

Arts Management Newsletter

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Kristin Oswald,
editor

Arts and Culture in the Near East

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Editorial

Dear reader,

The contrast between religious fervor and Western influences shapes the majority of the stereotypes and impressions of the Near East - often conveyed through the media: they are mostly political, like the reports about the religious fanaticism of the Islamic State, dictatorships like that in Syria, or the Arab Spring. Or they show a lifestyle of superlatives à la Dubai. But the countries of the Levant, the Arabian Peninsula and North Africa are more manifold than these aspects show. The only thing they have in common is the adherence to Islam and Arabic as the official language.

The Near East is currently an ubiquitous theme in which art and culture hardly receive any attention. But it seems that the cultural background draws an overall image of the Near East: the tales from the Arabian Nights, Bedouins, or the atmosphere of the markets in Istanbul, Damascus and Cairo. And yet, before Mohammed, the Babylonians and Persians, the Greeks, and the Romans all left their cultural footprints in the region between the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf, shaping its culture. Furthermore the contacts with the Western world have left their cultural traces.

The cultural heritage of the individual states is an important factor for the social development needed for diversity and openness. The traditional elements go hand-in-hand with pop culture and develop their own forms. The confrontation with the pre-Islamic past already contributes to a new identity in some countries. Theater draws upon current topics for a diverse audience. Modern and contemporary art, which, due to the Islamic image ban by fundamentalists was locked up, is being shown in public.

In this newsletter we like to show you several facets of the modern culture of the Orient. The cultural sector needs fewer academic rating systems for art as support for a customized cultural management tailored to its needs. In this constantly changing and conflict-ridden area, a stable and diverse cultural landscape can become the fundament for a common, open, and creative life, conveying educational content and encouraging critical thinking.

Stay also tuned for exciting cultural projects, conference reports and interesting features on www.artsmanagement.net. We are looking forward to exchange ideas, so please always feel invited to send us your feedback or contributions and do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

As the Near East is also an important part of the background of Christmas, we wish you happy holidays.

Sincerely yours,

Dirk Schütz (CEO), Kristin Oswald (editor) and the entire team of Arts Management Network



DR. H.C. MARGARETE
VAN ESS

is an Near Eastern archaeologist, the scientific director of the Orient Department of the German Archaeological Institute and its branch office in Baghdad. She is responsible for research projects in Lebanon, and the long-term project „Uruk“ in southern Iraq.

Archeology and Preservation of the Past in the Near East

With violent conflicts in countries such as Iraq, Syria or Yemen comes extensive damage to their cultural heritage. This may be one the one hand the direct consequence of attacks. On the other hand, ideological or financial backgrounds may also be a motive for destruction. The legacy of the pre-Islamic past also has social relevance. This is the reason why institutions such as the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), the Museum of Islamic Art Berlin or the ICOM are working on the documentation of endangered cultural assets. The archaeologists' work on site includes workshops as well, aimed to raise awareness among the local population and the employees in the ministries.

By Margarete van Ess

The European origins of interest in the ancient Orient

The works of Arab writers from the 10th century, in which they admired the beauty of the Roman temple of Baalbeck in Lebanon (e.g. al-Masudi to 956; Ibn Hauqal to 977) as well as sketches and elaborate drawings of the impressive ruins of Syria and Egypt by European travelers of the 17th to the 19th centuries had an enthusiastic readership and audience. The archaeological sites of the East were present since ancient times and attracted those who were hungry for knowledge.

A systematic study of the historical and archaeological legacy of the states of the East took place only in the second half of the 19th century. The interest in foreign cultures grew parallel to the globalization of external relations of the European nations, whether they were of colonial, economic or diplomatic nature. Thereby, it belonged to a country's self-representation to claim the significant cultural heritage of distant regions as their own. In the Middle East - in the region of the Ottoman Empire, i.e. on the territory of the present-day states of Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine, Turkey and Syria - the French and British, who were interested in archeology, were predominantly. They undertook excavations and to a large extent took archaeological objects back home, where they can be seen today in the Louvre or in the British Museum. Shortly after Germany developed economic and political cooperation with the Ottoman Empire, German archaeologists and architectural historians brought classification and new documentation methods to the excavation work in the Middle East and established the discipline of Islamic archeology.

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Photo of the ruins of Baalbeck today. © DAI/ Irmgard Wagner

Dealing with archaeology in Oriental countries

In 1884 the Ottoman Empire had issued an antiquities law which not only dictated that all antiquities of the empire were state-owned, but also laid down authorization procedures for excavation licenses for both domestic and foreign applicants. This law was a reaction to the Western scientists who came to the Orient with the objective of the requisition of antiques and art dealers who were looking for objects to sell. After the First World War, as the Ottoman Empire became Turkey and diverse Arab states, a new national administration of antiquities arose that is still valid today. The Arab region was initially under the mandate of Britain and France and the administrations and laws were recognizable by the prevailing tradition of these countries. After the independence of the states new structures and antiquity laws were very gradually created.

The involvement with archeology in the Middle Eastern states in the 19th century was first due to the interests of Western states and scientists. The society of the Ottoman Empire and its successor states knew little of its own pre-Islamic heritage, although this was a significant factor for the creation and the early history of Islam. Distinct institutions were created in its tradition over the centuries, which dealt with the Islamic past and at the same time represented their culture: mosques, schools and universities, hospitals or even tombs. Often elaborately set up and richly decorated, they belong to the best Islamic architecture ever produced. The protection of these facilities belonged to the obvious task of society. To date, these buildings are subject

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to the care of a special administration and are not the responsibility of the antiquity administrations. The confrontation with Islamic and non-Islamic past is separately institutionalized.

