of artistic autonomy'.¹²⁶² Oscillating between tradition

¹²⁵⁷ Ryan and Kleitarp, op. cit., lines 171, 182, 190.

¹²⁵⁸ Graves details the reliance on dynastic categories: 'early growth (Umayyad and early Abbasid periods); maturity and blossoming (multiple medieval dynasties); peaking and ultimately over ripening (the early modern empires); and finally decay and death (the advent of modernity in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and the colonial programme)'

MS Graves, 'Feeling uncomfortable in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, p. 2, retrieved 13 January 2014, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/graves.pdf>.

¹²⁵⁹ S Babaie cited in Graves, *ibid.*

¹²⁶⁰ Gruber, op. cit., p. 21.

¹²⁶¹ FB Flood, 'From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art', in E Mansfield (ed.), *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, Routledge, London and New York, 2007, p. 35.

¹²⁶² *ibid.*, p. 36.

and modernity, these ‘tasteless’ Qajar artworks and their creators were ‘condemned to perform derivative and reiterative parodies of European norms they could only aspire to.’¹²⁶³ These works were accused of lacking dynamism and legitimacy due to the apparent absence of chiaroscuro (contrasts of light and dark areas to create depth), and linear perspective that precluded it from the classical or fine art category, reducing its value to that of ethnographic documentary evidence.¹²⁶⁴ Murdoch Smith, for instance, regarded Qajar painting as ‘interesting’ but ‘not ... from an artistic point of view, but rather as illustrations of costumes, national types ...’¹²⁶⁵

A reference to Homi Bhabha is useful here: caught between ‘otherness’ and imitation Qajar artworks were seen through an ‘ambivalent’ lens especially by colonial authorities who ‘repeatedly turns from *mimicry*—a difference that is almost nothing but not quite – to *menace* – a difference that is almost total but not quite.’¹²⁶⁶ In a similar vein, Timothy Mitchell succinctly argues, ‘... the destiny of those [non-Western] regions has been to mimic, never quite successfully, the history already performed by the West. To become modern, it is still said, or today to become postmodern, is to act like the West.’¹²⁶⁷ Further, Shiva Balaghi sees the ‘fusion of the historical and the present, the universal and the local on the Persian canvas. Clearly, Iranian artists were contributors to, not simply recipients of, modernity.’¹²⁶⁸

Vernoit succinctly sums up the situation: ‘to win acceptance [from the West] in the domain of the fine art, Muslim artists would have to learn Western conventions.’¹²⁶⁹ However, many commentators held the view that even when Western canons were adopted, especially techniques of European oil painting, it ‘was imperfectly understood by many of the lesser artists who undertook it.’¹²⁷⁰ Robinson was particularly disdainful of the copying of European subjects and mannerisms from French examples as they were of ‘poor quality and often execrable taste’ that resulted in Persian works with ‘dissipated young men

¹²⁶³ Flood 36.

¹²⁶⁴ *ibid.*, p. 37.

¹²⁶⁵ Murdoch Smith cited in Vernoit, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 12.

¹²⁶⁶ Bhabha, 1994, *op. cit.*, p.131

¹²⁶⁷ T Mitchell, ‘The Stage of Modernity’, in *Questions of Modernity*, T Mitchell (ed.), University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis, 2000, p. 1.

¹²⁶⁸ S Balaghi, Iranian Visual arts in “The Century of Machinery, Speed, and the Atom”: Rethinking Modernity’, in Gumpert A, and Balaghi, *S Picturing Iran: Art, society and revolution*, IB Tauris, London New York, 2002, p.24.

¹²⁶⁹ Vernoit, 2004, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

¹²⁷⁰ Robinson, 1963, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

in smoking-caps and dressing-gowns and the young ladies simpering coquettishly under their poke bonnets.’ He cites several examples of religious works that were ‘incongruously attempted.’¹²⁷¹

Dislike for Qajar painting often turned to disgust as seen in this 1860s comment from Comte de Rochechouart: ‘as for the paintings that the Persians produce, they make one gnash one’s teeth.’¹²⁷² However, he did admit to being ‘enchanted’ by some Persian painted enamels that were deemed comparable to their Swiss counterparts at the time.¹²⁷³ Publications shared similar opinions that are especially pertinent to both the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* and Qajar painting:

Just as the Mongol period of the fourteenth century Persian artists were busy absorbing Chinese ideas and conventions, so in our period they were struggling to accommodate themselves to the artistic canons of Europe. We cannot blame them, however deplorable the tendency may seem; increasing contact made such a development inevitable.¹²⁷⁴

Travellers to the region during the nineteenth century were disparaging concerning the qualities of works, yet saw the artist’s efforts as praiseworthy revealing a paternalistic, colonial attitude:

These paintings, though designed without the smallest knowledge of perspective, though the figures are in general ill-proportioned, and in attitudes awkward and unnatural, are yet enlivened by a spirit and character so truly illustrative of the manners and habits of nations, which are represented, that I should have thought them an invaluable addition to my collection, if I could have had time to have made copies of them. When it is remembered that the artist neither could have had the advantages of academic studies nor the opportunities of improving his taste and knowledge by the galleries of the great in Europe, or conversed with masters in the art, his work would be allowed to possess a very considerable share of merit, and to be strong instances of the genius of the people.¹²⁷⁵

A more extreme reaction from a fellow British traveller to Persia, Scot James Baille Frazer, added to the negative opinion of Qajar painting based on its poor comparison to European traditions: ‘In the delineations of battle and hunting pieces, the total absence of all knowledge of drawing and perspective renders the effect ludicrous, if not disgusting.’¹²⁷⁶

¹²⁷¹ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 882

¹²⁷² Cited in Flood, op. cit., p. 37.

¹²⁷³ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 881.

¹²⁷⁴ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 870.

¹²⁷⁵ James Morier cited in J Scarce, ‘Persian art through the eyes of nineteenth-century British travellers’, *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Bulletin*, 1981, vol. 8, issue 1, p. 41, retrieved 12 September 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13530198108705306>.

¹²⁷⁶ Scot James Baille Frazer cited in Scarce, op. cit., p. 45.

Frazer also considered some wall paintings by ‘native artists’ as ‘... rather fearful performances.’¹²⁷⁷ This disdain of local ‘native’ hybridity and their place as mere ‘curiosities’¹²⁷⁸ is embedded in the preference for a pre-colonial ‘glorious’ past which Orientalism promoted that chapter two discussed in detail, especially in relation to the influence of European artists Dinnet and Gérôme on Algerian artists Azouaou Mammeri and Mohammed Racism and Turkish painter Osman Hamdi Bey respectively.

Collector, museum agent and writer Robert Murdoch Smith (whose activities were discussed in chapter two) delivered mixed reviews concerning Qajar painting. Although he regarded the large oil paintings as ‘very poor especially as regards to drawing’ and of ethnographic value only, he maintained ‘the best paintings in Persia are on the miniature scale ...’,¹²⁷⁹ drawing attention particularly to portraits of Fath Ali Shah concluding: ‘...In portraits the Persian artists have a remarkable power of catching a likeness ... In fact art in Persia is essentially art as applied to manufacture.’¹²⁸⁰ Graves draws attention to Murdoch Smith’s interest and admiration for miniatures for their commercial possibilities (they were sold widely as tourist commodities) and the value of Iranian manuscript painting in the eyes of European dealers was well established.¹²⁸¹ Graves argues that this is notable, as typically the European art market prized paintings, not smaller enamels/laquerwork, more highly,¹²⁸² describing them as attaining ‘unrivalled delicacy and beauty.’¹²⁸³ However, Murdoch Smith maintained some examples of metalwork and carpets designed for the European market were ‘misguided efforts’,¹²⁸⁴ implying not everyone believed the export quality of artworks lower on the art hierarchy were of real value.

Robinson is particularly scathing of depictions of ‘Persian types, costumes, manners’ where ‘genuine native styles’ are simplified and altered to suit the lucrative European market: ‘a sort of superior *tourist art*.’¹²⁸⁵ To further his case and illustrate the never-ending reliance on Orientalist discourse, he cites Sir William Ouseley’s reference to these examples

¹²⁷⁷ Scot James Baille Frazer cited in Robinson, 1963, op. cit., p. 96.

¹²⁷⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁷⁹ RM Smith, *Persian Art (South Kensington Museum Handbook)*, Committee of Council on Education, Scribner, Welford, & Armstrong, New York, p. 41, retrieved 1 September 2014, https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6309103M/Persian_art.

¹²⁸⁰ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹²⁸¹ Graves, op. cit., p. 5.

¹²⁸² *ibid.*

¹²⁸³ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 886.

¹²⁸⁴ Robinson, 1963, op. cit., p. 102.

¹²⁸⁵ Robinson, 1991, op. cit., p. 887.

as containing pornographic or erotic elements that although ‘... most highly finished were unfortunately of such description that precluded any further notice.’¹²⁸⁶ Nevertheless, this is a pertinent example of the power and prevalence of the commodification of art for commercial purposes such as that has been discussed previously in chapter two.

The belief that the colonizer had polluted the pureness of Islamic art led to the lack of collecting beyond the eighteenth century and the reluctance of some curators to include modern Islamic art in their collections today. Acknowledged experts in the field, Vernoit and Doris Behrens-Abouseif, who maintain that ‘despite foreign influences, the notion of a definable Islamic tradition in the visual arts ... can be sustained’ during the nineteenth century, describe some artworks from the Muslim world produced during this period as ‘hybrid and degenerate.’¹²⁸⁷ In a similar vein, Oliver Watson, current curator at the Islamic Museum in Doha Qatar, refers to Iranian pottery of the nineteenth-century as ‘almost hilariously bad.’¹²⁸⁸

This positioning of non-European art functions to maintain and promote both European superiority and stereotypical images of regressive, monolithic, static, dead non-Western cultures that the MQB and the French authorities have been accused of encouraging through its displays of their ‘trophy of war.’ This perspective also fails to take into account that these cross-cultural encounters can result in ‘patterns of mutual influence’ that manifest themselves, both inside and outside the colonized territories.¹²⁸⁹ Through the activities of individuals and institutions we realise that these diverse forces were not always opposing or mutually exclusive and many examples of indigenous art especially revealed an approach to hybridity that balanced traditional artistic approaches with contemporary developments in the West.¹²⁹⁰ The focus on artistic independence and authenticity of ‘native’ colonial artists, therefore, is not just particularly relevant to Orientalism and the Qajar period, but is representative of a general attitude towards Islamic art and culture.

¹²⁸⁶ *ibid.*

¹²⁸⁷ S Vernoit & D Behrens-Abouseif, ‘Foreword’, in *D Behrens-Abouseif and S Vernoit, Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2006, ix.

¹²⁸⁸ O Watson, ‘Almost hilariously bad: Iranian pottery in the Nineteenth-century’, Vernoit et al, (eds), 2000, *op. cit.*, p 333.

¹²⁸⁹ BC Fortna, ‘An Historical introduction to the Nineteenth century: Trends and Influences’, Vernoit et al, (eds), 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

¹²⁹⁰ *ibid.*, p. 18.

Robinson offers an opinion on why Qajar art has attracted such scorn and disdain: unlike the Timurid and Safavid eras where only the best examples have been preserved, with the Qajar period 'too much of it has survived.'¹²⁹¹ In the defence of art from this era, he argues that despite its 'Western veneer' Qajar art is a 'worthy successor' of previous eras (especially the development of the Safavid practice of depicting events from everyday life) by continuing the traditional themes of Persian art: 'royal magnificence, youthful beauty of both sexes, love of animal forms and the exploits of heroes...'¹²⁹² Alternatively, Diba contends that the durability of the painting techniques developed during Fath'ali Shah's rule that continued into the two next reigns is evidence of a 'true Persian school of painting' when compared to later more Western-style eras of Persian art production.¹²⁹³ Similarly, Shiva Balaghi sees the 'fusion of the historical and the present, the universal and the local on the Persian canvas. Clearly, Iranian artists were contributors to, not simply recipients of, modernity.'¹²⁹⁴ Furthermore, the wearing of miniature portraits of Fath'ali Shah with European-style dress uniform by his successor Muhammad Shah and Nasir al-Din Shah of his father reinforces the importance of the tradition of using visual imagery to legitimize Qajar dynastic rule. This practice while confirming the borrowing of certain artistic techniques from Ottoman and European sources, also highlights the innovation and adaption of these devices for their own unique cultural and social purpose.¹²⁹⁵

Regardless of opinions that support a claim for uniqueness, innovation and creativity in regard to Qajar painting, the ubiquitousness of orientalist/colonial ideologies and discourse effectively diminished the art form in the eyes of many historians, relegating these objects to the bottom of the art historical hierarchy.

¹²⁹¹ BW Robinson, 'Qajar Paintings: A personal Reminiscence', *Royal Persian painting: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925*, in Diba & Ekhtiar (eds.), 1998, p. 13.

¹²⁹² *Ibid.*, p171.

¹²⁹³ Diba, 1998, op. cit., p. 171.

¹²⁹⁴ Balaghi, op. cit., p. 24.

¹²⁹⁵ Raby, op. cit., p. 15. Another interesting adoption of European traditions was the granting of honorary titles similar to the Legion d'Honneur that was instituted by Fath in 1807 for both military and civic reasons. The Order of the Lion and the Sun including j(including a jewelled necklace with painted enamel figures) were honours bestowed on Europeans such as Sir John Malcom (who refused the honor) and Sir John Kinneir Macdonald in 1828 for efforts made to reduce the indemnity the Qajar ruler had to pay Russia under the treaty of Turkmanchai (pp. 15-17).

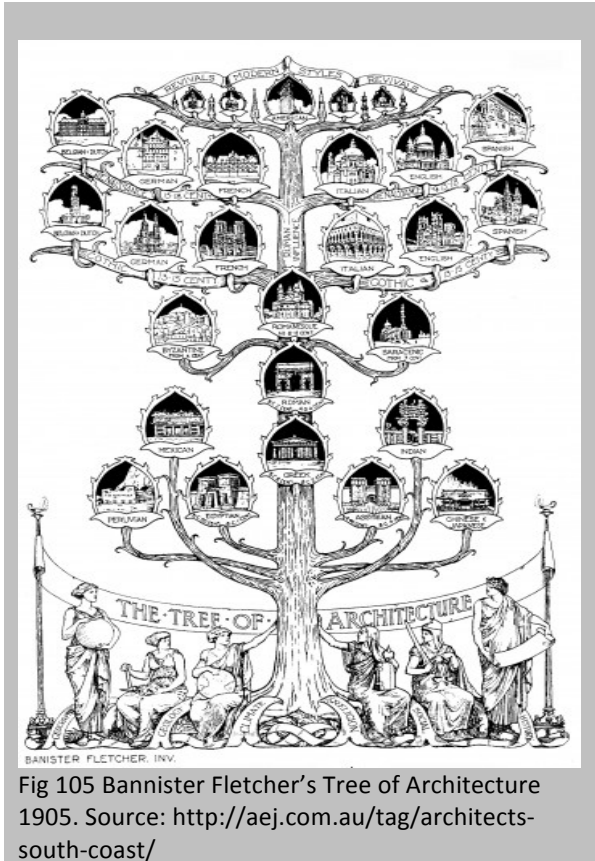


Fig 105 Bannister Fletcher's Tree of Architecture 1905. Source: <http://aej.com.au/tag/architects-south-coast/>

Reminiscent of Bannister Fletcher's *Tree of Architecture*,¹²⁹⁶ (fig 105) the persistence of discriminatory perspectives and attitudes is evident in the acceptance of hybridity in the work of European artists but the refusal to give credit to 'native' colonial artists who embrace similar attitudes towards pictorial depictions. The visual arts (especially techniques such as chiaroscuro and scientific perspective) had become an indicator of cultural progress and position on the evolutionary scale and as Qajar artworks were considered lacking in these illustrative devices, they came to

represent races in earlier, less advanced phases of human civilisation.¹²⁹⁷ Further, this view also considered 'hybrid' art to be predominantly secular and a result of Western modernity rather than a product of the fusion of multiple local and global influences.¹²⁹⁸

¹²⁹⁶ This overtly racist diagram was based on a schema that allocated the top, strong, evolving tree branches to the Western art styles from Greece to Modern America and consigned other cultures (Peruvian, Mexican, Egyptian, Assyrian, Iranian, Chinese and Japanese) to dead and unproductive lower limbs. This essentialism reinforced the notion of an East/West divide: Western styles were dynamic, vigorous and historically progressive while the non-Western cultures were static, decorative and aniconistic. Examples of positive interactions between East and West (Crusades, Qajar Iran) were considered idiosyncrasies or particular historical anomalies (B Fletcher, *A History of architecture on the Comparative method for the Student, craftsman, and Amateur*, Bradbury, Agnew & Co. Ltd. Printers, London, Tonbridge, 1905). Comments such as Castellan's in 1838 concerning the Turks (whose artistic feats were considered insignificant) is typical of Western attitudes: 'The Turks carry on all the arts and trades known to Europe, but with little skill. In all that relates to the fine arts, in particular, we are far more superior to them' (Scheid, op. cit.)

¹²⁹⁷ Vernoit, 2006, op. cit. In a similar vein, Donald Preziosi argues that through the museological process an object's place in the 'spatial-temporal web of associations' dictates its meaning and value where Europe '...as the *brain of the Earth's body* ... construed itself as the museums space within which non-European objects became specimens, where their (reformatted) visibility was rendered legible ... all alien objects were ranked as primitive, exotic, charming, or fascinating distortions of the central classical (European) canon or standard ...' (D Preziosi, 'In the Temple of Entelechy: The Museum as Evidentiary Artifact' in *Studies in the History of Art*, 1 January 1996, Vol.47, pp.165-171 ; Wright 1989, op. cit., pp. 166, 29-30). Further, the idea of the individual artist is a key figure in European art history but seems neglected when it comes to Islamic art. Artists' signatures are recognized but few exhibitions have been devoted to individual artists (even contemporary practitioners) from the Muslim world.

Adding to this complexity, the distinction between what is 'art' and merely 'ethnographic', as evident in the case of Qajar paintings, is contradicted by the art market as auctions houses are selling these works for

Focusing on the aesthetic object/experience effectively frames Islam as timeless, authentic and only pure if the artworks are produced before the Western colonization (i.e. before 1800), positioning these artistic and cultural artifacts in the glorious Islamic golden age of the historical past. This precise boundary that excluded all art produced after the eighteenth century was embedded in colonial practices and evolutionary theories that correlated the rise of modern Europe with the decay of Muslim society.¹²⁹⁹ This notion denies any culture and people outside of 'European time' as having no agency especially 'Islamic time or essence, [which] once absorbed into European time, is no more.'¹³⁰⁰ In short, there was no 'genuine' Islamic art after Napoleon's arrival on Egyptian shores in 1798. This worldview reinforces the tolerant Muslim of the past and the intolerant modern Muslim dichotomy, as all things labelled 'Islamic' are portrayed as monolithic, static, irrational and dangerous.

The exhibitions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries illustrated and reiterated these perspectives, leaving the international expositions as the only avenue for exhibiting contemporary artworks as part of displays representing nation building.¹³⁰¹ Writers such as Beshara Doumani advocate displaying objects so that they 'interrupt the very idea of linear time altogether ... to create a dissonance that unsettles audiences out of the complacent familiarity and awakens them from stupor of a liberal notion tolerance'; an approach that may be especially pertinent to the situation in the Netherlands.¹³⁰² Further, many museums are responding to audience research that reveals the inclusion of contemporary art works makes 'historical objects more relevant to the public.'¹³⁰³ There is the belief that by highlighting 'patterns of global experience' and facilitating a 'visual dialogue' this may create a 'tension' by exposing the visitor (especially those who believe Islamic and Arab art to be only medieval and solely decorative) to issues of contemporary

substantial and often record prices (Graves 2012, op. cit., p. 15). It is an interesting phenomena, as prior to 1980 most museums did not collect Qajar paintings due to their 'reputation' as being of dubious quality, however, many private collectors did acquire works as they were cheap and therefore considered low risk and could only increase in value (O Grabar, 'The Role of the Museum in the study of Knowledge of Islamic Art', in Junod et al, (eds), op. cit., p. 21).

¹²⁹⁸ *ibid.*

¹²⁹⁹ *ibid.*, p. 13.

¹³⁰⁰ B Doumani, 'The Power of Layers or the Layers of Power? The Social Life of Things as the Backbone of New Narratives', in Junod et al, (eds), 2012, op cit., p. 131

¹³⁰¹ Preziosi, 1996, op. cit.; Wright, op cit., pp. 166, 29-30

¹³⁰² *ibid.*, p. 132.

¹³⁰³ Lanwed, op. cit., p. 203.

cultural production. Such an environment has the possibility of encouraging reflection on contemporary representations of Middle Eastern cultures that could foster new insights and promote cross-cultural understanding.¹³⁰⁴

Beauty, aesthetic dispositions and agency

In chapter one various theoretical positions examined the role of beauty in Western art that affected perceptions, collecting practices and politics of display regarding Islamic art and culture. Particularly significant concepts included: Gombrich's 'multiplicity of ends' for beautiful art forms; Eco's changing effects of beauty and the sublime experience and the struggle of some European artists to depict the dangerous Orient (Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Eugene Delacroix); Belting's criticism of the French Orientalists 'imagined orient' and the concept of the 'masterpiece'; Benjamin's 'aura' of the singular and rare art work; the historical and biological role of beauty and aesthetic dispositions posited by Dutton; and the cultural construction of beauty via colour 'coding' argued by Mitter to be part of a colonial strategy to dismiss the work of Arab and Muslim scholars, astronomers, philosophers, mathematicians and artists and their contribution to Western development.

Of importance to this discussion is the emphasis on Western criteria of aesthetic judgement,¹³⁰⁵ which not only allowed the spectator to assess an artwork, but also promoted an idea of perfection that advanced hierarchical categories.¹³⁰⁶ These perspectives considered that artistic 'beauty' was not derived from an artifact's material quality or cultural background but from European museological traditions that often reflected the basic tenants of European superiority over non-European cultures.¹³⁰⁷ In the collection of the connoisseur especially (who was an expert in 'taste' and therefore qualified to evaluate the authenticity and quality of the objects) we have an approach that encouraged the ranking of works according to Western canons of art and standards of style, quality and skill.

¹³⁰⁴ *ibid.*

¹³⁰⁵ Notably the theories of Johann Joachim Winckelmann who followed Hegel in his love of classical art and culture (especially from ancient Greece) maintaining unity and simplicity were the two essential components of ideal beauty and this formed an aesthetic schema. For further detail see JJ Winckelmann, *The History of Ancient Art*, vol. 2, Book IV, F Ungar Pub. Co., 1873, pp. 40-41.

¹³⁰⁶ M Müller-Wiener, 'Aesthetics versus context? Towards New Strategies for the Study of the Object', Junod et al, op. cit., p. 139.

¹³⁰⁷ S Weber et al, 'Islamic Art and the Museum: Introduction', Junod et al, (eds), op. cit., p. 13.

The 'aura' of the masterpiece that the DNKG highlighted represents universal concepts of harmony, beauty and value and is essential to the notion of the aesthetic experience in the museum context. However as previously discussed, appraisal of artworks is a subjective act and selecting one 'masterpiece' leaves many other objects as secondary in quality¹³⁰⁸ – a fate that Qajar art has suffered by comparison to European canons of connoisseurship. In the displays at the DNKG an 'auratic zone'¹³⁰⁹ was created around individual artworks that was enhanced in several ways: the remoteness of the viewer from the place and time of creation emphasized an object's uniqueness and rarity; distance created by their containment in glass cases under dramatic lighting appeared to animate the objects, promoting their 'soul'- a notion that Khalili stressed as essential to the aesthetic encounter.¹³¹⁰ However, some commentators argue that the aura can also be heightened by the narratives that accompany them, such as tales and heroic deeds from the life of Muhammad and the dazzling portraits of Fath' Ali Shah that have been under discussion. Avinoam Shalem refers to the 'anima' (literature and discourse) that surrounds and accompanies the travelling artifact,¹³¹¹ considering both the aura and anima as external to the object's material qualities. Importantly, Shalem argues that the anima affects mental conceptions of the image and attitudes generally through the knowledge and memories that are 'anchored' in the object's historical narratives regardless of changing sites of display.¹³¹²

Alternatively, social anthropologist Alfred Gell regards the object as a neutral entity that is part of networks of action between agents of 'production, circulation and reception.'¹³¹³ According to Gell, as contexts change so do the relationships between the agent and the object and the meaning of objects alter as meaning and values are never fixed.¹³¹⁴ His 'anthropology of art' does not see art as a visual code or language (as in semiotics), although he concedes works of art can be viewed as aesthetic object as 'all

¹³⁰⁸ Many argue the role of fragments rather than whole objects have a significant place in the museum display, as the Louvre's new Islamic wing has demonstrated.

¹³⁰⁹ A Shalem, 'Multivalent Paradigms of Interpretation and the Aura or Anima of the Object', in Junod et al, (eds), 2012, op. cit., p. 111.

¹³¹⁰ See Shalem's comparison of the bust of Nefertit, Neues Museum, Berlin and Ardabil carpet, Jameel Gallery, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (Shalem, Junod et al, op. cit.).

¹³¹¹ *ibid.*, p. 109.

¹³¹² *ibid.*, p. 115.

¹³¹³ A Gell, 'Art and Agency: An anthropological Theory', Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998, p. 3.

¹³¹⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

cultures have an aesthetic', but stresses they are always a product of the social action that varies from culture to culture.¹³¹⁵

Weber agrees with Gell on this point: 'Taste and the idea of beauty are continuously changing and different aesthetics are at work at diverse times and places.'¹³¹⁶ Further, he argues that analysing the dominant/ruling class' aesthetic preferences at certain historical moments allows an insight into what is significant and authentic for that particular society.¹³¹⁷ Weber views taste (or Bourdieu's 'cultural capital') as 'socially and collectively constructed' and classifies objects as having certain degrees of beauty, value and meaning that are constantly modified especially in periods of social, political, religious and cultural change.¹³¹⁸ This is especially relevant to the majority of Islamic objects as they were made to be portable, traded and gifted regionally and internationally, travelling far from their place of origin so their narratives are diverse due to their multitude of representations and recontextualisations.¹³¹⁹

Shalem also maintains the 'migrating' or portable artifacts 'operate within (a) multilevel network and illustrate not only a linear picture of transfers and movements but rather a similarly multilayered system of transculturation. In a similar vein to Gell and Weber, Shalem believes that understanding can be enhanced by concentrating on the object's changing contexts and shifting aesthetic values rather than its individuality and materiality.¹³²⁰ However, Gell cautions that viewing art from an anthropological stance, we have to recognize that the 'aesthetic attitude' is a specific historical product of the Enlightenment and the rise of Western science, and is not applicable to civilisations that have not internalized the Enlightenment as we have.'¹³²¹

¹³¹⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 5-7, .

¹³¹⁶ Weber, 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 41.

¹³¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 42.

¹³¹⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 46,47.

¹³¹⁹ *ibid.*, p.52.

¹³²⁰ Shalem, Junod et al, 2012, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

¹³²¹ Gell, *op. cit.*, p. 97. Further Gell suggests: '... the desire to see the art of other cultures aesthetically tells us more about our own ideology and its quasi-religious veneration of art objects as aesthetic talismans, than it does about those other cultures (*ibid.*, p. 3). For an in-depth example of an artistic practice that is socially embedded and culturally significant and their relationship to institutional forms see Gell's analysis of tattooing in Polynesia particularly his 'Theoretical Introduction', pp. 1-39 (A Gell, *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993).

Suggestions from two theorists are relevant here: Karin Knorr-Cetina's concept that ordinary objects have the 'character of closed boxes ... but objects of knowledge appear to have the capacity to unfold indefinitely ... [they] *lack in completeness of being*¹³²²; and Donald Preziosi's argument that museum objects have the 'the carrying capacity ... [to be] windows into particular time, places and mentalities' as they 'bear within themselves traces of their origin ...'¹³²³ These perspectives reinforce the notion that all cultural artifacts are travelling objects, as when they move from their site of creation to their many sites of display historical traces of their journey accompany them in visual, oral and archival form. The example of artifacts that were reclassified as secular rather than religious by the Ottoman Empire to prevent the flow of cultural objects to the West as discussed in chapter two, is illustrative of how events in public sphere force impact upon curatorial practices and, ultimately, the museum experience.

The artificial separation of religious and secular artifacts in the all displays of the AoIE has been an issue at the heart of this research. At the DNKG this binary was reinforced, confirming the prevalence of ethnocentric assumptions such as the belief that the prohibition of human and animal images in Islamic art was always followed. As analysis of both the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* and the Qajar portraiture painting of Fath' Ali Shah has illustrated this perception to be untrue,¹³²⁴ along with the revelation that artists relied on archetypal depictions, schemas and compositional formulae to avoid accusations of idolatry from all faiths at certain historical moments. The depiction and reception of figural images generally not only questions what is acceptable to Islamic doctrine but also raises the issue of tolerance from both Islamic and non-Islamic groups. If these absent narratives had been part of the *Passion for Perfection* display at the DNKG, the show may have contributed to easing societal tensions and effectively promoted cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim audiences and the wider community. Likewise, comparisons could

¹³²² K Knorr-Cetina, 'Objectual practices', *The practice turn in contemporary thought*, in TR Schatzki, K Knorr-Cetina, E Von Savigny (eds.), Taylor and Francis Group London, New York, Routledge, 2001, p. 181.

¹³²³ D Preziosi, *Brain of the earth's body: Art, museums, and the phantasms of Modernity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minnesota and London, 2003, p. 19.

¹³²⁴ It is interesting to note that an exhibition in 2004 *Heaven and Earth: Art from Islamic lands: Works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection* viewed the secular and religious aspects of Iranian art as was '... contrasting, but complementary' deliberately giving: 'A prominent place to the court arts of Islam in the 18th and 19th centuries, which have so often be regarded as a period of Westernization and decline, but which assimilated and adapted foreign motifs and techniques not less successfully and with no less magnificence than in earlier centuries' (Piotrovsky et al, 2004, op. cit., p.17).

have been drawn between Qajar paintings and other similar artifacts as representing colonial attitudes towards the authenticity and value of hybrid art forms created by local artists in colonies Dutch East Indies and Africa, and the current crisis over migration, Dutch citizenship, national identity and contentious civic integration and assimilationist governmental policies.

Missed opportunities?

By concentrating solely on the aesthetic qualities of the beautiful object did the DNKG miss an opportunity to promote cross-cultural understanding? In a society so fraught with political, social and ethnic unrest (especially over the Muslim 'question') and struggling to regulate 'intolerable' behaviour, was including the wider context of the artifacts showcased in *Passion for Perfection* necessary for achieving their aim of promoting a common humanity and universality through aesthetic contemplation?

The focus on visual encounters with beautiful objects in museum displays certainly has merit in terms of engaging audiences initially. Many agree with Lorenz Korn's statement: 'Beauty is a quality of Islamic art that should be presented and propagated.'¹³²⁵ The aesthetic approach argues the direct, subjective often sensual and emotional encounter with the key object is the best approach when displaying Islamic art, as the majority of these objects are designed to give pleasure to the viewer. Besides the traditional art museum's focus on the aesthetic encounter, the Musée du Quai Branly's aestheticizing approach of re-interpreting former ethnographical objects as art discussed in the last chapter, is an example of new cultural endeavours believing in the power of beauty to connect audiences and encourage understanding of non-European cultures.

The artworks under discussion have revealed rich and significant stories associated with their historical, social, political, religious and cultural backgrounds that would have enhanced the visitor experience. Both the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* and the Qajar portrait of Fath' Ali Shah, although separated by over six centuries, are symbolic of the power of monarchy and the dynastic authority of the Muslim world and its rulers. These visual representations were tools of propaganda, designed to bestow prestige on the dominant elite at home and promote their influence abroad. The East/West exchanges that occurred have been shown

¹³²⁵ L Korn, 'Intrinsic Goals and External influence: On some factors Affecting Research and Presentation of Islamic Art', in Junod et al, op. cit., p. 89. Korn is professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology, University of Bamberg, Germany.

to be mutually beneficial rather than a one-way process of the colonizer 'educating' and civilising' the primitive colonial subject. This was a rich resource that the DNKG chose to consciously underuse, ignoring the curatorial possibilities for encouraging cross-cultural understanding between their diverse, and often conflicted, local audiences.

Criteria of success and social relevancy

As discussions and analysis have illustrated, the premise of this chapter was to investigate whether the practises and policies of display at the DNKG fully utilised the potential of this collection of Islamic art and if they had missed an opportunity to be socially relevant by connecting the material from the exhibition to the specific social, cultural, political and religious circumstances in the Netherlands at the time. Perceptions of success, however, can vary enormously depending on a stakeholder's role and level of participation in a project or event, the audience demographic and the dissemination of knowledge and information to the wider public sphere.

In particular, anxieties surrounding the funding of exhibitions generally are problematic for public and private institutions alike. In this instance, the DNKG expressed the difficulty of attracting and maintaining sponsors in the current economic climate despite the DNKG being more recent privately funded gallery space within the walls of a relatively newly deconsecrated Christian church. It is obvious that museums such as the DNKG, have the broader social task to promote reflectivity in their audiences but are concerned that being seen as too politically aligned or polemic may jeopardize their desired role in society and perceptions of their displays.

The approach of the DNKG to include social and political debates and niche tours linked to their exhibition themes were designed to create a more 'democratic' and interpretative environment. The DNKG curator was adamant that every measure had been taken to promote this outcome and they had been successful based on the responses from their typical and loyal audiences. However, knowing whether they were catering to the majority of atypical visitors was not possible with the lack of surveying conducted by the gallery.¹³²⁶ The 'beautiful' object surely dazzles and stimulating debates may ignite

¹³²⁶ It is interesting that while the Sydney show also attracted 75,000 visitors, the AGNSW was pleased with visitor numbers yet the DNKG expressed disappointment. The DNKG which usually recorded higher than average attendance figures when compared to other museums in the Netherlands, felt this lower than expected visitor numbers was due to several reasons: an audience demographic of 55 years plus (eighty per

meaningful exchanges but gauging any long-term attitudinal changes in their audiences is hard to determine without comprehensive visitor surveys. Therefore, there is no evidence that the curatorial practices of display favouring the 'aesthetic' over the 'interpretative' at the DNKG is any more successful than any other previous display at counteracting stereotypical images and promote cross-cultural understanding between diverse museum audiences.

Final thoughts

When societies are divided into distinct religious and cultural groups the possibility for conflict and violence is increased,¹³²⁷ as the situation in the Netherlands has shown. The perceived failure of multiculturalism, sensationalized media reporting, conflicting perceptions of migrant (especially Muslim) integration and the attitude of authorities towards youth crimes have contributed to moral panics and long-term societal unease among both native Dutch and migrant communities. When the *Passion for Perfection* exhibition designer commented that conveying narratives was difficult due to the space and object disparity, a solution could have been found through the inclusion of additional contextual and background information that the objects carried with them. Objects always have social and historical contexts and their narratives (along with appreciation of aesthetic qualities) can reveal the layers of meaning that objects accumulate on their journey through different times, spaces and societies.¹³²⁸ This consideration of contexts beyond the aesthetic permits 'a fresh view of stylistic periods other than reference to decline or corruption'¹³²⁹ that takes into account diversity and change, norms and deviations that can assist in changing stereotypical and negative perceptions of Islam and Muslims.

Khalili's belief that 'art is timeless and culture universal' may actually be limiting cross-cultural understanding if displays of his 'beautiful' objects convey the ideology that non-western art is static, monolithic and ancient and the only culture advancing into

cent Dutch, ten-fifteen per cent foreigners and approximately ten per cent Muslim); a severe winter with public transport stoppages; and having previously displayed several other Islamic exhibitions. However, the people that came were 'impressed, they tweeted it all around, and our visitor's book was really full.' As the gallery is not a museum with permanent collections, it receives no state funding and relies on income from ticketing, gallery shop, restaurant, publishing houses and sponsorship that the curator confessed is 'very difficult. It is getting worse and worse' (Ryan and Keliterp, op cit., lines 179-80, 269).

¹³²⁷ J Gonnella, 'Islamic art versus material culture: Museum of Islamic Art Museum of Islamic culture?', Junod et al, op. cit., p. 147.

¹³²⁸ Weber, 2012, op. cit., pp. 43, 44.

¹³²⁹ Ibid., p. 42.

contemporary times is European based and directed. This mindset would effectively promote and reinforce negative and racist attitudes rather than counteracting the sensationalized media reporting and exclusionist and discriminatory policies in the Netherlands that discussions have highlighted. Museums can become arenas where debates around 'tolerance' are played out but to impact upon and assist in easing societal tensions displays themselves must exemplify ideals worthy of emulation by the public.

The reliance on the 'experience' at the expense of 'interpretation' is at its most potent in this last venue that this travelling troupe of objects was displayed. The placement of objects in a mirrored and dramatically lit environment has enhanced and projected the aesthetic qualities of the artifacts beyond their glass vitrines into the boundless space reflecting religious iconography in its most tangible form-church architecture. When curators of *Passion for Perfection* chose to concentrate on aesthetic formal properties to define the function of an object on display to engender 'a neutral level- common humanity' among its audiences, the impact of the show was reduced. This analysis maintains that specific cultural, political, religious and economic factors can influence the practices and policies of display in museums and galleries at different places and times, transforming these travelling and decentred cultural objects into transmitters of new meanings and values, that are often radically different from their initial and subsequent sites of display. In this case, any debates and discourses dominate in the public sphere were never thematised within the exhibition, therefore, this troupe of travelling objects becomes is a 'treasure house' removed from the world outside its doors.

The case studies under discussion in this chapter have revealed the role of the artistic and cultural artifact as powerful agents of innovation, creativity and originality. In this instance, a decolonization of the Western gaze in terms of criteria of value and beauty and a re-centring of objects, including their rich and often disturbing narratives that are entangled in histories of monarchy and colonization, are fundamental and vital components of the museum display. For museums to be innovative, vibrant, relevant, and transformative places that invite cross-cultural conversations, an appreciation of the dynamic and resilient nature of cultures and traditions needs to be engendered in the minds and hearts of their diverse audiences.

Chapter Seven

Concluding Thoughts: Reflections and recommendations

The challenge for exhibition makers is to provide within exhibitions the contexts and resources that enable audiences to choose to recognize their knowledge.

IVAN KARP, CULTURE AND REPRESENTATION.

Criticism is integral to museums, as it is to any important cultural institution, and should be viewed as the legitimate prerogative of all who care about their future.

ANDREW MCCLELLAN, THE ART MUSEUM FROM BOULÉE TO BILBAO

The central question and theoretical framework: a final analysis

In this final section of the study it is important to restate the main premise of this inquiry and the theoretical framework that has facilitated an examination and analysis of the touring AoIE. The particular focus of this thesis has been to examine and problematize curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/didactic modes of display when the museums mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture. Investigations have revealed that although all four exhibition venues prioritized the object, the aesthetic experience and cross-cultural understanding, their meta-narratives and underlying agendas differed when placed in the situational context. Varying approaches to the politics of display have illustrated how curatorial practices alter the perceived meanings of cultural artifacts when they travel from their initial sites of creation to distant sites of display, subjecting them to a process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation.

The theoretical model proposed by this thesis has emphasized the symbiotic relationship between vigorous debates and hot topics in the wider public arena, museum world and the singular exhibition experience. Discussions and analysis have focused on the broader issues of identity politics, nation building, modernity, governmentality, colonial legacies, multiculturalism, art markets and their collectors, and influence of the media, that filtered through a variety of contexts (religious, economic, political, social, cultural and historical), have reappeared in museological dilemmas related to philanthropy and

sponsorship, the role of the museum, beauty and the sublime, the object and collections, material culture and commodification, and the impact of technology. Many of the conversations concerning these issues are responses to recent developments and events, but some topics and disputes have simmered for decades and are reignited depending on local, national and global events.

A final analysis of how these wider issues and specific museum dilemmas that have manifested themselves during this travelling show is required to confirm the validity of the theoretical model and reveal the significance of this study's findings to situations that are occurring in the contemporary museum world. A discussion of the central themes of this study allows assessment not only of the success of these exhibitions to be made, but permits recommendations and current best practices in the museological world to come to the fore.

Cross-cultural understanding: magic bullet or pipe dream?

The belief in the universal and transformative power of art and the aesthetic experience to transcend boundaries and solve contemporary problems has been shown to be a common vision for many collectors, curators and museums. However, the success of this shared mission has relied, in many cases, on notions and theories embedded in particular narratives and practices of institutions grappling with difficult and contested pasts and modern multiracial dilemmas. The persistence of such legacies and the acquisition and display of 'colonial booty' by France and the Netherlands created volatile and challenging environments that divided communities over issues relating to migration policies and legislation, secularism and faith-based allegiances and governance and tolerance debates that have been fundamental to analysis of the Paris and Amsterdam venues of the AoIE. The social and ethnic tensions and multiculturalism debates in Australia, particularly Sydney, prior to the 2007 display of the AoIE has been shown to have impacted profoundly on the activities, organization, and focus of the cultural event and influenced the relationships between stakeholders, especially the philanthropist, curatorial staff, community leaders and groups, and audiences. Essential to an investigation of the AoIE's journey to Abu Dhabi in the UAE were discussions concerning the young nation-state's search for a modern global image predicated on cultural and economic plans to ensure a sustainable future beyond natural resources, while dealing with challenging local and regional heritage and

conservation issues especially in regard to the role of Eurocentric globalized art museums. Each of the site-specific contexts of the AoIE provided a wealth of themes that might have been reflected in the exhibition itself and could have contributed to cross-cultural understanding in a wider sense. However, the primacy of the aesthetic and the relative neglect of other societal dimensions, in each case limited the degree to which such an outcome could be reasonably expected. Even though the wider public sphere had some influence and presence in the each display, the curatorial decision favouring of the aesthetic approach over the interpretative limited the effectiveness in each case.

Therefore as contemporary institutional agencies museums have been required to develop and implement practices and procedures based on curatorial decisions that address and reflect the societal needs and desires of the public they serve. This task involves negotiations with individuals and groups from diverse and often conflicting social, cultural, religious and political ideologies. Many cultural institutions have advocated promoting cross-cultural understanding between disparate societal groups as the most effective and acceptable approach to this dilemma, especially for museums that are still considered safe havens in an unpredictable world. However, is cultural understanding a reasonable and realistic goal or is it a utopian distraction that diverts museums from other more fitting or authentic objectives?

As the outcome of this investigation's examinations and arguments, a set of recommendations have emerged that will be discussed in conjunction with a final analysis of this study's empirical findings to provide some possible solutions to such questions that has been central to this thesis. The three main themes and key recommendations relate to displaying Islamic art and culture in the museum setting: the necessity for contextual information especially historical narratives and the role of the object; the importance of contemporary art to 'build bridges' between cultures; and the inclusion of community consultation to attract diverse audiences, to ensure relevance and avoid conflict.

The first and most significant recommendation emerging from this study is that for cross-cultural connections and understanding to occur, a broader and deeper knowledge of an object's historical trajectory, changing social, cultural and political contexts is essential. The appreciation of an object's beauty may engage the viewer initially, but to alter perceptions, attitudes and mindsets requires exposure to rich histories that accompany the artifact through time and space, revealing layers of meaning that connect with and inform

the audience's pre-existing networks of knowledge and potentially effect permanent change.¹³³⁰ The role that beauty and the notion of the 'masterpiece' has played in artistic and cultural development and their relationship to standards and criteria of 'taste', have been major concerns for this investigation, especially in terms of encouraging cross-cultural understanding as the following discussion highlights.

Beauty and the masterpiece: a matter of taste.

The changing perceptions of beauty have been central to arguments in this study. Opinions and debates emanating from the art world surrounding this concept are polemic and pervasive, especially when it comes to Islamic art: ranging from 'Beauty is a quality of Islamic art that should be presented and propagated',¹³³¹ to 'the visual plenty on view [in Islamic art displays] ... should be the minimum you can expect from any exhibition, rather than the best you're likely to get out of it.'¹³³² A common thread throughout all displays of the AoIE has been the prioritizing of the 'beautiful' object as mandated by Khalili's constant rhetoric concerning his Islamic collection and the purpose of their four-year journey. This was the situation in Amsterdam at the DNKG in particular, that dedicated the entire exhibition to the 'breathtakingly beautiful object' and the aesthetic experience.

One of the main problems with conceptions of beauty in art that this investigation has highlighted, is that objects from the Islamic world have a long history of being viewed, assessed and ranked through a Eurocentric lens with colonial and orientalist overtones. The notion of 'taste' exists within established systems of beauty bestowing meaning to works and was often based on the perspectives and criteria of quality set by a range of collectors, connoisseurs, experts, Orientalists, and art buyers who acquired 'exotic' artifacts from the East to meet the demands of European publics and Western museums. However, like beauty, taste is not fixed and shifts according to changing aesthetic preferences of ruling or dominant sectors of societies. As writers such as Hall and Bourdieu have suggested, what is considered meaningful and genuine is slippery and socially and historically constructed. Therefore, at different times and places, multiple manifestations of taste and beauty have existed. This is especially the case during periods of social and cultural change, where 'good

¹³³⁰ S Weber, 2012, op. cit., p. 29.

¹³³¹ Korn, op. cit., p. 89.

¹³³² B Gopnik, 'Palace and Mosque': Pretty Little Things', 16 July 2004, *The Washington Post*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53650-2004Jul15.html>.

taste' and beauty are re-modelled and re-formulated to suit those in power, as explorations into the Iranian Qajar dynasty revealed.¹³³³

The question of beauty and the notion of the 'masterpiece' have influenced aesthetic canons and often dictate what is eligible for inclusion in the museum display. In terms of Islamic art, the colonial perspective positioned all work within an hierarchical and Western framework viewing European art as the most evolved and developing and objects from non-Western cultures as either static and timeless or corrupt and decaying. Conferring the title of 'masterpiece' on an artwork is part of this universal system of beauty and taste and the Islamic artifact that fitted the pre-colonization criterion for 'purity' of form was isolated on the pedestal so that its 'auratic' qualities of beauty and harmony could be fully appreciated. The notion of the mystery surrounding the 'exotic' object has a long history of perpetuating and reinforcing stereotypical images of the licentious and alien 'other' commonly promoted in Orientalist and travel literature since the mid-nineteenth century.

This dilemma can be resolved to a point, if we consider the changing definitions of beauty, shifts in audience perception at historical moments and the multiple layers of meaning that social, cultural, political and religious contexts and rich narratives that accompanying objects on their journey through time. When artifacts are placed in relationships with each other rather than as stand-alone 'masterpieces', audiences are offered alternative options to add to their knowledge networks and make cross-cultural linkages that would otherwise be impossible. The multifaceted uses of calligraphy and the Mosque lamp, for example, have been revealed to possess histories and stories related to their religious and social pasts that are far richer than viewed simply as technically and aesthetically crafted objects as the AoIE displayed at the IMA in Paris promoted.

Another more telling example highlighting the potential of this curatorial strategy was demonstrated in the close analysis of two items from the DNKG display exhibited as isolated 'star' objects. Their dense and textured social, cultural, religious, political histories revealed numerous layers of meaning that had the potential to encourage further debate and deeper thought among its audiences. Such contextual information is invaluable for audiences in gaining insight into the unevenness that particular historical moments bring: manuscripts such as the *Jami' al-Tawarikh*, that were considered exquisite artifacts since

¹³³³ Weber, 2012 op. cit., p. 47.

their creation in the seventh century Iran on one hand; compared to Qajar art that suffered the disdain of collectors till the 1980s, are now considered comparable items in the auction room but are still labeled as ‘dubious’ in terms of authenticity and quality by some museums, on the other. In this way colonial narratives that reinforce social and cultural discrimination are shown to be replicated and preserved through various contemporary policies and practices of governance within the museum, but not maintained in the world outside its doors. This awareness would encourage and promote the re-examination and rewriting of new narratives, adopted by curatorial teams and put into practice through displays of art and culture that reflect the experiences and stories of post-colonial migration and their connection to the wider issues of modernity, globalization and multiculturalism.

However, is this recommendation reflected in museological trends and supported in the wider public sphere? Weber has suggested that although attempts are being made by museums in modern times to include ‘rich historical textures’, many are still reinforcing neo-colonial stereotyping through concentration on the object as a visual and formal resource ‘suggesting a continuity of artistic practice reinforces stereotypes of a unified Islamic art transcending time and space.’¹³³⁴ Many museum professionals admit that the power of the context-free ‘star’ object persists as a priority in current curatorial decision making while others insist on the need to look beyond the aesthetic. For example, Sheila Canby and Nadar Haidar, from the newly opened Islamic wing at the Metropolitan Museum in New York (MET), share Khalili’s sentiments concerning the transforming power of art. They elaborate on exhibition decisions that reveal that while the Met are interested in diversity and ‘connecting culture’, its ‘guiding principle’ was to put major art objects on pedestals in the middle of rooms.¹³³⁵

An approach that recognizes the need for both perspectives is seen in museums in Denmark, Britain and Berlin. The David Collection (DC) in Copenhagen maintains: ‘... our objects are chosen because of their beauty ... [however] from technique point of view, from aesthetic point of view they need some explanation.’¹³³⁶ The British Museum in London (BM) agrees that: ‘... we present an holistic view of what an object is, so it's not just an aesthetic work or the sensory experience, it's also encompassing all of these other layers of

¹³³⁴ Weber, 2012, op. cit. p. 382, 384.

¹³³⁵ Transcript L Ryan, S Canby and N Haidar, 2013, lines 45, 76-78.

¹³³⁶ Transcript L Ryan and J Meyer (B), op. cit., lines 122-128.

meaning. ...' However, there are times when the BM prefers the aesthetic approach despite the 'push towards that sort of more historical, contextual ...' as the star object is more likely to give you that lasting memory.¹³³⁷ Tim Stanley, curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A) London, argues that the beauty of Islamic art always appeals to visitors especially Khalili's collection as they 'are very beautiful, and they communicate something' but you do need 'go so much further. There is a sort of legibility.'¹³³⁸ Although plans for the new Pergamon in Berlin (housing one of Europe's most significant collection of Islamic art), will present objects in relationship with each other in respect of their production, materiality, reception (aesthetic) and temporal and socio-historical contexts, Weber concedes 'some objects will remain isolated. Masterpieces and other objects that possess special qualitative and aesthetic value will still be presented scenographically as key-objects.'¹³³⁹

Other curators are more committed to the inclusion of contextual information however. For example, Linda Komanoff from The Los Angeles County Museum of Art (LACMA) admits: 'multiple narratives are essential, but let the eyes lead visitors ... it is what you discover on your own ... that educates the masses.'¹³⁴⁰ A new exhibition at the Museum of Fine Arts in Houston Texas, *Arts of Islamic lands: Selections from Te al-Sabah Collection Kuwait*, highlights artifacts such as the mosque lamp (that was discussed in chapter six) as an object when 'juxtaposed' in a museum display produces 'new meanings' and 'conversations ... If we allow ourselves to hear their voices they can tell us many stories.'¹³⁴¹ Further, at the newly opened Islamic Museum of Australia (IMA) curator Nur Shkempi is adamant: '[we are] all about context ... Even beautiful objects have a story ... What's the point of just putting out objects that don't have any meaning ...'¹³⁴²

In light of these discussions, it is a question of balancing two essential components of exhibitionary display: the necessity of the crowd-pulling, aesthetically- pleasing 'star object' with the desire to promote meaningful, enriching and in-depth exhibition encounters. This is a dilemma that every curatorial team appears to be struggling with and

¹³³⁷ Transcript L Ryan & 'Museum curator in the UK' (Pseudonym), lines 358-405, 421.

¹³³⁸ Transcript L Ryan and T Stanley, op. cit., lines 167-183.

¹³³⁹ Ibid., p. 303.

¹³⁴⁰ Transcript L Ryan and L Komaroff, 2013, lines 72-92.

¹³⁴¹ Sheika Hussah Sabah al-Salam al-Sabah cited in T Gaines, 'Fighting fanatics with art: Kuwaiti princess shares Islamic treasures with Houston — and the world', 8 February 2015, Culture Map Houston, retrieved 9 February 2015, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/arts/02-08-15-fighting-fanatics-with-art-kuwaiti-princess-shares-islamic-treasures-with-houston-and-the-world/>.

¹³⁴² Transcript L Ryan and N Shkempi, 2014, lines 366-407.

responding to with varying degrees of eagerness and success. As criteria for what are considered realistic and achievable outcomes are disparate and site-specific, that the AoIE venues and other exhibitions have illustrated throughout this study, there can never be a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Ultimately, it is the responsibility of individual cultural institutions to ensure their curatorial decisions take into account what is the best museum experience in each particular display in light of the needs and desires of their diverse audiences.

The object and the travelling display: inside and out

In the introductory chapter of this thesis the ontological question of whether an exhibition is constituted by the works on display or by its overriding mandate was posed. Discussions revealed that through process of (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation assemblages of objects altered when placed in new display environments in various ways: curatorial and design personnel; the contents/displayed objects; the design/scenography; the catalogue; and even in the final venue, the title of the exhibition. Has this stretched the concept of what constitutes a 'travelling exhibition' to almost breaking point? Just how much continuity is required to warrant the judgement that the AoIE was a single exhibition rather than four distinct shows?

Perhaps exhibitions should be considered like any artistic or cultural performance, which can tolerate some a degree of improvisation in their concrete execution, while still being considered to be the same phenomenon. The works in the AoIE have merely been mobilised to promote Khalili's overall goal of presenting his particular vision to promote cross-cultural understanding through displays of art and culture. If this vision is realised through an emphasis on religious meaning in one context and on secular meaning in another, or aesthetic rather than interpretative in approach, this does not in itself compromise the constancy of the message because the multi-faceted nature of the works licences both perspectives. This would suggest that a mandate such as Khalili's is necessary to prevent the collection being merely a troupe of artefacts, and enable us to ask how the same message can be conveyed despite changes to the exhibition details.

Additionally, the role the object itself plays in the exhibitionary display has been highlighted as fundamental to the curatorial process and this thesis' theoretical model.

Important to the study's first recommendation, is Doumani's argument that to ensure success the relationship of the curator to the museum object must have three dimensions:

first, the power relations and ideological assumptions that bestow the status of archive on a particular object (which archives speak, which are silenced) ... the agency of the archive itself [and] how the archive carries with it the story of its own production as a material object and can transmit this knowledge in unpredictable yet persistent ways ... and the subjective relationship between the author and the archive: that is, the matter of violence visited upon the archive as it is deployed in the service of a larger narrative ... ¹³⁴³

Thus context, agency and reflexivity are essential considerations for any display as my analysis of the traveling shows has suggested. However, different situational contexts produced varied curatorial approaches to the issue of an object's intrinsic and extrinsic qualities: while Sydney and Abu Dhabi both relied on chronologically ordering based on cultural and geographical differences, the AGNSW reinforced a dominantly secular discourse whereas Gallery One in Abu Dhabi gave equal weighting to religious and secular aspects of objects on display; the IMA in Paris choose a thematic method of display, showcasing Islamic workmanship especially the art of calligraphy; and in Amsterdam the DNKG viewed the object as solely aesthetic and relied on the intrinsic, formal qualities of the artifact.

These differing politics of display reflected wider issues such as cultural and religious ideologies that have resulted in conflict and disagreements between societal groups in many cases. Discussions concerning the Sydney show are illustrative of this argument as audiences were divided on formal properties of objects that triggered problems in the wider public sphere in terms of commonly held norms, values and attitudes of particular communities. For example, while the majority of Muslims interviewed maintained certain images depicting the Prophet were offensive to them, some non-Muslim visitors (and the AGNSW curatorial staff) felt there was little controversy over artworks on display, suggesting a change of attitude was required. Comments included: Muslims needed to be 'less prickly' otherwise museums would become places of 'boredom'; and problems with 'sensitivity' may be due to a lack of 'sophistication' or cultural capital on the part of Muslim visitors.

However, following my previous recommendation, the story of an object's history can influence audience perception and mindsets in this instance. If Muslim visitors were presented with the knowledge that at certain places and era's portrayals of Muhammad

¹³⁴³ Doumani, op. cit., p. 133.

were acceptable then they are shown an historical precedence suggesting valid alternate views regarding Islamic doctrines, pointing to a larger over-arching narrative that has been subjected to changing social, religious and cultural forces. Through exposure to multiple layers of meaning that the social life of an object carries with it from creation to exhibition, audiences may begin to question their own mindsets through imagining a different past, and adopt different ways of thinking in the future.¹³⁴⁴

Face of Mohammad: a global dilemma

The display of controversial and contentious artworks from Islamic lands, especially objects depicting of the face of Mohammad, has been shown to be increasingly problematic on both the micro level of the AoIE, and in the wider public sphere and museum world and requires further analysis. Complicating the debate are disagreements over what the real issues of concern are and the possible solutions to this global dilemma. Lending weight to the previous example from the AGNSW, the V & A believe it is misinformation and ignorance that causes problems as ‘after 9/11, people had a very strong idea that Islam was something that was resistant of the outside world ... this idea that there's no images in Islam, is not true.’¹³⁴⁵ The IMA (Australia) agrees that it is ‘a lack of understanding’ but emphasises ‘people have the right to their opinion. If they are not comfortable with something, they don’t have to support it or engage in it ...’¹³⁴⁶ The David Collection (DC) in Copenhagen has concerns over the display of individual pages from Qur’ans that ‘can be a problem for a very orthodox person, as these Qur’ans are torn into pieces and handled by infidels’¹³⁴⁷, but maintains European audiences generally ‘don't see these problems. We are so used to exhibiting Christ being crucified, and all the saints ... we don't have issues about that. ... So we have a different sensitivity...’¹³⁴⁸

The Met admits to owning six images of Mohammad, maintaining their website and displays aim to ‘contextualize’ these works ‘appropriately’ and they ‘have very good exchanges with people about the interpretation of the art, and their meaning for audiences’. They do not shy away from ‘stimulating conversations’ but accuse ‘irresponsible

¹³⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁴⁵ Ryan and Stanley, op. cit., lines 77-96.

¹³⁴⁶ Ryan and Shkempi, op. cit., lines 462-472.

¹³⁴⁷ Ryan and Meyer (A), op. cit., lines 233-249

¹³⁴⁸ Ibid., lines 420-426.

tabloids fuelling the flames of social and cultural discontent.¹³⁴⁹ LACMA supports this view pointing to the ‘... really big difference between a caricature that is derogatory and a painting that was done by a Muslim out of respect ...’¹³⁵⁰ In a similar vein, exposure to works such as the *Jami’ al-Tawarikh* are considered to have the ability to dispel ignorance as academic Omid Safi argues:

It is really important for audiences that have never seen the pietistic images of Muhammad to make a radical distinction between the mystical and beautiful images that have been produced over the last 1,000 years by Muslims and for Muslims, and the offensive and sometimes pornographic images [currently in the news].¹³⁵¹

Gruber also agrees, arguing persuasively why such images are essential for Muslims to see and for cross-cultural understanding to occur:

Publishing these images is artistic restitution in the face of senseless irreverence ... Muslims can be proud of them as part of a very richly textured artistic heritage ... [to not publish them] is actually quite belittling of Muslims. There is a pernicious unspoken message that Muslims won’t be able to handle seeing these materials or talking about them ... every time I have seen or held any discussion of these respectful images, there has only been positive reaction.¹³⁵²

In countries such as France and the Netherlands where the AoIE toured, the Muslim communities themselves have been blamed for their lack of integration and embracing of national ideals and secularism. The media has singled Muslims and Islam out as inherently intolerant, barbaric and dangerous. However, a leading figure in the French Central Council of Muslims, Abdallah Zekri, draws attention to the fact that Islam is only one of many faiths that object strongly, even violently, to derogatory depictions of religious symbols yet is the only group regularly reported in the media: ‘... The Catholics did not accept the movie “The Temptation of Christ”, and the movie theatre was burned [Latin Quarter Paris 1988], and the movie was withdrawn ... so it is not only Islam and the Muslims ... as it was Catholic fundamentalists who carried out acts.’¹³⁵³

¹³⁴⁹ Ryan and Haidar, op cit., lines 155-169.

¹³⁵⁰ Ryan and Komaroff, op. cit., lines 278-285, 320-321.

¹³⁵¹ E Graham-Harrison (A), ‘Drawing the prophet: Islam’s hidden history of Muhammad images’, 11 January 2015, *The Guardian*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://theguardain.com/world/2015/jan/10/drawing-prophet-islam-muhammad-images>.

¹³⁵² Cited in Graham-Harrison (A), op. cit.

¹³⁵³ S Shevarnadze, ‘Western govts bred terrorists - and blamed it on Muslims - head of Anti-Islamophobic collective’, 26 January 2015, *RT.com*, retrieved 30 January 2015, <http://rt.com/shows/sophieco/226111-terrorist-attacks-france-muslims/>

In support of this view, negative depictions of Jesus in art and films have incited controversy including outrage over the portrayal of Christian symbols: on Palm Sunday, 2011, French Catholic fundamentalists attacked *Piss Christ*, a photograph of a crucifix in a glass of urine that had generated enormous controversy in America in the 1980s; and when Chris Ofili's *The Holy Virgin Mary*' created with elephant dung and collages of female genitalia (currently owned and displayed at MONA) was displayed in 1999 at the Brooklyn Museum, New York Mayor Rudolph Guiliani threatened to cancel funding for the museum.¹³⁵⁴

This study's examination of these vigorous and heated debates has involved discussions concerning the responses of museums to these disputes and controversies. The effects and problems associated with the deployment of corporation-style 'risk management' strategies and practices especially those adopted by the 2007 AoIE display at the AGNSW, for example, have been highlighted and analyzed. While some museums (St Mungo's and MONA) were shown to be less risk-adverse, it appears that when it comes to imagery considered offensive to Muslims and Islam, the AGNSW isn't alone in adopting 'risk management' policies and procedures.

The reaction to raising terrorist alerts has continued to effect museums and the media it seems, with a recent article beginning with the statement: 'Warning: this article contains the image of the prophet Muhammad, which some may find offensive'; a disclaimer that had been suggested by one Muslim visitor that had attended the Sydney show back in 2007 to reduce possible tensions and complaints. The article proceeds to describe what they believe is 'a wider pattern of apparent self-censorship by British institutions that scholars fear could undermine public understanding of Islamic art and the diversity of Muslim traditions.'¹³⁵⁵

With the recent removal of a devotional image of the Prophet from the V & A's display of Islamic art and from its online database because 'the museum is a high-profile public building already on a severe security alert', the British Library's decision to only show veiled depictions of Muhammad, the Hague Museum withdrawing masks of Muhammad

¹³⁵⁴ J Socolovsky, 'Touchiness About Religious Figures' Portrayal Not Unique to Islam', January 22, 2015, *Voice Of America*, retrieved 24 January 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/articleprintview/2609712.html>.

¹³⁵⁵ E Graham-Harrison (B), 'V & A in row over self censorship after Muhammad image is taken down', 25 January 2015, *The Guardian*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/24/victoria-and-albert-museum-muhammad-image-website>.

from a planned photographic display, and the Met removing all images from display claiming the move was a 'simple rotation of the exhibits, planned for some time',¹³⁵⁶ it appears many museums and galleries that have images (like the *Jami' al-Tawarikh*), are suddenly reluctant to display them. This is despite similar images being shown throughout Europe with little protest. For example, the Tropenmuseum in Amsterdam received no complaints when they displayed a contemporary Iranian image of Muhammad next to a Christian icon, as part of an exhibition on cross-cultural encounters in 2013, as curator Mirjam Shatanawi explained: 'We knew it might be controversial, but decided to take the risk because the story is important to tell. These images are a real eye-opener, a powerful example of Islam being different and more diverse than many imagine ...'¹³⁵⁷

This reluctance to display portrayals of the Prophet may have been exacerbated by the 2015 Paris attacks but is not a recent response to risky artworks as previous discussions have shown. This also appeared to be the case with the Edinburgh University Library exhibition titled *The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314. A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting* featuring the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* in August 2014. No explanation was given for excluding depictions of the Prophet despite their collection having the only significant examples of this chronicle outside of the Khalili Collection.¹³⁵⁸ Many commentators condemned this curatorial decision such as Gruber:

There is no artistic reason whatsoever why those folios should have been left out ... I worry that our institutions of culture and learning are muting these significant Islamic works of figural art due to a variety of fears. This is a real shame and a terrible loss for our shared global artistic heritage.¹³⁵⁹

Ingvild Flaskerud, an expert on Shia devotional culture at the University of Oslo agreed: '... By not displaying the images, we give privilege to certain understandings of Islam and marginalise others. This is not simply a scholastic issue; it is also a democratic matter.'¹³⁶⁰

¹³⁵⁶ G Meotti, 'Expose: European culture grovels before Islam', *Israel National News*, 2 February 2015, retrieved 4 February 2015, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/16405#.VNFTghaD6hc>.

¹³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵⁸ Sskeldon, 'The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314. A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting', *University of Edinburgh CRC Exhibitions*, 14 July 2014, retrieved 25 January 2015, <libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/blog/2014/07/14/the-world-history-of-rashid-al-din-1314-a-masterpiece-of-islamic-painting/>.

¹³⁵⁹ Graham-Harrison (B), *op. cit.*

¹³⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

It appears that despite many museums displaying exhibitions of Islamic art that attract little negative reaction or controversy (including the AoIE's Abu Dhabi, Paris and Amsterdam venues) many powerful and prominent voices are unconvinced of their place in the public domain. This is evident in a response to the issue from a spokesperson for the Muslim Council of Great Britain, Nasima Begum, who maintains attitudes towards depictions of the Prophet were consistent and sacred art is simply an unnecessary 'historical anomaly':

It is believed that he [the Prophet] should not be depicted whatsoever ... [historically] there may have been books producing images of the prophet, however, the very fact that images of his face were covered up in the 16th century or so does show that Muslims were not happy about the depictions and therefore resulted in a veil being used to cover the face.¹³⁶¹

The displaying of religious images, especially in relation to Islam, is a topical debate in museological discourses but it presents an even wider question. Should the the museum remain a space of 'quiet contemplation' removed from the concerns of the outside world or should it be an arena for reflecting contemporary opinions on challenging issues? Research data has suggested that visitors believe the museum is a safe environment where controversial topics can be debated and disputed, despite museum management concerns about risk-assessments for certain topics and displays of art and culture. The real question, however, is that if an object's extrinsic properties (such as its historical past and rich narratives) are presented alongside its intrinsic qualities, the chance of situations occurring where institutions, collectors, and curators are overly nervous, or audiences offended, can be mitigated or, in some cases, eliminated. For cross-cultural understanding to occur the museum needs to be an inclusive space for diverse audiences and alternate discourses.

¹³⁶¹ Graham-Harrison (A), op. cit.

Contemporary Islamic art: a moot point

Discussion so far has concentrated on the ancient artifact and its place in displays such as the AoIE. In line with the majority of Islamic collections in private and public institutions, most of the artifacts from both Khalil's Islamic collection as a whole and the touring show were produced before the nineteenth century. An exception was Khalili's significant collection of Qajar art from Iran created during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that is considered unique in its scope and diversity. Its general unpopularity among collectors, investors and institutions until recently has been shown to be reflective of the power of art world trends and the value systems that underpin the trading in and displaying of Islamic art and culture historically. The emergence of a strong and dynamic Middle Eastern art market has challenged the superiority of the Western collectors and institutions that have traditionally dominated the public sphere, as discussions concerning the reassessment and redefining of national identity through culture, art and education in Abu Dhabi and the UAE as a region has revealed. Additionally, discussions surrounding the acquiring and displaying of Orientalist works by Western and Eastern collectors and museums and contentious debates around exoticism as discussed in chapter two, are revealing of the complexity surrounding these colonially inspired and hybrid artworks, especially where they belong in the history of Islamic art collecting and exhibition and their place in contemporary times.

Therefore, a second recommendation of this study emanates from a major criticism of Khalili's mission to encourage cross-cultural understanding through his travelling exhibition: the exclusion of the works of twenty-first century artists and the undervaluing of current Islamic art production by many public and private agencies. This investigation views the inclusion of contemporary art created by current artists identifying with Islam culturally and religiously, as essential to dispelling neo-colonial narratives of Islamic culture as monolithic, timeless and decaying and promoting instead the image of a living, dynamic and evolving social and artistic practice. Many museums are responding to audience research that reveals combining historical artifacts with contemporary artworks can raise awareness of the issues surrounding contemporary cultural production. Further, by encouraging reflection on present-day representations of Middle Eastern cultures that could foster new

insights and promote cross-cultural understanding,¹³⁶² the viewer is exposed to cultural and museological entanglements including the 'colonial histories of modernity.'¹³⁶³

Empirical data emerging from this study supports this view and regards it as a trend that indicates a significant shift in thinking away from the notion that modernity corrupted Islamic art production. The BM, for example, besides its extensive collection of Islamic art prior to 1800s, believes it is important to 'compliment' collections with contemporary examples and '... has been one of the forerunners of building a modern and contemporary collection of Middle Eastern art.'¹³⁶⁴ At LACMA contemporary art is important, especially the works of Middle Eastern women artists that are very popular with young people, with the curator maintaining:

... I don't think all contemporary art is global any more than I think all American contemporary art is global ... everything has been cross fertilized anyway ... I think what you have to accept the hybridization which you find in Islamic art especially... is important that you make that connection that these people are still around, the same people who made the work of art you are admiring from the 11th century, they're still producing art ...¹³⁶⁵

Similarly, the Met is emphatic that Islamic art does not stop at 1800 but admits representing contemporary or global art is 'really challenging ...' especially in current times.¹³⁶⁶ The IMA in Australia argues the 'enormous capacity of contemporary art to have layers of meaning' is reflected in art works such as their collection of twenty-one surfboards decorated with calligraphy and other Islamic symbols. The curator maintains these designs are more than 'beautiful' as knowing their context allows '... something else starts resonating ... they then have a different power behind them, reflecting upon the Cronulla riots, and that is a real experience for both Muslims and non-Muslims ...'¹³⁶⁷ (fig 106-109). Considering the major social unrest prior to the 2007 AoIE in Sydney was the Cronulla 'riots', the inclusion of contemporary art such as this example would physically connect with the warring beach communities, complementing and contributing substantially to the AGNSW's aim to improve Sydney's immediate societal problems and Khalili's wider mission to encourage cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and non-Muslim communities.