The past as an identity factor in the nation-states of the Near East

After the end of the Ottoman Empire there was, primarily deriving from the self-understanding of the mandate powers, a search for an appropriate means of "nation building" that was independent of religion. In addition to promoting modern art, pre-Islamic cultural heritage offered the possibility of covering recent religious and ethnic differences, promote new forms of society, and create commonalities through the focus of a long regional history. National museums were created everywhere since the 1920s and their staff received an education in archaeology or museum administration. However, one could first study these subjects in the 1950s or 60s or later, as in several of these states dictatorships or dictatorship-like domination arose. Nationalist terms were applied in the study either intentionally or unintentionally. For example, in Iraq, the standard Western archeological term for the modern borders of "Mesopotamia" was naturally replaced with "Iraqi". In addition, until 2003, everything that was public - the sculptures glamorizing the dictator and the historic paintings - was created to draw reference to ancient events; for example, Saddam Hussein being portrayed in a enormous painting before the ministry of justice together with King Hammurabi - an important ruler of the Babylonian Empire, who, in the 18th century BC engraved the first laws in a stone stele. Here, similar to Italy under Mussolini - the glorious ancient history so blatantly served the self-representation of the State that the destruction or in particular looting of modern art and the National Museum in 2003 was strongly motivated domestically.

The administration and importance of cultural heritage today

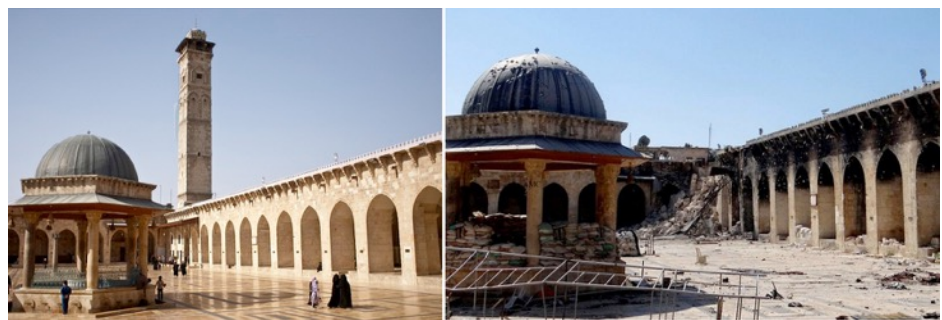
The antiquities administrations, museums and universities have been and are being financed by the public sector. Although they are often only minimally endowed, they offer permanent employment and thus, through the administration and the overseeing of the excavation and historical sites, offer stable living conditions that go far into the villages. Due to the combination of civil servants and staff as well as being an unusual profession, these institutions continue to function even in times of crisis, as currently observed in Syria or Iraq. The commitment of those responsible for the sites and museum objects also springs from the consciousness in the Orient to advocate a special cultural heritage.

The preoccupation with one's own history and the often decade-long excavation projects by foreign teams make, especially for a city's or a region's own residents, people proud about the past and revere that which was previously created. The local population's great interest for excavations or conservation projects can be felt almost everywhere and, with the expectation that the

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special features of the location are known internationally, the hope of national attention and economic development arises. Therefore, there are always people who are ready to protect and maintain an archaeological site with great commitment. Like everywhere, this leads to national and economic improvement but also results in rising land and property prices and the investment of new buildings and infrastructures that are often created without regard to the historically relevant sites. Also, the attractiveness of illegal excavations and the robbery of antiques increases.



The destruction of the mosque of Aleppo with a minaret of the 11th century shows that also cultural heritage of the Islamic eras is threatened by the war © Association for the protection of Syrian archeology (APSA)

The scientific staff of the German Archaeological Institute considers it therefore their duty, through excavations and conservation projects, to not only create picturesque new sites whose significance is determined by the number of visitors, but in particular to involve the local community. The research findings are simultaneously presented for and with them in a larger, local context that emphasizes the visual characteristics and harkens the ancient cultural achievements in particular. Cultural aspects, relationships, historical processes, and the methods of interpretation should be a basic part of education in these regions. This would raise an awareness of the collections' importance and help to look through nationalistic purposes. It is hoped, that the antique sites are thereby protected from fanatical devotion or rejection and destruction. At the same time this ideally becomes communal property and in turn a true part of the world heritage. ¶



URSULA ROTHE

is specialized in the archaeology of the Roman provinces and excavates among other places, the Tall Zira'a in Jordan. Previously, she worked at the University of Edinburgh (UK) and the Reiss-Engelhorn Museums in Mannheim, Germany. She is currently working as Baron Thyssen Lecturer in Classical Studies at the Open University (UK).

Heritage Sites in Jordan

A treasure of a different kind

Jordan is a unique place in the Near East. Surrounded by crisis regions like Israel, the West Bank, Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, the country became a peaceful island in the last 15 years. The development of tourism has therefore a comparatively big significance. Next to modern art pre-Islamic culture plays a central role in this. The close linkage and equality of both areas is an example for the openness of this country and its society.

By Ursula Rothe

An open country with own challenges

Jordan is a poor and at the same time a very rich country: poor because it consists mainly of desert, with very little water and few natural resources such as oil or gas; rich, because it contains spectacular mountain scenery and a unique cultural landscape, and because its people are characterised by open-mindedness, adaptability and a high level of education. This firm situation caused that multinational companies have been showing increasing presence in the capital Amman, and on the other hand, that the country has taken on several million refugees from Iraq and Syria – bearing in mind the native population is just 8 million.

For these and many other reasons the country is changing rapidly. The influx, for example, of international corporations has created new jobs, but in many ways the changes that Jordan is currently experiencing raise concerns, too. Petrol and house prices have skyrocketed without the basic income rising accordingly. Moreover the sudden population growth has exerted pressure on the country's already inadequate water and energy supplies. So Jordan is at a crossroads. Without significant export commodities such as crude oil, the country will never be able to follow the paths of its neighbours Iraq and Saudi Arabia. The lack of natural resources and water also makes an expansion both of secondary industry and agriculture virtually impossible. In other words, Jordan can and must work with what it has: its stable political situation, its extremely attractive natural and cultural landscape and the ability of its people. The development of tourism is an obvious course to take.