¹³⁶² Beyer, op. cit., p. 98.

¹³⁶³ *ibid.*

¹³⁶⁴ Ryan and 'Museum curator in the UK', op. cit., lines 43-44.

¹³⁶⁵ Ryan and Komaroff, op. cit., lines 467-523, 567-568.

¹³⁶⁶ Ryan and Khaidar, op. cit., lines 318-319

¹³⁶⁷ Ryan and Shkembi, op. cit., lines 366-407.



Fig 106 Exterior view of Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne. Source: <http://www.islamicmuseum.org.au>



Fig 107 Interior display space showing Philp George's *Borderlands* display of surfboards and other art works at the Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne. Source: <http://www.islamicmuseum.org.au>



Fig 108 Interior display space Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne. Source: <http://www.islamicmuseum.org.au>



Fig 109 Interior display space Islamic Museum of Art Melbourne. Source: <http://www.islamicmuseum.org.au>

The IMA in Paris has always collected modern and contemporary Arab art as they are not only a museum of Islamic art and express a similar desire to Khalili and the AoIE generally in highlighting the West's debt to the East in terms of developments and inventions in the arts, mathematics, and the sciences: '... but the Arab world has always been involved in creativity and art ... by displaying contemporary art you can see that these activities in all areas of thinking with no gap in history ...'¹³⁶⁸ Discussions throughout this investigation have raised the importance of disseminating knowledge of the East's artistic and cultural past as an antidote to the negative stereotyping of Arabs, Muslims and Islam as uncivilized, degenerate and barbaric.

¹³⁶⁸ Transcript L Ryan & E Delpont, 2013, lines 34-64.

The inclusion of contemporary Islamic art from outside the Middle East, especially from South East Asia, is another area where most European collections have few examples and can also contribute significantly to promoting cross-cultural understanding worldwide. Both the Met and smaller private museums (such as the Doris Duke Centre for Islamic Art and Culture Hawaii) have accumulated substantial ancient artifacts and contemporary artworks that have the potential to challenge the hierarchy and stereotyping established by Europeans and colonizers concerning art from the East. The display of both ancient and modern objects is viewed by the owners of these collections as contributing to a global reordering and potentially unsettles notions about the Muslim person and Islamic community historically.¹³⁶⁹

Confirming the view that there should be no distinction between ancient and modern artworks, a recent exhibition at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas USA, *Echoes: Islamic art and contemporary artists* addresses the issue directly:

What is Islamic Art? How do contemporary artists respond to Islamic art and culture in their own work? This exhibition will explore these questions through a series of visual conversations that make connections across cultures, geography and time.¹³⁷⁰

Despite significant support for mixed displays, the decision to exclude contemporary artworks from their displays, particularly those that criticize or question strongly held views and ideologies such as Islamic doctrine, is widespread. Behind many of these curatorial decisions is the heightened risk of controversy and negative reactions from audiences at a time when public confidence is essential for survival. Privately owned or community run institutions (like MONA and St Mungo's) may have more flexibility with decision-making at the micro-level than public museums (like the AGNSW) who must answer to governing authorities and boards of trustees, but the responsibility for all is the same: to be relevant and meaningful to their communities and remain financially viable cultural institutions. Public institutions especially rely on securing sponsorship and philanthropic donations to operate as popular cultural tourism destinations, as discussions throughout this thesis have shown. As previously highlighted, the influence of 'corporate taste' on not only the 'market value' of artworks but also its impact on governing bodies and cultural institutions, requires

¹³⁶⁹ Ryan and Haidar, op. cit., lines 352-363; Transcript L Ryan & C Khewhok, 2013.

¹³⁷⁰ Nelson-Atkins Museum, *Echoes: Islamic art and contemporary artists*, April 2014, retrieved 30 August 2014, < <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/exhibitions/echoes.cfm>>.

constant and challenging negotiations between the museum and the wider business world. After risk assessments are conducted based on with corporate-style templates, many planned displays of contemporary art are simply shelved, regarded as being too contentious or unpredictable. A recent exhibition at the IMA in Paris may, however, indicate that some institutions that speak on behalf of the Arab/Muslim world are prepared to embrace controversy to effect change. The provocative 2012 exhibition *Le Corps Découvert (The Body Revealed)* showcased a selection of Arab artists work from nineteenth-twentieth centuries (including 1930s works by previously discussed Algerian and Egyptian artists Racim and Saïd) with the aim to:

broaden views of Arab culture, spotlighting the many artists willing to break taboos and depict nudity in all forms ... to find a place in the contemporary global art scene ... to challenge the stereotypes ... that reduce it to a single image of religious fanaticism.¹³⁷¹

Despite displaying two hundred works (painting, sculpture, collage, photography, video) from seventy artists (many of whom were female) dealing with eroticism, sensuous dance, homosexuality, violence, exploitation of women,¹³⁷² (fig 110-113) there were no complaints according to the curator, which they hope will encourage other museums to follow suit:

... with so much secular stuff in this exhibition we worried that Muslim visitors especially might not enjoy the work of art, but actually nothing happened ... There were a lot of visitors of Arab origin to this exhibition ... Actually I saw veiled women come and see the exhibition and they were not fleeing, ashamed or fearful.¹³⁷³

The show did attract critics, however, due to its contentious nature, with one commentator feeling that while 'thought-provoking ... [and challenging] aesthetic preferences and artistic sensibilities' they were 'conflicted and unsure' of the display's purpose beyond all Arab artists not sharing the same vision:

... A certain element of pointless vulgarity seemed to overcompensate when aiming to disprove traditional visions of Arabic femininity ... the overall vision of an Arabic approach to the body remained unclear. Elements of violence and excessive sexual explicitness contradicted more sensual or beautiful images honoring the human body.¹³⁷⁴

¹³⁷¹ AFP Paris, 'Paris exhibit on Arab nudes hopes to challenge stereotypes', 11 April 2012, *Al Arabiya News*, retrieved 20 August 2012, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/04/11/206886.html>.

¹³⁷² *ibid.*

¹³⁷³ Ryan and Delpont, 2013, lines 75-100.

¹³⁷⁴ Les Derniers Jours, *Le Corps Découvert*, 17 July 2012, retrieved 6 February 2015, <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.



Fig 110 Majida Khattari, *Les Parisiennes* 2008 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert*, 2012 exhibition at Institut du Monde Arabe Paris. Source: <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.

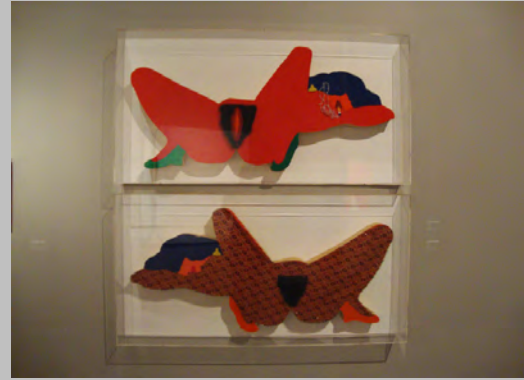


Fig 111 Lamia Ziadé, *Pigalle and Passy* 2008 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert*, 2012 exhibition at Institut du Monde Arabe Paris. Source: <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.



Fig 112 Mohammed Racim *Femmes à cascade* 1930 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert*, 2012 exhibition at Institut du Monde Arabe Paris. Source: <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.



Fig 113 Mahmoud Saïd, *L'Endormie* 1933 displayed in *Le Corps Découvert*, 2012 exhibition at Institut du Monde Arabe Paris. Source: <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.

The 'shock value' of such exhibitions, like MONA, treads a fine line between acceptability and 'bad taste' that has been a consideration in this investigation. Unsettling audiences pre-conceptions and dispelling stereotypes is a noble cause but will fail to change mindsets and attitudes if the only emotion felt is repulsion.

As argued, the importance of the audience perceptions and reactions is a crucial factor influencing the politics of display at the micro level of the singular exhibition encounter, and at the macro level of sponsorship, philanthropy and funding in general. The

consequences of limited visitor data when making curatorial decisions or analysis generally has been highlighted as one of the major methodological restrictions of this investigation. However, research data supports the recommendation that the inclusion of well-chosen contemporary works can benefit exhibitions generally and would have assisted the AoIE specifically, increasing their chances of connecting to the knowledge networks of diverse audiences and therefore promoting cross-cultural understanding. Whether to include or exclude contemporary art from displays is only one of a myriad of decisions that museum professionals at various institutions need to consider but the role of community consultation, however, is central to the museum management and curatorial staff worldwide.

Community engagement: a survival skill

The museum's quest to be places of relevance and contribute positively to the lives of their populations is a common goal of cultural institutions. The forces of modernity and globalization have had consequences for governments, communities and individuals alike; especially the search for national and personal identity in an increasingly fragmented world where ill-defined borders and geo-political strife have produced a sense of displacement. This lack of continuity and coherence in modern times (as detailed by theorists such as Bauman, MacDonald and Lasch), has required cultural institutions to reassess and sometimes reinvent themselves in order to adapt to a rapidly changing environment and meet the needs and desires of their diverse audiences. The third recommendation of this study concerns community engagement and the ways in which museums have approached the issue and whether it is universally regarded as a necessary component of the curatorial process and the museum's display.

The examination of an event such as the AoIE gives a snapshot of how institutions with differing social, cultural, religious and political environments have incorporated this trend into their politics of display. At the first venue of the AoIE, the desire to attract audiences from the Muslim communities was stated as a priority by the collection owner, AGNSW director and curatorial staff working on the display. However, stakeholders, particularly some community leaders and museum volunteers, failed to agree on an adequate level of community involvement to make cross-cultural understanding a reality equally. The suggestion of related exhibition events in the local community to promote

‘everyday multiculturalism’ was well supported by Muslim visitors and their leaders yet was not seen as essential by all museum staff.

The situation in Abu Dhabi was more problematic in terms of community engagement for many reasons: a largely transient local population with only twenty per cent classed as citizens; a focus on tourism and attracting international rather than local visitors to boost their economy; and the difficulty of ensuring the ‘local’ in satellite museums from globalized European networks. In the last two European destinations of the AoIE, social and ethnic unrest as a consequence of decades of immigration in France and the Netherlands especially from former colonies in North Africa, Morocco and Algeria, left cultural institutions with the dilemma of how to incorporate a disparate public with conflicting ideologies particularly on issues related to religious and national allegiances, freedom of speech and censorship.

As a result of these findings, this study suggests the need for a balance between the role and expertise of museum curatorial staff and the contributions of individuals and community representatives. As artworks are continually subject to (re)presentation, (re)contextualisation, disruption and transformation, this is a on-going process of cooperation and negotiation, whose dynamics shift and alter as each new situation presents itself. The responses to community engagement by museums in the wider public sphere is useful here in terms of examples of ‘best practices’ for institutions operating in modern, global environments.

The approach of the V & A is conservative in their attempts to avoid contentious issues and negative public reaction, considering extensive community consultation across cultures is especially vital to their curatorial decision-making with Islamic art displays: ‘... I think that it was very important to actually talk to people who are Muslim about it ... what we were doing matched extremely well with what people asked us for ... [feedback] was extraordinarily positive...¹³⁷⁵ American museums also regard community involvement as a priority with the Met allocating a ‘tremendous amount’ of time and money into surveying their public especially prior to the opening of the new Islamic wing: ‘... there is this whole

¹³⁷⁵ Ryan and Stanley, op. cit., lines 296-321.

engagement with the Muslim community, and the non-Muslim community, because Islam in the broadest sense is not about Muslims alone ...¹³⁷⁶

The BM's 2012 *The Hajj: Journey into the heart of Islam* exhibition also consulted a kind of cross section of the community in a desire for comprehensiveness and to reduce potential conflicts as it had the 'potential to be highly sensitive'¹³⁷⁷ The success of this exhibition, particularly among Muslim communities, was prominent in the media, with the display travelling to the Museum of Islamic Art Doha, Arab World Institute Paris and National Museum of Ethnography Leiden in the Netherlands. Despite the BM's efforts to avoid controversy through extensive community consultation, criticisms surfaced. An especially scathing accusation from a local newspaper argued that 'too many of our cultural and educational institutions have been quiescent in suppressing uncomfortable truths', targeting the British Museum Hajj exhibition for ignoring the 'bad press' about the Saudi royal family who lend the majority of art works for the display and who control and receive an income from the sacred site. Terrorist attacks on Mecca (from the seventh century till modern times), bridge collapses, stampedes and fires that have resulted in the death of pilgrims were absent narratives because these events 'did not fit into the exhibition's scope.' This exhibition was accused of being indicative of many displays at European museums today: 'Censorship is at its most effective when no one admits it exists.'¹³⁷⁸

In the Australian context, the IMA's approach is particularly consultative as they regard themselves as a community museum first and foremost and have an extraordinary amount of public involvement in their displays. Their aim is to not only include audiences in the exhibition-making process but also have a wider more global aim in relation to concepts of Islamic art:

... we would like to challenge beliefs about "the" visitor by arguing that each museum visit is a complex action, influenced by a diverse range of factors ... new ways of curating and displaying the arts and cultures of Islamic-influenced countries are required, not least to enhance the political and social role of museums as forums for dialogue with representatives of the source communities. This is even more important at a time in which we are experiencing a backlash to simplification. We hope that we can provide some insights so that both museum professionals and different audiences might be able to learn how to speak the language of Islamic art in the future.¹³⁷⁹

¹³⁷⁶ Ryan and Khaidar, op. cit., lines 184-235.

¹³⁷⁷ Ibid, lines 164-175.

¹³⁷⁸ N Cohen, 'Keep corrupt regimes out of British culture', 18 March 2012, *The Guardian*, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/18/nick-cohen-british-museum-hajj-saudi>.

¹³⁷⁹ C Gerbich, 'A Wooden room with Many doors...: Social, physical and Intellectual Accessibility at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin', Junod, op. cit., p. 208.

As chapter three highlighted, the AGNSW attitude towards the idea of community involvement in the decision-making process (as seen in the 2007 AoIE and the 2005 *Buddha: the radiance* exhibition),¹³⁸⁰ suggested that curatorial staff were reluctant to hand over their role as they considered themselves the best judges of 'aesthetic value' and what visitors should take away from the exhibition experience. The BM expresses a similar attitude towards the role of community engagement if it impinges on curatorial authority: ' ... to have what is called a people curated show, and have people do all these photographs and make decisions. Now, that is not a curated show, it is a juried show, and there is a difference ...',¹³⁸¹

The range of approaches and attitude towards to the issue of community involvement in museum displays is varied as the findings from the AoIE have shown and responses from a number of different institutions, both private and public, have added to the argument. It remains clear that listening to the needs and desires of the diverse communities is vital for museums to remain viable and dynamic institutions in a world where competing with a multitude of other leisure spaces for audiences and vying for the local and international consumer dollar is paramount for survival. However, should the museum include the contributions of the visitors and communities in displays or are curatorial decisions a professional question for experts? Certain cultural institutions and displays will lend themselves more readily to community involvement, as examples such as MONA and St Mungo's have illustrated. Some exhibitions require a level of expertise beyond the scope of the layperson to meet the requirements of philanthropists, sponsors, museum directors and the general public. Nevertheless, the level of resistance from some institutions, such as the AGNSW in 2007, has been shown to be counter-productive in encouraging some cultural and ethnic groups to view the museum as a place to visit and detrimental in terms of promoting cross-cultural understanding.

¹³⁸⁰ Ryan & 'Museum curator in the UK', op. cit., lines 476-478.

¹³⁸¹ Ibid.

Significance of study and future research directions

What remains to be discussed is the significance of this investigation in terms of its contribution to the wider body of knowledge and suggestions for future research directions. This study has contributed to the wider body of knowledge endeavouring to expose and isolate colonial and Imperial/Orientalist overtones that permeate the discourse of many western writers and provide a space for the voices of the ‘other’ – the Muslim visitor, community leader, scholar and commentator – to contribute to the conversations in the broader public domain that potentially can alter attitudes, perspectives and mindsets. This happens when the work of Orientalist scholars and writers are contested by accounts of the Qajar dynasty and its use of artistic and cultural artifacts that complemented and adapted modern western-style legal, political and educational systems, revealing one of many recorded historical episodes where close governmental and economic ties with Europe and the Muslim world existed.¹³⁸²

Interpretative and analytical approaches favoured by this study challenge the perception of Islam as rigidly resistant to and incompatible with western values and modernization, encouraging both Muslims and non-Muslims to see another side to Islam and European thinking generally, thereby increasing the possibility of cross-cultural understanding occurring. This project has not been politically based or motivated, however, after years of reading extremist rhetoric from both sides of the argument I think the most balanced approach to terrorist attacks and the global ‘problem’ of Islam and Muslims is summed up by Obiedallah: ‘They are terrorists with a political agenda who are using the Islamic faith, not acting in accordance with it. That is our enemy.’¹³⁸³

There are several research directions that are being considered that will enhance my current work and extend into more diverse areas of cultural investigation. These include: further investigations into museological issues such as public versus private museums and travelling versus permanent displays; how other ethnic groups and their cultural artifacts are represented, recontextualized, disrupted and transformed at every level: the exhibitionary site of display, the wider museum world and the broader public sphere; and

¹³⁸² Hossein-Zadeh, op. cit.

¹³⁸³ Obiedallah, D, ‘There’s No Such Thing as ‘Radical Islam.’ There Are Only Terrorists Who Are Muslim’, 6 February 2015, *The Daily Beast*, retrieved 7 February 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/02/06/there-s-no-such-thing-as-radical-islam-there-are-only-terrorists-who-are-muslim.html>

exploration and analysis of the role of contemporary art especially in the Middle Eastern context and the new global museums in Abu Dhabi that are finally due to open next year.

Lastly, a reflection on the journey of this investigation and its researcher is necessary. The conversations held with a multitude of individuals, communities and professionals, the vast numbers of museums and exhibitions visited and the multifaceted issues, problems, and debates presented for contemplation, have had a profound impact, both on a professional and personal level. When first viewing the AoIE in 2007 I was, like many others, struck by the sheer beauty and breadth of the display but it triggered a niggling question and sparked my curiosity to look beyond the aesthetic pleasure the experience had provided. The conclusion I have reached at the end of this project is that displays of art and culture do have the capacity to affect attitudes, behaviours and ways of thinking of any individual or society but it cannot do it alone. Both museums and collection owners must work with other public and private agencies, groups and individuals to achieve cross-cultural understanding between a diverse public. They need to be conscious of the far-reaching consequences of changing cultural items into art objects through the curatorial and exhibition process and be mindful of the multicultural and multi-faith audiences they seek to attract and represent in their displays.

In a world fraught with complex issues and dilemmas that are seemingly impossible to resolve, there are better alternatives than resorting to segregation and exclusion, hatred and violence against those 'others' we don't understand. Promoting sentiments such as recently seen on the façade of the IMA in Paris 'We are all Charlie' in both French and Arabic rather than vandalizing places of worship and engaging in mass book burning as part of 'cultural cleansing' campaigns from fundamentalists arguing over the place of Islam and Muslims in the modern world, are aspirations worthy of any cultural endeavor or investigation. Hopefully my thoughts and recommendations go some way to providing global dilemmas with some possible solutions.

References

Books and Journals

- Adamova, AT, 'Art and Diplomacy: Qajar painting at the State hermitage Museum', in Diba, LS, & Ekhtiar, M, (eds.), 1998
- Abd Allāh, M Mursi, *The United Arab Emirates: a modern history*, Croom Helm, 1978.
- Abdel-Malek, A, 'Orientalism in Crisis', *Diogenes*, no. 44, winter 1963, pp. 104-12
- Adida, CL., Laitin, DD., & Valfort, M, *Muslims in France: Identifying a Discriminatory Equilibrium*, October 2012, retrieved 12 May 2014, <<http://ftp.iza.org/dp6953.pdf>>
- Alaoui, B, 'An ongoing dialogue: the Institute of the Arab World in Paris', *Museum International*, UNESCO, Paris, vol.51, no. 3, 1999, pp. 38-42
- Alcock, T, *Travels in Russia, Persia, Turkey and Greece in 1828-1829*, London, 1831.
- Alghasi, S, Eriksen, T, Hylland, & Ghorashi, H, *Culture Paradoxes of Cultural Recognition*, Ashgate Publishing Ltd, Abingdon, Oxon, Great Britain, 2009
- Ali, W, 'From the Literal to the Spiritual: The Development of the Prophet Muhammad's portrayal from the 13th Century Ilkanid Miniatures to 17th Century Ottoman Art', *Proceedings of the 11th International Congress of Turkish Art, Utrecht-The Netherlands, August 23-28, 1999*, *EJOS*, IV, 2001, no. 7, http://www.staff.science.uu.nl/~gent0113/islam/downloads/ejos_4_7.pdf).
- Alivizatou, M, 'The politics of 'arts premiers': Some thoughts on the Musée du Quai Branly', *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008, pp. 44-57
- Allsen, T, *Culture and Conquest in Mongol Eurasia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge and New York, 2001
- Alpers, S, 'A Way of Seeing', in Karp, I & Lavine, S (eds.), 1991
- Amanat, A, 'Qajar Iran: A historical Overview', in Diba, L S & Ekhtiar, M (eds.), 1988
- Amato, S, 'Quai Branly museum: representing France after empire', *Race & Class*, vol. 47, no. 4, 2006, pp. 46-65
- Ames, M, *Cannibal Tours and Glass Boxes: The Anthropology of Museums*, Vancouver, BC, Canada, UBC Press, 1992, p. 144, retrieved 9 June 2014, <http://site.ebrary.com/lib/sydney/Doc?id=10141390&ppg=161>
- Amin, A, & Thrift, N, *Cities: Rethinking Urban Theory*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2002
- Anderson, B, *Imagined Communities*, Verso London, 1983
- Ang, I *Desperately Seeking the audience*, Routledge New York, 1989

- *Watching Dallas: Soap Opera and the Melodramatic Imagination*, Routledge New York, 1990
 - 'Together-in-difference: beyond diaspora, into hybridity', *Asian Studies Review*, 1467-8403, Volume 27, Issue 2, 2003, pp. 141 – 154
 - 'The Predicament of Diversity: Multiculturalism in Practice at the Art Museum', *Ethnicities*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2005, pp. 305-20
- Appadurai, A, *The social life of things: Commodities in cultural perspective*, Cambridge University Press, 1986
- Appiah, K, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers*, N.W. Norton and Company, New York and London, 2006
- Apple, M, 'The new sociology of education: analyzing cultural and economic reproduction', *Harvard University Review*, no. 48, 1978, pp. 495-503
- Arquez-Roth, A, 'The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration: a place for partnering and networking', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, pp. 85-96
- Art Gallery of New South Wales, *The Arts of Islam: Treasures from the Nassar D. Khalili Collection*, Exhibition Catalogue, AGNSW Publishing, Sydney, Australia, 2007
- 'Art Gallery of NSW, 2007 Arts of Islam exhibition-key data', marketing department, 2007
- Arts and Antiques, 'Khalili makes dazzling debut', *Arabian Knight*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2008
- Assmann, J, 'What's Wrong with Images' in Ellenbogen, J & Tugendhaft, A, (eds.), 2011
- Baker, F, Hulme, P, Iversen, M, & Loxley, D (eds.), *Europe and its Others* Colchester, University of Essex, vol. 1, 1985
- Bal, M, 'Telling, showing, showing off', *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 18, no. 3, 1992, pp. 556-594
- Balaghi, S, 'The Century of Machinery, Speed, and the Atom": Rethinking Modernity', in Gumpert, L & Balaghi, S, (eds.), 2002
- Baudrillard, J, *Symbolic Exchange and Death*, London, California and New Delhi, Sage Publications, 1993
- Bauman, Z 'From Pilgrim to Tourist- or a Short History of Identity' in, Hall, S, & du Gay, S P, (eds.), 1996
- *Legislators and Interpreters: On Modernity, Post-Modernity and Intellectuals*, Cornell University Press, 1987
- Beaulieu, J & Roberts, M (eds.), *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography*, , Duke University press, Durham and London, 2002
- Beck, U, *World Risk society: Towards a new modernity*, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, 1999

- 'The Terrorist Threat: World risk society revisited', *Theory, Culture & Society*, SAGE Publications, London, Thousand Oaks and New Delhi, vol. 19, no. 4, 2002, pp. 39-55
- Behrens-Abouseif, D & Vernoit, S *Islamic Art in the 19th Century: Tradition, Innovation, and Eclecticism*, Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2006
- Belting, H *Likeness and Presence: A history of the image before the era of art*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago and London, 1994
- *The Invisible masterpiece*, Reaktion, London 2001
- Benjamin, R, *Orientalist Aesthetics: Art, Colonialism, and French North Africa 1880-1930*, Berkeley, 2003
- 'The Oriental Mirage,' *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*, Art Gallery of New South Wales, 1997
- Benjamin, W, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction', *Illuminations*, H Arendt (ed.), London, Fontana, 1968, pp. 217-253
- Bennett, T, *The Birth of the Museum*, Routledge, London, New York, 1995
- 'Exhibition, Difference and the Logic of Culture' in Karp, I & Kratz, C (eds.), 2006
- *The Multiplication of Cultures Utility. The Art Gallery Versus the Alehouse*, in T Bennett, T, Frow, J (eds.), London, California, New Delhi, Sage Publications, 2008
- *Making Culture, changing society*, Routledge, London and New York, 2013
- Bennett, T & Frow, J (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, Sage Publications, London, California, New Delhi, 2008
- Berger, J, *Ways of Seeing*, British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972
- Bernault, F 'Colonial Syndrome: French Modern and the deceptions of History', in Tshimanga, C, D Gondola, D, & P J Bloom (eds.), 2009
- Beyer, V, 'Preliminary Thoughts on the Entangled presentation of "Islamic Art"', in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Bhabha, H, *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, London and New York, 1994
- Bhabha, H 'Signs taken for wonders: Questions of ambivalence and authority under a tree outside Delhi, May, 1817' in Baker, F, Hulme, P, Iversen, M, & Loxley, D (eds.), 1985
- Blair, S, 'Religious Art of the Ilkanids', in Komaroff, L & Carboni, S (eds.), 2002
- *The Compendium of Chronicles, The Nassar D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, vol. XXVII, 1995
- 'Color and Gold: The Decorated Papers Used in Manuscripts in Later Islamic Times', *Muqarnas*, vol. 17, 2000, pp. 24-36, retrieved 24 August 2014, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523288>

- Bloom, J M, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no. 1, March 2003, retrieved 15 December 2013,
<<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-3079%28200303%2985%3A1%3C152%3ATMOIAR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>>
- Bocock, R, *Consumption*, Routledge, London, New York, 1993
- Boswell, D, & Evans, J, (eds.), *Representing the Nation; A reader-History, heritage and Museums*, Routledge, London, New York, 1999
- Bosworth, E & Hillenbrand, C (eds.), *Qajar Iran. Political, Social and Cultural Change 1800-1925*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 1992
- Bowness, A, *The Conditions of Success: How The Modern Artist Rises to Fame*, Thames and Hudson, London, 1989
- Bourdieu, P, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, Harvard University Press, USA, 1984
- Bourdieu, P, & A Darbell, *The Love of Art, European Art Museums and their Public*, C Beattie and N Merriman (trans.), Polity Press, Oxford, 1991
- Boyle, A J, 'Maḥmūd Ghāzān', *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, retrieved 12 August 2014,
<<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/232549/Mahmud-Ghazan>>
- Brouwer, L, 'Islam as a symbol of protest: Reactions of Dutch-Moroccan youths on the Debate on Islam', Working Paper no 29, *Centre on Migration, policy and Society*, University of Oxford, Oxford Great Britain, 2006 retrieved 10 July 2014,
https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/fileadmin/files/Publications/working_papers/WP_2006/WP0629_Brouwer.pdf.
- Browne, E G, *A Literary History of Persia*, (3 volumes), T F Unwin, London, 1902
- Brown, W, *Regulating Aversion: Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2006
- Brouard, S & Tiberj, V, *As French as Everyone Else? A survey of French citizens of the Maghreb, Africa, and Turkish origin*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 2011
- Brubaker, R, 'The Return of Assimilation?', in Joppke, C & Morawska, E (eds.), (2002) - 'Ethnicity, Race, and Nationalism', *Annual Review of Sociology*, vol. 35, 2009
- Brubaker, R, & Cooper, F, 'Beyond Identity', University of California, Los Angeles; University of Michigan, 2000, retrieved 10 July 2012,
http://www.sscnet.ucla.edu/soc/faculty/brubaker/Publications/18_Beyond_Identity.pdf
- Buckingham, J S, *Travels in Assyria, Media and Persia*, London, 1829
- Burckhardt, T, *Art of Islam: Language and Meaning*, London, World of Islam Festival, 1976

- Cameron, F, 'Object-orientated democracies: Conceptualising museum collections in networks,' *Museum Management and Curatorship*, vol. 23, no. 3, 2008, pp. 229-243
- 'Risk society, controversial topics and Museum interventions: (Re) reading controversy and the Museum through a risk optic', in Cameron F and Kelly L (eds.), 2010
 - 'Introduction', in Cameron F and Kelly L (eds.), 2010
- Cameron, F & Kenderdine, S, 'Introduction', *Theorizing Digital Cultural Heritage: a critical discourse*, MIT Press, 2007
- Cameron F and Kelly L (eds.), *Hot Topics, Public Cultures, Museums*, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010
- Canby, S, 'Islamic Archaeology: By Accident or Design?' in Vernoit, S (ed), 2000
- Carey, M, & Graves, M S, 'Introduction: the historiography of Islamic art and architecture, 2012', *Journal of Historiography*, op. cit., p. 6, retrieved 13 December, 2012, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/introgravesabdcarey2.pdf>>
- Carswell, J, 'The Greeks in the East: Alexandria and Islam', Vernoit, S (ed), 2000
- Casati, R, 'Book review: The Art Instinct by Denis Dutton', *International Cognition and culture Institute*, 27 April, 2009, retrieved 15 December, 2013, <<http://www.cognitionandculture.net/home/blog/39-robertos-bog/446-book-review--the--art-instinct-by-denis-dutton>>
- Cherry, D, 'Algeria In and Out of the Frame: Visuality and Cultural Tourism in the Nineteenth-Century', in Lübbren, N and Crouch, D, (eds.), 2003.
- Cincotta, T, 'Manufacturing the Muslim Menace: private Firms, Public servants and the Threat to rights and Security', Sommerville MA: Political Research Associates, 2011
- Clifford, J, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art*, Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1988
- 'Museums as contact zones', *Routes, Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1997
- Clifford, J, & Marcus, G E, (eds.), *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, University of California Press, Berkley Los Angeles, London, England, 1986
- Cohen, S, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers*, Martin Robertson, Oxford, 1972
- Conklin, A, *In the Museum of Man: Race, Anthropology, and Empire in France, 1850-1950*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, 2013
- Contadini, A, 'Ugo Monneret de Villard: A Master of the Italian Orientalist School', Vernoit (ed), 2000

- Crouch, D and Lubben, N, *Visual culture and tourism*, Oxford, Berg, New York, 2003
- Culver, L et al, 'Revisiting Risk Society: A conversation with Ulrich Beck', *RCC Perspectives*, Munich, issues 6, 2011
- Cuno, J, 'The Object of art Museums', in *Whose Muse? Art Museums and the Public Trust*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2004
- Dabashi, H, *Post-orientalism: Knowledge and Power In Time of Terror*. New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Publishers, 2009.
- Desilver, D, 'World's Muslim population more widespread than you think', *Global Religious Landscape Report*, 7 June 2013, Pew Research Centre Forum on Religion and Public Life, retrieved 10 June 2014, <<http://www.pewresearch.org>>
- Diamondstein, B, *Inside the art world: Conversations with Barbaralee Diamondstein, Artists, Directors, Curators, Collectors and Dealers*, Rizzoli International Publications Inc., New York, 1994
- Dias, N, 'Double erasures: rewriting the past at the Musée du quai Branly', *Social Anthropology*, vol. 16, no. 8, 2008
- Diba, L S, 'The images of power and the power of images: Intention and response in early Qajar painting (1785-1834) in Diba, LS, & Ekhtiar, M (eds.), 1998
- 'An encounter between Qajar Iran and the West', in Vernot (ed) 2000
- Diba, L S, & Ekhtiar, M, (eds.), *Royal Persian painting: The Qajar Epoch 1785-1925*, IB Tauris, Brooklyn Museum of Art, London, New York, 1998
- Dixon, C A, 'Decolonising the museum: Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', *Race and Class*, Sage Journals, vol. 53, no. 4, 2012, p. 79, retrieved 23 May 2014, <<http://rac.sagepub.com>>.
- Doherty, E, 'The Ecstasy of Property: Collecting in the United Arab Emirates', in Mejcher-Atassi, S and Swartz, J P, 2012
- Doumani, B, 'The Power of Layers or the Layers of Power? The Social Life of Things as the Backbone of New Narratives' in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Dubuc, E & Turgeon, L, 'Musees d'ethnologie: nouveaux defis, nouveaux terrains', *Ethnologies*, vol. 24, no. 2, 2002
- Dudley, S, 'Museum Materialities: Objects, sense and feeling', *Museum Materialities: Objects, engagements interpretations*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London, New York 2010
- Duncan, C 'Art Museums and the ritual of citizenship', in Karp, I & Lavine SD (ed), 1991
- Duncan, C & Wallach, A, 'The Universal Survey Museum', *Art History* Vol. 3, No.4, December 1980
- Dunne, K, 'Performing Australian Nationalisms at Cronulla,' in G Noble (ed.), 2009
- Eco, U, *On Beauty*, (translation McEwen, A), Secker and Warburg, Great Britain, 2000

- Eggleton, L, 'History in the making: the ornament of the Alhambra and the past-facing presence', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., p. 15, retrieved 13 December 2013, <
<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/eggleton.pdf>>
- Ekhtiar, M, 'From workshop and bazaar to academy: Art training and production in Qajar Iran', in Diba, LS, & Ekhtiar, M, (eds.), 1998
- Ellenbogen, J & Tugendhaft, A, (eds.), *Idol Anxiety*, Stanford University Press, Stanford California, 2011
- Elliott, R, 'Dubai: Terrorist Target?' *Security Management*, 2013, retrieved 20 July 2013,
<http://www.securitymanagement.com>
- Entzinger, H, 'Race, Class and the Shaping of a Policy for Immigrants; The Case of the Netherlands', *International Migration Review*, issue 25, March 1987, pp. 5-20
- 'The Rise and Fall of Multiculturalism', in Joppke, C & Lukes, S (eds.), 1999
 - 'The growing gap between facts and discourse on immigrant integration in the Netherlands, *Identities: Global Studies in Culture and Power*, 2013, p. 3, retrieved 10 July 2014,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/1070289X.2013.828616>
- Ericson, R V & Doyle, A (ed.), *Risk and Morality*, niversity of Toronto Press, Toronto, Buffalo London, 2003
- Erzini, N, "Cultural Administration in French North Africa and the Growth of Islamic Art History, Vernoit, (ed), 2000
- Ettinghausen, R, 'Islamic Art and Archaeology', in Young, TC, (ed.), 1951
- Euben, RL, *Enemy in the Mirror: Islamic fundamentalism and the limits of modern rationalism, a world of comparative political theory*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1999
- Fiske, J, *Reading the Popular*, Routledge, London 1989
- Fletcher, B, *A History of architecture on the Comparative method for the Student, craftsman, and Amateur*, Bradbury, Agnew & Co. Ltd. Printers, London, Tonbridge, 1905
- Flood, FB, 'From the Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art', in E Mansfield (ed.), 2007
- Fortna, C, 'An Historical introduction to the Nineteenth century: Trends and Influences', in Behrens-Abouseif, D & Vernoit, S, (eds.), 2006
- Foucault, M, *Technologies of the self*, L Martin, H Gutman & P Hutton (eds.), University of Massachusetts Press, Amherst, 1988
- 'The Political Function of the Intellectual', C Gordon (trans.), *Radical Philosophy*, issue 17 (Summer, 1997), pp. 12-14