Cultural tourism as an economic factor

Archeology plays a central role in this context, because Jordan has an incomparable wealth of archaeological sites, from Neolithic settlements such as in Wadi Faynan, through the numerous Bronze and Iron Age tell settlements like on Tall Zira'a, to well preserved classical cities like Petra, Jerash and Gadara, early Christian churches such as in Madaba, grandiose buildings of the Umayyad period such as the so-called 'desert castles' and the Qasr al Abd, and

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crusader-period castles like Karak and Ajlun. Hardly a corner of this relatively small country lacks an important archaeological site. Alongside these cultural attractions, there are also important natural treasures: the Dead Sea, breathtaking ravines like the Wadi Mujib and Wadi Rum, the forested mountains of Dana'a and Ajlun and coral reefs in the Red Sea at Aqaba.

The Jordanian government knows this, and has been working for decades on the development of tourism and the related fostering of the country's cultural and natural heritage. Petra, the unique capital of the Nabataean people and important trading center between Arabia and the Mediterranean, attracts around half a million visitors every year. The excellently preserved Roman city of Jerash has been developed in the past two decades to act as a tourist destination, and is now the second most visited site in Jordan after Petra. It is also the venue of the largest music and culture festival in Jordan. Meanwhile, the country has four UNESCO World Heritage Sites (Petra, the Wadi Rum, the desert castle Qaseir Amra and the Roman to early Islamic city of Umm er-Rasas), and there are fifteen other sites on the provisional list.



The rock city of Petra, built around the beginning of the Common Era, characterised by its Roman inspired facades. © Wikimedia Commons

Culture needs infrastructure and cooperation

But the potential is far from being fulfilled. There are a lot of obstacles that hinder the process. Public transport is rudimentary; there is a lack of catering and accommodation facilities in many parts of the country; because of financial reasons the archaeological finds are only maintained and displayed

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properly in a few places; the two ministries that are responsible – the Department of Antiquities and the Department of Tourism – do not always work smoothly together. The country is poor, and often the necessary funds to build infrastructure are lacking.

There is also an additional, perhaps more fundamental issue: the perceived distance between especially the archaeologists and the ordinary people of the country. Jordan is a relatively young country: when the Emirate was established in 1922, the population was only 225,000, half of which were nomadic Bedouins who still strongly influence the culture of the country, especially in the south. After the Arab-Israeli war of 1948, Palestinians increasingly populated the country. Where previously there were only two cities – Amman and as-Salt – there grew large urban centres like Irbid, Zarqa, Karak and Aqaba. Unlike, for example, in Syria, with its long, relatively continuous history, Jordan has only slowly been developing a national identity, and it is one which is centred mainly on the royal family; the relationship of the people to the land itself, along with the cultural heritage it contains, is still in many ways in the process of developing.

In Petra it is different: tourism is firmly in Bedouin hands, who made a home of the caves in the valleys for many generations, now serve as proud hosts for the masses of annual visitors. The same applies to the stunning desert landscape of Wadi Rum. But especially in the north the relationship between the sites and the people who live in the vicinity is not always quite so close. Most archaeological sites are still excavated by foreign – mainly European and North American – institutions; a gap between the archaeologists on the one hand and the Jordanians on the other arises, of course, on the cultural, linguistic and economic differences.

But in recent years things have changed: the local archaeology has begun to establish in the country, more young people are doing archaeological and conservation degrees, and the efforts of foreign scholars are increasingly focussed on projects aimed at the long-term conservation and local benefit of archaeological sites and finds – such as the exemplary Temple of the Winged Lions Project of the American Center of Oriental Research together with the Jordanian Department of Antiquities. The most successful initiatives are those in which Jordanian and foreign partners work together, for example at the Archaeological Museum in as-Salt. Before the long-awaited opening of the new National Jordan Museum many of the Jordanian employees were sent to foreign museums such as the Louvre in Paris or to mosaic experts of the Department of Antiquities in Italy, to acquire skills. The museum now allows the establishment of a cultural reference point for scientists, Jordanians and visitors to the country. The new knowledge of the employees during examples of learning abroad now a solid core of expertise, which can let Jordanian culture management act more and more independent.

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The ruins of the nymphaeum in Gadara before the setting of Lake Tiberias in the background. © Ursula Rothe

However, perhaps more important is the fact that the Jordanians themselves are becoming increasingly interested in their cultural heritage, and that far away from Amman. In Umm Qais, for example, the location of the spectacular Roman city of Gadara in the northwest of the country, a local club has been established that, organises events in the Roman theatre, does regular litter picks on the archaeological site and leads archaeological and nature tours for school children. The desire to make more out of the place is palpable, but the resources are scarce. It is hoped that both the Jordanian government and the foreign organisations operating in Jordan realise the long term potential of the development of Jordan's cultural heritage and invest generously. This would not only fulfil the duty of preserving culture for future generations, but also has the prospect of helping to secure the uncertain future of the country.¶



HELLA MEWIS

studied business and has been working as a cultural manager since 1993 with, among others, the Kunsthof Gesellschaft zur Kunst- und Kulturförderung mbH (Kunsthof Society for Arts and Cultural Development Corporation) as well as a manager for international theater projects at the Theaterhaus Berlin Mitte from 2010 to 2012. Hella Mewis now lives and works independently in Baghdad and organizes cultural exchange projects in various branches of art between Europe and the MENA region.

Culture in Difficult Times

Theater in Iraq Between Big Ideas and Weak Structures

The aftermath of the war, the terrorism of the fundamentalist Islamic State, and the development of a new system of government is shaping life in Iraq. To ensure that the cultural sector can grow again, artists and cultural managers are needed. Hella Mewis organizes national and international theater projects in Baghdad. Kristin Oswald spoke with her about how culture in Iraq contributes to the development of education, community values, and openness more actively than it is often the case in the Western world.

The interview was conducted by Kristin Oswald, ok@kulturmanagement.net

AMN: Ms. Mewis, you plan and realize theater projects and co-productions in Iraq, in particular in Baghdad. How did you come about to doing this?

Hella Mewis: In 2010 I worked as a project manager for international theater projects at the Theaterhaus Berlin Mitte. I was in Baghdad for the first time when the house was invited to a theater festival. It became clear to me very quickly that I wanted to work in Iraq. I directed my very first own theater project there with the name of Stamba last year as part of the theme 'Baghdad, Cultural Capital of the Arab World'. For each country of this four-country project between Iraq, Egypt, France and Germany, a play was developed based on the theme of clichés in Europe and the MENA-Region. It was premiered in Baghdad as the first international co-production presented after 2003.

AMN: What was the indigenous theater tradition in Iraq like before 2003?

HM: Theater has a long tradition and a great significance in Iraq. Until the First World War it was concentrated in the cities of Baghdad, Mosul, and Basra. With the British colonization the influence of theater grew, just like other areas of the fine arts. Around the end of the 1920's theater departments were set up at institutes and universities of fine arts and classical and later epic theater was taught and performed. However, theater in Iraq is more than just a Western influence. There was a great deal of synergy during its development. Today, the Iraqi theater has its own form and deals intensively with the problems in the country - even right now, although the IS is in power to the north and west of Iraq. Upstart theater pieces stick out in particular. There is dance theater like the work Noise by Rasool Abbas. In the field of performance, pieces are especially conceived for the special regional architecture such as the Montara Theater in Baghdad - a Schanasschil, a former residential building with a roofed courtyard and units surrounding it. The director and choreographer Bassem Al Tayeb used nine of these units to perform scenes taken from daily life. This is something completely new in Iraq.

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AMN: You have implemented numerous projects in Iraq, including a theater festival for next generation artists. To what extent have you been supported by the financial, political and managerial structures of state culture?

HM: The festival for next generation artists was organized by Muntada Theater and was funded by the Ministry of Culture. The Muntada is part of the State National Theater with currently about 270 members in the ensemble. The Iraqi Ministry of Culture operates four theater houses that were rebuilt piece-by-piece after their destruction. The ministry also has a budget at its disposal, but has only first been able to work with it since 2002. There is no strategy for culture and no cultural development plan. Today's entire administration apparatus is set up just as centrally as it was under Saddam, using in part some of the same staff. That makes the work difficult, even though the management level in the branches of the Ministry of Culture and the theater houses has been switched and they are interested in achieving something. But their amendment proposals are subject to the approval by the parliament. For example, a culture funding strategy plan was filed in 2013 but still hasn't been decided upon. Such official struggles with formal political opponents continue to happen daily.

AMN: What role do cultural sectors like the theater have to deal with this system, the consequences of the war, the political and social problems, and the new beginning?

HM: Upstart theaters are particularly very critical of society and are therefore very creative. Just last week, we premiered the performance Interview, a German-Iraqi co-production directed by Akram Assam. The themes of the status of women, the ideology of the Islamic State and what is happening in northern Iraq are addressed here using multimedia and various elements such as drama, dance and video installations. Addressing the target group and publicity works quite differently than in Europe. We only managed to reach a wide audience for Interview because I have contacts with newspapers and television. Otherwise, a lot runs using social media, which reaches new audiences. Normally, like in Europe, academics from the arts and social sciences go to the theater. This time others, like those from technical colleges, also came. They rarely know anything about theater projects and performances. The next generation is particularly open to discussion and change. This is not so much the case with older people. These important aspects of cultural management - audience development, the transmission of values and a critical look at current conditions - work very well here. The discussions that arise from the plays continue afterwards. Perhaps this is due to the difficult circumstances and the greater need to change something.

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Criticism of the terrorist practices of the IS is particularly evident in this scene from the play "Interview". © Mohamed Oda

AMN: How do you organize and fund projects? What kinds of cultural managerial challenges do you face?

HM: There is no cultural management or marketing training in Iraq. That is the after-effect of Saddam's centralization policies. Artists do not know how they can fund projects. This training is a responsibility of the state, which is slowly taking care of it, but it is also a responsibility of the artists themselves. A lot of work needs to be done. If an NGO is planning a project, it can apply for co-financing by the Ministry of Culture and look for other donors if this is not enough. Sponsoring by the economic sector is not well known – also by organizations, although the willingness to rethink is there. Then, there are the international supporters on location, consulates with cultural funding programs or foundations. Only a few know about these options. Also new and important is that the tasks are being distributed meaningfully and that there is advancement in structured teamwork. In the past, most things worked through contacts. To learn something like this and to teach it is a procedure. One cannot just apply European cultural management to Iraq. First, one needs to understand the differences between cultures and behaviors. Intercultural management was a great help to me and should be a greater part of the training in Germany.

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AMN: Baghdad was the UNESCO Cultural Capital in 2013. You were involved in an international theater festival as part of the program. How was the feedback?

HM: I was pleased that Baghdad's application was successful because a larger budget was allotted for culture through it. There was film, art, literature and theater. We organized an eight-day festival with performances at the National Theater, in the Rafidain, and in the Muntada Theater. Two plays were presented each day from Iraq, the Arab region, as well as from abroad. The theaters were always crowded. Many international journalists have criticized the yearly cultural capital program, mostly because of the quality. But many of them were not on location and others had a political rather than a cultural background. You cannot just apply Western standards; instead, you have to know the background. Festivals are conceived differently in the Arab region. I found it very good because national and international productions from across all cultural sectors were shown, artists were invited, and there was a dialogue. In addition, the infrastructure was built up, for example, the Museum of Modern Art in Iraq was reopened after it had been destroyed and looted during the war.

AMN: What is there left to do? Where do you want have support - perhaps from the European countries?