- *Dits et écrits IV*, Gallimard, Paris, 1994
- *Power: the Essential works 3*, P Rainbow (ed.), Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, London 2002
- Freeman, D, *The Power of Images: Studies in the History and Theory of Responses*, Chicago, 1989
- Fumaroli, M, 'The Christian Critique of Idolatry' in Ellenbogen, J & Tugendhaft, A, (eds.), 2011
- Gabar, O, 'An art of the object', *Artforum*, vol. 14, no. 7, March 1976
- Gallini, S, Compressed Cosmopolitanization, in Culver, L, et al, (2011), pp. 12 - 14
- Garland, D, 'The risk of risk', *Risk and Morality*, R V Ericson & A Doyle (ed.), University of Toronto Press, Toronto Buffalo London, 2003
- 'On the concept of moral panic', *Crime Media Culture*, vol. 4, no. 9, 2008, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://cmc.sagepub.com/content/4/1/9>
- Gell, A, *Art and Agency: An anthropological Theory*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1998
- *Wrapping in Images: Tattooing in Polynesia*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993
- Gerbich, C, 'A Wooden room with Many doors...: Social, physical and Intellectual Accessibility at the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin', in Junod et al (eds.), 2012
- Ghorashi, H, 'Ayaan Hirsi Ali: daring or dogmatic? Debates on multiculturalism and emancipation in the Netherlands', *Focaal*, no. 42: 2003, pp.163-169
- Gombich, EH, 'Art Transplant', *New York review of Books*, 19 June 1969
- 'Art and Illusion: a study in the psychology of pictorial representation', Phaidon Press, London, 1969
- Gonnella, J, 'Islamic art versus material culture: Museum of Islamic Art Museum of Islamic culture?' in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Goode, E & Ben-Yehuda, N, *Moral Panics; The Social Construction of Deviance*, 2ed, Wiley-Blackwell, Oxford, 2009
- Gosden, C, "What do objects want?" *Journal of Archeological Method and Theory*, vol. 12, 2005, pp. 193-211.
- Grabar, O, 'The Implications of Collecting Islamic Art', pp. 194-200, in S Vernoit (ed), 2000
- 'The Role of the Museum in the study of Knowledge of Islamic Art' in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Grabar, O & Blair, S, '*Epic images and Contemporary History: the Illustrations of the Great Mongol Shahnama*', University of Chicago press, Chicago, London, 1980
- Grabar, O & Natif, M, 'The Story of the Portraits of the Prophet Muhammad', *Studia Islamica*, vol. 96, 2003, retrieved 21 August 2014, <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/stable/i271968>

- Graves, MS, 'Feeling uncomfortable in the nineteenth century', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, retrieved 13 January 2014,
<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/graves.pdf>
- Gray, B *The world History of Rashid al-Din: A study of the Royal Asiatic Society Manuscript*, Faber & Faber Limited, London, 1978
- Grognet, F, 'How to Reconcile the Irreconcilable: the place of ethnology in the Museum of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, pp. 48-55
- Gruber, C, 'Questioning the 'classical' in Persian painting: models and problems of definition, *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, retrieved 13 January 2014,
<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/gruber.pdf>.
- Gumpert, L, and Balaghi, S, *Picturing Iran: Art, society and revolution*, IB Tauris, London New York, 2002
- Gutmann, A, (ed), *Multiculturalism, Examining the Politics of Recognition*, Princeton University press, New Jersey, 1994
- Habermas, J *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, MIT Press, 1991
- Hage, G, 'Analysing Multiculturalism Today', in Bennett, T & Frow, J (eds.), 2008
- Hagedorn, A 'The Development of Islamic Art History in Germany in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries' in Vernoit (ed.), 2000, pp. 117-27
- Halbental, B & Margalit, A, *Idolatry*, trans. N. Goldblum, Harvard University press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1992
- Hale, CR, 'Does Multiculturalism menace? Governance, cultural rights and the politics of identity in Guatamala', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 34, 2002, pp.485-524
- Hall, S, *Representation: Cultural representations and signifying practices*, Sage, London, 1995
- *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*, Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Birmingham, Media Series: SP no. 7, 1973
- 'Colonialism contested in the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', *McGill University Department of Sociology*, retrieved 10 May 2014,
www.mcgill.ca/sociology/sites/mcgill.ca.sociology/files/sara_hall_cv.pdf
- Hall, S & du Gay, SP, (eds.), *Questions of Cultural Identity*, Sage, London, 1996
- Hallam, E & Street, BV, *Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness*, Routledge, New York, 2000
- Hansen, R, 'Citizenship and Integration in Europe', Joppke & Morawska, 2003

- Harding, J, 'At Quai Branly: Jeremy Harding on Jacques Chirac's Museum', *London review of Books*, vol. 29, no. 1, 4 January 2007, retrieved 10 December 2014, www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n1
- Hargraves, A C, *Immigration, 'Race', and Ethnicity in Contemporary France*, Routledge, London, 1995
- Hayek, F *Constitution of Liberty*, Routledge, London and New York, 1960
- *Law, Legislation and Liberty* vol. 1-3, Routledge, London and New York, 1973, 1976, 1979.
- Heraud, N, 'The Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration: site of transmission and public education', *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008
- Herrington, C, 'Arts of the Islamic World: a teachers guide', *Smithsonian Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery*, 2002, retrieved 14 December 2014, <https://www.asia.si.edu/explore/teacherResources/islam.pdf>
- Hervik, P, 'Danish Cultural World of Unbridgeable Differences', *Ethnos* vol. 69, no. 2, 2004, pp. 247-267
- Hillenbrand, R, 'Richard Ettinghausen and the Iconography of Islamic Art', in Vernoit (ed), 2000
- 'Oleg Grabar: the scholarly legacy', *Islamic Art Historiography*, no. 6 June 2012, retrieved 13 December, 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/hillenbrand.pdf>>
- 'The Arts of the Book in Ilkanid Iran' in Komaroff, L & Carboni, S (eds.), 2002
- Hooper-Greenhill, E, *Museums and the shaping of knowledge*, Routledge, London, New York, 1992
- Huggan, G, *The postcolonial exotic: Marketing at the margins*, Routledge, New York, 2001
- Hughes, R, *Nothing if not critical: Selected Essays on Art and Artist*, Penguin, London, New York, 1990
- Huntington, S P, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996
- Huyssen, A, *Twilight Memories: Marking time in the culture of amnesia*, Routledge, New York, 1995
- 'Escape from Amnesia: The Museum as Mass medium', *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia*, Routledge, New York, 1995
- Ireland, P, *The Policy Challenge of Ethnic Diversity: Immigrant Politics in France and Switzerland*, Harvard University press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, London, 1994
- Irwin, R, 'Louis Massignon and the Esoteric Interpretation of Islamic Art', in Vernoit, 2000, p163-170
- *For lust of Knowing: Orientalists and their enemies*, Penguin, 2006
- Jakubowicz, A, 'Masculinity, Culture and Urban Power,' in Noble, G (ed.), 2009, pp. 168-184
- Jalal al-'Azm, S, 'Orientalism and Orientalism in reverse', *Khamsin*, 8, 1981, pp. 5-26
- Jameson, F, *Postmodernism or, the cultural logic of late capitalism*, Duke University press, Durham, 2001
- Janes, R, & Conaty, T (eds.), *Looking Reality in the Eye: Museums and Social Responsibility*, Calgary University Press, Calgary Canada, 2005

- Jarrassé, D, 'The Former Palace of the Colonies: the burden of heritage', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, pp. 56-65
- Jenkin-Madina, M, 'Collecting the Orient at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America', *Ars Orientalis*, January 2000, Vol.30, pp.69-83
- Jones, A and Stephenson, A (ed) *Performing the body/performing the text*, Routledge, 1999
- Joppke, C & Morawska, E, 'Integrating Immigrants in Liberal Nation-States', in Joppke, C & Lukes, S 1999
- Joppke, C, & Lukes, S, *Multicultural Questions*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999
- Jucubowicz, J 'Masculinity, Culture and Urban Power' in G. Noble, 2009.
- Jullian, P, *The Orientalists: European Painters of Eastern Scenes*, Phaidon, Oxford, 1977
- Junod, B, Khalil, G Weber, S & Wolf, G (eds.), *Islamic Art and The Museum*, Saqi, London, 2012
- Kabbani, R, *Europe's Myths of the Orient: Devise and Rule*, Macmillan Press Ltd, London, 1986
- Kadoi, Y, 'Arthur Upham Pope and his 'research methods in Muhammadan art': Persian carpets', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., pp. 1-12, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/kadoi.pdf>>
- Kallili, N D, 'Individualism vs. Universality', *ArtSource: The Art World*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (Jan, 1917), pp. 230-234, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25587728>
- Kant, E, *Critique of the power of judgement*, Retrieved 22 March 2014, <http://denisdutton.com/kant_third_critique.htm>
- Karlberg, M, 'Discourse Theory and Peace', *The Encyclopedia of Peace Psychology*, First Edition Ed. D J Christie (ed.), Blackwell Publishing Ltd, London, United Kingdom, 2012
- Karp, I & Kratz, C, (eds.), *Museum Frictions: Public Cultures/Global Transformations*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2006
- Karp, I & Lavine, S D, 'Culture and Representation' in Karp, I & Lavine SD, 1991
- *Exhibiting Cultures: The poetics and politics of museum display*, Smithsonian Institution, Washinton, London, 1991
- Kastoryano, R, 'French Secularism and Islam: France's headscarf affair' in Modood et al (eds.), 2006
- Katzman, K, 'The United Arab Emirates (UAE): Issues for U.S. Policy', *CRS Report for Congress*, Prepared for Members and Committees of Congress, March 18, 2013, <pc.state.gov/documents/organization/207800.pdf>
- Kechichian, J, *A Century in Thirty Years: Shaykh Zayed and the United Arab Emirates*, Middle East Policy Council, 2000
- Kenan, M 'The real values of diversity', *Connections* Winter 2002, retrieved 10 July 2012, <http://www.kenanmalik.com/essays/diversity.html>

- Khalili, ND, 'Foreword', *The Compendium of Chronicles, The Nassar D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art*, vol. XXVII, J Raby (ed.), Nour Foundation, London, 1995
- Kilgore, R, 'The Universality of Art', *Phi Delta Kappa*, Vol, 35, No. 8, May 1954
- Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, B, 'Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums and Heritage', University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1998
- 'World Heritage and Cultural Economies', in Karp, I & Kratz, C (eds.), 2006
- Komaroff, L, 'Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and perceptions of Islamic Art', *Ars Orientalis*, Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of History and Art, University of Michigan, vol. 30, 2000, p.2, retrieved 29 November 2013, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4434259>>
- Komaroff, L & Carboni, S (eds.), *The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Art and Culture in Western Asia, 1256-1353*, The Metropolitan Museum of art, Yale University press, New York, London, 2002
- Kopf, D, 'Hermeneutics versus history', *Journal of Asian studies*, issue 39, no. 3, 1980, pp. 495-506
- Korn, L, 'Intrinsic Goals and External influence: On some factors Affecting Research and Presentation of Islamic Art', Junod, B et al 2012
- Knorr-Cetina, K, 'Objectual practices', in Schatzki, T R et al (eds.), 2001
- Kuehn, J, 'Exotic Harem Paintings: Gender, Documentation, and Imagination,' *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, University of Nebraska Press, vol. 32, no 2, 2011, pp. 31-63
- Kumar, D, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2012.
- Labadi, S, 'The National Museum of Immigration History (Paris, France), neo-colonialist representations, silencing, and re-appropriation', *Journal of Social Archaeology*, vol. 13, no. 3, 2013, pp. 310-330
- Lanwed, S, 'The Aesthetic Approach' in Junod, B et al (eds.) 2012
- Lewis, B, *Islam and the West*, Oxford University Press, 1993
- Lewis, R, 'Reviewing Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts by John M MacKenzie', *Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 22, no. 2, 1999, pp. 133-36
- 'Cross-Cultural reiterations: Demetra Vaka Brown and the performance of the racialized female beauty', in, A Jones and A Stephenson (ed) (1999) pp. 56-75.
- *Rethinking Orientalism: Women, Travel and the Harem*, I B Tauris, London, New York, 2004
- Lifton, R J, *Superpower Syndrome: America's apocalyptic confrontation with the world*, Thunder's Mouth Press/Nation Books, New York, 2003, introduction xii.
- Lopez, M, *The Origins of Multiculturalism in Australian Politics 1945-1975*, Melbourne University Press Australia, 2000
- Lousley, C, *World at risk*, Polity Press, Cambridge, 2007

- Lyon, J, *Islam through Western Eyes*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2012
- Lübbren, N and Crouch, D, (eds.), *Visual Culture and Tourism*, Berg, Oxford, New York, 2003
- Macfie, A, (ed), *Orientalism: a reader*, New York University Press, New York, 2000
- Mak, G, *Gedoemd tot kwetsbaarheid*, Atlas, Amsterdam, 2005
- McAuliffe, C, *Popular Cultural Relativism: Religion, racial Profiling and National Multiculturalisms*.
Everyday Multiculturalism Conference Proceedings, Macquarie University, September 28-29,
2006
- McChesney, R, *Rich Media, Poor democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, New Press
New York, New York, 2000.
- McClellan, A, *The Art Museum: from Boullée to Bilbao*, University of California Press, Berkeley and
Los Angeles, California, 2008
- MacDonald, S, *Materializing culture: behind the scenes at the science Museum*, Berg, Oxford, New
York, 2002
- 'Museums, national, postnational and transnational identities', *Museum and Society* 1, No.1,
2003, pp. 1-16
- MacKenzie, J M, *Orientalism; History, theory and the arts*, Manchester University Press, Manchester,
1995
- Mackenzie, M, and Huxley, M, *Guess who's going to the gallery? A strategic audience evaluation and
development study by the Museums and Galleries NSW*, NSW Government Community Arts
NSW publication, 2010
- Maliepaard, M, Lubbers, M & Gijsberts, M, 'Generational differences in ethnic and religious
attachment and their interrelation. A study among Muslim minorities in the Netherlands',
Ethnic and Racial Studies, vol. 33, no. 3, March 2010, pp. 451-472
- Mansfield, E (ed.), *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, Routledge, London,
New York, 2007
- Mason, P, *Infelicities: Representations of the exotic*, The John Hopkins University Press, Baltimore
and London, 1998
- Masuya, T, 'Persian Tiles on European Walls: Collecting Ilkanid Tiles in Ninteenth-Century Europe',
Ars Orientalis, vol 30, 2000, pp. 39-54
- Mejcher-Atassi, J, & Swartz, J P, *Museums and Collecting Practices in the Modern Arab World*,
Ashgate, London, 2012
- Meredith, C, 'Early Qajar administration: an analysis of its development and functions', *Iranian
Studies*, 1971, issue 4, nos. 2-3, retrieved 22 September 2014,
<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00210867108701411>

- Mill, John Stuart, *On Liberty 1859*, Penguin, London, 1974
- Miller, C Wright, *The Sociological Imagination*, New York, Oxford University press, 1959
- Miller, D, *Material Culture and Mass Consumption*, Oxford, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1987
- Miller, M, 'Book Reviews', *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, vol. 67, no. 3, summer 2009, pp. 333-336, retrieved 15 December, 2013, <http://theartinstinct.com/mara_miller_review.pdf>.
- Milliard, C, 'Controversial Louvre Abu Dhabi Flaunts its Collection', 'Birth of a Museum' exhibition', *Blouin Artinfo*, 2013, retrieved 10 January 2014, <http://uk.blouinartinfo.com>
- Mitchell, T, 'The Stage of Modernity', in Mitchell, T (ed.) 2000
- Mitchell, T (ed.), *Questions of Modernity*, University of Minneapolis Press, Minneapolis, 2000
- Mitter, P, 'The Hottentot Venus and the Western Man: reflections on the construction of beauty in the West', *In Cultural Encounters: Representing Otherness*, Editors E Hallam & B V Street (eds.), Routledge, New York, 2000
- Modood, T, *Multicultural Politics: Racism, Ethnicity and Muslims in Britain*, Edinburgh University Press, Bodmin, 2005
- Modood, T, Triandafyllidou, A & Zapata-Barrero, R (eds.), *Multiculturalism, Muslims and Citizenship: A European Approach*, Routledge, London, New York, 2006
- Müller-Wiener, M, 'Aesthetics versus context? Towards New Strategies for the Study of the Object', in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Nasr, S Hossein, *Islamic Art and Spirituality*, Albany, State University of New York press, Albany 1987
- Natif, M, 'Concepts of Idol anxiety in Islamic Art', in Ellenbogen, J & Tugendhaft, A, (eds.), 2011
- NSW Ministry for the Arts, 'The Arts and Cultural Diversity: Principles for Multicultural Support in New South Wales', Sydney, NSW Ministry for the Arts, 1997
- Newhouse, V, *Towards a New Museum*, Monacelli Press, New York, 1998
- Noble, G, *Lines in the Sand: The Cronulla Riots, Multiculturalism and National Belonging*, Sydney, Institute of Criminology Press, G Noble (ed.), Sydney, 2009
- 'The Face of Evil: Demonising the Arab Other in Contemporary Australia', *Cultural Studies Review*, vol. 14, no. 2, 2008, pp. 14-32
- Nochlin, L, 'The Imaginary Orient', *The Politics of Vision: essays on Nineteenth-Century art and Society*, Harper, New York, 1989
- Noordegraaf, J, *Strategies of Display: Museum presentation in the Nineteenth-and Twentieth-Century Visual Culture*, NAI Publishers, Rotterdam, 2004
- Norris, P & Englehart, R, *Sacred and Secular: Religious and Politics Worldwide*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004

- Ostling, S, 'The Global Museum and the Orbit of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum in New York', *The International Journal of the Humanities*, vol.5, 2007, pp. 87-94
- Overton, K, 'A history of Ottoman art history through the private database of Edwin Binney, 3rd', *Journal of Art Historiography*, pp. 1-19, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/overton.pdf>>
- Pakes, F, 'The ebb and flow of criminal justice in the Netherlands', *International Journal of the Sociology of Law*, issue 34, 2006, retrieved 10 July 2014, www.sciencedirect.com
- 'The Panicky debate: The State of Moroccan Youth in the Netherlands', in Poynting, S, & Morgan, G (eds.), 2012
 - 'Global forces and local effects in youth justice: The case of Moroccan youngsters in Netherlands', *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, issue 38, 2010, p. 117, retrieved 8 July 2014, www.sciencedirect.com
- Penninx, R, Garces-Mascarenas, B & Scholten, P, 'Policymaking Related to Immigration and Integration: A Review of Literature of the Dutch Case', *international Migration, Integration, Social Cohesion (IMISCOE)*, University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, 2005, retrieved 7 July 2014, <http://www.dare.uva.nl/document/352322>
- Phillips, A, 'The historiography of Ottoman velvets, 2011-1572: scholars, craftsmen, consumers', *Journal of Art Historiography*, pp. 1-26, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/Phillips.pdf>>.
- Pinder-Wilson, R, (ed), *Paintings from Islamic Lands, Oriental Studies IV*, Bruno Cassirer, Oxford, 1969
- Piotrovsky, MB, 'Islamic Art: an Introduction' in Piotrovsky, B, & Roger, JM, (eds.), 2004
- Piotrovsky, MB, & Roger, JM, (eds.), *Heaven and Earth: art from Islamic lands: works from the State Hermitage Museum and the Khalili Collection*, Prestel, Munich, Berlin, London, New York, 2004
- Popper, K, *The Open Society and its Enemies*, Routledge & Kegan, London, 1945
- Porter, RK, *Travels in Georgia, Persia, etc., during the Years 1817-1820*, London, 1821
- Porter, Y, 'From the "Theory of the Two Qalams" to the "Seven Principles of Painting": Theory, Terminology, and Practice in Persian Classical Painting', *Muqarnas*, vol. 17, 2000, p. 113, retrieved 10 August 2014, BRILL Stable URL <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1523293>
- Povinelli, E, *The Cunning of Recognition: Indigenous Alterities and the Making of Australian Multiculturalism*, Duke University Press, Durham, 2002
- Poynting, S, 'What caused the Cronulla riot?' *Race & Class*, Sage Publications, vol. 48, no. 85 2006, p.33-34, retrieved 5 July 2009, <http://rac.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/48/1/85>

- 'Bin Laden in the Suburbs": Attacks on Arab and Muslim Australians before and after 11 September', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, vol. 14, no. 1, July, 2002, pp. 43-64
- Poynting, S, & Morgan, G, (eds.), *Global Connections: Global Islamophobia: Muslims and Moral panic in the West*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, Surrey, Great Britain, 2012
- Poynting, S, Noble, G, Tabar, P, Collins, J, *Bin Laden in the Suburbs: Criminalising the Arab Other*, Institute of Criminology/ Federation Press, Sydney, 2004
- Preziosi, D, *Brain of the Earth's Body: Art, Museums, and the Phantasms of Modernity*, University of Minnesota Press, 2003
- 'In the Temple of Entelechy: The Museum as Evidentiary Artifact', in *Studies in the History of Art*, 1 January 1996, Vol.47, pp.165-171
- Price, S, *Paris primitive, Jacques Chirac's Museum on the Quai Branly*, The University of Chicago press, Chicago and London, 2007
- Rabbat, N, 'Islamic Art at a Crossroads?', in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Raby, J, *Qajar Portraits*, Azimuth Editions, London, IB Tauris, London, New York, 1999
- Ramadan, T, 'To be a European Muslim', Islamic Foundation, Leicester, 2000
- Rawls, J, *A Theory of Justice*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1971
- 'Political Liberalism', *The John Dewey Essays in Philosophy*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1996
- Rectanus, MW, *Culture Incorporated Museums, Artists and Corporate Sponsorships*, Minneapolis, London, University of Minnesota Press, 2002
- Rice, T, *The Illustrations to the 'World History' of Rashid al-Din*, B Gray (ed.), Edinburgh University press, Edinburgh, 1976
- Richon, O, 'Representation, the Despot and the Harem: Some questions around the academic Orientalist painting by Lecomte-du- Nouÿ (1885)', in Baker, F, Hulme, P, Iversen, M, Loxley, D (eds.), 1985
- Roberts, M, *Orientalism's Interlocutors: Painting, Architecture, Photography* in Beaulieu & M Roberts (eds.), Duke University press, Durham and London, 2002
- Robertson, I, *Understanding International Art Markets and Management*, Routledge, London New York, 2005
- Robinson, B W, 'The Royal Gifts of the Fath'ali Shah', *Apollo*, lii, 1950, pp. 66-68
- 'The Court Painters of Fath'ali Shah', *Israel Exploration Society*, Jerusalem, vol. 7, 1963, pp. 94-105
- 'Qajar painted Enamels', in Pinder-Wilson, R (eds.), 1969

- 'Persian Royal Portraiture', in Bosworth, E & Hillenbrand, C (eds.), 1983
 - 'Persian painting under the Zand and Qajar Dynasties', *The Cambridge History of Iran, vol. 7: From Nadir Shah to the Islamic Republic*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge MA, 1991
 - 'Qajar Paintings: A personal Reminiscence', in Diba, LS, & Ekhtiar, M, (eds.), 1998
 - 'The Burlington House Exhibition of 1931: A Milestone in Islamic Art History' in Vernoit, 2000 pp. 147-155
 - 'Rashid al-Din's World History: The Significance of the Miniatures', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland*, no. 2, 1980, p. 217, retrieved 13 August 2014, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/25211170>
- Rogers, JM, 'The Collecting of Islamic Art in Nineteenth-century Russia', Vernoit (2000)
- 'The Arts of Islam; Treasures from the Nasser D Khalili Collection', *Art Gallery of New South Wales Publications*, 2007
- Romeyn, E, 'Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: Spectropolitics and Immigration', *Theory Culture Society*, 2014, vol. 31, no. 6, p77-101, retrieved 25 September 2014, <http://tcs.sagepub.com/content/31/6/77>
- Roxburgh, DJ, 'Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880-1910', *Ars Orientalis*, 2000, pp. 9-38
- Rushworth, P, *Orientalism revisited*, 2012, accessed 2 February, 2013, <<http://www.albab.com/arab/articles/text/orientalism.htm>>
- Ryan, L, 'Forging Diplomacy: a socio-cultural investigation of the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the "Art of Australia 1788-1941" exhibition', VDM Publishing, 2007
- Sabella, S, 'Is the United Arab Emirates constructing its Art History? The Mechanisms that Confer Value to Art', *Contemporary Art Practices Journal*, Vol. IV, 2009, pp. 126-135
- Said, EW, *Orientalism*, Penguin Books, London, New York, Toronto, 1978
- *Culture and Imperialism*,,, Vintage Books, New York Toronto 1993
- Sandell, R, 'Museums and the combating of social inequality: roles' responsibilities, resistance', *Museums, society, inequality*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2002, pp. 142-152
- Sauvage, A, 'Narratives of colonisation: The Musée du quai Branly', *reCollections: Journal of the National Museum of Australia*, vol. 2, no. 2, September 2007, retrieved 10 May 2014, <recollections.nma.gov.au/issues/vol-2-no2/papers/narratives-of-colonisation>.
- Scarce, J, 'Ancestral themes in the art of Qajar Iran' in Vernoit et al (ed), 1989
- 'Persian art through the eyes of nineteenth-century British travellers', *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, Bulletin*, 1981, vol. 8, issue 1, pp. 38-50, retrieved 12 September 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/13530198108705306>

- Schainp, M A, 'Minorities and Immigrant Incorporation in France: The State and the Dynamics of Multiculturalism', in Joppke, C & Lukes, S (eds.), 1999
- Schatzki, TR, Knorr Cetina, K, Von Savigny, E (eds.), *The practice turn in contemporary thought*, Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, London, New York, 2001,
- Scheid, K, 'The Study of Islamic Art at a Crossroads, and Humanity as a Whole', in Junod et al (eds.), 2012
- Schiller, IH, *Communications and Cultural domination, International Arts and Sciences Press, White Plains New York, 1976*
- Scott, JW, *The Politics of the Veil*, Princeton University Press, 2007
- Servole, F, 'The Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration and its public: images, perceptions and evolutions', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, pp. 110-116
- Shaw, WMK, 'Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1889-1923', *Ars Orientalis*, 2008, pp. 55-68
- 'The Islam in Islamic art history: secularism and public discourse', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, pp. 1-34, retrieved 13 December 2013, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shaw1.pdf>
- Shalem, A, 'What do you mean when we say "Islamic art"? A plea for a critical rewriting of the history of the art of Islam', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June 2012, pp. 1-18, retrieved 13 December 2013, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/shalem.pdf>
- 'Multivalent Paradigms of Interpretation and the Aura or Anima of the Object' in Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Shelton, AA, 'The Public Sphere as Wilderness: Le Musee du quai Branly', *American Anthropological Association*, 2009
- Sherman, D, 'People's Ethnographic: Objects, museums, and the Colonial Inheritance of French Ethnography', *French Historical Studies*, vol. 27, no. 3, 2004, pp 669-703
- Sherman, DJ, & Rogoff, I, *Museum culture: History, discourse, spectacle*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1994
- Siebers, H, 'Discrimination and Cultural Closure at Work: evidence from two Dutch organizations', in Alghasi et al (eds.), 2009
- Simpson, M S, 'A gallant Era: Henry Walters, Islamic Art and the Kelekian Connection', *Ars Orientalis*, 2000, pp. 91-112

- Smith, RM, *Persian Art (South Kensington Museum Handbook)*, Committee of Council on Education, Scribner, Welford, & Armstrong, New York, retrieved 1 September 2014, https://openlibrary.org/books/OL6309103M/Persian_art
- Sniderman, P & Hagendoorn, A *When ways of life collide: multiculturalism and its discontents in the Netherlands*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 2007
- Soucek, P, 'The Life of the Prophet: Illustrated versions', *Content and Context of Visual Arts in the Islamic World*, The College Art Association of America, The Pennsylvania State University Press, University Park and London, 1988
- Spivak, GC, 'The Rani of Sirmur' in Baker, F, Hulme, P, Iversen, M, & Loxley, D (eds.), 1985
- Starn, R, 'A Historian's Brief Guide to New Museum Studies', *The American Historical Review*, vol. 110, no. 1., 2005, retrieved 20 March 2012, <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/ahr/110.1/starn.html>
- Statham, P, Koopmans, R, Giugni, M & Passy, F 'Resilient or Adaptive Islam?: Multiculturalism, Religion and Migrants' Claim-Making for group demands in Britain, the Netherlands and France', *Ethnicities*, 2005, vol. 5(4), pp. 427-459, retrieved 12 May 2014, <etn.sagepub.com>
- Stevens, M, 'Immigrants into the Citizens: ideology and Nation-Building in the Cité Nationale de l'Histoire de l'Immigration', *Museological Review*, University of Leicester, no. 13, 2008
- Stoker, WS, van der Merwe W L, eds.), *Looking Beyond? Shifting views of transcendence in philosophy, theology, art and politics*, Rodopi, Amsterdam, New York, 2012
- Stronge, S, 'Collecting Mughal Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum', Veroit (2000), pp. 85-95
- Sturken, M, & Cartwright, L, *Practices of Looking: An introduction to Visual Culture*, Oxford university Press, Oxford, New York, 2009
- Suau, JT, *The Guggenheim Museum Bilbao: Cultural Tourism, Urban Renewal and Political Risk*, MA Thesis, American University, Washington, 1999
- Suleri, S, *The rhetoric of English India*, University Of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1993
- Taylor, C, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, Duke University Press, Durham and London, 2004
- 'The Politics of Recognition', in A Gutmann (ed.), 1994
- Tévanian, P, 'Conservative Revolution within Secularism: The Ideological Premises and Social Effects of the March 15, 2004, "Anti-Headscarf" Law', Translated by Baldinger, N in Tshimanga et al 2009
- Tibawi, AL, 'English-Speaking Orientalists', *Islamic Quarterly*, no. 8, 1-4, 1964, pp. 25-45
- Titley, NM, *Persian Miniature Painting*, University of Texas Press, Austin Texas, 1984
- Todorov, T, *On Human Diversity: Nationalism, Racism, and Exoticism in French Thought*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1993

- Toubon, J, 'The Political Genesis of the Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration', *Museum International*, vol. 59, no. 1/2, 2007, pp. 8-12
- Troelenberg, EM, 'Regarding the exhibition: the exhibition *Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art* (1910) and its scholarly position', *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 6, June., pp. 1-34, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/troelenberg.pdf>>
- Tshimanga, C, Gondola, D & Bloom, P J, (eds.), *Frenchness and the African Diaspora: Identity and Uprising in Contemporary France*, Indiana University Press, Bloomington, 2009
- Turner, BS, *Marx and the end of Orientalism*, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1978
- Unseen, M, 'The Inner Circle: Large Corporations and the Rise of Business Political Activity in the United States and the United Kingdom', Oxford University Press, New York, 1984
- Urry, J, *The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies*, Sage Publications, London, California and New Dehli, 1990
- Van der Waal, J, de Koster, W & Achterberg, P, 'Stedelijke context en steun voor de PVV: Interetnische nabijheid, economische kansen en cultureel klimaat in 50 Nederlandse steden', *Res Publica*, issue 53, no 2, pp. 189-207.
- Van Nieuwkerk, K, 'Veils and wooden clogs don't together', *Ethnos*, vol. 69, no.2, 2004, pp. 229-246
- Van Swaaijng, R, 'Public safety and the management of fear', *Theoretical Criminology*, 2005, pp. 289-305, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://tcr.sagepub.com/content/9/3/289>
- Vasta, E, 'From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilation in the Netherland', *Ethnic Racial Studies*, vol. 30, no. 5, 2007, pp. 713-740, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01419870701491770>
- Vernoit, S, *Occidentalism: Islamic Art in the 19th century*, IB Tauris Ltd., 2004
- (ed), *Discovering Islamic Art: scholars, collectors and collections 1850-1950*, New York, London, I B Tauris, 2000
 - 'Islamic Art and Architecture: An overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c. 1950' in Vernoit (2000)
- Vernoit, S & D Behrens-Abouseif, 'Foreword', in Behrens-Abouseif, D & Vernoit, S (eds.), 2006
- Verbeek, S & Groeneveld, S, 'Do "hard" diversity policies increase ethnic minority representation? An assessment of their effectiveness using administrative data', *IMISCOE Conference, Netherlands*, Emerald Group Publishing Limited, vol. 41, no. 5, 2012, pp. 647-664, retrieved 5 July 2014, www.emeraldinsight.com/0048-3486.htm
- Vergo, P (ed.), *The New Museology*, Reakiton Books Ltd, London, 1989
- Wagner, R *The Invention of Culture*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, London, 1981
- Ward, R 'Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display at the British Museum', in Vernoit (ed), 2000

- Waring, ES, *A Tour of the Sheeraz*, London, 1807
- Watson, O, 'Almost hilariously bad: Iranian pottery in the Nineteenth-century', in Vernoit, (ed), 2000
- Weber, M, *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, G Roth & C Wittich (trans.), University of California Press, Berkley Los Angeles, London England, vol. 1 & 2, 1978
- Weber, S, 'The Role of the Museum in the Study and Knowledge of Islamic Art', in Junod, B et al (ed), 2012
- 'A Concert of Things: Thoughts on Objects of Islamic Art in the Museum context', in Junod, B et al (ed), 2012
 - 'Islamic Art and the Museum: Introduction', Junod, B et al (eds.), 2012
- Wearden, J, 'The Acquisition of Persian and Turkish Carpets by the South Kensington Museum, Vernoit (2000), pp. 96-104
- Werbner, P, 'The predicament of diaspora and millennial Islam. Reflections on September 11 2001', *Ethnicities*, vol. 4, no. 4, 2004, pp. 451-476
- Wilson, B R (ed.), *Rationality*, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1979
- Wimmer, A, & Schiller, NG, 'Methodological nationalism and beyond: Nation-state building, migration and the social sciences', *Global Networks*, vol. 2, no. 4, 2002, p. 301-334
- Winklemann, JJ, *The History of Ancient Art*, vol. 2, Book IV, F Ungar Pub. Co., 1873
- Witcomb, A, *Re-Imaging the museum Beyond the Mausoleum*, London, Routledge, 2003
- Wood, B D, 'A Great Symphony of Form: The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and its Influence', *Ars Orientalis*, 2000, pp. 113-130
- Wright, P, 'The Quality of Visitors' experiences in Art Museums', in P Vergo, (ed.) 1989
- Wu, CT, *Privatising culture: corporate art intervention since the 1980s*, Verso, London, New York, 2002
- Yalman, S, 'Helibrunn Timeline of Art History, The Art of the Ilkhanid Period (1256-1353), Thematic Essay', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art*, 2000-2014, retrieved 11 August 2014, http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd_ilkh.htm
- Yenisehirlioglu, F C, 'The Republican Ethic and the Family Album: Aspects of Collecting and Art Historical Research in Turkey, 1923-50', Vernoit (2000), pp. 182-193
- Young, R, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West*, Routledge, London and New York, 1990
- *Postcolonialism: A very short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2003
- Young, TC, (ed.), *Near Eastern Culture and Society: A symposium on the Meeting of East and West*, Princeton University press, Princeton New Jersey, 1951
- Zeynep, A, *International heritage and historic building conservation: Saving the world's past*, Hoboken, Taylor and Francis, 2013