HM: Most important, I think, is to promote and institutionalize cultural exchanges. Culture thrives on that. Opportunities for artists and cultural managers are needed to gain experience outside the country and to be able to participate in projects, workshops or serve as trainees. One can pass this knowledge on at home to initiate developments in management as well as in the content of culture, matching the conditions of the country. Therefore an understanding of the diversity of the backgrounds and the quality of the culture and lifestyle of the Arab world is fundamental. ¶



DR. GABRIELE
LANDWEHR

has been the director of the Gulf Region Goethe Institute in Abu Dhabi since 2013. She studied German and history in Stuttgart and since 1980 has worked at the Goethe-Institute in Rome, Los Angeles, Mexico City, New York and Chennai, South India. From Abu Dhabi she coordinates the work of the Goethe-Institute in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Oman. Sharjah is one of her favorite places in the UAE.

Sharjah

A Small Emirate with Great Art

The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven empires. They are mainly known for their wealth from oil trading and the modern, almost pompous architecture. Ruled by autonomous hereditary monarchies, the Emirates are symbolic for the many possibilities of finding an individual path between one's own tradition and Western economic influences. In the Emirate of Sharjah, one of the smaller and lesser-known Emirates, art has great relevance. Here, the ruling family tries to solve the conflicts in the country and in public life with the help of supporting art and culture.

By Gabriele Landwehr

"So That You Might Know Each Other" was the title of the exhibition for the official start of Sharjah as the "Capital of Islamic Culture 2014". This title, which has been awarded annually since 2006 by ISESCO, the International Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, to cities in which cultural assets of Islam are available in great quantities, will however need to be maintained and protected. The choice of the symbolic opening exhibition was subtitled: "The world of Islam from North Africa to China and beyond, from the collection of the Vatican Ethnological Museum". With it, His Highness Sheikh Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of the Emirate of Sharjah, a trained historian and avid art collector, made both friends and enemies who grappled fiercely in social media about this Muslim-Christian cooperation. At the end the proponents of the exhibition prevailed, praising the mindfulness of the Vatican for its collection of Islamic art objects.

Intercultural and interfaith dialogues aren't new topics in this emirate, which can be reached after passing through Dubai and can be immediately recognized in the architectural differences. We can still find traditional architecture in Sharjah: Islamic Arabic elements with materials that blend harmoniously into the desert environment, the old buildings stylishly renovated. Preservation and protection is very important for the ruling family, as well as is the protection of social structures and integrity. On this basis, an opening for modern and avant-garde art is possible. With its 17 museums and a nearly 30-year old museum tradition - at least for the United Arab Emirates, which was established in 1971 - Sharjah is far ahead of its larger neighbors Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

Conservative - a matter of perspective

In Germany, Sharjah is stuck with the "conservative" label. There, Shariah is regarded for everything ranging from the strict prohibition of alcohol and the Code of Decency, adopted in 2001 and which sets rules for modest dress and

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behavior in public. Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi studied art history and is the daughter of the ruler. She founded the Sharjah Art Foundation in 2009 and since 2003 has led the Sharjah Biennial, which was established in 1993. Sheikha Hoor has carefully and skillfully opened this for the young artists that mainly come from Arab countries, as well as for non-Arab artists. The promotional work of the Sharjah Art Foundation offers year-round exhibitions, seminars, workshops and residences. She also uses her extensive art education to help the local population gain an understanding of works of art. Residency programs allow for example visitors and artists to meet and talk with each other.

Sheikha Hoor casually wears the Abaya, the traditional Arab cloak, and has jeans and T-shirt underneath as well as colorful nail polish and a bob haircut. She is self-confident, articulate and understands a lot of art. She personally knows the artistic elite of the both the Arab world and abroad, their main curators, gallery owners and collectors. She curates many of their exhibitions in Sharjah and will even be organizing the pavilion of the UAE at the 56th Venice Biennale in 2015.

Of course, political reflections will be visible there, such as in the exhibition Sinus Arabicus, which was on display up to the end of September 2014 in the former 4711 factory in Cologne, in collaboration with Galerie Brigitte Schenk. A battered pink Mini by the Saudi artist Sara Abu Abdallah and the accompanying video installation leave no doubt what Hoor stands for as a curator. She has respect for that which we call dignity in the west, meeting older and traditional people in her country with a headscarf.



The combination of modernity and cultivated tradition is reflected in the architecture of Sharjah. © marviikad / [flickr.com](https://www.flickr.com/photos/marviikad/)

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Calligraphy dominates Islamic art. It is, also in accordance to the modern Islamic prohibition of images, mostly non-figurative. Traditional people either don't go to modern museums or turn away from physical representations bashfully or hostile. There are self-conscious women who wear the Abaya and Sheila (head covering) as an expression of their national identity and have their picture taken. And there are other, also young, self-confident women, who don't allow their face to be photographed. Sheikha Hoor passes effortlessly between these worlds and embodies a type of Arabic Islamic woman that Western people are often confused by.

Intercultural conflicts and Sharjah's attempts to find solutions

This fine line also applies to Manal Ataya, the director of the Sharjah Museums Department. Her tasks include making Sharjah's 17 museums attractive to the people of the Emirates. From a gush of oil it was catapulted from a nomadic Bedouin tribal community into a modern, global, and extremely media-savvy society that has simply leaped over all the development phases that other societies took for granted. Out of such rapid upheavals, which go comparatively slowly in Western countries, cultural conflicts arise that are only to be equated with conservatism. Today it is the Emirati who are sedentary and the many foreigners (ex-pats) in the country are the nomads, because they live in the UAE (with very few exceptions) for only for a limited period of time.

As an introduction to Emirati Bedouin life, it is worth visiting the National Heritage Museum in Sharjah, which has been rebuilt in a vanished ancient city wall. Through vibrantly composed units both tourists as well as the next generation of Emirati learn about family, education, food, clothing, religion and work life about how life looked like in the Emirates, how it smelled and how it sounded. The youth, just like in Western countries, needs to learn first how to critically deal with their own culture and history because they live in modern villas or luxurious apartments, and expensive cars and luxury products are the norm.

Museums and pieces of art are not purely a financial investment for the ruling family in Sharjah. Their commitment to building a national Emirati identity in art or for art is not typical of all the rich art owners in the Gulf States. Sharjah regards itself as the guardian and creator of Islamic culture. As early as 1998 UNESCO honored the Emirate with the title "Cultural Capital of the Arab World." Art and culture is deeply rooted within the ruling Qasimi family; they include avant-garde artists, writers and playwrights. In their community as well as in the UAE they promote gifted painters, installation artists, musicians, writers and cultural workers. They contribute in forging identities through art and its content- or at least try to, because people here are more seduced by shopping and by the venal luxury brands and these are more copiously found in the huge malls than in the museums. That said, each German community would be green with envy when, alongside world-

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class exhibitions or artists' residencies, a public, predominantly free culture-art-involvement program would be available for all ages like that which the Sharjah Art Foundation offers.

Rarely has globalization been so tangible to experience as in the Emirates and especially in Dubai. Influences of Western art are unavoidable because the Emirati have until only recently received their art education in England, the USA or in France. The young artists primarily draw on their own themes and confront social conflicts more in conciliatory manner than with horror. Parallel to modern art, calligraphy - one of the main lines of Muslim art tradition - is also witnessing a renaissance and has its own museum in Sharjah, from which Western artists draw inspiration.

Art as the basis of national sentiment

Of course, Sheikh Qasimi and his daughter Hoor don't just display parts of their collections for pleasure. The Bedu tribes lived on livestock, agriculture (mainly date palms), from fishing and pearl diving until the Japanese covered the market with cultured pearls. Almost miraculously, oil was then discovered and since then it has not only fed the country much better, it has also given it international standing and led to the establishment of the UAE, and - though still with clear demarcations between the seven emirates - a national society. The Emirati realize that oil is coming to an end. They want to create another wonder by strongly expanding several economic sectors, and in Sharjah this is especially tourism. Not only beautiful beaches should attract visitors to the country all year, but also museums, art treasures, cultural events and architectural masterpieces.

Abu Dhabi goes its way and buys brands such as the Louvre and Guggenheim. The ruler of Dubai, HH Sheikh Mohammed Al Maktoum, wants to transform the hypermodern Metro stations into galleries and museums and make art accessible. In Sharjah the ruling family already recognized the importance of museums as places for education and for establishing identity 40 years ago and is building a marketing strategy aimed at an upscale and educated group of tourists. Art students and artists from around the world are now making the pilgrimage to the Sharjah Biennale or the March meeting of the Sharjah Art Foundation, which can afford to invite artists or curators who are currently in demand and who bring their audience. The Emirati in Sharjah are becoming more and more used to the international audience and the avant-garde art that is presented in the historic buildings. They are invited to all activities and should perceive it as a celebration of their community. Scheika Hoor and her father see culture as a social unifying force and have the means to make it accessible to everyone. Currently, however, foreign visitors are benefitting from it the most. ¶



DR. AHMAD NAŞER
ŞARMAŞT

was born in Afghanistan as son of the famous composer, conductor and musician Ustad Salim Sarmast. He studied ethnomusicology and pedagogy at Moscow State Conservatory and was granted with several fellowships in international conservatories, memberships in various music companies and global awards. Before he founded the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) in 2010, he undertook intensive research about Afghan music history with a particular focus on cross-cultural influences and instruments.

Rebuilding Music in Afghanistan

The Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM)

In the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM) in Kabul, the nation recovers from thirty years of war and young children are learning to forget the destructive force of conflict by embracing the healing, restorative power of music.

By Allegra Boggess, William Harvey and Dr. Ahmad Sarmast

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Why Afghanistan needed a Music Institute

During the 1990s, during the regime of the Taliban, playing or listening to music, as well as selling recordings, was prohibited. This policy forced the nation's musicians to flee their homeland, causing a creative and cultural drain that severely damaged Afghanistan's arts and cultural scene for many years.

One of these musicians-in-exile was Ahmad Sarmast. With Degrees from Moscow Conservatory and a Doctorate from Monash University, he frequented Afghanistan to best determine how to revive the lost Afghan musical culture. While at Monash, he embarked on the Revival of Afghan Music (ROAM) project, which made several recommendations, one being the establishment of a dedicated music education entity.

"Given the damage done to Afghanistan's music culture across years of civil war, efforts to rebuild and revitalize Afghan music needs to focus on those who will be our musicians in the future: the children of Afghanistan," said Dr. Sarmast. With the support and encouragement of Monash University, the Ministry of Education of Afghanistan, and with financial backing from many international donors, he founded ANIM on June 20, 2010. ANIM is the first music institute in the country where talented children — regardless of gender, ethnicity, or socioeconomic circumstances — can receive a high quality education that includes general academic and specialist music training.

Education and the aftermath of the civil war

Due to extreme poverty many children in Afghanistan are forced to choose work over school in order to provide money for their families. That's why the school is tuition-free and has a special focus on supporting the most disadvantaged groups of society — girls, orphans, and street vendors — to attain a vocation that will allow them to reach their full potential while contributing to their social and economic status as well as their emotional healing. To en-

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WILLIAM HARVEY

taught violin, cello and bass from March 2010 to March 2014 at ANIM . He studied at the Juilliard School, Indiana University and Carnegie Hall Academy and played as concert master internationally with various orchestras. On ANIM he was the founding director of the Afghan Youth Orchestra, for which he wrote the arrangements and that he led nationally and internationally in many important concerts. He was also the artistic director of ANIM. Harvey also founded Cultures in Harmony, a non-profit organisation that promotes intercultural understanding through music in the poorest regions of the world.

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sure that the most vulnerable children – the street vendors and low-income children – are not forced to leave the school to make a living for their families and themselves, ANIM offers a sponsorship program that provides a small monthly allowance to compensate for the loss of their potential income. Additionally, ANIM provides transportation, uniforms, and lunch to all students. ANIM partners with The Afghan Child Education and Care Organization (AFCECO) and Aschiana to identify orphans and former street children who may be potential students at ANIM. This program reflects ANIM's commitment to poverty alleviation.