Zimmer, R & Jeffries, J 'Accessing material through technologies of mediation and immediation',
Journal of Futures, retrieved 12 December,

<<http://elsevier.com/locate/futures>,>doi:10.1016/j.futures.2007.05.007.ff>

Zoanna, J, 'The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of *Jane Eyre*', *Signs*,
University of Chicago Press, Chicago, vol. 18, no. 3 (Spring, 1993), pp. 592-617, retrieved 27
February, 2013, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174859>>

Newspapers and Media

- ABC Foreign Correspondent 24 August 2010, CBS News in Depth, Sydney Morning Herald 12 January 2009, Herald Sun, 18 August 2010.
- Adams, B, 'Islam's Jewish envoy Billionaire an unlikely promoter of Islamic art', *South China Morning Post*, Hong Kong, 1 July, 2007, retrieved 1 July, 2007, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.
- Adam, G, 'How Khalili almost sold his collection to Abu Dhabi: Fine works of Islamic art are at the centre of a dispute with his former business partner', *The Art Newspaper*, 2013, retrieved 11 November 2013, <http://www.theartnewspaper.com>
- Alexander, K, 'What being an Emirati truly means', *gulfnews.com*, 13 May 2011, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/what-being-an-emirati-truly-means-1.806971>
- Allen, C, 'Islam's world: rich traditions within limitations'. *The Australian Financial Review*, 28 June 28 2007.
- Ahmed, NH, 'Time to hold the Media to Account for Islamophobia', *Huffington Post*, July 18, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk>
- Ahmed, P, 'Appreciating Islam's Contribution to Civilisation', *Huffington Post*, 7 May 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- AFP, 'Paris exhibit on Arab nudes hopes to challenge stereotypes', 11 April 2012, *Al Arabiya News*, retrieved 20 August 2012, <http://english.alarabiya.net/articles/2012/04/11/206886.html>
- 'German police ban anti-Islamic Pegida rally in Dresden citing terror threat', *The Telegraph*, 18 January 2015, retrieved 22 January 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11353639/German-police-ban-anti-Islamic-Pegida-rally-in-Dresden-citing-terror-threat.html>
- AP, 'Comic sentenced to jail for Islam insult', 4 February 2012, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, retrieved 10 July 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/comic-sentenced-to-jail-for-islam-insult-20120203-1qxni.html>.
- 'German anti-Islam group vows new rally after cops nix protest', *The Times of Israel*, 19 January 2015, retrieved 22 January 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/german-anti-islam-group-vows-new-rally-after-cops-nix-protest/>.
- 'US Arab-Muslim comedy grows, pushes beyond funny talk in post-9/11 world', *The Washington Post*, 14 March 2012, retrieved 15 March 2012, <http://washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/us-Arab-Muslim-comedy-grows-pushes-beyond-funny-talk-in-post-9/11-world/>

- Appleyard, B, 'Envy, controversy and suspicion follow this billionaire art collector everywhere he goes. But he always has the last laugh', *The Sunday Times Magazine*, 12 July 2009
- Associated Press, 'Iraq Notebook: wax statues in Shiite holy city prompt awe by fans, cries of heresy by critics', 2012, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraq-notebook-wax-statues-in-shiite-holy-city-prompt-awe-by-fans-cries-of-heresy-by-critics>.
- Bayliss, S, 'A positive understanding of Islam', *ARTnews*, 1 January 2008, retrieved 24 November 2014, <http://www.artnews.com/2008/05/01/a-positive-understanding-of-Islam/>
- Bharadwaj, V, 'Cultural Jewels in the Gulf,' *The New York Times*, 2012, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/03/21/arts>
- Boland, M, 'Numbers are up for museum gamble that continues to defy tourism odds', *The Australian*, 16 July 2011
- Blair, SS, & Bloom, J M, 'The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field', *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no. 1, March 2003, pp.152-153
- Bradley, K, 'The Deal of the century', *Art in America*, July 1997
- Breskin, N, 'Showcasing the art of Islam,' *The Australian Jewish News*, 2007, retrieved 15 August 2009, <<http://www.ajn.com.au>>
- Brothers, C, 'For Some, A Museum Hits Close to the Heart', *International Herald Tribune*, 17 August 2006, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/08/17/arts/17iht-branly.2514868.html>
- The Brunei Times, 'Allure of oriental costumes on display in Paris museum, *bt.com*, 15 February 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.bt.com.bn/art-culture/2011/02/15/allure-oriental-costumes-display-paris-museum>.
- Burke, D, 'After Paris attacks, 7 questions being asked about Islam', 13 January 2015, *CNN.com*, retrieved 12 January 2015, <edition.cnn.com/2015/01/10/living/questions-islam/>.
- The Canberra Times, 'Telling Islam's story', 23 June, 2007, retrieved 30 June, 2007, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>.
- Checkland, SJ, 'Khalili at the BM: Art diary', *The Times*, London UK, 22 February, 1994, retrieved 23 July, 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>
- 'Offer of Islamic treasures splits art world', *The Times*, London UK, 2 October 2, 1992, retrieved 25 July, 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>
- Chrisafis, A, 'Chirac leaves controversial legacy with monument to African and Asian art', *Guardian*, 7 April 2006, retrieved 10 May 2014, www.guardian.co.uk/france/story/0,,178871,00.html

- 'Chirac eyes his legacy as indigenous Paris museum opens', *Guardian Unlimited*, 21 June 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/news/story/0,,1802174,00.html>
 - Europe: France's first immigration museum opens', *The Guardian*, London UK, 10 October 2007, p.22, retrieved 13 June 2014, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/france>
 - 'France's first immigration museum opens', *The Guardian*, 10 October 2007, retrieved 12 May 2014, <http://theguardianonline.com>
 - 'Nicholas Sarkozy says Islamic veils are not welcome in France', *The Guardian*, 23 June 2009, retrieved 4 May 2014, <<http://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/june/22/Islamic-veils-speech-france/>>
- Clennel, A, 'Riot order: avoid Middle Eastern Men,' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 4 February 2006, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.smh.com.au/news/national/riot-order-avoid-middle-eastern-men/2006/02/03/11.htm>>
- Clifford, J, 'Quai Branly in Process', *October Magazine*, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, October Magazine Limited, October 2007, vol. 120, pp. 3-23
- CNBC.com, 'Islamic Art: More than religious artifacts', 2012, retrieved 2 March 2013, <<http://www.cnbc.com>>.
- Cohen, N 'Keep corrupt regimes out of British culture', 18 March 2012, *The Guardian*, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/mar/18/nick-cohen-british-museum-haji-saudi>
- Coll, S, 'Notes on the Death of Osama bin Laden', *The New Yorker*, 2 May 2011, retrieved 1 January 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/notes-on-the-death-of-osama-bin-laden>.
- Coulter, A, 'This is War', *dailynews.yahoo*, 13 September 2001, retrieved 1 August 2014, <<http://www.dailynews.yahoo>>.
- Couturier, E 'The Arabian Cultures of David Khalili', *Parismatch*, 3 December 2009, retrieved 10 March 2011, <http://www.parismatch.com/Culture-Match/Actu/Les-Mille-et-une-cultures-de-David-Khalili>
- Craig, D J, 'Authority and collector Khalili to explore glories of Islamic art', *B.U. Bridge*, vol. 20, 7 February, 2003, retrieved 27 March, 2008, < <http://www.bu.edu/bridge/archive/2003/02-07/khalili/htm>>
- Darwent, C, 'Van Gogh's letters: The artist Speaks, Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam The Arts of Islam, Institut du Monde Arabe', *The Independent*, 8 November 2009, retrieved 9 November 2009, <[http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/reviews/van g...>](http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/reviews/van_gogh...).

- Davey, M, 'Muslim leaders' 'fear of security agencies' is preventing counselling against extremism', *The Guardian online*, retrieved 19 January 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/16/fearful-of-security-agencies-muslim-leaders-refuse-to-counsel-against-extremism>
- Delalande, N & Jablonka, I, 'Immigration, knowledge and power. An interview with Gérard Noiriel', *la vie des idées*, 27 May 2008, retrieved 10 May 2014, <<http://www.laviedesidees.fr>>
- De Guise, L, ' Bridging the Gulf: The Arts of Islam exhibition puts a well-known collection into a novel, new setting', in *Islamic Art Asian Art*, April 2008
- Edwards, C , Milner, C, 'Egypt demands return of Rosetta Stone', *The Telegraph UK*, retrieved 10th March 2014, <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/egypt/1436606/Egypt-demands-return-of-the-Rosetta-Stone>>
- Edwards, S, 'Rethinking Orientalism, Again', *The Getty Iris*, 2010, <http://blogs.getty.edu/iris/rethinking-orientalism-again/#sthash.eI0DTGJk.dpuf>
- Eger, JM 'If Art is a Universal language', *Huffpost Arts & Culture*, 11 Jan 2001. <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>
- El Heloueh, J 'Abu Dhabi Art 2011: 50 prestigious and innovative galleries participate in this year's edition', *Art Daily*, 18 November 2011, retrieved 22 November 2014, <http://artdaily.com/news/51846/Abu-Dhabi-Art-2011--50-prestigious-and-innovative-galleries-participate-in-this-year-s-edition#.VHLiRBaD6hc>
- Ellison, E, 'In Pursuit of the finer things: The art of collecting art Part 1: Private Collections', *The Global Edition of the New York Times*, 2 October, 2010
- Fattah, H, 'Celebrity Architects Reveal a daring Cultural Xanadu for the Arab World', *The New York Times*, retrieved 29 April 2014, <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/01/arts/design/01isla.html?>
- Ferguson, L , *Pushing Buttons: controversial topics in museums*, retrieved 31 March 2014, <hosting.collectionsaustralia.net/omj/vol8/pdfs/ferguson-paper.pdf>
- Forbes, *The Worlds Billionaires*, retrieved 2 January, 2007, <<http://www.forbes.com/profile/nasser-khalili/>>
- Flanagan, R. 'The Gambler', *The Monthly*, February 2013
- Gardner, J, "'She'll blow your brains out": Muslim girl greeting card parodies talking Arab doll with terrorist bomb jokes', *Mail Online*, 4 May 2013, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.mailonline.com>
- Gayford, M, 'Healing the World with Art', *Independent Newspapers UK*, 16 April, 2004, retrieved 7 June 2013, <http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>

- Gazette Drouot International, 'Women in orient seen by Christian Lacroix', *Gazette Drouot International*, no 1, 2011, p. 58, retrieved 14 December 2014
- Glancey, J, 'How does your gallery grow?' *Guardian Unlimited*, 26 June 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/features/story/o,,1806019,00.html>
- Gibbs, E, Penhallurick, C, & Robinson, W, *Canvas supplement*, Khalili Family trust website, retrieved 22 June 2012, <<http://www.khalili.org/foundrs-profle.html>>
- Gopnik, B, 'Palace and Mosque': Pretty Little Things', 16 July 2004, *The Washington Post*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A53650-2004Jul15.html>
- Green, W, 'Getting Rich through Islamic Art', *Bloomberg Markets*, May, 2010
- Green, W, 'Iranian Student With \$750 Turns Billionaire — Made by Islamic Art', *Muslim Observer*, 1 April, 2010, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://muslimmedianetwork.com/mmn/?p=5996>>
- Graham-Harrison, E (A), 'Drawing the prophet: Islam's hidden history of Muhammad images', 11 January 2015, *The Guardian*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://theguardain.com/world/2015/jan/10/drawing-prophet-islam-muhammad-images>
- Graham-Harrison, E (B), 'V & A in row over self censorship after Muhammad image is taken down', 25 January 2015, *The Guardian*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/jan/24/victoria-and-albert-museum-muhammad-image-website>.
- Guerrin, M, 'The Phantom Museum', *Le Monde*, 19 march 2010, http://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2010/03/19/le-musee-fantome_1321510_3224.html.
- Gutcher, L, 'Abu Dhabi in the spotlight for key tourism event', *The National*, 2013, retrieved 10 July 2103, www.thenational.ae
- Habboush, M, 'Call to naturalise some expats stirs anxiety in the UAE', *Reuters.co.uk*, 10 October 2013, retrieved 18 November 2014, <http://uk.reuters.com/assets/print?aid=UKBRE99904J20131010>.
- Halpern, J, 'Muslim-American terror rare, study says', *News and Observer*, 2 October 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.standard.net/stories>.
- Henley, S Gough, 'Indigenous art on the Seine', *The Age*, 19 November 2006, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://www.theage.com.au/news/france/indigenous-art-on-the-seine/2006/11/16/116326670>

- Hight, J, 'Behind Orientalism's Veil', *Saudi Aramco World*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2009, retrieved 20 February, 2013, pp. 16-23,
<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/200902/behind.orientalism.s.veil.htm>
- Hollingsworth, M 'The treasure seeker; who the astonishment of his peers, an unassuming Iranian art dealer has somehow built up a personal fortune of 2.5 billion pounds. Is David Khalili a genius or merely the agent of some of the world's biggest spenders?', *Evening Standard*, London UK, 27 March, 2009, retrieved 20 September 2010,
<<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>
- Howard, J, 'Those who don't share our values, won't integrate', *The Age*, September 11, 2006, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.theage.com>
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report, 2003 p. 147-8.
- Janmohamad, S, 'The rising innovation of Muslim women', *The National*, December 1, 2012, retrieved 20 January 2013, <http://www.thenational.ae>
- 'Warning: Muslims have a sense of humour and we'll be using it', March 17, 2012, *The National*, retrieved 21 March 2012,
<http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/culture-comment/warning-muslims-have-a-sense-of-humour-and-well-be-using-it>
- The Independent, UK, 16 April 2004, retrieved 12 July, 2008,
<<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>
- Jenkins, S, 'Hysteria calls the shots', *The Times*, London, 19 November 1997, p. 22, retrieved 4 May 2014, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/printviewfile?accountid=36155>
- Kaaki, L, 'Connecting cultures: Louvre Abu Dhabi', *Arab News*, 2012, retrieved 20 July 2013,
www.arabnews.com
- The Khalili Collection*, (n.d.), retrieved 20 August 2012, <<http://aroundtheworld.forumpro.fr/Islamic-art-f11/the-khalili-collection-t139.htm>>
- Katz, G, 'Terror in Europe fuels immigration tensions', *The Associated Press*, March 30, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.newsday.com>
- Kerbaj, R, 'Muslim leader blames women for Sex attacks,' *The Age*, 26 October 2006, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.theage.com.au>>
- Kimmelman, M, 'A Heart of Darkness in the City of Light', *The New York Times*, 2 July 2006, retrieved 4 June 2014, www.nytimes.com/2006/07/02/arts/design/02kimm.html
- Kohn, R, 'Arabesque: the art of Islam', *ABC Radio National*, 1 July, 2007
- Kouri, J, 'Obama to law enforcement: Stop linking Muslims to terrorism', *Examiner.com*, retrieved 19 February 2012, <http://www.examiner.com>.

- Kovacs, S, 'Letter to the Editor: A new museum in Paris', *International Herald Tribune*, 8 July 2006, retrieved 10 December 2014, <<http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/docview/318767748/7F6ADD86373B4A9CPQ/34?accountid=36155>>
- Krattenmaker, T, 'Use terror label when justified', *USA Today*, 6 November 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://usatoday.com>
- Kristof, N, 'Apocalypse (almost) Now', *New York Times*, 24 November 2004, retrieved 1 August 2014, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, The New York Times (1851-2010), p. A23.
- Lauder, S, 'The World Today- World's largest private collection of Islamic art in Sydney', *ABC online*, 7 June, 2007, retrieved 28 July, 2007, < <http://www.abc.net.au>.>
- Le Corps Découvert Les Derniers Jours*, 17 July 2012, retrieved 6 February 2015, <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.
- Leone, V, 'The fear of Muslims', *The Age Education Unit*, 4 December 2002, retrieved 14 May 14 2009, <http://education.theage.com.au/cmspage>
- Lohrey, A, 'High Priest: David Walsh and Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art', *Society*, December 2010-January 2011, retrieved 20 January 2013, <<http://www.themonthly.com.au>, 2010>
- Lycett, A, 'Islamic collection offered to Britain', *The Middle East*, no. 218, 1992, p. 50, retrieved 3 January, 2008, <<http://find.galegroup.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au>
- Mackenzie, J, 'Sarkozy says "thugocracy" behind French Riots', *Reuters*, 9 November 2007, retrieved 24 May 2014, <http://www.reuters.com>.
- Maher, H, 'Muslim Protests: Has Obama helped bring on the anti-U.S. 'Islamist Spring'?', *The Atlantic*, September 24 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://theatlantic.com>.
- Marceau, A, 'Australia a land of racists: Survey finds many anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic', February 23, 2011, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.news.com.au>.
- McDermott, Q, Richards, D, 'Dancing Shiva', *Four Corners ABC*, 24 March 2014
- McDonald, J, 'Of this world and the other-visual arts', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 14 July, 2007, retrieved 22 July, 2007, <<http://www.infoweb@newsbank.com>>
- McLeod, P, 'The Arts of Islam: special advertising report', *Weekend Australian*, 23 June, 2007
- McLeod, P, 'Magical Forest to share with the world', *Weekend Australian*, 7 June, 2007
- McLeod, P, 'Telling Islam's story', *The Canberra Times*, June 27, 2007, retrieved 10 June 2008, <http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>
- Melikian, S, 'Qatar's museum of Islamic Art: despite flaws, a house of masterpieces', *The New York Times*, 2008, retrieved 10 December 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/12/06/arts>

- Menkes, S, 'Women in the Orient', *The New York Times*, 2 December 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/programmation/exhibitions/last-exhibitions/women-in-orient.html>>
- Meotti, G 'Expose: European culture grovels before Islam', *Israel National News*, 2 February 2015, retrieved 4 February 2015, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/Articles/Article.aspx/16405#.VNFTghaD6hc>.
- Mohammed, E, 'Collector says education key to understanding Islamic art', *Gulf News*, section 8, 24 January 2008, assessed 20 July 2013, <www.gulfnews.com>.
- Moore, S, 'A leap of faith', *Financial Times*, 12 May 2012, retrieved 7 June 2013, <<http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/2/f526cb06-98f5-11e1-9d3-00144feabdc0.html>>
- Morocco world News, '#JeSuisKouachi hashtag creates controversy on Twitter', 10 January 2015, *moroccoworldnews.com*, retrieved 12 January 2015, <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/01/149246/JeSuisKouachi-hashtag-creates-controversy-on-twitter>
- Moses, A, 'Cronulla game falls between legal cracks', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 October 2006, retrieved 10 June 2007 <www.smh.com.au/news/web/cronulla-game.../1160850910458.htm>
- Murphy, B, 'Abu Dhabi Louvre Museum offers peek at growing collection ahead of 2015 opening', *The Associated Press*, 2013, retrieved 20 January 2014, www.theprovince.com
- Nambair, S & Brown, M, 'Limited supply, soaring prices for Islamic art Investing Marketplace by Bloomberg', *International Herald Tribune*, 4 July 2007, retrieved 31 January 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>.
- The New Zealand Herald, 'Art-lover opens eyes to Islam', 7 July 2007, retrieved 22 July 2007, <<http://proquest.umi.com>>
- Nicholson, A M, 'National Gallery of Australia defends practices despite admitting it may have been conned into buying stolen Indian art', *ABC News Online*, retrieved 10 March 2014, <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2014-03-05/national-gallery-defends-practices-over-suspected-stolen-art/5300966>)
- Norman, G, 'Art Market: mysterious gifts from the East', *Independent.co.uk*, 13 December, 1992, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <http://Independent.co.uk>
- Obiedallah, D, 'There's No Such Thing as 'Radical Islam.' There Are Only Terrorists Who Are Muslim', 6 February 2015, *The Daily Beast*, retrieved 7 February 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/02/06/there-s-no-such-thing-as-radical-islam-there-are-only-terrorists-who-are-muslim.html>

- Oldoyd, R, 'Secret Sultan' makes U3bn from Islamic Art; EXCLUSIVE: The Top 300 British Millionaires and How They Made -- or Lost -- a Fortune' *Mail on Sunday*, 2 February, 2003, p.7, retrieved 22 July, 2008, <<http://www.highbeam.com/doc/1G1-98277231.html>>
- Ouroussoff, N, 'Building Museums, and a fresh Arab Identity', *New York Times*, 26 November 2010, retrieved 21 March 2011, www.nytimes.com/2010/11/27/arts/design/27museums.htm.
- Pipes, D, 'Islam bulldozes the past', *Washington Times*, 20 March 2015, <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/mar/20/daniel-pipes-islam-bulldozes-past/>.; BBC News, 'Tunis Bardo Museum attack: Thousands join protest', 29 March 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-32105232>
- Qureshi, H, 'Muslima shows the diverse experience of women in Islam', *The National*, May 30, 2013. [http://www.the national.ae](http://www.thenational.ae)
- Radnofsky, L, 'Reviews roundup: Musee du Quai Branly', 26 June 2006, *Guardian Unlimited*, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://arts.guardian.co.uk/reviews/story/0,,1806442,00.html>
- Randall, N 'David Khalili', *Hali: Frontlines Profile*, 18 December 2009, Issue 162
- Richard, P, 'In art museums, portraits illuminate a religious taboo', *The Washington Post*, retrieved 9 August 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2006/02/13/AR2006021302407_pf.html
- Riding, A, 'The industry of art goes global', *New York Times*, 28 March 2007, assessed 4 May 2014, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/433535986?accountid=36155>
- Rocker, S, 'Artistic bridge- building', *Jewish Chronical online*, 2007, retrieved 2 January, 2008, <<http://www.thejc.com>>
- Roddy, M, 'New British Museum galleries to help counter militants' image of Islam', 30 March 2015, *The Daily Star*, retrieved 30 March 2015, <https://dailystar.com.lb/Arts-and-Ent/Culture/2015/Mar-30/292561-new-british-museum-galleries-to-help-counter-militants-image-of-islam.ashx>
- Romnicanu, J, 'The new Branly Museum of Paris', *The Independent*, 9 June 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://independent-bangladesh.com/news/jun/09/09062006fr.htm>
- Rothstein, E, 'French Museums Atone for a Colonial History', *The New York Times*, 26 November 2011, retrieved 15 June 2014, <http://search.proquest.com.ezproxy.uws.edu.au/docview/906045422?accountid=36155>
- Rubython, T, *Euro Business*, London, (n.d.), retrieved 13 January, 2008, <<http://infoweb.newsbank.com.wwwproxy0.nun.unsw.edu.au>>
- Scheffer, P, 'The Multicultural Drama', *NRC Handelsblad*, 29 January 2000, retrieved 10 July 2014, <http://pemstatistieken.nl/pem/nrch/s?oudeite.dossiers.Multicultureel.scheffer>

- Said, E, 'Islam Through Western Eyes', *The Nation*, April 26, 1980, retrieved 10 June 2013, National Digital Archive, < <http://www.thenation.com>>.
- Salcedo, A, 'Khalili Collection: the unsung masterpieces', *lintermede*, 16 February 2010, retrieved 3 October 2011, <http://www.lintermede.com/exposition-arts-de-i-islam-collection-khalili-ima.php>
- Savodnik, P, 'Yes, there are comedians in Qatar', 21 May 2012, *The New York Times*, retrieved 5 July 2012, http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/magazine/yes-there-are-comedians-in-qatar.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0
- Seaman, A, 'UAE's Shanghai Expo pavilion coming to Saadiyat Island', *The National*, retrieved 9 Jan 9 2011, <http://www.thenational.ac/news/uae>
- Siegel, M, *MONA, a Museum at the End of the World*, 2012, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.businessweek.com>.
- Shah, T, 'The Khalili Collection of Islamic art', *Saudi Aramco World*, vol. 45, no. 6, 1994, pp. 38-47, retrieved 11 November, 2012, <<http://www.saudiaramcoworld.com/issue/199406/the.khalili.collection.of.islamic.art.htm>>
- Smee, S, *The Australian*, AAP Newscentre, 7 July 2007
- Socolovsky, J, 'Touchiness About Religious Figures' Portrayal Not Unique to Islam', January 22, 2015, *Voice Of America*, retrieved 24 January 2015, <http://www.voanews.com/articleprintview/2609712.html>
- Steinberg, J, 'Islamic State was born in 1979 with covert operations in Afghanistan', 10 January 2015, *pravda.ru*, retrieved 31 January 2015, http://english.pravda.ru/history/30-01-2015/129656-islamic_state_history-0/#.
- Storm, S, & Naastepad, R, 'The Dutch Distress', *New Left Review*, issue 20, March-April 2003 p. 147-149
- Sunday Telegraph, 2 May 2004, retrieved 22 July 2008, <<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>
- Sutton, R 'There's a perception that anti-Muslim, anti-immigration sentiment is growing in Australia. But is it?', *SBS*, 1 January 2013, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au>
- Swibel, M, 'God is Great', *Iranian.com*, 2 March 2005, retrieved 25 July 2008, <<http://www.iranian.com/Photoday/2005/March/dk.html>>.
- Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Affront to our Christian sensibilities' after the terror of 9/11, 26 November 2002, retrieved 10 July 2009, <http://smh.com/news>
- Taylor, K, 'Abu Dhabi Lures Western Museums,' *The New York Sun*, 1 February 2007, retrieved 28 April 2014, <http://www.nysun.com/arts/abu-dhabi-lures-western-museums/47795/>

- Thomas, J, 'New tourism authority to replace two agencies for Abu Dhabi', *the.national.ae*, 10 February 2012, retrieved 18 November 2014,
<http://www.thenational.ae/business/travel/new-tourism-authority-to-replace-two-agencies-abu-dhabi>
- The Times*, 23 October 1992, retrieved 10 July 2008,
<<http://proquest.umi.com.eproxy.uws.edu.au>>???
- Tresilian, D, 'Visions of Islam, *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 16 December 2009, retrieved 17 December 2009,
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2009/976/cul.htm>
- 'Museum of the oppressed', *Al-Ahram Weekly*, June 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007,
<http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/print/2006/801/cu2.htm>
- Verkaik, R, 'Channel 4 history of Islam sparks flood of complaints and presenter Tom Holland subjected to torrent of abusive tweets', *Mail Online*, September 2, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>.
- VOA News, 'UAE arrests Al-Qaida-Linked Terrorist Cell', *Voice of America*, 2013, retrieved 20 January 2013, <http://voanews.com>
- von Roques, AK, 'An Investigation of the situation of Contemporary Arab Art Today', *Art Market*, 2009, retrieved 2 May 2014,
<http://www.contemporarypractices.net/essays/volume5/artmarketing/An%20Investigation%20of%20the%20Situation%20of%20Contemporary%20Arab%20Art%20Today.pdf>
- Wagner, RL, 'Abu Dhabi's outsized cultural ambitions', *The Jerusalem Post*, 6 February 2012, retrieved 10 July, 2013,
<<http://www.jpost.com/LandedPages/PrintArticle.aspx?id=256670>>
- Wam, 'UAE pavilion rated *Top Ten* at Expo 2010', 28 July 2010, *Khaleej Times*, retrieved 20 November 2014,
http://www.khaleejtimes.com/DisplayArticle08.asp?xfile=data/theuae/2010/July/theuae_July681.xml§ion=theuae
- Warburton, N, 'Can evolution explain aesthetics?' *Prospect*, 26 April 2009, retrieved 15 December 2013, <http://denisdutton.com/warburton_review.htm>
- Warraq, I, 'Linda Nochlin and the Imaginary Orient', *New English Review*, June, 2010,
http://newenglishreview.org/custpage.cfm/frm/65193/sec_id/65193
- Weiner, E, 'Why Cartoons of the Prophet Insult Muslims', *npr*, retrieved 9 August 2014,
<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=5196323>
- Weisblott, M, 'Center stage', *Lifestyle Magazine*, 2009

- Wiederhofs, D 'Christian Lacroix tribute to Muslim women at Branly Museum', *Bonjour Paris*, 2011, <http://www.bonjourparis.com/story/christian-lacroix-tribute-muslim-women-branly-muse/>
- Zaretsky, R, 'What does it mean to be French?', *Le Monde diplomatique*, English Edition, December 2010, retrieved 10 June 2014, <mondediplo.com>
- Zwartz, B, 'Terror fear as extremists seek local Somali recruit', *The Age*, 13 April 13 2007, retrieved 14 May 2009, <<http://www.theage.com.au>>

World Wide Web Links

Abu Dhabi website, <http://visitabudhabi.ae/en/default.aspx>.

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority, *Cultural Mandate*, retrieved 18 November 2014,

<http://tcaabudhabi.ae/en/culture/Pages/cultural-mandate.aspx>

Abu Dhabi, ICOMOS Paris 2011 Conference, 2014, <http://openarchive.icomos.org/1111/1/I-1->

[Article7_Chabbi_Mahdy.pdf](#)

albawaba.com, *'The Muslims are Coming: Muslim comedy takes on Islamophobia'*, 22 September 2013, *MV Media*, retrieved 25 January 2015,

<http://muslimvillage.com/2013/09/22/44102/the-muslims-are-coming-muslim-comedy-takes-on-islamophobia/>>

Al Arabiya News, *'After Charlie Hebdo, Arab World Institute fights terror with culture'*, 30 January

2015, retrieved 31 January 2015, *alarabiya.net*, < [http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-](http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2015/01/30/After-Charlie-Hebdo-Arab-World-Institute-fights-terror-with-culture.html)

<http://english.alarabiya.net/en/life-style/art-and-culture/2015/01/30/After-Charlie-Hebdo-Arab-World-Institute-fights-terror-with-culture.html>>

Ali, DD, *islamonline*, 21 October 2001, retrieved 8 January 2008, <IslamOnline.net>

Affinity Intercultural Foundation website, retrieved 15 August 2009, <affinity.org.au/>

American Alliance of Museums, Strategic plan 2010-2015, *American Alliance of Museums*, retrieved

10 December 2012, <www.aam-us.org/events/annual-meeting>.

American Museum of Natural History, Risk and Disaster Planning, retrieved 10 July 2013,

<<http://collections.paleo.amnh.org/9/risk-management-and-disaster-planning>>.