From 2010 to 2014 the enrolment of girls at ANIM increased from 1 to 55. While girls are now featured in every ensemble, in 2014 an all-girls orchestra and choir has been established. ANIM's provision of a coeducational environment makes it unique in Afghanistan. The establishment of ANIM's student association, one of the only such associations in the country, reveals ANIM's commitment to democratic values and this association is also represented in the school council.



In the ANIM orchestras children with different backgrounds are combining traditional arabic and western instruments and musical styles. © Jennifer Taylor.

ANIM's curriculum is based on Afghanistan's general education program, as taught in primary and secondary schools, combined with a specialist music-training. The music program has been developed in association with the National College of Music, London, and revised by the ANIM faculty to incorporate the needs of Afghan music.

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ALLEGRA BOGGES

teaches piano, oboe and bassoon at ANIM. She studied at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and the University of Colorado, won awards and played at various international festivals as well as in the Denver Young Artists Orchestra. She was also founder and director of the Department of Music at Shanti Bhavan Children's Project, a school for disadvantaged children in South India.

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The curriculum aims to deepen the students' understanding of music, its history, and its manifestations in different cultures throughout the world. The Department of Afghan Music provides intensive study of instruments such as ghichak, rubab, tanbur, dilruba, sitar, sarod, and tabla while the Department of Western Music offers instruction in violin, viola, cello, bass, flute, oboe, clarinet, saxophone, bassoon, trumpet, horn, guitar, piano, and percussion.

The cultural music heritage of Afghanistan

Given the mission of ANIM to rebuild and revitalize Afghan musical traditions, instruments and musical genres were included for the first time in the history of music education of this country in the curriculum of the school. To preserve Afghan musical oral traditions, method books using Western musical notation have been developed. To ensure the sustainability of music and music education, training programs for the teachers and students are a crucial part of the ANIM's program. Additionally, the international teachers work side-by-side with local Afghan counterparts in order to jointly implement the school's curriculum while creating awareness of the modus operandi of international music schools.

ANIM is also working assiduously to assure and promote musical diversity by focusing on Western classical music and teaching instruments of this tradition. International teachers recruited for the Department of Western Music are remunerated by funds from the World Bank. While living in Afghanistan they teach students, train local Afghan teachers, and implement the curriculum during these initial stages of ANIM's development. In order to take care of its instrument collection and to provide a new vocation for its faculty and graduates, ANIM has devoted attention to the maintenance and repair of instruments. Generous funding by the British Council, the Goethe Institute and partnership of the British Chapter of Luthiers sans Frontieres, enabled ANIM to establish an instrument repair workshop capable of servicing woodwind, brass, and string instruments – the first such workshop in Afghanistan.

Thanks to the generosity of sponsors and donors such as the World Bank, German Foreign Office, Goethe Institute, British Council and Embassies of the USA, Canada, Finland, and Denmark, ANIM has developed an outstanding infrastructure for music, with facilities comparable to those of music schools in the US and Europe.

Concerts and a new public understanding for music

ANIM initiated a number of ensembles including the Afghanistan Youth Orchestra, ANIM Wind Ensemble, Young Ensemble of Afghan Traditional Instruments, Girls Ensemble, Sitar and Sarod Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble, Guitar Ensemble, and ANIM Choir. These ensembles are a crucial element in

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community outreach and engagement. While ANIM plays many concerts annually, the highlight of the musical life of Afghanistan each year has become the ANIM Gala Concerts of its international music festival, the Annual Winter Music Academy.

Initiated in 2010, the annual Afghanistan Winter Music Academy is Afghanistan's first international music festival to combine performance and education. For this cause guest performers and educators from Australia, Europe, Central Asia, Russia, South Africa, and other countries come to Kabul. These local performances of ANIM students and international guest artists promote cultural diversity in Afghanistan and create people-to-people diplomacy and dialog.

Additionally, ANIM plays a significant role in connecting Afghanistan to the international community through building musical bridges between nations. ANIM carries its message through participation in tours, festivals, scholarship exchange programs and competitions outside of Afghanistan. The growth and progress of ANIM's programs continues to generate international interest and acclaim by showing a new face of Afghanistan, one of positive social changes, freedom of expression, and intercultural dialog. Each year, many opportunities are given to ANIM for international cultural diplomacy initiatives in countries worldwide. Highlights from previous years include tours to Argentina, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Poland, South Korea, Tanzania, Uzbekistan, the United Kingdom, and two large-scale tours with over 60 participants to the United States in February 2013 in which ANIM performed sold-out concerts at the world-renowned Kennedy Center and Carnegie Hall, and a tour to Muscat, Oman in February 2014 where students were performing a concert at the prestigious Royal Opera House of Muscat.

A highlight of ANIM's international collaboration is its ongoing partnership with the Transcultural Music Studies department of the Liszt University of Music in Weimar. A team of ANIM musicians and faculty travelled there in June 2012 to represent Afghan music and culture and to create a beautiful musical and cross-cultural fusion with German musicians. This successful collaboration was called "Safar" and grew into a three phase expanded project. The second phase in August 2013 organized a similar concert in Afghanistan including three virtuoso German musicians, ANIM students, faculty, and Afghan master musicians. This concert was attended by numerous ambassadors, diplomats, government officials, and members of the Afghan community. Additionally, given the uniqueness of this event, the European Broadcasting Union agreed to broadcast the concert "live" in Europe, a historic occasion in Afghanistan. This special collaboration provided enormous opportunities to present the positive cultural and musical achievements in Afghanistan to the world. In November 2014, phase three of the Safar Project will present a second large concert for the Kabul community.

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The sold out Carnegie Hall in New York City during the ANIM concert in February 2013.

© Jennifer Taylor.

Back in Kabul, as ANIM finished construction on its new practice building and nears completion of its new concert hall, and began construction on a dormitory for 200 girls, the Institute looks forward to providing a new venue to feature its students and guest musicians. ANIM currently seeks qualified musicians in the areas of cello, brass, and sitar to move to Afghanistan and teach our students while training their teachers. Although much remains uncertain about Afghanistan's future, ANIM is committed to doing whatever it can to ensure music will be as central to that future as it was to its past. ¶



FRANZIŠKA FALTIN

studied regional sciences of Japan and has a bi-national B.A. in German-French studies. She was already active at the Goethe Institute in Ramallah and now works in the regional coordination of the transformational projects of the Institute for North Africa and the Middle East. She oversees the cultural management program.

Cultural Management in the Arab World

Egypt, like a lot of Near Eastern states, has a vibrant, internationally inspired culture, networks and dedicated employees in its subculture and independent scene. In contrast there is the traditional 'high culture'. Up until the Arab Spring it was a financially shabbily treated and with regards to content regimented area of state responsibility. Through censorship, centralization and a lack of professionalism in cultural management the cultural sector could hardly make any impact on its content.

By Stefan Winkler and Franziska Faltin (Goethe Institute)

Culture for all, sub- and state culture: Egypt up to the revolution

The cultural field of Egypt has permanently changed in the last few decades. The nationalization of key industries in the 1960s has also had an impact in the cultural sector. "Culture for all" was the slogan at the time and cultural palaces were opened in all major cities. Sadat's policy of economic openness thinned out the cultural sector once again during the 1970s. Under Mubarak the focus was mainly set on prestige objects, mostly with financial support from abroad: the construction in 1988 of the opera house that was in the center of a complex with ten other cultural facilities, or the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, which opened in 2003.

In the late 1990s the cultural field became increasingly emancipated, independent initiatives and cultural institutions were created that, on the other hand, had to contend with major challenges: problems with bureaucracy and approvals, insufficient funding, and professional qualification requirements for employees. At the same time, new cultural institutions were being founded mainly by non-government agencies. They spread throughout the Arab world since the 1990s, loosely linked through the network of the regional organization Al Mawred Al Thaqafi (Culture Resource, founded in 2004), which is based in Cairo. Al Mawred continues to advocate conferences for the further development of the cultural policy debate in Arab countries (among other things, at the World Congress for cultural policy ICCPR 2014 in Hildesheim) and created a study in this context.

In turn, there has been an improved development of the independent sector through the Internet and digitalization. Through digital media filmmakers have been given the opportunity to produce quickly and cost-effectively for the first time. Internet and social media from Egypt - used for local, regional and international communication, for networking, as well as for gathering information and marketing - have become indispensable. New cultural ex-

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STEFAN WINKLER

majoried in Islamic Studies and has been working for the Goethe Institute since 2004. He was in Aleppo, Alexandria and Munich before he came to the Goethe Institute in Cairo in 2012. He works there as the coordinator for projects of the Transformation Partnership between Germany and the states of the Arab Spring. Focussing on the issue of "Culture and Development", his interests are culture, cultural policy and current discourses of the Arab countries.

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pressions are also enriching the scene: graffiti and street art, graphic novels and comics, Hip Hop and break-dance have emerged in specific local forms.

Before the revolution in 2011 the cultural field was marked by conflicts between the hardened state sector, independent institutions and initiatives (often financed with foreign funds) as well as an increased religious-conservative trend. There was hardly any support for the independent sector; censorship by the state, society, and centralization in Egypt restricted its possibilities. The neglect of the cultural sector by the state was highlighted in September 2005, when, in the disaster of Beni Suef, over 50 theater directors, actors and critics were killed after the Cultural Palace burned down during a theater performance due to serious deficiencies in safety measures. This tragedy was exemplary for the relationship between the state and culture.

The Arab cultural scene and cultural management

Cultural management is therefore facing many challenges here: the state sector is based generally on "representative" cultural events, conventional forms of expression and folk festivals. The non-governmental sector, in turn, is dependent on foreign support, even though it would like to be 'independent'. It cannot expect state support; sponsors or entrance fees are still far from being enough to maintain operations. Through workshops and other offerings of cultural education some institutions generate more revenue. But all in all the resources of the partners are modest. Currently, the work of the cultural institutions in Egypt has become considerably more difficult through stricter regulations for NGOs and the criminalization of accepting foreign funds.

The local offerings in vocational qualifications for cultural managers come from the independent sector. The only significant provider of workshops and trainings is Al Mawred Al Thaqafy. He has also proposed to set up a degree in cultural management and cultural policy. Although the demand is great, up to now there is nothing in the entire region apart from a broad-based, systematic and academic qualification program in cultural management. Particularly necessary are continuing education courses in project management, marketing, audience development and fundraising as well as soft skills such as intercultural communication, conflict management, change management in state institutions, or discussions about concepts of culture in the light of the conditions mentioned above.

Because of the politically complex situation, location planning is often a challenge. Flexibility, creativity and much patience are required from all sides in order to raise awareness for the need of cultural work in the provinces and to allow the public to have access to culture. ¶

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Editor note:

Many international organizations already organize this kind of training. Pro Helvetia promotes Arts Management in the Near East with a website about art in public space in Egypt that also serves as a platform for sharing ideas. The Joanneum Museum Academy in Graz and the Austrian Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and External Affairs is organizing a discussion forum for cultural managers from Austria and the Near East. Also, the German Goethe Institute and the Robert Bosch Foundation are organizing training courses in this region, which, starting next year, will also be available as an on-line course. The program Tandem Shaml offers cultural organizations in European and Arab countries across the Mediterranean the opportunity to establish long-term cooperation to exchange knowledge in different disciplines. And the EUNIC (European Union National Institutes for Culture) cluster for MENA countries (Middle East and North Africa) is currently implementing the "pilot" edition of a new management training program for the cultural and creative sectors, with the participation of some 15 professionals from 10 countries in the region.

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