Anderson, G, *Tasmania's Museum of Old and New Art finally opens*, 2011, retrieved 20 January 2013,

<<http://au.artshub.com.au>>

Art Gallery of new South wales, retrieved 10 March 2011, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au>>

Barriendos, J, *The Interplay of Art and Globalization- Consequences for Museum*, 2006, retrieved 20

September 2010, <<http://www.globalartmuseum.de/site/participation/56>>

AGNSW Events, AGNSW website, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>>

- Exhibition and Events brochure, AGNSW, June-November 2007, retrieved 2 June 2009,

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>

- *Annual Report 2007-08*, retrieved 2 June 2009, <<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>> (retrieved 24 March 2014,

<http://www.crc.nsw.gov.au/legislation_and.../principles_of_multiculturalism>

- Exhibition and Events brochure, AGNSW, June-November 2007, retrieved 2 June 2009,

<http://www.artgallery.nsw.gov>

- *Video story wall*, retrieved 5 may 2014,
<http://projects.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/afghanistan/video/>
- 'Art Gallery of NSW, 2007 Arts of Islam exhibition-key data', marketing department, 2007.
The Council for Australian-Arab Relations, *Annual Report 2006-7*, retrieved 15 August 2009,
<http://www.dfat.gov.au/caar/>
- Baker, C, 'Archeologist Craig Baker on Contemporary Archeology', *Afghanistan: Hidden Treasures*,
Video story wall, retrieved 5 may 2014,
<http://projects.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/afghanistan/video/>
- BBC News, *Q and A: Depicting the Prophet Muhammad*, retrieved 9 August 2014,
http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/4674864.stm
- Bell, M, Cuno, J, 'Who's Rights? Repatriation of Cultural Property: Two experts debate whether art
and artifacts should be repatriated', *IIP Digital/US Department of State Publications*, 2
November 2010, retrieved 10 March 2014,
<http://iipdigital.usembassy.gov/st/english/publication/2010/10/20101022140412aidan0.7519953.html#By_James_Cuno>
- Brown, D, 'Gold-leafed Korans, gems, carpets and calligraphy in historic Paris shows', *Rfi English*,
Culture in France, 18 October 2009, retrieved 2 April 2011,
<http://www.english.rfi.fr/culture/20091017-gold-leafed-korans-gems-carpets-and-calligraphy-historic-paris-show>.
- Burke, D, 'Terrorist attacks and deaths hit record high, report shows', 28 October 2013, *CN.com*,
retrieved 21 January 2015, <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/28/terrorist-attacks-and-deaths-hit-record-high-report-shows/>.
- Bush, G, 'Remarks by President Upon Arrival', September 16, 2001, retrieved 10 June 2013,
<<http://www.whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2001/09>>.
- Chabbi,A and Mahdy,H M, 'Virtuous circle or vicious cycle? Modern heritage and development in
Abu Dhabi, ICOMOS Paris 2011 Conference, 2014, http://openarchive.icomos.org/1111/1/1-1-Article7_Chabbi_Mahdy.pdf;
- Chengu, G, 'Zimbabwe: Right Wing Domestic Terrorists Far More Deadly Than Islamic Extremists", 16
January 2015, *allafrica.com*, retrieved 17 January 2015,
<allafrica.com/stories/201501160403.html>.
- Coller, I 'Liberty, equality, fraternity: redefining 'French' values in the wake of Charlie Hebdo', 13
January 2015, *The Conversation*, retrieved 6 February 2015,
<http://theconversation.com/liberty-equality-fraternity-redefining-french-values-in-the-wake-of-charlie-hebdo-36066>

- CBC news, 'Indepth: Islam France's hijab ban', *CBC Online*, 7 September 2004, retrieved 25 August 2010, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/background/islam/hijab.html>
- CCTV, 'Christian Lacroix exhibition graces Paris', *CCTV.com.English*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://english.cntv.cn/program/cultureexpress/20110210/105368.shtml>
- CSC Arts, 'Collector shares beauty of Islamic art with the world', 25 June, 2007, retrieved 30 June, 2007, <<http://cbc.ca/news/arts/artdesign/story/2007/0/25/islamicart.html>>
- Les Derniers Jours, *Le Corps Découvert*, 17 July 2012, retrieved 6 February 2015, <https://derniersjours.wordpress.com/2012/07/17/le-corps-decouvert/>.
- Doherty, L, 'The art of Islam', *NSW Public schools website*, 2007, retrieved 15 August 2009, <<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au>>
- Ebers, C, 'Prof. Nasser D Khalili: Passion for Perfection, Amsterdam', Amsterdam exhibition video, *Khalili Trust Collection*, 2011, retrieved 10 August 2012, www.khalili.org
- EGE, 'Women in orient, seen by Christian Lacroix', *ege we create more than carpets*, retrieved 14 December 2014, [http://www.egecarpets.com/inspiration/projects/project-details-page/women-in-the-orient--christian-lacroix-\(fr\).aspx](http://www.egecarpets.com/inspiration/projects/project-details-page/women-in-the-orient--christian-lacroix-(fr).aspx)
- Face book pages, Andrea Zsuzsa Ignacz Maashaallah, Graca Helder, Alyaa Almansoori, UAE Expo Facebook site, retrieved September 25, 2010, <https://www.facebook.com/pages/EXPO-2010-UAE-PAVILION/152490360364>
- Posted online by *cronullariots*; posted by *Ramio 1983*; posted by *ferrous 13*; posted by *GeeThug*; posted by *slick 3166*; all retrieved online 14 March 2010
- FOCUS, Focus Migration, *France*, retrieved 20 May 2014, <http://focus-migration.hwwi.de/France.1231.0.html?&L=1>
- Fahmi, A, 'Fear of a funny Muslim', 30 November 2011, *MuslimVillage.com*, retrieved 2 December 2011, <http://muslimvillage.com/2011/11/30/16710/fear-of-a-funny-muslim/>.
- Faussart, G, *OCU onculture.eu*, 14 December 2009, retrieved 16 December 2009, r <http://OCUonculture.eu>
- Forbes.com, Nasser Khalili, *The World's Richest People*, retrieved 2 December 2006, <www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/CZAK.html>
- Gaines, T 'Fighting fanatics with art: Kuwaiti princess shares Islamic treasures with Houston — and the world', 8 February 2015, *Culture Map Houston*, retrieved 9 February 2015, <http://houston.culturemap.com/news/arts/02-08-15-fighting-fanatics-with-art-kuwaiti-princess-shares-islamic-treasures-with-houston-and-the-world/>
- Gallo, W, 'Paris attack condemned across Muslim world', 10 January 2015 *VOA News*, retrieved 11 January 2015, <http://musimvilage.com/2015/01/10/61539/paris-attack-condemn>

- Gayford, M, 'Healing the world with art', *The Independent: Arts and Books Review*, 16 April 2004, retrieved 10 July 2013, www.independent.co.uk.
- Global Security, United Arab Emirates, 'Religion', *Global Security.org*, 19 November 2014, retrieved 1 December 2014, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/gulf/uae-religion.htm>
- Gittins, R, 'The real cost of the war on terror', September 15, 2011, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://muslimvillage.com>
- Hobbs, L, 'The Islamic Codex', *The Ultimate History Project*, retrieved 2 September 2014, <http://www.ultimatehistoryproject.com/the-islamic-codex.html>)
- Hosseini-Zadeh, I "'Clash of Civilizations". Why the Delay in Islamic Reformation?', 8 February 2015, *Centre for Research on Globalization*, retrieved 9 February 2015, <http://www.globalresearch.ca/clash-of-civilizations-why-the-delay-in-islamic-reformation/5430129>
- IMA website, retrieved 1 June 2014, www.imarabe.org/.
- Immigration museum, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr/musee/autour-des-expositions/1931-les-etrangers-au-temps-de-l-exposition-coloniale>
- '1931, foreigners during the Colonial Exhibition', retrieved 16 December 2014, <http://www.parisbestlodge.com/colonies.html>.
 - Official Cité nationale de l'histoire de l'immigration website, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://www.histoire-immigration.fr>.
- Islamic City 'Islam and Islamic History in Arabia and The Middle East', *Islamcity.com*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <https://www.islamcity.com/mosque/ihame/Sec10.htm>
- Iman Reza 'Arabic calligraphy', *Iman Reza (A.S.) Network*, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.imamreza.net/eng/imamreza.php?print=4202>
- Karam, M, 'Abu Dhabi's Arts of Islam exhibition ends successful showing', *Business Intelligence Middle East*, 4 March 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, <http://www.bi-me.com/main.php?id=19826&t=1>).
- Kean, B, 'The deceit at the heart of the terrorism hysteria', 9 September 2014, *Crikey.com*, retrieved 14 January 2015, http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/09/09/the-deceit-at-the-heart-of-the-terrorism-hysteria/?wmp_switcher=mobile&wmp_tp=0
- Kern, S, 'The Islamization of France in 2013', *Gatestone Institute*, 6 January 2014, retrieved 16 May 2014, <http://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/4120/islamization-france>)
- Khalili Trust Collection website, retrieved 20 September, 2010, <<http://www.khalili.org/founds-profile.html>>
- Khalili Foundation website, retrieved 10 May 2014, <http://khalili.org/events>

- The Khalili Collection, (n.d.), retrieved 20 August 2012, <<http://aroundtheworld.forumpro.fr/Islamic-art-f11/the-khalili-collection-t139.htm>>.
- Khalili, ND, 'Passion for Perfection: Islamic art from the Khalili Collections', *De Nieuwe Kerk Amsterdam*, retrieved 10 November 2012, http://www.nieuwekerk.nl/en/#/en/pers/passie_voor_perfectie/persbericht.htm
- 'Abu Dhabi hosts Khalili Islamic art treasures', *Middle East Online*, 22 January 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, retrieved <http://middle-east-online.com/english/?id=23991>
- Kluijver, R, *Introduction to the Gulf Art World*, 2012, Gulf Art Guide website, retrieved 4 May 2014, p. 60, <http://gulfguide.com/g/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Contemporary-Art-in-the-Gulf-for-print.pdf>.
- Knowledge @Wharton, 'Contemporary art has become like buying shares', 12 June, 2012, retrieved 22 June, 2012, <http://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/Arabic/printer_friendly.cfm?articleid=2835>
- MacKenzie, D, 'Dean Obeidallah: Most Terror Attacks Not Done by Muslims', 14 January 2015, *newsmax.com*, retrieved 16 January 2015, <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/terrorism-islamists-muslims-jews/2015/01/14/id/618509/>
- Middle East Online*, 22 January 2008, retrieved 4 July 2013, <http://www.middle-east-online.com/english/>
- Madsen-Brooks, L, 'Mega-Museums in Abu Dhabi-cultural Imperialism in reverse?', *museum blogging*, 2009, retrieved 20 July 2013, <<http://museumblogging.com>>
- Melville, C, 'Jami' al-Tawarikh', *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2008, <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/jame-al-tawarik>.
- Musée Quai Branly website, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/index.php?id=76&L=1>
- retrieved 15 December 2014, <<http://www.quaibrantly.fr/en/programmation/exhibitions/last-exhibitions/women-in-orient.html>>
- Museums with No Frontiers website, retrieved 20 January 2013, http://www.museumwnf.org/atrium_about.php
- Nasab, H, 'A Collector's Passion for Perfection – De Nieuwe Kerk's Marlies Kleiterp on the Khalili Collection', *BlouinARTINFO*, retrieved 20 December 2010, <http://blogs.artinfo.com/museumviews/2010/12/20/a-collector-s-passion-for-perfection-de-nieuwe-kerk-s-marlies-kleiterp-on-the-khalili-collection/>

- Nelson-Atkins Museum, *Echoes: Islamic art and contemporary artists*, April 2014, retrieved 30 August 2014, < <http://www.nelson-atkins.org/art/exhibitions/echoes.cfm>>.
- [NYU Abu Dhabi University & College in UAE, New York University](http://nyuad.nyu.edu), retrieved 10 July 2013, <nyuad.nyu.edu>
- Oldmeadow, H, 'The Debate about Orientalism', *Journeys East: 20th Century Western Encounters with Eastern Religious Traditions*, World Wisdom Inc, 2004, retrieved 2 February 2014, www.worldwisdom.com/public/library/default.aspx)
- Pappers, D, 'Farid Belkahia on the Musée Quai Branly in Paris', *The Power of Culture; Current Affairs*, October 2006, retrieved 26 January 2007, <http://powerofculture.nl/uk/current/2006/october/belkahia.html>
- Paris, C 'When Bethlehem was the "Paris" of fashion', *colleensparis.com*, 2011, retrieved 14 December 2014, <http://www.colleensparis.com/2011/02/when-bethlehem-was-the-paris-of-fashion/>
- Pew Research centre, 'Continuing Divide in Views of Islam and violence' 2010; 'Religion and Public Life program,' Executive Summary, 2013, retrieved 3 December 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org>
- Pitt, B, 'The French Left and Islam: Liberty, Equality and Islamophobia', *Loonwatch.com*, 15 December 2012, retrieved 10 January 2015, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2012/12/the-french-left-and-islam-liberty-equality-and-islamophobia/>.
- Poliscanova, J, 'What went wrong with multiculturalism in france?' *Global politics*, retrieved 2 May 2014, <http://www.global-politics.co.uk%203/multiculturalism%20France.html>)
- Powerhouse museum website, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.powerhousemuseum.com/previous/beirut.php>.
- Randall, N, 'David Khalili', *Hali: Frontlines Profile*, 18 December 2009, Issue 162
- Religion Facts, *Depictions of Muhammad in Islamic Art*, retrieved 9 August 2014, <http://www.religiousfacts.com/islam/things/depictions-of-muhammad-in-islamic-art.htm>
- Richardson, J, 'go mona... , 2013, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.yourdemocracy.net.au>
- Ruiz, C, A 'subversive Disneyland' at the end of the world, [web blog], 5 July 2010, retrieved 20 January 2013, <www.theartnewspaper.com>
- Saadiyat cultural district Abu Dhabi publication of Saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae, 2012
- Saadiyat Cultural District Abu Dhabi, Exhibition booklet, saadiyatculturaldistrict.ae
- Sahlins, P, 'Civil Unrest in French Suburbs, November 2005', *SSRC*, 24 October 2006, retrieved 25 May 2014, <http://riotsfrance.ssrc.org/>

- Salter, B, 'Over 30,000 visit 'Arts of Islam' exhibition in six weeks 'Treasures of Nasser D. Khalili collection', *ArabianBusiness.com*, 12 march 2008, retrieved 10 July 2013, http://www.arabianbusiness.com/press_releases/detail/14149
- Sauvage, A, 'Musée Quai Branly', Université de Paris 4 Sorbonne, retrieved 2 August 2007, <http://www.quaibrantly.fr/index.php?id=1&L=1>
- SBS online, 'Tony Abbott announces \$64 million to combat home-grown terrorism', 26 August 2014, retrieved 2 January 2015, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/26/tony-abbott-announces-64-million-combat-home-grown-terrorism>
- Shaheen, J, 'How the Media created the Muslim Monster Myth', *Middle East Online*, 16 June 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.middle-east-online.com>.
- Shevarnadze, S, 'Western govts bred terrorists - and blamed it on Muslims - head of Anti-Islamophobic collective', 26 January 2015, *RT.com*, retrieved 30 January 2015, <http://rt.com/shows/sophieco/226111-terrorist-attacks-france-muslims/>
- Shovelton, E, 'Discover Islamic Art-virtual Museum', *Museum with No Frontiers*, retrieved 14 December 2014, http://www.discoverislamicart.org/database_item.php?id=object;ISL;uk;Mus01;24;en
- Sskeldon, 'The World History of Rashid al-Din, 1314. A Masterpiece of Islamic Painting', *University of Edinburgh CRC Exhibitions*, 14 July 2014, retrieved 25 January 2015, <libraryblogs.is.ed.ac.uk/blog/2014/07/14/the-world-history-of-rashid-al-din-1314-a-masterpiece-of-islamic-painting/>.
- [St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art - Glasgow Life](#), website information, assessed 10th July 2013, retrieved <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/museums/our.../st-mungo.../home.aspx>.
- ['AD317: Is religion a museum piece?'](#), 1994, retrieved 10 July 2013, <https://moodle.fp.tul.cz/mod/page/view.php?id=11354>
- Tarquini, A, 'Exhibits: Islamic art treasures on display', *ANSAmEd*, 6 October 2009, retrieved 19 October 2009, <https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/WorldHistory-L/.../6580?var=1>
- TDIC press release, 'Over 61,000 visit Abu Dhabi's 'Art of Islam' Exhibition UAE capital's international arts debut earns widespread acclaim', *TDIC*, 1 May 2008, retrieved 4 July 2013, <http://www.tdic.ae>
- 'UAE's Iconic World Pavilion to Relocate to Saadiyat Island', 2011, retrieved 10 January 2012, <http://tdic.ae>
- The Times, retrieved 20 May, 2011, <<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/richlist/person/0,,46952,00.html> >.

Unescopres, 16 October 2012, retrieved 20 October 2012,

http://www.unesco.org/new/en/media-services/single-view/news/director_general_design

United Arab Emirates, 'The World Almanac of Islamism, 2011, retrieved 20 July 2013,

<http://almanac.afpc.org/united-arab-emirates>

University of Maryland, Global terrorism database, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, retrieved 14 January 2015, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

University of St Andrews, Certificate in terrorism Studies training course', October 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.terrorismstudies.com>

The Wallace Collection, 'Treasure of the Month - September 2004

- A mid-14th-century Islamic glass mosque lamp from Cairo (XXVB94)', *Wallace Collection website*, retrieved 14 December 2014,

<http://www.wallacecollection.org/whatson/treasure/38>.

The World Almanac of Islamism, 2011, 'United Arab Emirates,' retrieved 20 July 2013,

<http://almanac.afpc.org/united-arab-emirates>.

Xinhua News Agency, *S Korea to retrieve stolen cultural property from Japan: media*, 2010, retrieved 10 March 2014, [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-11/08/c_13596596.htm)

[11/08/c_13596596.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english2010/culture/2010-11/08/c_13596596.htm)

List of interviewees/transcripts

Shoena White, AGNSW Sydney Australia, 24 February 2011

Jackie Menzies, AGNSW Sydney Australia, 24 February 2011

Mehmet Ozalp, Auburn Sydney Australia, 1 April 2011

Robert Herbert, AGNSW Sydney Australia, 5 April 2011

Levent Gunadin, Sydney Australia, 20 April 2011

Berrin Gunaydin, Carlingford Sydney Australia, 9 May 2011

Yasemin Gunaydin, Carlingford Sydney Australia, 9 May 2011

Neville Dabboussy, Mascot Sydney Australia, 20 May 2011

Nahla Nassar, London United Kingdom, 1 July 2011

Museum Fieldworker, Glasgow Scotland, 9 June 2011

Tim Stanley, Khalili Foundation London United Kingdom, 21 June 2011

Museum Curator in the UK, London United Kingdom, 21 June 2011

K.W. Specialist in the field of global ethnic conflicts, AGNSW Sydney Australia, 25 June 2011

Eric Delpont, 27 June 2011, & 7 October 2013
Makiz Ansari, Auburn Sydney Australia, 9 August 2011
Sadiq Ansari, Auburn Sydney Australia, 19 August 2011
Mehmet Saral, Auburn Sydney Australia, 11 October 2011
Rahil Ansari, Auburn Sydney Australia, 11 October 2011
Oeima Sukkarieh, Auburn Sydney Australia, 28 October 2011
Khaled Sukkarieh, Auburn Sydney Australia, 28 October 2011
Joachim Meyer, David Collection Copenhagen Denmark, 14 May 2012, (A) 24 May 2012 (B)
Marlies Kleterp, De Nieuwe Kerk Gallery Amsterdam the Netherlands, 30 May 2012
Michelle Walton, Museum of Islamic Art Doha Qatar, 20 June 2012
H.A. Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Representative, Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates, 24 June 2012
K.S. Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Representative, Abu Dhabi United Arab Emirates, 24 June 2012
Elizabeth Courtenay, Hornsby Sydney Australia, 2 October 2012
Robert Phipps, Kensington Sydney Australia, 14 October 2012
Penny McKeon, Summerhill Sydney Australia, 17 December 2012
Stefan Weber, Pergamon Museum Berlin Germany, 25 June 2013
Carol Khewhok, Doris Duke Museum of Islamic Art Honolulu United States of America, 13 September 2013
Linda Komaroff, Los Angeles County Art Museum, Los Angeles United States of America, 23 September 2013
Navina Haidar, The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, United States of America, 26 September 2013
Sheila Canby, The Metropolitan Museum of Art New York, United States of America, 26 September 2013.
Annie-Christine Matthews, Louvre Museum, Paris France, 7 October 2013
Daniel Soulie, Louvre Museum, Paris France, 7 October 2013
Nur Shembi, Islamic Museum of Australia, Melbourne Australia, 4 July 2014

Conversations

Donald Scarrow, Expo 2010 Shanghai China, 23 September 2010

Appendices

Appendix 1

Details of methodology

This project was primarily qualitative, with the intention to contextualise the experiences and realities of museum /organisational representatives and museum audiences within debates concerning the capacity for museums to promote cross-cultural communication using the following research methods:

1. Interviews: in-depth, semi-structured interviews were held with 6 key stakeholders of the exhibition (representatives of AGNSW, Nasser D.Khalili, Affinity Intercultural Foundation);
2. Focus groups: open-ended, semi structured questions were asked of 4 focus groups comprising audiences that attended the Sydney AoIE, predominantly from the Islamic and Muslim communities, who visited the exhibition and were involved in any related activities;
3. Audio/visual recordings of interview/focus groups and photographic evidence were employed to facilitate data information collection (both verbal and non-verbal);
4. Textual analysis of exhibition/related events documentation, museum programs and media articles were examined in relation to wider public and academic discourses on cross-cultural communication.

Individual interviews/Focus Group details of audiences from the Sydney venue of the AoIE

In terms of museum professionals, the identification of potential participants were sourced through the catalogues of exhibitions and other public relations material or identified via museum websites that list the expertise of curatorial staff. Individual interviews with institution/organisation representatives were sent a letter of introduction/email and information sheet introducing the study and explaining that interest in their practices and policies and perceptions of their audiences through primary research conducted may be beneficial to future planning, procedures and practices (included in this appendix). Individual participants were identifiable through their professional association with the particular exhibition/ institution or organisation, and if they wished to remain non-identified, had their responses coded according to their role in the exhibition. Participants

were offered a copy of the transcript for their own reference and to check the accuracy of transcription, which had the additional benefit of inviting further reflection and involvement in the research.

While the focus group cohort had varying engagements with museums and the AoIE, their interest in attending the specific exhibition and related events was the reason for their selection. The diversity of backgrounds of participants and their involvement in Islamic and Muslim community activities allowed the project to explore a far broader understanding of the specific museum display. Potential focus group members were contacted in writing (e-mail) and invited to participate in the research. A variety of recruitment methods were employed- e.g. snowball, adverts in local paper, as well as through community groups. Through information sheets participants were made aware that by participating in the project, museum/related activities they would have the opportunity to become actively engaged in expressing their perceptions and opinions of the programs of museums that may influence how museums display culturally sensitive artifacts and how they negotiate difference and acknowledge minority groups (included in appendix).

When interviewing members of the Islamic or Muslim communities or their representatives the researcher was aware of issues such as dress/ attire and questioning techniques that could potentially be considered culturally offensive. Information regarding these cultural sensitivities was discussed with personnel associated with the organisations the members and representatives are affiliated with. Strategies were developed to deal with the problems of interviewing groups such as: domination by one or more group members, uncommunicative group members, difficulty in ensuring a full group response and the need to manage group dynamics. As with individual/professional interviews, none of the audience participants were identifiable in any research data or research findings unless their consent was obtained and transcripts would be supplied on request.

Analysis of methodology

A series of possible limitations of this thesis' findings were suggested in the introductory chapter particular the lack of access to visitor data in the Abu Dhabi, Paris and Amsterdam venues of the AoIE. The site-specific nature of research couched in a case study of one travelling display of art was signaled as potentially restricting the relevance of empirical data to the wider context. It is widely acknowledged that gauging the level of

cross-cultural understanding in any particular setting is a difficult endeavor therefore the thesis question was altered to reflect what is possible to draw conclusions and make recommendations: the examination and problematization of curatorial decision-making favouring the experiential encounter over interpretative/ didactic modes of display when the museums mandate is to promote cross-cultural understanding between Muslim and Non-Muslim communities through displays of Islamic art and culture. Additionally, in order to monitor long-term changes in attitudes, behaviors and ways of thinking, extended programs of research are usually required that would support longitudinal studies. These longer investigations are typically based on a more extensive corpus of research material rather than on just four sites of display such as in the present thesis.

Nevertheless, every study must focus, both thematically and historically, on a relatively constrained province of human history and experience. It is incumbent on the researcher to be especially conscious of the multi-dimensional nature of even the most parochial subject, as well as the ever-present risk of one's research program being subject to some form of ideological bias. By constructing a theoretical model which gave equal weight to cultural, social, economic, aesthetic, religious and political dimensions of experience, this thesis has reduced the risk that any one of these aspects should come to dominate the analysis to the exclusion of any other. In a sense, the argument as a whole reflects the multi-faceted qualities of the subject matter itself as well as systematically avoiding becoming a monothematic, ideologically motivated diatribe. Since one of my central aims was to construct and test a theoretical model capable of supporting multi-dimensional analysis especially in museology, a prospective critic could focus first on shortcomings of the theoretical basis of the thesis, and then, as a secondary gambit, could turn to the truth or validity of the substantive material in the thesis itself. Thus the usage of a theoretical model enables discussion to proceed on two levels, the theoretical and the factual more or less independently.

Any research program that must collect and interpret conversational material has the familiar challenge of having to derive warranted conclusions from the diverse opinions in the corpus it has assembled. While a statistical approach may be appropriate when soliciting public opinion in something like a market research project, this thesis called for a different approach. It required access to particular persons, or to groups who were involved in various ways with one or more of the exhibitions in questions. This meant that the

subjects who agreed to be interviewed were available, willing to express an opinion and to speak their mind regarding a fixed range of relatively open questions. The structure of the interviews ensured that although the salient themes of the study were adequately addressed in each case, respondents were free to express their opinions and to digress as they saw fit. Personality differences and, in some instances, professional caution effected the respondents manner of engagement; this fact itself is as relevant to the study as the spoken material from the interviews themselves. In some cases, the opportunity to conduct follow-up interviews enabled the researcher to validate responses from other respondents, and interviews with exhibition professionals at the larger museums facilitated corroboration, support and challenged views expressed in books, journals and other professional literature.

Lastly, although it was anticipated that the use of disputed terminology (East and West, Primitive and Modern, Muslim/Arab and Western/Orientalist and 'Islamic art' as a category) would be problematic, it provided an opportunity for further examination of such contentious concepts. Any public discussion, especially areas such as cultural studies, will of necessity traffic in disputed, controversial and contested terms. Reflective and critical analysis of such terms can be considered an essential step in the process of developing a considered and balanced account of the topics under investigation and is a pre requisite for achieving any degree of consensus or ongoing negotiation concerning these issues and debates including the dismantling of dichotomies that are barriers to cross-cultural understanding.

Locked Bag 1797
Penrith South DC NSW 1797
Australia



Participant Information Sheet (Professional Participants)

You are invited to participate in a study that will be conducted in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Project Title:

Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Who is carrying out the study?

Louise Ryan supervised by Dr. Russell Staiff, Professor Tony Bennett and Dr Fiona Cameron, Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney.

What is the study about?

The purpose of the research is to investigate the:

- Art museums capacity to encouraging cross-cultural understanding
- how art museums displays portray identity and difference
- involvement of art museums in creating places for public discussion about issues such as identity, difference and cross-cultural dialogue

What does the study involve?

We are inviting museum/organization professionals working on projects that involve the exhibition of displays of Islamic art and culture in the museum/gallery setting. A semi-structured interview will be conducted with the researcher, Louise Ryan. You will be asked questions about your perceptions about museum /cultural projects generally and your involvement in exhibitions and related activities specifically. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous and you may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

How much time will the study take?

The interview will take about 30-60 minutes, depending upon your response.

Will the study benefit me?

Museum audience research in Australia and internationally has identified the desire for museums to function as spaces which encouraging cross-cultural communication, so it is anticipated that the results of this study are of relevance and beneficial to your everyday work practices By participating in the project, you will have an opportunity to express your perceptions and opinions of exhibitions and related programs of museums that may

affect future planning of such events. The information the researcher gains will be helpful in improving museum displays and related activities for audiences and other interested parties.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

You will not suffer any discomfort by participating in this study.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

You have a choice about how your responses will be recorded and reported. You can choose on the consent form, whether to have your responses fully attributed, or to have your responses attributed to a pseudonym. Any personal information collected will be confidential with only the researcher having access to information on participants.. The results will also be disseminated via thesis and published papers.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the contact details of the Principal Investigator, Louise Ryan (see below). They can contact the Principal Investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, a member of our research team will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact

Louise Ryan

PhD Candidate

Institute for Culture and Society

Ph: 0418 270 595

Email: louise.ryan@uws.edu.au

Dr Russell Staiff

Cultural Heritage and Tourism Studies

School of Social Sciences

University of Western Sydney

Penrith Campus (Kingswood PG42)

Tel: +61 2 4736 0146 Fax: +61 2 47360150

Email: R.Staiff@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H881]. If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0083 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.



Interview Consent Form (Professional Participants)

Project Title: *Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales*”.

I,....., consent to participate in the research project titled ***Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales*”.**

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher/s.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved has been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

By signing below I am indicating my consent for

- the interview to be recorded and understand that I can request a full copy of the transcription
- to be contacted should the researchers require any clarification of material following the interview.

I understand that the data collected from my participation will provide the basis for an academic thesis, seminar presentations and publications written by the researchers.

I consent to this data being used in the following way and understand that I can vary the conditions of my participation at any time:

Fully Acknowledged: My Name, exhibitions I've been involved with and the Museum may be used in publication, providing acknowledgement for comments I have made regarding my own professional practice/s, and I have authority to give this permission.

Partial Acknowledgement: The above data and information may be used; however it will NOT be identifiable and pseudonyms will be used that will be determined by the researchers. I understand that exhibitions and institutions may still be named and discussed in the results.

I understand that I can withdraw from the study at any time, without affecting my relationship with the researcher/s now or in the future.

Signed:

Name:

Date:



Institute for Culture and Society
02 9685 9600
louise.ryan@uws.edu.au

GENERAL QUESTION SCHEDULE — Institution Interview

Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Louise Ryan supervised by Dr Fiona Cameron, Professor Tony Bennett and Dr Russell Staiff

Introduction

What does your role within the museum consist of?

What do you consider the role of the museum in society today?

Exhibition

Tell me about your involvement with exhibitions/collections?

What were the themes/issues involved with exhibitions held at your museum?

Do your displays/exhibitions aim to encourage cross-cultural understanding? If so, in what ways did you plan to realise this aim through the exhibition/related activities?

How do you think your exhibitions perform in terms of its stated aim in promoting cross-cultural understanding? Are they usually a success, failure or otherwise from your point of view?

What procedures/principals did you employ in dealing with ideas of depicting cross-cultural understanding in displays/exhibitions?

What internal (gallery) and external (sponsorship) considerations affected the development of displays?

Do you think social or political contexts affect exhibitions? Why, why not, should they?

How did you assess the success of exhibitions?

Audience Cohort

Who were your main audience groups?

What factors did you consider in terms of encouraging cross-cultural dialogue between different audiences when developing exhibitions?

Future Plans

What do you see the role of cross-cultural dialogue in museum displays in the future? Do you have plans to mount similar displays?

What do you see being the main institutional opportunities / challenges for achieving this aim?

Participant Information Sheet (Focus Group Participants)

You are invited to participate in a study that will be conducted in conjunction with the University of Western Sydney, Australia.

Project Title:

Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

Who is carrying out the study?

Louise Ryan supervised by Dr Fiona Cameron, Associate Professor Brett Neilson and Dr. Russell Staiff, Institute for Culture and Society, University of Western Sydney.

What is the study about?

The purpose of the research is to investigate the:

- museums capacity to encouraging cross-cultural understanding
- how museums displays portray identity and difference
- involvement of museums in creating places for public discussion about issues such as identity, difference and cross-cultural dialogue

What does the study involve?

We are inviting anyone who attended the exhibition or its related activities to participate in a semi-structured focus- group discussion of approximately 60 minutes with the researcher as the convener. You will be asked questions about your perceptions about the museum generally and the exhibition and its related activities specifically. The group discussions will be recorded and transcribed. Your participation is voluntary and anonymous and you may choose not to participate or to withdraw at any time.

How much time will the study take?

The focus group sessions will take about 60 minutes, depending on group discussion.

Will the study benefit me?

By participating in the project, you will have an opportunity to become actively engaged in expressing your perceptions and opinions of exhibitions and related programs of museums that may affect future planning of such events. The information the researcher gains will be helpful in improving museum displays and activities for audiences and other interested parties.

Will the study involve any discomfort for me?

You will not suffer any discomfort by participating in this study.

Will anyone else know the results? How will the results be disseminated?

Your identity will remain anonymous. Your responses will be attributed to a pseudonym and all data collected will be confidential with only the researcher having access to information on participants. The results of the research

will be publicised on the project website [insert project URL]. The results will also be disseminated via thesis and published papers.

Can I withdraw from the study?

Participation is entirely voluntary: you are not obliged to be involved. If you do participate, you can withdraw at any time without giving any reason and without any consequences.

Can I tell other people about the study?

Yes, you can tell other people about the study by providing them with the contact details of the Principal Investigator, Louise Ryan (see below). They can contact the Principal Investigator to discuss their participation in the research project and obtain an information sheet.

What if I require further information?

When you have read this information, a member of our research team will discuss it with you further and answer any questions you may have. If you would like to know more at any stage, please feel free to contact

Louise Ryan

Dr Fiona Cameron

PhD Candidate

Research Fellow

Centre for Cultural Research

Centre for Cultural Research

University of Western Sydney

University of Western Sydney

Ph: 0418 270 595

Ph: 02 9685 9677

Email: louise.ryan@uws.edu.au

Email: f.cameron@uws.edu.au

What if I have a complaint?

This study has been approved by the University of Western Sydney Human Research Ethics Committee. The Approval number is [H881].

If you have any complaints or reservations about the ethical conduct of this research, you may contact the Ethics Committee through the Office of Research Services on Tel 02-4736 0083 Fax 02-4736 0013 or email humanethics@uws.edu.au. Any issues you raise will be treated in confidence and investigated fully, and you will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to sign the Participant Consent Form.

Locked Bag 1797

Penrith South DC NSW 1797 Australia



Participant Consent Form (Focus Group Participants)

Project Title: Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales

I,....., consent to participate in the research project titled Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales

I acknowledge that:

I have read the participant information sheet and have been given the opportunity to discuss the information and my involvement in the project with the researcher.

The procedures required for the project and the time involved has been explained to me, and any questions I have about the project have been answered to my satisfaction.

By signing below I am indicating my consent for

- my participation in the focus group discussion to be recorded
- to be contacted should the researchers require any clarification of material following the group discussions.

I understand that the data collected from my participation will provide the basis for an academic thesis, seminar presentations and publications written by the researcher.

I consent to this data being used in the following way and understand that I can vary the conditions of my participation at any time:

Signed

Date

...../...../.....

Name (please print)

.....



Institute for Culture and Society

02 9685 9600

louise.ryan@uws.edu.au

QUESTION SCHEDULE — Focus groups

Transcending Boundaries: The Arts of Islam Exhibition, Nasser Khalili Collection, Art Gallery of New South Wales

Louise Ryan supervised by Dr Fiona Cameron, Prof Tony Bennett and Dr Russell Staiff

Introduction

What community groups do you belong to? Why do you choose to belong to these particular groups?

Exhibition

What events did you attend? Who did you go with? Why those particular events? Exhibition, community day etc.

Would you normally go to events like exhibitions, community days, films, lectures? Why/ why not and where?

What were the themes/issues that interested you at these events? Do you think issues such as "identity" or "difference" are important subjects to discuss at exhibitions and events like this one?

The exhibition and related events aimed to encourage cross-cultural understanding; do you think this happened?

Did you talk etc to anyone you wouldn't normally associate with? Are museums places that encourage cross-cultural understanding?

Do you think social or political contexts affected this exhibition? Why, why not, should they?

How does reporting in the media affect political and social issues?

How did you assess the success of the exhibition for you and your group? Have there been any positive effects of this exhibition and related events?

Do you think visiting the exhibition/related activities was beneficial? In what ways/ why not?

Future Plans

Would you attend other cultural events like this exhibition in a museum that had the goal of encouraging cross-cultural dialogue in the future?

Are there other events/activities in your communities that are more effective in promoting cross-cultural understanding?

Appendix 2

The purpose of appendix 2 is to provide a detailed account of the political and socio-cultural background of East/West relations historically, the impact of the media and attempts to counteract negative stereotyping of Islam and Muslims generally. Appendix 3 offers a comprehensive history of the collection and display of Islamic art from the mid nineteenth century to the present day, including the role of international expositions. This additional contextual information and its relevance to certain arguments throughout the thesis is signposted in-text and through footnotes.

The impact of American policy at home and abroad

Many commentators blame America for the birth of modern Islamic fundamentalism. Recently disclosed documents reveal that in 1979, then President of the United States Jimmy Carter, signed a secret authorization known as the *Bernard-Lewis Plan* approving a covert operation in Afghanistan against the feared Soviet Union invasion of the region. Sponsored by the British, French, Saudi and Israeli governments, the American plan involved promoting fundamentalist groups and developing a 'radical Islamic terrorist apparatus ... to play Islamic Fundamentalists against the 'godless Soviet Union.'¹³⁸⁴ The operation was a success, but the long-time consequences have been the emergence of an international terrorist network that includes groups such as al-Qaeda and ISIS and of what had become known as 'Jihadists without Borders.'¹³⁸⁵

Regardless or perhaps because of this historical truth, the West has taken its lead from the USA on most matters pertaining to Islam and Muslim relations especially since 9/11. In 2009 American president Barack Obama's speech in Cairo signalled the desire for a:

new beginning between the United States and the Muslims around the world-one based on mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap and share common principles- principles of justice and progress, tolerance, and the dignity of all human beings.¹³⁸⁶

¹³⁸⁴ J Steinberg, 'Islamic State was born in 1979 with covert operations in Afghanistan', 10 January 2015, *pravda.ru*, retrieved 31 January 2015, http://english.pravda.ru/history/30-01-2015/129656-islamic_state_history-0/#.

¹³⁸⁵ *ibid.*

¹³⁸⁶ H Maher, 'Muslim Protests: Has Obama helped bring on the anti-U.S. 'Islamist Spring'?' *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://theatlantic.com>.

Critics such as Deepa Kumar maintain that although Obama's rhetoric may be 'gentler' than Bush's 'war on terror' it is still the language of liberal imperialism and liberal Islamophobia that has a long history of demonizing Islam in USA policies. In his view, while Obama rejects the 'clash of civilisations' rhetoric, recognizing there are 'good Muslims' and 'moderate Islamists' who can be included in negotiations, America still feels entitled to conduct 'a struggle against Islamic terrorism' globally, with scant attention paid to the entitlement of self-determination by populations in targeted countries.¹³⁸⁷

In terms of national policy, Obama attempted to reduce the association of Muslims and terrorism, when in January 2012, he authorized the removal of any offensive material portraying negative images of Muslims from FBI training manual, law enforcement and Homeland Security documents generally.¹³⁸⁸ This was despite the highly controversial McCarthy- style hearings on 'Muslim radicalization' by US Congressman Peter King in 2011 and recommenced in June 2012. Additionally, incidents such as American Pastor Terry Jones 2010 Qur'an burnings and attacks on mosques generally, the recruiting Muslims to spy on their communities, people with Middle Eastern sounding names and dress denied access to flights or taken off planes as they make other passengers feel 'uncomfortable', all contributed to an eroding attempts to improve perceptions and attitudes towards Islam and Muslims.

Furthermore, Obama's attempts to reduce tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims nationally were eclipsed by continued military interventions internationally in Afghanistan and Iraq and continued violence worldwide. World events appear to reinforce this East-West dichotomy and anti-Islam narrative relentlessly. For example, despite the death of Osama bin Laden in Pakistan by US agents in 2011 regarded as a 'symbolic' victory over terrorism and a morale raising exercise,¹³⁸⁹ subsequent incidents have counteracted any sense altering the status quo. Events include: the Boston bombing of 2012; the consequences of the Arab spring such as the rise of the Muslim brotherhood (who Obama was criticized for supporting) and continuing conflicts with Coptic Christians in Egypt; fear of the imposition of Sharia law worldwide; the escalating Libyan/Syrian humanitarian crisis';

¹³⁸⁷ D Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Haymarket Books, Chicago, 2012, p. 121.

¹³⁸⁸ J Kouri, 'Obama to law enforcement: Stop linking Muslims to terrorism', *Examiner.com*, retrieved 19 February 2012, <http://www.examiner.com>.

¹³⁸⁹ For detailed reporting of the event see: S Coll, 'Notes on the Death of Osama bin Laden', *The New Yorker*, 2 May 2011, retrieved 1 January 2015, <http://www.newyorker.com/news/news-desk/notes-on-the-death-of-osama-bin-laden>.

and the global terrorism threat of groups such as ISIS. As a result, nations worldwide have increased pressure on a war-weary America, as head of the 'coalition of the willing', to spearhead Western action against the 'dark forces' from the Middle East.

Too many too ignore

The Pew Research Centre has estimated that twenty-three per cent of the world population (1.6 billion) regard themselves as Muslim with a rapidly growing youth population, making Islam the second-largest religion after Christianity. While the Middle East-North Africa area has a higher concentration of Muslims (ninety-three per cent), Indonesia is the country that has the largest number of Muslims (over eighty-seven per cent of the population), with Muslim populations making up the majority in 49 countries worldwide.¹³⁹⁰ With such demographics, discussion concerning Islam and Muslims appear to be polarizing society and overshadowing any nuanced conversations regarding Islam. Despite the 2011 Pew Poll revealed that forty-two per cent of Americans believed Islam was no more likely than any other religion to promote violence, radical fundamentalist Islamic groups are on the rise and are contributing to global terrorism and supremacist doctrines.¹³⁹¹ This concern is also held by at least half of all Muslims worldwide who worry about Islamic extremism,¹³⁹² a concern that appears unfounded as 2012 research data that indicates local terrorist plots in the US had declined since 2010.¹³⁹³

In Australia, the 2003 Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission study reported that eighty-seven per cent of Muslims had experienced racially motivated violence or abuse¹³⁹⁴ and a longitudinal nation-wide study released in 2011 confirmed that almost half of Australians held anti-Muslim views-almost twice the number when compared to attitudes to other ethnic groups.¹³⁹⁵ The leading researcher Professor Kevin Dunn commented that despite overall findings being positive and that multiculturalism had been

¹³⁹⁰ D Desilver, 'World's Muslim population more widespread than you think', *Global Religious landscape Report*, June 7, 2013, Pew Research Centre Forum on Religion and Public Life, retrieved 10 June 2014, <<http://www.pewresearch.org>>.

¹³⁹¹ Pew Research Centre, 'Continuing Divide in Views of Islam and violence' 2010; 'Religion and Public Life program,' Executive Summary, 2013, retrieved 3 December 2013, <http://www.pewforum.org>

¹³⁹² *ibid.*

¹³⁹³ Findings from the University of North Carolina in 2012, cited in J. Halpern, 'Muslim-American terror rare, study says', *News and Observer*, October 2, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.standard.net/stories>.

¹³⁹⁴ Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission Report, 2003 p. 147-8.

¹³⁹⁵ Indigenous Australians (27.9), black Africans (27%), Asians (23.8%) and Jews (23.3%) (A Marceau, 'Australia a land of racists: Survey finds many anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic, February 23, 2011, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.news.com.au>.)

a successful programme,¹³⁹⁶ one in ten respondents expressed 'very problematic views'. Dunn maintains that these elevated levels of anti-Muslim sentiments was the result of political events internationally, 'poorly-informed public debates' and 'sensationalist media treatment',¹³⁹⁷

Media representations

Accusations levelled at media reporting of issues relating to Muslims and Islam as responsible for shaping and often skewing public perception is widespread. Back in 1980, Said commented on the 'profoundly one-sided' Western view from the media and 'experts' where Muslims and Arabs were:

... essentially seen as either oil suppliers or potential terrorists. Very little of the detail, the human density, the passion of Arab-Moslem life has entered the awareness of even those people whose profession it is to report the Arab world. What we have instead is a series of crude, essentialized caricatures of the Islamic world presented in such a way as to make that world vulnerable to military aggression.¹³⁹⁸

This situation has intensified since this statement and particularly since 9/11, with far-reaching consequences. Besides affecting public perceptions and politics, definitions of terrorism and who the perpetrators are generally impact upon policing and legal judgements. A 2012 analysis by Tung Yin, former law professor University of Iowa College of Law, suggests that there is an absence of 'white terrorists' as religion and race effect accounts of terrorism (particularly when the suspect are Muslim of Middle Eastern descent) and this reporting has significant consequences:

There are real costs imposed on society when terrorism becomes branded with Islam: Cognitive biases against Muslims become more potent; investigators risk losing the trail of non-Muslim perpetrators when they fixate reflexively on Muslims; and worst of all, some government officials, aware of the biases and concerned about appearing anti-Muslim, may overcompensate by deliberately ignoring specific 'red flags' about Muslim individuals.¹³⁹⁹

A report conducted of the British Press by Unitas Communications Ltd., (specialising in analysis of cross-cultural communications particularly Islam-West relations), has revealed an 'overwhelming trend of negative, stereotypical and inaccurate reporting' since the late

¹³⁹⁶ Report findings indicated 87% of Australians viewed cultural diversity positively, and 86% believed that something needed to be done concerning racism.

¹³⁹⁷ Marceau, op. cit.

¹³⁹⁸ Said, 1978, op. cit.

¹³⁹⁹ T Krattenmaker, 'Use terror label when justified', *USA Today*, 6 November 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://usatoday.com>.

1990's which has accelerated since 9/11 and the 2007 London bombing. Richard Peppiatt, a former *Daily Star* reporter observed:

False and inaccurate stories about Muslims routinely put out by the press are, in turn, routinely used as tools by far right groups to legitimise their case and gain followers. The Internet is full of forums using mainstream newspaper reporting as proof that their hateful views about Muslims are true. Unfortunately, newspapers refuse to recognise their role in that.¹⁴⁰⁰

These far-right parties are gaining momentum in many countries and having an effect. For example, Anders Brevik's massacre in Norway in 2011 as a self-professed warrior against the perceived Islamization of Europe was inspired by extreme-right authors (especially Geert Wilders) and anti-Muslim immigration literature found on the internet. Additionally, numerous defence leagues are growing in numbers in England (fig 114, 115) and Denmark with similar groups expected in Finland, Sweden, Russia, Germany, France, Poland and Romania.¹⁴⁰¹ In Australia, the *Rise Up Australia Party* and the newly formed *Australian Party for Freedom*, based on Dutch politician Geert Wilder's party, claim to have a healthy following.¹⁴⁰² In the wake of the 2015 Paris attacks, the rise in popularity of the Dresden-based nationalist German PEGIDA party (Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident) protesting against the 'Islamization of the West'¹⁴⁰³ ... [and] criminal asylum seekers,¹⁴⁰⁴ have seen the group's numbers swell dramatically from a couple of hundred in October 2014 to 25,000 in the January 12th 2015 demonstration.¹⁴⁰⁵ Despite government and wider public condemnation, copycat groups using the PEGIDA name have attempted to organize anti-Islam protests in Denmark and Spain.¹⁴⁰⁶ These anti-Islamic protests have also been directed at the museum world when in November 2012 hundreds of would-be nationalists (mainly from far-right groups) demonstrated against

¹⁴⁰⁰ NM Ahmed, 'Time to hold the Media to Account for Islamophobia', *Huffington Post*, July 18, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk>.

¹⁴⁰¹ G Katz, 'Terror in Europe fuels immigration tensions', *The Associated Press*, March 30, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.newsday.com>.

¹⁴⁰² R Sutton, 'There's a perception that anti-Muslim, anti-immigration sentiment is growing in Australia. But is it?', *SBS*, 1 January 2013, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.sbs.com.au>.

¹⁴⁰³ AP, 'German anti-Islam group vows new rally after cops nix protest', *The Times of Israel*, 19 January 2015, retrieved 22 January 2015, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/german-anti-islam-group-vows-new-rally-after-cops-nix-protest/>.

¹⁴⁰⁴ AFP, 'German police ban anti-Islamic Pegida rally in Dresden citing terror threat', *The Telegraph*, 18 January 2015, retrieved 22 January 2015, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11353639/German-police-ban-anti-Islamic-Pegida-rally-in-Dresden-citing-terror-threat.html>.

¹⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁴⁰⁶ AP, 19/1/2015, *op. cit.*

'Islamist fascism' displaying posters with slogans such as 'Islam out of the Louvre' in response to a new Islamic art exhibition showing at the Louvre Museum in Paris France.¹⁴⁰⁷



Fig 114 British National Front protester 2010.

Source:

<http://www.barenakedislam.com/2015/01/06/will-the-netherlands-be-hosting-the-next-anti-islamization-pegida-rallies/>



Fig 115 Anti-Muslim sentiments result in vandalism, Britain 2010.

Source:

<http://www.barenakedislam.com/2015/01/06/will-the-netherlands-be-hosting-the-next-anti-islamization-pegida-rallies/>

Film, television, literature and social media

Film and television broadcastings have also contributed to stereotypical depictions of Islam, Muslims and Arabs. Writer and critic Jack Shaheen maintains that American images of Muslims and Arabs 'despite the diversity of Arab and Muslim experience ... have remained remarkably consistent over the decades'. From the 1918 film *Tarzan of the Apes* and *The Sheik* in 1921 to *Obsession: Radical Islam's War Against the West* in 2005 and *Holy Terror* (a 2011 graphic novel by comic book icon Frank Miller), 'Arab women have appeared mostly mute and submissive-belly dancers, bundles in black and beasts of burden. Arab men have fared no better, appearing as Bedouin bandits, sinister sheiks, comic buffoons or weapon-wielding terrorists' (fig 116).¹⁴⁰⁸ Shaheen further argues that since 9/11 television series' such as *The Agency*, *The Unit*, *24*, *Sleeper Cell*, *Threat Matrix*, *NCIS* and *Sue Thomas: F.B. Eye*, coupled with politically driven and well-funded campaigns of groups and anti-Islam organizations such as Daniel Pipes's *Middle East Forum* and Steven Emerson's *Investigative*

¹⁴⁰⁷ B Pitt, 'The French Left and Islam: Liberty, Equality and Islamophobia', *Loonwatch.com*, 15 december 2012, retrieved 10 January 2015, <http://www.loonwatch.com/2012/12/the-french-left-and-islam-liberty-equality-and-islamophobia/>.

¹⁴⁰⁸ J Shaheen, 'How the Media created the Muslim Monster Myth', *Middle East Online*, 16 June 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.middle-east-online.com>.

Project on Terrorism, have exploited fears and promoted myths, convincing the public that ‘The Evil Other from over there’ is now ‘Here’ as well.¹⁴⁰⁹ This perspective is supported by the 2011 report by Thomas Cincotta *Manufacturing the Muslim Menace* which exposed groups of private security firms who condoned or were sponsored by local and tax-payer funded federal US agencies that were demonizing mainstream Muslim and Islamic communities and promoting Islamophobia.¹⁴¹⁰ Recalling writer Sam Keen’s observation of the Association of Editorial Cartoonists in 1986, ‘You can hit an Arab free; they’re free enemies, free villains-where you couldn’t do it to a Jew or can’t do it to a black anymore’, Shaheen believes this view is more accurate today than ever.¹⁴¹¹



Fig 116 Visual from Jack Sheehan’s book ‘How the Media created the Muslim Monster Myth’ 2012. Source: <http://neareststudies.as.nyu.edu/object/kc.media.jackshaheen.reelarabsvrealarabs>

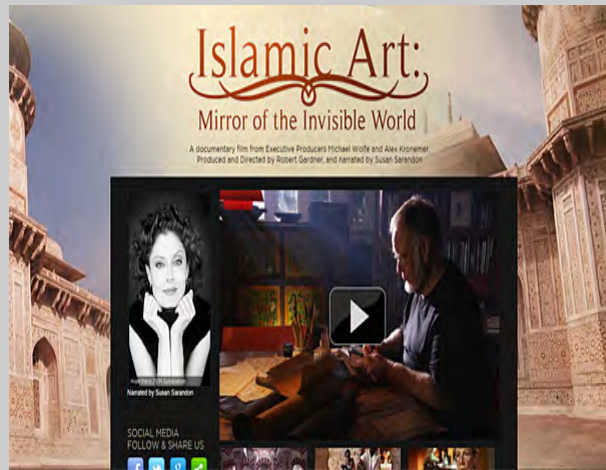


Fig 113 Online webpage for *Islamic Art: Mirror of the Invisible World* documentary 2012. Source: <http://www.e-mosaik.com/moroccan-decor/?p=98>

There are documentaries and movies that are attempting to dispel these myths however, promoting realistic portrayals and counteracting stereotypical images. Most notable are the British non-religious and non-profit organization *Foundation for Science, technology and Civilisation’s* 2010 exhibition and 2012 film of the same name *1001 Inventions* and *Islamic Art: Mirror of the Invisible World* (fig 117). This documentary narrated by American actress Susan Sarandon, are timely reminders to the global public of the East’s

¹⁴⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴¹⁰ T Cincotta ‘Manufacturing the Muslim Menace: private Firms, Public servants and the Threat to rights and Security’, Sommerville MA: Political Research Associates, 2011 p. 1-80.

¹⁴¹¹ Ibid.

immense and often unacknowledged historical and contemporary contribution to art, science and technology.¹⁴¹² Furthermore, documentaries such as Bettany Hugh's 2008 series *When the Moors ruled Europe* have been widely praised for its comprehensiveness and balanced view of relations between the West and Islam historically. Conversely, the 2012 BBC Channel 4 screening of academic Tom Holland's *Islam: the untold story* resulted in a flood of online complaints and academic debates regarding the accuracy and motives of its creator.¹⁴¹³

Comedy has also been used as a weapon in an attempt to diffuse problems associated with Muslims and Islam. Three American comedians of Muslim background, Ahmed Ahmed, Dean Obeidallah (who calls himself a 'political comedian') and Amer Zahr were lawyers before 9/11, but in 2007 toured their show's *Axis of Evil Comedy Tour* and *Allah Made Me Funny*¹⁴¹⁴ throughout America and the Middle East, with twenty-seven sold out shows to crowds totaling more than 20,000

people (fig 118). Obeidallah explains their origins: 'Our comedy reflected the abrupt realization that our world had changed around us, even though we had nothing to do with 9/11.'¹⁴¹⁵ In Qatar the group have worked with other local comedians members of *Stand Up Comedy Qatar*, Ousama Itani, Issa El-Fahoum, Abdulla Al-Ghanim, Halal Bilal, Said Barqawi



Fig 118 Comedian Ahmed Ahmed on stage 2007.

Source: [SZ Janmohamed](http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/culture-comment/warning-muslims-have-a-sense-of-humour-and-well-be-using-it), 'Warning: Muslims have a sense of humour and we'll be using it', March 17, 2012, *The National*, retrieved 21 March 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/culture-comment/warning-muslims-have-a-sense-of-humour-and-well-be-using-it>

¹⁴¹² P Ahmed, 'Appreciating Islam's Contribution to Civilisation', *Huffington Post*, 7 May 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.huffingtonpost.com>.

¹⁴¹³ R Verkaik, 'Channel 4 history of Islam sparks flood of complaints and presenter Tom Holland subjected to torrent of abusive tweets', *Mail Online*, September 2, 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.dailymail.co.uk>.

¹⁴¹⁴ [SZ Janmohamed](http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/culture-comment/warning-muslims-have-a-sense-of-humour-and-well-be-using-it), 'Warning: Muslims have a sense of humour and we'll be using it', March 17, 2012, *The National*, retrieved 21 March 2012, <http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/culture-comment/warning-muslims-have-a-sense-of-humour-and-well-be-using-it>.

¹⁴¹⁵ *ibid.*

and Mohanalakshmi Rajakumar.¹⁴¹⁶ Also Australian Muslim comedian's Waleed Ali, Aamer Rahman and Nazeem Hussain (who created the popular series *Legally Brown*, a comedic



Fig 119 Online poster for movie *The Muslims Are Coming* 2014. Source: <http://themuslismsarecoming.com/blog/the-world-premier-at-austin-film-festival/>

take on his experiences as an Australian Muslim),¹⁴¹⁷ have joined in the fight against islamophobia. Sociologist Mucahit Bilici explains: 'The discrimination, prejudices and stereotypes from which other Muslims suffer are a godsend for the Muslim comedian.'¹⁴¹⁸

In other areas of the creative arts, Wajahat Ali's play *Domestic Crusaders* in 2009 was well received by American audiences and the 2010 British film *Four Lions* (a black comedy about suicide bombers) was popular with both Muslims and non-Muslim audiences.

A more recent film using comedy to tackle Islamophobia is Negin Farsad and Dean Obeidallah's *The Muslims are Coming* that is

touring America accompanied by non-Muslim comedians stand-up shows (fig 119). As the film makers commented:

You have to realize Islamophobia is an industry in America ...[our film] its about changing the narrative about who we are ... hopefully we can chip away at misconceptions about Muslims ... overwhelmingly the audiences have been great but some on the right are a little concerned.¹⁴¹⁹

¹⁴¹⁶ P Savodnik, 'Yes, there are comedians in Qatar', 21 May 2012, *The New York Times*, retrieved 5 July 2012, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/05/27/magazine/yes-there-are-comedians-in-qatar.html?pagewanted=all&r=0>.

¹⁴¹⁷ A Fahmi, 'Fear of a funny Muslim', 30 November 2011, *MuslimVillage.com*, retrieved 2 December 2011, <http://muslimvillage.com/2011/11/30/16710/fear-of-a-funny-muslim/>.

¹⁴¹⁸ AP, 'US Arab-Muslim comedy grows, pushes beyond funny talk in post-9/11 world', *The Washington Post*, 14 March 2012, retrieved 15 March 2012, <http://washingtonpost.com/national/on-faith/us-Arab-Muslim-comedy-grows-pushes-beyond-funny-talk-in-post-9/11-world/>.

¹⁴¹⁹ alawaba.com, '*The Muslims are Coming*: Muslim comedy takes on Islamophobia', 22 September 2013, *MV Media*, retrieved 25 January 2015, <<http://muslimvillage.com/2013/09/22/44102/the-muslims-are-coming-muslim-comedy-takes-on-islamophobia/>>.

Despite such success, some comedians have been jailed for ‘defaming Islam’ on screen and on the stage. The most prominent case was the jailing by an Egyptian court in 2012 of high profile Egyptian Adel Imam actor, comedian and UN goodwill ambassador.¹⁴²⁰

An array of literature has added to this debate surrounding the depictions and stereotyping of Islam and Muslim/Arabs generally. For example, personal accounts following 9/11 were tinged with strong statements especially from American right-wing commentators such as Ann Coulter:¹⁴²¹

... The nation has been invaded by a fanatical, murderous cult. And we welcome them. We are so good and so pure we never engaged in discriminatory racial or “religious” profiling ... we know the homicidal maniac’s are. They are the ones cheering dancing right now ... we should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity. We weren’t punctilious about locating and punishing only Hitler and his top Officers. We carpet-bombed German cities; we killed civilians. That’s war. And this is war.¹⁴²²

This type of ‘white crusader’ rhetoric has some thought-provoking comparisons in American literature. Commentator Nicholas Kristof draws attention to an interesting book series *The Left Behind* by American secular liberals Tim Jenkins and Jerry Jenkins. He describes the series as ‘... enthusiastically depicting Jesus returning to slaughter everyone who is not a born-again Christian. Muslims, Jews, and agnostics along with many Catholics and Unitarians, are heaved into everlasting fire.’ Kristof pointedly argues that if ‘Saudi Arabians write an Islamic version of this series we would furiously demand that all sensible Muslims repudiate such hatemongering. We should hold ourselves to the same standard.’¹⁴²³

A more balanced view of the ‘war on terror’ is posited by Robert Jay Lifton’s analysis of the ‘Superpower Syndrome’. In this book Lifton calls post 9/11 a ‘landscape of fear’, where America (and its allies) are engaged in an ‘apocalyptic face-off’ with Islamist forces in

¹⁴²⁰ AP, ‘Comic sentenced to jail for Islam insult’, 4 February 2012, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, retrieved 10 July 2012, <http://www.smh.com.au/world/comic-sentenced-to-jail-for-islam-insult-20120203-1qxni.html>.

¹⁴²¹ Ann Coulter is an American conservative social and political commentator, writer, syndicated columnist, and lawyer.

¹⁴²² A Coulter, ‘This is War’, *dailynews.yahoo*, 13 September 2001, retrieved 1 August 2014, <<http://www.dailynews.yahoo>>.

¹⁴²³ N Kristof, ‘Apocalypse (almost) Now’, *New York Times*, 24 November 2004, retrieved 1 August 2014, ProQuest Historical Newspapers, *The New York Times* (1851-2010), p. A23.

a process of ‘massive destruction in the service of various visions of purification and renewal.’¹⁴²⁴ He argues both sides are engaged in this battle as:

... Islamist forces, overtly visionary in their willingness to kill and die for their religion, and American forces claiming to be restrained and reasonable but no less visionary in their projection of a cleansing war-making and military power. Both sides are energised by versions of intense idealism; both see themselves and embarked on a mission of combating evil in order to redeem and renew the world; and both are ready to release untold levels of violence to achieve that purpose.¹⁴²⁵

Further, Lifton maintains this ‘mutual zealotry’ has rendered America an ‘*aggrieved superpower*’, hardening their perceived entitlement to control and dominant and qualifying 9/11 as the most potent single example of ‘Islamist apocalyptic martyrology.’¹⁴²⁶ Despite both sides viewing themselves as victims,¹⁴²⁷ Lifton believes this vicious cycle of violence and victimization can be altered if America uses its superpower status and exercises restraint in order to ‘disrupt this ‘dangerous psychological interaction’. In this scenario, America recognizes that there are limits to violence and destruction by ‘refusing to be God’ thereby emerging from its syndrome.¹⁴²⁸

Unsurprisingly, social media sites are overrun with hate speech and racist ideologies with virulent language and comments over the Internet not uncommon and have enormous impact, as this thesis’ discussions regularly highlights. A pertinent example is the recent social media responses to the 2015 Paris attacks from Muslims condemning and supporting the event: the suggestion of a phone application iCondemn to register your disapproval of terrorism ‘not in my name’;¹⁴²⁹ Twitter Arabic hashtags #revengefortheprophet and #parisburns were trending,¹⁴³⁰ and #JeSuisCharlie was replaced by #JeSuisKouachi after the surname of one of the gunman.¹⁴³¹ Less advertised but no less powerful stereotyping and Islamophobic discourses can be found in commercial retailing especially online. Examples include: the image of a head-scarfed Muslim doll portrayed by an American greeting card

¹⁴²⁴ R J Lifton, *Superpower Syndrome: America’s apocalyptic confrontation with the world*, Thunder’s Mouth Press/Nation Books, New York, 2003, introduction xii.

¹⁴²⁵ *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

¹⁴²⁶ *ibid.*, pp. 3,4, 91.

¹⁴²⁷ America regarded its core values of democracy and freedom were assaulted in the 9/11 attacks while Islam feels victimized by its history of despotic rulers and incursions with the West, particularly America (*ibid.*, pp. 194-195).

¹⁴²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 196, 199.

¹⁴²⁹ D Burke, ‘After Paris attacks, 7 questions being asked about Islam’, 13 January 2015, *CNN.com*, retrieved 12 January 2015, <edition.cnn.com/2015/01/10/living/questions-islam/>.

¹⁴³⁰ W Gallo, ‘Paris attack condemned across Muslim world’, 10 January 2015 *VOA News*, retrieved 11 January 2015, <http://musimvilage.com/2015/01/10/61539/paris-attack-condemn>.

¹⁴³¹ Morocco world News, ‘#JeSuisKouachi hashtag creates controversy on Twitter’, 10 January 2015, *moroccoworldnews.com*, retrieved 12 January 2015, <http://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2015/01/149246/JeSuisKouachi-hashtag-creates-controversy-on-twitter>.

company as a suicide bomber with slogans such as 'She'll love you to death ... she'll blow your brains out';¹⁴³² and increasing online terrorism courses being offered to the general public with by-lines such as 'Understand the threat ... Reduce the risk.'¹⁴³³

Real or imagined?

The cost of combating terrorism, real or imagined, is high. In the ten years since 9/11, for instance, the USA government's contribution alone was estimated at well over one trillion American dollars which included: terrorism insurance premiums; delays to passengers due to increased airport security; and extra car trips due to fears of terrorists acts on planes and other consumer welfare losses.¹⁴³⁴ Similarly, the Abbott government has recently committed sixty four million Australian dollars in their effort to counteract homegrown terrorism.¹⁴³⁵ This is despite the statistic that the risk of an Australian dying in a terrorist attack is the same as being struck by lightning: one in seven million.¹⁴³⁶ Also, many are questioning the government's commitment to deradicalization programs within the Muslim communities, as the priority is jailing vulnerable youths and potential offenders.¹⁴³⁷

The old adage 'fear sells' is a pertinent description of what sections of the worldwide media are regularly accused of in their attempts to increase commercial profits through sensationalizing people and events. As Garland argues, we now live in an 'age of exaggeration' which the media exploits to regularly engineer or create moral panic from individual anxiety-producing issues.¹⁴³⁸ Stamping an event or action as 'terrorism' is one of the most derogatory labels possible since 9/11¹⁴³⁹ and manufactured and inflated threats produce networks of hate that fuel Islamophobic attitudes, contributing to distorted worldviews. It is true that the targeting of ethnic groups scapegoated as 'Other' is not restricted to the current emphasis on Middle Eastern populations as other racist profiling of

¹⁴³² J Gardner, "'She'll blow your brains out": Muslim girl greeting card parodies talking Arab doll with terrorist bomb jokes', *Mail Online*, 4 May 2013, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.mailonline.com>.

¹⁴³³ University of St Andrews, Certificate in terrorism Studies training course', October 2012, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://www.terrorismstudies.com>

¹⁴³⁴ R Gittins, 'The real cost of the war on terror', September 15, 2011, retrieved 10 June 2013, <http://muslimvillage.com>.

¹⁴³⁵ SBS online, 'Tony Abbott announces \$64 million to combat home-grown terrorism', 26 August 2014, retrieved 2 January 2015, <http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/2014/08/26/tony-abbott-announces-64-million-combat-home-grown-terrorism>.

¹⁴³⁶ Australian University Professor Mark Stewart quoted in Gittins, *ibid*.

¹⁴³⁷ M Davey, 'Muslim leaders' 'fear of security agencies' is preventing counselling against extremism', *The Guardian online*, retrieved 19 January 2015, <http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2015/jan/16/fearful-of-security-agencies-muslim-leaders-refuse-to-counsel-against-extremism>.

¹⁴³⁸ D Garland, 'On the concept of moral panic', *Crime Media Culture*, vol. 4, no. 9, 2008, retrieved 8 July 2014, <http://cmc.sagepub.com/content/4/1/9>.

¹⁴³⁹ Krattenmaker, *op. cit*.

Asian and Jewish communities, for example, is well documented. None however seem to be so globally popular as the current targets.

Newspapers constantly warn us terrorist attacks are on the rise. It is true that from 2012-14 alone, attacks rose by forty-three per cent and have been used to justify military interventions overseas and new surveillance, legislation and laws at home.¹⁴⁴⁰ However it is Muslims worldwide who suffer at the hands of these Islamic fundamentalists: attacks in western countries rose from 140 to 250 in 2013 but incidences outside of West rose from 8000 attacks to over 11,000 mainly due to events in Pakistan and Iraq, and lesser numbers in Egypt and the Philippines.¹⁴⁴¹ ISIS alone has killed an estimated 4325 people, murdering an average 12 Muslim civilian men, women, and children daily. According to the Global terrorism Database (START): 'Not so long ago, terrorism was centred in Western Europe and Latin America. It moves. And, unfortunately, it has moved into the Muslim world now.'¹⁴⁴²

The catchcry 'All Muslims may not be terrorists, but all terrorists are Muslim' appears misplaced as well. In the American context, post 9/11 extremists associated with various far-right wing ideologies, including and Jewish extremists and White Supremists, have murdered more people than extremists driven by 'radical Islam.'¹⁴⁴³ Additionally, according to data less than two per cent of attacks are 'religiously motivated' while eighty-four per cent were based on 'ethno-nationalist or separatist beliefs.'¹⁴⁴⁴ Some commentators such as Dean Obeidallah have blamed the media for this misconception:

Our media simply do not cover the non-Muslim terror attacks with same gusto ... Why? It's a business decision. Stories about scary 'others' play better. It's a story that can simply be framed as good versus evil with Americans being the good guy and the brown Muslim as the bad.¹⁴⁴⁵

¹⁴⁴⁰ According to Kean: 'The bulk of the rise in terrorism in Western countries occurred in just two places: Northern Ireland and Greece. In Northern Ireland, terrorist incidents increased from 45 each in 2011 and 2012 to 117 in 2013. And the number of incidents in Greece more than doubled from 22 to 53 in 2013. The upsurge in Greece has been driven by austerity-induced violence by both Left and Right. In Northern Ireland, dissident republicans have driven the upsurge in terrorism.' (B Kean, 'The deceit at the heart of the terrorism hysteria', 9 September 2014, *Crikey.com*, retrieved 14 January 2015, http://www.crikey.com.au/2014/09/09/the-deceit-at-the-heart-of-the-terrorism-hysteria/?wpmp_switcher=mobile&wpmp_tp=0.) Data also gathered from Global terrorism database, *National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism*, University of Maryland, USA, retrieved 14 January 2015, <http://www.start.umd.edu/gtd/>.

¹⁴⁴¹ Attacks in Iraq rose from just over 1400 to over 2800; attacks in Pakistan rose from 1651 to over 2200.

¹⁴⁴² D Burke, 'Terrorist attacks and deaths hit record high, report shows', 28 October 2013, *CN.com.*, retrieved 21 January 2015, <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2013/10/28/terrorist-attacks-and-deaths-hit-record-high-report-shows/>.

¹⁴⁴³ G Chengu 'Zimbabwe: Right Wing Domestic Terrorists Far More Deadly Than Islamic Extremists', 16 January 2015, *allafrica.com*, retrieved 17 January 2015, <allafrica.com/stories/201501160403.html>.

¹⁴⁴⁴ D MacKenzie, 'Dean Obeidallah: Most Terror Attacks Not Done by Muslims', 14 January 2015, *newsmax.com*, retrieved 16 January 2015, <http://www.newsmax.com/Newsfront/terror-islamists-muslims-jews/2015/01/14/id/618509/>

¹⁴⁴⁵ *ibid.*

Appendix 3

Collecting and displaying Islamic art: a history

Collections, collecting practices and exhibitionary displays (both past and present in the West and Middle East), have influenced and altered the public's perceptions of Islamic art. Temporary exhibitions of all kinds (nationalistic, formalistic, dynastic, regional, the stand-alone masterpiece) and permanent museum collections have promoted certain perspectives and attitudes towards Islamic art and culture through their interrelated visual arrangements of objects driven by ethnographic, historical, educational or multicultural agendas.¹⁴⁴⁶

The importance of investigating why Islamic art was collected is argued succinctly by one of the field's most imminent pioneers, the late Oleg Grabar.¹⁴⁴⁷ Grabar outlines two reasons why studying the impact of collecting Islamic art is fruitful. Firstly, for what he terms the 'orientalist adventure of collecting Islamic art' which reveals the '... wild or secretive, attractive or objectionable personalities of dealers and collectors ... whose strange lives and occasionally bizarre behavior' makes for interesting stories and political exposes about dubious dealings. More importantly, research highlights the intellectual and scholarly weakness of many existing accounts based on the writings of 'exotic travelers'. Secondly, what Grabar calls the 'progeny of discovery' is crucial to understanding the history of any arts, especially poorly chronicled ones such as Islamic art, so that we can identify and assess sources of knowledge and recreations of the past.¹⁴⁴⁸

Important to this thesis is the display of the AoIE (except in Abu Dhabi), the emphasis was on displaying secular objects and the representation of religious artifacts (other than the Qur'an) as multi-purpose items. While multiple stories accompany artifacts on their journey from the site of creation to a myriad of exhibitionary contexts, Grabar

¹⁴⁴⁶ L Komaroff, 'Exhibiting the Middle East: Collections and perceptions of Islamic Art', *Ars Orientalis*, Freer Gallery of Art, The Smithsonian Institution and Department of History and Art, University of Michigan, vol. 30, 2000, p.2, retrieved 29 November 2013, <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/4434259>>.

¹⁴⁴⁷ Further reading on Oleg Grabar's contribution to Islamic studies includes R Hillenbrand, 'Oleg Grabar: the scholarly legacy', *Islamic Art Historiography*, no. 6 June 2012, pp. 1-35, retrieved 13 December, 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/hillenbrand.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁴⁸ O Grabar, 'The Implications of Collecting Islamic Art', pp. 194-200, in S Vernoit, *Discovering Islamic Art: scholars, collectors and collections 1850-1950*, I B Tauris, New York London, 2000.

criticizes of the lack of religious artifacts in Islamic art collections generally, believing contemporary collecting favours secular objects as ‘mystical images’ are easier to fit into the ‘Western European intellectual framework’ than traditional Islamic knowledge and ethics. Further, Grabar calls for private collections to be more accessible to the public through displays outside elitist institutions and for Muslim lands to collect their own art (rather than relying on European collections) to develop a greater sense of their own modern character and identity based on knowledge of their artistic heritage.¹⁴⁴⁹

Due to the absence of literature of art and architecture concerning the Muslim world historically, along with scant information about scholarship, collectors and collecting, Stephen Vernoit’s comprehensive and detailed chronological account is invaluable. According to Vernoit, studies in political and constitutional history were slowly expanded in the nineteenth century as old theories were reassessed and new historical data was explored to cover a wider range of areas and topics in investigations pertaining to Islamic/Muslim cultural and historical developments.¹⁴⁵⁰

The expansion of colonial empires into the Muslim lands through the processes of colonization in the early twentieth century, made acquiring artifacts and obtaining information easier and increased interest in the area. British and French colonial expansion was widespread and is well documented; however, colonialism was an activity that non-European Imperialists (particularly China and Russia) also engaged in. For example, the Chinese province of Xinjiang (meaning literally ‘New Territories’) had been in Muslim Uyghur hands for over a millennium but was increasingly populated by Han Chinese settlers. The region’s valuable natural resources were mined as revenue for the Chinese government, resulting in violent ethnic clashes up to the present day. Similarly, Russia extended their colonial activities into Central Asia, Afghanistan and Iran, initially for raw materials and later petroleum, with the region suffering a fate similar to Xinjiang, albeit on a larger scale, with a history of bloody and continuous conflicts.¹⁴⁵¹ These global Imperialist activities meant

¹⁴⁴⁹ *ibid.*, pp. 199-200.

¹⁴⁵⁰ S Vernoit, ‘Islamic Art and Architecture: An overview of Scholarship and Collecting, c. 1850-c. 1950’, in Vernoit (2000), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹⁴⁵¹ SS Blair, JM Bloom, ‘The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field’, *The Art Bulletin*, vol. 85, no. 1, March 2003, p. 153, retrieved 15 December 2013, <<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0004-3079%28200303%2985%3A1%3C152%3ATMOIAR%3E2.0.CO%3B2-G>>.

travellers (mainly European) brought back 'exotic' souvenirs from Muslim lands that became very collectable items for European museums.¹⁴⁵²

Early interest in studying Islamic art during the nineteenth century is evident in commentaries from a range of publications (scholarly surveys, articles, traveller tales) from art historians, architectural theorists, medievalists, palaeographers and bibliophiles. Collections of Islamic art that were being assembled provided an array of objects for historians, such as Gustave Le Bon and Alfred von Kremer, to investigate Islamic civilisation from the middle of the nineteenth century onwards. Additionally, archaeologists¹⁴⁵³ and scholars proficient in oriental languages contributed to a growing awareness of this area of study.¹⁴⁵⁴

The rapid decline of colonial empires after Second World War and independence for former European colonies, however, resulted in the dramatic reduction of European activities, paving the way for new perceptions in historical writing.¹⁴⁵⁵ In these revisions of theories from the nineteenth century by twentieth-century writers, the promotion of Islamic art and architecture based on the work of artists who either travelled to Muslim lands independently or joined political missions or European led military campaigns is significant. For example, the 1832 mission of the Comte de Mornay to Morocco included the painter Eugene Delacroix and the colonization of Algiers by the French from 1830 onwards led to a long line of artists including: Horace Vernet (1830), Eugene- Napoleon Flandin (1837), and Adrien Dauzats (1839).¹⁴⁵⁶ In particular, the 'pictorial realism' of Jean-Leon Gèrôme's depictions of Middle Eastern life and people (coupled with the advent of photography) stirred Orientalist desires and impacted significantly the exploration of Islamic

¹⁴⁵² *ibid.*, pp. 153-4.

¹⁴⁵³ For an interesting account of three archaeologists - J. T. Wood, Ernst Herzfeld and Marc Aurel Stein – contributions to the British museum collection (1870-1930s) and the growing realization that Islamic objects can be 'archaeological data, not simply exotic items of home décor' see S Canby, 'Islamic Archaeology: By Accident or Design?', in Vernoit 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 128-37.

¹⁴⁵⁴ For a comprehensive discussion of Italian Orientalist scholarship (particularly Ugo Monneret de Villard's work) see A Contadini, 'Ugo Monneret de Villard: A Master of the Italian Orientalist School', Vernoit, 2000 *op. cit.*, pp.156-62. Alternatively, Robert Irwin's account of Louis Massignon's study of Sufism (1922) reveals that not all studies of Islamic art and culture result in greater cross-cultural understanding: 'the general effect of Massignon's ideas ... was to make Islamic art even stranger and more un-Western than it actually was ...' R Irwin, 'Louis Massignon and the Esoteric Interpretation of Islamic Art', Vernoit 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 163-70. For a discussion on Richard Ettinghausen's significant articles on Islamic iconography see R Hillenbrand, 'Richard Ettinghausen and the Iconography of Islamic Art', Vernoit, 2000 *op. cit.*, pp. 171-81.

¹⁴⁵⁵ Vernoit, 2000 *op. cit.*, pp. 1-2

¹⁴⁵⁶ *ibid.*, p. 4.

art and architecture as the nineteenth century progressed and influenced the works of numerous twentieth-century scholars, academics and authors generally.¹⁴⁵⁷

For the most part, the care and preservation of library and artifact collections, craft industries and buildings in these colonized Muslim territories became the responsibility of newly installed colonial governments. Artists, architects, and historians were used to help in this endeavour. For example: descriptions and illustrations of Islamic and Classical monuments in Algiers, Tlemcen, Oran, Constantine and Bone by Louis-Adrien Berbrugger (1843); publications resulting from examinations of art and architecture in Turkey and Ottoman history by Hammer-Purgstall (1827-35), publication of extensive architectural drawings in Turkey (and later Iran) by Charles Texier (1833-37) and restoration in Bursa of fourteenth and fifteenth century Ottoman monuments by French architect Leon Parvillee; and extensive research into Indian architecture (whose diversity and richness the British found appealing) by James Fergusson between 1835-42, when the powerful East India Company was at its peak.¹⁴⁵⁸

The influence of racial theories by Europeans (Joseph-Arthur de Gobineau, Ernst Renan) during the mid-nineteenth century favoured the Persian races that were considered Indo-Europeans and Aryans. However, the Arabs (or Semites) were relegated to the lower rung of the evolutionary scale just above the Turks as they were viewed as incapable of attaining any further civilizational development. This lowly position for the Arab race was deemed appropriate and strategically ignored their immense cultural achievements during the medieval era; a focus important to this thesis' discussions.¹⁴⁵⁹

Collection formation

Alongside the historical investigations of Islamic art and architecture, the flow of objects from Muslim lands to Europe was steadily increasing. Interest in Persian, Arabic and Turkish coins and manuscripts in particular flowed over to investigations of Islamic art, increasing a general awareness of the topic. Histories of palaeography and manuscripts in European collections-especially *Palaeographic universelle* (1839-42) by Joseph Silvestre and traveller/bibliophile Robert Curzon's *Catalogue for Material*-had substantial impact. As Persian art was seen as superior, glassware and pottery was enthusiastically collected by

¹⁴⁵⁷ *ibid.*, p. 5.

¹⁴⁵⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

¹⁴⁵⁹ *ibid.*

writers (Jean-Charles Davillier) and artists (Mariano Fotuny), and affirmation of the Persian's and Spanish Moors' influence on European ceramic and glass production (especially in Italy) was acknowledged.¹⁴⁶⁰

During the nineteenth-century the earliest collections of Persian, Arab and Turkish art in the West included the significant collection of the ultraconservative French politician Pierre-Louis-Jean-Casimir, duc de Blacas d'Aulps; a large number of objects from this collection now reside in the British Museum. Importantly, this collector commissioned Orientalist J. T. Reinaud to write the first catalogue of a collection of Islamic decorative art in 1828 and was patron to many artists interested in Middle Eastern culture including J. A. D. Ingres, Jean-Baptiste Greuze and Eugene Delacroix.¹⁴⁶¹

The removal and sale of Ottoman tiles from the 1860s into European collections is noteworthy for illustrating the typical chain of supply of artifacts from original source to site of display. The scholar and explorer Richard Burton, for example, spread the word to other collectors, such as painter Fredric Leighton in 1871, that tiled houses in Damascus were being demolished and could add to his growing collection. Leighton in turn, advised Capar Purdon Clarke on the sale of tiles for the South Kensington Museum¹⁴⁶² in 1876. Egypt became another source for The South Kensington Museum to continue purchasing items and collections (such as the Meymar Collection in 1869 and the Saint-Maurice Collection in 1883) for their Islamic holdings and exhibitions.¹⁴⁶³

Despite attempts to stem this one-way flow of artifacts from Egypt to Europe by British officials and the placement of regulations to reduce their trafficking, institutional bodies and agencies in Britain continued to acquire cultural and artistic objects unabated. The purchase of four hundred objects, a complete room including pottery and ornamental/architectural decorations and subsequent book *The Art of the Saracens in Egypt* (1886) by Orientalist scholar Stanley Lane-Poole in the early 1880s (under contract from the Committee of Council of education), is especially telling of this continued practice.¹⁴⁶⁴

More European collectors were to follow. Frenchman Jules Richard (aka Mirza Riza) found little competition when he began actively collecting in Iran from 1844 and is credited

¹⁴⁶⁰ *ibid.*, pp. 7-8.

¹⁴⁶¹ Blair, Bloom, *op. cit.*, pp.152-153, 154.

¹⁴⁶² Renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum (V & A) in 1899.

¹⁴⁶³ Vernoit.2000, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

with bringing the daguerreotype to the region. However, by the 1870s collecting was becoming increasingly popular with collector and museum agents such as Richard Murdoch Smith, who by 1873 had began purchasing items for the South Kensington Museum; a task he continued to under take over the following twelve years which included the sale of 2000 objects (some from Isfahan and Kashan) in 1875 from the Richard Collection to the museum. Also in 1876 Murdoch Smith obtained tiles from a mosque in Natanz from Richard and Jean-Baptiste Nicolas (who had plundered the site before 1875 and again between 1881-1900) for the South Kensington collection.¹⁴⁶⁵

Importantly, Murdoch Smith purchased further items from the Richard Collection in 1889 that had attracted large crowds and commercial interest when displayed at the Exposition Universelle in Paris. In addition, a greater awareness of and interest in Lustre-painted pottery, manuscripts and painting in Europe saw the British Museum increase their Islamic collection by acquiring works from agent Sidney Churchill (who worked with Murdoch Smith) between 1884-94.¹⁴⁶⁶

Objects from Central Asia began being circulated as a result of scientific expeditions in the region that enabled more Europeans to travel and acquire objects at greatly reduced prices. Notable collectors partaking in these journeys included: French collector and jeweler Henri Vever (1881); Swedish collector and art historian Fredrik Robert Martin (1894); and Edward Denison Ross, a British orientalist scholar (1897). Again Islamic items, this time from Central Asian collections of Paul Nadar and Edouard Blanc, were displayed at the 1893 *Exposition d'Art Musulman* in Paris; thereby contributing to an ever-escalating interest in objects from the Orient.¹⁴⁶⁷

Of interest is the French collection of art dealer Adolphe Goupil,¹⁴⁶⁸ who amassed a large number of objects from both the Orient and the Occident, producing a catalogue for a sale in the art dealer's home in 1888 that included photographs of the objects in domestic interiors. This sales technique concentrating on the character of the 'amateur' (late nineteenth-century term for the 'connoisseur'), had the effect of making the collection and the collector an indistinguishable entity and reflected the spectacular and crowded

¹⁴⁶⁵ T Masuya, 'Persian Tiles on European Walls: Collecting Ilkanid Tiles in Nineteenth-Century Europe', *Ars Orientalis*, op. cit., pp. 39-54.

¹⁴⁶⁶ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 11-13.

¹⁴⁶⁷ *ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁶⁸ Goupil was the brother-in-law of Gèrôme, the orientalist painter.

commercial spaces of department stores. Other collectors followed Groupil's example: collector and Professor of Persian art at the L'Ecole des Langues Orietales Vivantes), Charles Schefer's sale and display in his home in 1898; and Swedish scholar, collector, art dealer and diplomat Fredrick Robert Martin's 1897 exhibition at the General Art and Industry Exhibition in Stockholm and the 1905 exhibition of the Muslim art of Algiers, Algiers, were both arranged in a series of rooms designed to reflect domestic interiors.¹⁴⁶⁹

As the nineteenth-century came to a close, there was a renewal of interest in acquiring Islamic items from India, with Purdon Clarke purchasing over 34000 objects for the South Kensington Museum and the India Office from 1981-82. The reason behind this revival of collecting stemmed from the desire of British administrators in India to record and classify their colonial outpost. With the 1858 deposing of the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II and the establishment in 1862 of the Archaeological Survey of India, colonial understandings and historical interpretations of Indian art and architecture was reappraised and contributions from the Mughal's was subsumed under the general category of Hindu art. This move was politically motivated, as the British rulers were actively discouraging any divisions between Hindu and Islamic sectors of the society through highlighting the distinctiveness of Hindu creativity and unity of Indian art.¹⁴⁷⁰

Additionally, from the late nineteenth century there was a growing awareness of Islam not only as a religious structure but also as a cultural entity. In an attempt to discover the 'essence' of Islam, scholarship began to unravel the origins and development of Islamic art and culture by concentrating on earliest religious and historical documents.¹⁴⁷¹

Noteworthy for its rare insights are the investigations of J.M. Rogers (honorary curator of the Khalili Collection) into the collecting of Islamic art in Russia during the nineteenth century, which he admits is extremely difficult to conduct due to scant historical documents and lack of assistance from Russian institutions and agencies.¹⁴⁷² According to Rogers, there was little '*ideological* reason' for Russia to acquire Islamic art as it was considered a best forgotten past. Therefore, most collections were initially private collections of aristocracy or the Tsars that later became state collections when Russian

¹⁴⁶⁹ DJ Roxburgh, 'Au Bonheur des Amateurs: Collecting and exhibiting Islamic Art, ca. 1880-1910', *Ars Orientalis*, op. cit., pp. 9-38.

¹⁴⁷⁰ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 13-14.

¹⁴⁷¹ *ibid.*, p. 32.

¹⁴⁷² JM Rogers, The Collecting of Islamic Art in Nineteenth-century Russia, in Vernoit 2000, pp. 62-67

Imperial activities expanded into Central Asia and the Balkans.¹⁴⁷³ Additionally, most Russian collectors were greatly influenced by the European taste for Persian items. Besides the vast collections of both Catherine and Peter the Great, the Moscow Kremlin Armoury, and manuscript collections at the Russian national Library in St. Petersburg, the only notable Islamic collections were the metalwork items of Count Stroganov and Count A.A. Bobrinsky, and Piotr Ivanovich Shchukin's substantial Mughal and Persian collection. By the beginning of the twentieth-century, the majority of collections were housed in the newly created Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow.¹⁴⁷⁴

The role of International Exhibitions

By the mid nineteenth-century, international expositions were the first to display Islamic objects to large European audiences. These large-scale events introduced the idea of nationhood through world trade fairs, encouraging awareness of aesthetic and commercial possibilities of non-European items whose art and architecture were increasingly classified by national styles.¹⁴⁷⁵ The Universal Exposition's encyclopaedic approach to displaying sets of objects of the same typological category or material, established meaning through the interrelationship of objects. This 'episteme, of knowledge by taxonomy' created a framework and method of display for Islamic art that had its roots in nineteenth-century empiricism and mirrored the evolving role of the art object in the commodity market.¹⁴⁷⁶

Beginning with the Great Exhibition in 1851 held in London at the Crystal Palace, European nations were exhibiting their colonies alongside their own industrial and manufacturing achievements to the world: Britain had exhibits from all colonial outposts especially India; France displayed wares from Algeria; Turkey, Egypt and Tunis were invited to attend and exhibit cultural items; with the Ottoman Empire displayed as individual sections of a region.¹⁴⁷⁷ Luxury souvenirs that had been popular with Europeans travelling in Muslim lands were on display including miniature architectural models of palaces (including the Islamic masterpiece the Alhambra in Granada, Spain) that were again

¹⁴⁷³ *ibid.*, p. 63.

¹⁴⁷⁴ *ibid.*, pp. 63-67.

¹⁴⁷⁵ Vernoit, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

¹⁴⁷⁶ Roxburgh 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

¹⁴⁷⁷ Vernoit, 2000, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

exhibited at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1867, with one surviving model being acquired by the South Kensington Museum in the 1860s.¹⁴⁷⁸

The 1867 Exposition Universelle in Paris is notable for introducing national pavilions and the 1878 Exposition (also along the Champ de Mars) with its pavilions constructed in parkland adjacent to the Trocadero Palace, displayed Islamic art works within the Palace from the European collector Goupil and Schefer, an orientalist scholar. In 1889, displays of ‘villages’ with their people and comprehensive ethnological displays were the main features of the Exposition in Paris and introduced the first ‘Cairo Street’, where run-down buildings in a section called the Rue de Caire featured ‘natives’ in their environment producing ware that the visitor could purchase. The displaying of people in ‘villages’ became a central feature of the regular American international expositions by the turn of the century: Philadelphia, 1876; Boston, 1883; New Orleans, 1884-85; Chicago, 1893; and St Louis, 1904. The Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition, besides featuring the now standard ‘Cairo Street’, included an exhibition from prominent Armenian art dealer and collector Dikran Khan Kelekian; who by 1904 Louisiana Purchase Exposition in St Louis was the Iranian commissioner general.¹⁴⁷⁹ A brief but interesting comparison is made in chapter four, between the Paris and Chicago exhibitions and the Shanghai Expo 2010, in terms of depicting the Middle East and the persistence of *Cairo Street*.

Early museum exhibitions of Islamic art

These International expositions were forerunners to the Islamic exhibitions in the West that were increasingly popular from the late nineteenth-century onwards. With the growing acquisitions of items by European museums and collectors, these displays created an awareness and appreciation of not only the high quality design and advanced technical attributes of Islamic objects commercially, but of the aesthetic and antiquarian merits of Islamic art.¹⁴⁸⁰

The 1876 *Exhibition of Persian Art* held at the South Kensington Museum was the first specialized exhibition of Islamic art but was criticized by the Murdoch Smith (who supplied many of the items) as being unrepresentative of ‘Persian’ Art as the display was

¹⁴⁷⁸ L Eggleton, ‘History in the making: the ornament of the Alhambra and the past-facing presence’, *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., p. 15, retrieved 13 December 2013, <http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/eggleton.pdf>

¹⁴⁷⁹ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 15-18.

¹⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.*

top-heavy with manufactured goods such as tiles, pottery, metalwork, lacquer ware and wooden objects.¹⁴⁸¹ This harsh assessment of the exhibition may have spurred Murdoch Smith mission to supply the museum with Persian carpets at an increasing rate from 1876 onwards; by 1889 the South Kensington Museum had a diverse collection of Persian, Turkoman, Turkish, Caucasian, Indian, Chinese and Central Asian carpets. The same criticism was levelled at the *Exhibition of Persian and Arab Art* held at in London at the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1885, which revered Persian pottery as the highest example of creativity from the region and placed Arab works in the categories of 'Damascus' and 'Rhodian' pottery, as they were considered merely derivative of the Persian style.¹⁴⁸² Ironically, many of the items on display were misappropriated and were actually Turkish Iznik ware that most collectors at the time viewed as artistically inferior.¹⁴⁸³

Rachel Ward attributes the establishment of Islamic art department at the British Museum to the curator Augustus Wollaston Franks (1851-1896), who contributed over 3000 objects from mainly from his own collection or that of his friends. Franks, under great opposition from other curators at the museum, acquired Islamic art, placing both decorative and ethnographic objects alongside European collections of the same period and medium. The present day John Addis Islamic gallery at the British Museum revolves around Franks combined collections and has formed a comprehensive display of objects from the Muslim world.¹⁴⁸⁴

The booming sale in carpets from the Muslim regions of the world to Europe by the late nineteenth-century spurred more exhibitions. For example, the 1893 *Exposition d'Art Musulman* promoted Islamic art commercially and some younger investigative scholars began to take an interest in collecting and exhibiting: the 1897 F.R Martin exhibition in Stockholm; the 1899 Kunstgewermuseum display in Berlin by Fredrich Sarre; and the Philipp Walter Schulz show in Leipzig Kunstgewermuseum in 1900. The 1903 *Exposition des Arts Musulmans* in Paris, organized by collector Raymond Koechlin and Louvre curator Gaston Migeon, significantly raised the profile of Islamic art in several ways: there was a diverse

¹⁴⁸¹ For more details see J Wearden 'The Acquisition of Persian and Turkish Carpets by the South Kensington Museum, in Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 96-104.

¹⁴⁸² For a rare first-hand account of the Burlington exhibition see B W Robinson 'The Burlington House Exhibition of 1931: A Milestone in Islamic Art History', Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 147-155.

¹⁴⁸³ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

¹⁴⁸⁴ For a more detailed account see R Ward, 'Augustus Wollaston Franks and the Display at the British Museum', Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 105-116.

display of items of exceptional standard exhibited sourced from a variety of prominent collectors; and academics versed in oriental scholarship were present to assist with reading Arabic inscriptions, as organizers were keen to increase the public's knowledge of Islamic art. Of note, is the 1925 *Exposition d'art musulman* displayed in Alexandria, Egypt (which Migeon was commissioned to write the catalogue for) that is revealing of the role Greek collectors (such as Alexandre Benaki, Alexandre J. Choremis, M. S. Lagonikos and M. Salvagos) residing in Egypt played in promoting Islamic art.¹⁴⁸⁵

Exhibitions in 1905 and 1907 in Paris promoted textiles and manuscript painting as the most prized objects from the Muslim world but it was the 1910 Islamic art exhibition in Munich which displayed 3600 objects from French, German, Spain, British, Egyptian, Turkish and Russian collections that shifted the emphasis from 'manufactured' to 'art' objects and introduced a new style of exhibition (fig 120, 121). The exhibition was aimed at freeing the objects from their dense, exotic and domestic settings of previous shows (Groupil 1888, Martin 1897, Schefer 1898) in an '...attempt to have the works impress merely through their quality ...declar[ing] war against the popular understanding of Oriental art, against the fairytale splendor and bazaar commodities.'¹⁴⁸⁶



Fig 120 Hall of Honour Munich exhibition 1910.
Source: <http://www.carolinemawer.com/whats-new/>



Fig 121 Interior of Munich exhibition 1910. Source:
<http://www.rugtracker.com/2012/05/seljuk-rodeo.html>

¹⁴⁸⁵ For a more detailed account see J Carswell, 'The Greeks in the East: Alexandria and Islam', in Vernoit, 2000, op. cit. pp. 138-146

¹⁴⁸⁶ Sarre cited in Roxburgh, op. cit., p. 27 and E M Troelenberg, 'Regarding the exhibition: the exhibition *Masterpieces of Muhammadan Art* (1910) and its scholarly position', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., p. 21, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/troelenberg.pdf>>.

However, according to both exhibition organizers Sarre and Kuhnel and media commentators at the time, this aspiration appears to have met with limited success in changing public attitudes for a variety of reasons. For example, in order to see the entire exhibition the visitor was required up to undertake six visits (according to Sarre) due to the overwhelming number of works. In addition, the inclusion of a variety of



Fig 122 Poster of *Meisterwerke muhammedanischer Kunst* exhibition, Munich, 1910. Source: photo: DR. // Matisse and friends at the Oktoberfest, Munich 1910, DR.

restaurants, a concert hall, fairground amenities, a department store selling an array of art objects including carpets and a house (a 'Karawanseraï') where craftsmen from Syria and Turkey demonstrated their art and craft techniques, was possibly too close to the World's Fairs and expositions of the nineteenth-century to dispel stereotypical images of the Orient in the public's mind.¹⁴⁸⁷ According to Annette Hagedorn, the Munich exhibition, designed to educate and inform the public about Islamic art and culture, was considered a failure. Media at the time described the display as joyless and dull and a 'prejudiced audience ... had wanted fantasy, the romantic view of the orient as a land of stories and legends that since the time of the crusades had opposed factual perception'. However, several avant-garde German and international artists had been impressed by the exhibition including: Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc, Henri Matisse and architect Le Corbusier (fig 122).¹⁴⁸⁸ Meanwhile, in the United States the Metropolitan Museum in New York (hereafter referred to as the MET)

¹⁴⁸⁷ Troelenberg, *ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁴⁸⁸ For further details see a Hagedorn, 'The Development of Islamic Art History in Germany in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries', Vernoit, 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 117-27 and Troelenberg, *ibid.* pp. 33-4.

held exhibitions of carpets in 1910-11 and in 1921 and 1914 the Boston Museum of Fine Arts exhibited a collection of Indian and Persian paintings and manuscripts.¹⁴⁸⁹

Twentieth- century exhibitions

With the advent of the First World War displays of Islamic art were limited. However, by 1925 two large displays were staged: London's Victoria and Albert Museum (who had acquired a vast Mughal art collection from 1901-29 due to the purchasing power of Stanley Clarke)¹⁴⁹⁰ exhibited items from the Martin Collection; and the *Exposition d'Art Oriental, Chine-Japon-Perse* in Paris displayed the works from private collections. Eagerness to exhibit Persian art (especially carpets) in the United States was evident in the 1926 *Sesqui-Centennial Exposition* at the Pennsylvania Museum in Philadelphia and exhibitions in the 1930s at the Met and the Detroit Museum.¹⁴⁹¹

Exhibitions of Persian art and culture reached its peak in the 1930s: the 1931 *Exhibition Of Persian Art* at Burlington House in London; a series of displays at the MET of ceramics (1931), book illuminations and miniature painting (1933-4) and textiles and carpets (1935); displays at the Hermitage in St. Petersburg and *Exposition d'Art* in Cairo (1935); Indian miniatures at the Kestner-Gesellschaft in Hanover, Germany (1935); exhibitions in Zurich and Vienna (1936); first exhibition of Islamic art in San Francisco (1937); and the *Les Arts de l'Iran, l'Ancienne Perse et Bagdad* exhibition at the Bibliotheque Nationale, Paris (1938).¹⁴⁹²

The 1931 *Exhibition Of Persian Art* at Burlington House in London is particularly significant, as due to the size and scope of objects on display (more than 2,000 works valued at ten million and assembled at a cost of fifty thousand dollars) it encouraged greater awareness of Islamic art (especially Persian), and helped cultivate an enthusiasm for oriental art and culture. However, it appeared to further entrenched stereotypical images of the Middle East in the public imagination. The brainchild of American Persophile, connoisseur and collector Arthur Upham Pope, the exhibition was underwritten by no less than King George of England and Reza Shah Pahlavi of Iran; a winning combination that elicited donations from museums, collections and governments from thirty countries. The aim of

¹⁴⁸⁹ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

¹⁴⁹⁰ S Stronge, 'Collecting Mughal Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum', Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 85-95.

¹⁴⁹¹ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 21-22.

¹⁴⁹² *ibid.*

this 'exotic' extravaganza was to dazzle the senses and evoke the Arabian Nights style stereotype, emphasizing decorative splendour rather than the didactic experience and downplaying historical, social, religious or political contexts. An impressive advertising campaign accompanied the show including two hundred lectures, special supplements in the London *Times*, broad radio exposure and free lessons in Persian. This media blitz ensured the show's huge success, attracting a crowd of 259,000 in three months including Winston Churchill, George Bernard Shaw, H. G. Wells and the Aga Khan.¹⁴⁹³ Pope, who was called 'the P.T. Barnum of Persian art',¹⁴⁹⁴ is considered visionary by many for his attempts to advocate the study of Oriental carpets as a branch of Islamic art. Pope fought to remove carpets from the 'minor' arts category that so much of Islamic art had been allocated, elevating their status to that of cultural products of art-historical value rather than commodities of fine art at best and 'magic carpets from the Oriental bazaar' at worst.¹⁴⁹⁵

This desire to raise the status of Islamic art through display, the inclusion of a range of related events linked to the exhibition and the emphasis on the 'beautiful' objects rather than historical, social, religious or political contexts is akin to Khalili's approach. Therefore, this aspirational desire of Pope to promote Islamic art and his faith in the artifact's ability to transcend boundaries indicates that Khalili's program of using the arts to establish a common humanity in the twenty-first century was part of an earlier tradition established in the early twentieth-century. However Pope's negative opinion of certain categories of Islamic art is perhaps more revealing of his stance, as his reference to the Seljuqs as 'lacking in the graces of civilisation, a barbaric race unacquainted with the arts.'¹⁴⁹⁶

The rise of the United States as a world power in the West (while Eastern Europe was dominated by the Soviet Union) after the Second World War saw exhibitions to rival those in Britain and Europe; and with the decline of colonial empires there was a flurry of displays of art from collections in Britain, India, Pakistan, France and the United States. Interest in Turkish art in particular, due to racial theories losing favour, meant that the arts

¹⁴⁹³ BD Wood, 'A Great Symphony of Form: The 1931 International Exhibition of Persian Art and its Influence', *Ars Orientalis*, 2000, pp. 113-130.

¹⁴⁹⁴ SG Welch cited by SS Blair, JM Bloom, op. cit., p. 155.

¹⁴⁹⁵ Y Kadoi, 'Arthur Upham Pope and his 'research methods in Muhammadan art': Persian carpets', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., pp. 1-12, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/kadoi.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁹⁶ Pope cited in K Scheid, op. cit., p. 91.

of Iran were no longer considered superior works of art.¹⁴⁹⁷ One American collector in particular, Edward Binney 3rd, was a prolific collector of Turkish art (European, Indian, South Asian and Ottoman) during the mid-twentieth century. As already discussed, lines are often blurred between dealing, collecting and scholarship and social relationships and individual personalities can have significant influence on the creation of many Islamic art collections. Keelen Overton calls Binney a 'social collector', describing him as 'a connoisseur of the market, rather than a connoisseur of the object; a specialist in the history of Turkish art collecting, rather than in Turkish art itself'. What made Binney a 'visionary collector', according to Overton, was that he assembled an encyclopedic Turkish art collection and 'approached collecting with the exactitude of an archivist and the market-trend awareness of a dealer', considering 'artistic evolution' of crucial importance in the larger picture of art production. It was his role as 'collector-curator', therefore, that was his enduring legacy.¹⁴⁹⁸

Vernoit's account of Islamic art collection and display reveals a history of mutually beneficial relationships between the institutions such as museums and libraries in terms of displaying Islamic art since the nineteenth century, as many items from private collections that museums and libraries had initially helped exhibit were later purchased by them. Unsurprisingly, perspectives and policies have been revised concerning cultural artifacts and the politics of display of public collections in many institutions throughout both the Western and Eastern worlds and the increasingly independent Muslim region.¹⁴⁹⁹

This is due in part to the acknowledgement that Islamic objects, with their high quality design and manufacturing attributes, were considered significant contributions to Western public collections. The South Kensington museum served as a model for museums throughout Europe, particularly in Germany, whose collecting practices influenced American institutions such as the privately funded Met with its mission to be a didactic survey

¹⁴⁹⁷ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., p. 222. For an examination of the collecting practices and reinterpretation of the Islamic culture of the Ottoman era in the early years of Turkish state formation (1923-50) see F C Yenisehirlioglu, 'The Republican Ethic and the Family Album: Aspects of Collecting and Art Historical Research in Turkey, 1923-50', Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., pp. 182-193.

¹⁴⁹⁸ K Overton, 'A history of Ottoman art history through the private database of Edwin Binney, 3rd', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., pp. 1-19, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/overton.pdf>>. For an alternative perspective on the role of the scholar, craftsmen and consumer in the history of Ottoman collecting see A Phillips, 'The historiography of Ottoman velvets, 2011-1572: scholars, craftsmen, consumers', *Journal of Art Historiography*, op. cit., pp. 1-26, retrieved 13 December 2013, <<http://arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/Phillips.pdf>>.

¹⁴⁹⁹ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit. p. 22.

museum, advancing general knowledge through the study of 'fine' art.¹⁵⁰⁰ Of interest is Jenkin-Madina's comprehensive essay on early collecting practices of the MET that draws attention to the fact that sixty per cent of the museums 6,000 objects which forms the largest Islamic collection in the world were acquired prior to 1932, highlighting the enormous influence of early art dealers and collectors working on behalf of the museum (especially D G Kelekian) and later patrons Edward C. Moore, James F. Ballard and Mr and Mrs H. O. Havemeyer and Henry and Louisine Osborne.¹⁵⁰¹ Other examples of Islamic art collecting include: the French public displays at the Musee des Arts Decoratifs opened in Paris in 1877 and the continuing enlargement of the Islamic collection at the Louvre; the enormous and ongoing acquisitions (often from private collections) and displays at the British Museum in London. Libraries promoting Islamic art included the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris, the India Office Library and the Hofbibliothek in Vienna.¹⁵⁰²

From the mid nineteenth-century onward, French and British colonies (especially Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and India) created museums to educate populations under their governance and to implement cultural and political policies.¹⁵⁰³ For example, by 1900 the colonial French administration had developed a cultural policy that encouraged the conservation and documentation of monuments and the traditional arts and crafts and the creation of museums throughout its colonies: Algeria and Tunisia in the late nineteenth-century, and Morocco in 1912.¹⁵⁰⁴

In independent Muslim regions museums were established but performed a different function to those in the West. For instance, the Imperial Ottoman Museum in the Topaki Palace (1876), the Islamic museum in Suleymaniye Istanbul (1914), the Museum of Arab Art (1880) and the Khedivial Library manuscript collection (1870) both in Cairo, were constructed primarily as an attempt to stop the traffic of Islamic artifacts to the West.¹⁵⁰⁵ Furthermore, during a thirty-year period (1889-1923) Islamic objects were collected by the Ottoman government in their quest to prevent the theft and exoticizing of cultural artifacts

¹⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁵⁰¹ For more details see M Jenkin-Madina, 'Collecting the Orient at the Met: Early Tastemakers in America', *Ars Orientalis*, January 2000, pp. 69-89.

¹⁵⁰² *ibid.*, pp. 22-26.

¹⁵⁰³ *ibid.*, p. 64.

¹⁵⁰⁴ N Erzini 'Cultural Administration in French North Africa and the Growth of Islamic Art History', in Vernoit, 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 71-84.

¹⁵⁰⁵ Vernoit, 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-28.

by Europeans and to preserve a cohesive national identity as an expression of resistance in the face of these European Imperialistic ventures. As a result, two separate and conflicting museological practices occurred: religious objects were secularized through the processes of aesthetic investigation, collection and display while simultaneously art works that had been part of the political domain of the Ottoman empire were now considered religious relics. When curators arranged these objects into exhibitonary formats, powerful metanarratives were constructed concerning society and their material culture, thereby assigning new and often disparate aesthetic, ideological and economic values.¹⁵⁰⁶

The political situation in the Middle East was changed forever changed by the First World War, with French and British troops occupying and later governing over Arab lands previously ruled by the Ottoman Empire and the creation of the new states or territories of Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine. Western scholars now had greater access to the region in terms of archaeological, architectural and art historical investigations.¹⁵⁰⁷

The museums sector in Turkey continued to grow and after the Arabs reclaimed territory following the Ottoman defeat Iran, Iraq and Syria established their first museums including: the National Museum of Damascus, Syria (1919), and a museum in Serai, Baghdad, Iraq the same year; and the Iranian Archaeological Museum (Bastan) and Ethnographic Museum both in the 1930s. The establishment of museums in the majority of Muslim countries, therefore, assisted in stemming the flow of cultural artifacts from their region and became integral to the nation building process.¹⁵⁰⁸

Most Islamic collections today (according to 2010 HIAA data) are still housed in European museums but there are also substantial collections in the national museums of Islamic countries, mainly from private collections of their ruling classes. Despite Islamic objects being exchanged and traded before the nineteenth century, it is the patterns of westward dispersal established through colonization processes of the major European countries that continues to predominate. For example, the Louvre's passion for collecting Egyptian art and the Victoria and Albert's extensive holdings of Indian artifacts.¹⁵⁰⁹

¹⁵⁰⁶ W M K Shaw, 'Islamic Arts in the Ottoman Imperial Museum, 1889-1923', *Ars Orientalis*, January 2000, pp. 55-68.

¹⁵⁰⁷ Vernoit, 2000, op. cit., p. 37.

¹⁵⁰⁸ *ibid.*, pp 26-29. For chronology of exhibitions and museums see same publication, pp 201-204.

¹⁵⁰⁹ Carey, Graves, op. cit., p. 6.