

CURRICULUM VITAE

Dr Nadia ALI

Resident Fellow FIAS, The Institute for Advanced Studies of Aix-Marseille (IMERA)

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Nationality: French

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EDUCATION:

2020-2021

I am currently working on the writing of my HDR (Habilitation à diriger des recherches) entirely devoted to a critical historiography of the field (Islamic art history).

2009 & 2018

- Qualified as 'Maître de conférences' by the CNU (National Committee of the Universities, France). Section 15 (Arabic) and section 21 (Ancient History).

1997-2008 University of Aix en Provence, France

- PhD in History of Islamic Art and Architecture, 2008: 'The Making of Images in Early Islamic Syria' (original title: Procéssus de fabrication de l'iconographie omeyyade: l'exemple des décors de Qusayr 'Amra, Qasr al-Hayr al-Gharbi and Khirbat al-Mafjar, (Syrie, 8^e s.).
- Master 2 (D.E.A) in Islamic Studies, 2001.
- Master 1 in Art History and Archaeology, 1999.
- Bachelor's Degree in Arabic language and Islamic civilization (*Licence*), 2000.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- (As part of my fellowship at Silsila between 2018 and 2020) Lecturer in Islamic Art & Architecture. Graduate Seminar: Historiographies of Late Antique and Early Islamic Art, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, spring 2020.
- Lecturer in Islamic Art & Architecture. Graduate Seminar: The Art of Replication. Responding to the Post-classical Past in Early Islamic Syria, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, fall 2019.
- Lecturer in Islamic Art & Architecture. Survey Course Part II: Islamic Material Culture from the Mongols to Modernism, New York University, fall 2019.
- Lecturer in Islamic Art & Architecture. Survey Course Part I: Islamic Material Culture from the Prophet to the Mongols, New York University, fall 2018.
- Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture. Approaching the Arts of Late Antiquity & Early Islam, University Paris-IV La Sorbonne, Department of Art History and Archaeology. October 2011-January 2012 (sabbatical leave of Prof. Eloise Brac de la Perrière).
- Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture, University of Aix en Provence. October 2008-May 2012.
- Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture, University of Aix en Provence. October 2003-April 2004 (sabbatical leave of Prof. Yves Porter).

POST-DOCTORAL FELLOWSHIPS (LONG TERM, INTERNATIONAL & CROSS DOMAIN EXPERIENCES)

- **Resident Fellow, FIAS, The Institute for Advanced Studies of Aix-Marseille (IMERA),** September 2022-July 2023
- **Post-doctoral Fellowship, Silsila: Center for Material Histories, New York University,** February 2018-September 2020. The Center for Material Histories has been established by Professor Finbarr Barry Flood as a place for experimental conversations and for the promotion of all aspects of Islamic material history in 2018.
- **Post-doctoral Fellowship, Empires of Faith Project.** October 2013-January 2018. A five-year humanities research project funded by the Leverhulme Trust and jointly hosted by the British Museum and Oxford University. Empires of Faith was run by Professor Jas Elsner and conceived as a cross-disciplinary programme to investigate how images and objects were used to construct and disseminate political and religious forms of authority across South Asia, the Middle East and the Mediterranean from c. AD 200 to 800. <https://empiresoffaith.com/>
- **Max Planck Post-doctoral Fellowship, *Connecting Art History in the Museums Project.*** A collaboration between the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz and the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin, May 2012-May 2013.
- **Summer Fellowship, Centre for Byzantine Studies at Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University,** June-August 2011.
- **Post-doctoral Fellowship, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Art and Architecture, Harvard University,** January-August 2008.

OTHER FELLOWSHIPS & GRANTS

- Barakat Trust Grant 2018: ‘Revisiting Early Islamic Stucco: The View from the North African Margins (8-10th c.).’
- Leverhulme Research Fellowship 2017: ‘The Arts of pre-Islamic Arabia.’
- Israel/Palestine: Funded by IFPO Palestine (Institut français du Proche-Orient). ‘The Impact of Jewish Mosaic Traditions on Khirbat al-Mafjar’s Iconographic Program.’ November 2012
- Yemen: Funded by CEFAS (Centre français d’archéologie et de sciences sociales de Sanaa). ‘Tracing the Routes of Graeco-Roman Art Forms in the Arabian Peninsula before the Rise of Islam (3rd-6th c.)’ March-June 2004.
- Egypt: Funded by IFAO (Institut français d’archéologie orientale, Le Caire). ‘The Coptic Contribution to Umayyad Painting.’ January-March 2003.
- Syria-Jordan-Lebanon: Funded by IFEAD (Institut français d’études arabes de Damas). ‘Umayyad Art in the Bilād al-Shām: Material Circumstances of Production.’ January-August 2001.

PUBLICATIONS

Book (Currently under revision)

I have just completed the manuscript of my first book project entitled: *Qusayr ‘Amra and the Power of Images in Early Islam*. This book is about Qusayr ‘Amra, an early Islamic bath-house (Jordan, 730s) celebrated for its impressive figural wall paintings, the meanings of which have been much debated. Following the spectacular discoveries of new images after the recent cleaning of the paintings, I have

identified classicizing scenes inspired by *Aethiopica*, a fourth-century romance about an Ethiopian princess born white and composed by Heliodorus, a Syrian outsider assimilated within Graeco-Roman culture. Taking this discovery as its starting point, the book looks in two directions: backward, to the efforts expended in understanding the paintings, and forward, to new and emerging ways to examine images and texts together. Above all, the book reveals a millennial tradition of circulation, migration, compartmentalized obliviousness and reuse of both ancient texts and images whose very continuities suggest the robustness of Middle Eastern local cultures from the High Imperial East to the Caliphate.

Articles

Forthcoming:

- ‘The Power of Images in Early Islam’ in *Syria: Past and Present*, Nasser Rabbat (ed), Edinburgh University Press, 2023.
- ‘Roman Spectacles & Local Festivals in Early Islamic Imagery: From Civic Liturgies to Personalized Forms of Munificence’ in *The Oxford Handbook on Hellenistic and Roman Syria*, Rubina Raja (ed), Oxford University Press, 2023.

Published:

- ‘Response to Ivan Foletti and Katharina Meinecke: From Sarapis to Christ to the Caliph’ in *Exploring Art in Religions of Late Antiquity*, Jas Elsner and Rachel Wood (eds), British Museum Press, 2021.
- ‘The Road from Decadence: Personal Histories and the Study of Early Islamic Art’ in *Empires of Faith: Histories of Image and Religion in Late Antiquity from India to Ireland*, Jas Elsner (ed), Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 189-222.
- ‘Acculturated Natives Who Rebel: Revivalist, Ottomanist and Pan-Arabist Engagements with Early Islamic Art, 1876-1930’ in *Empires of Faith: Histories of Image and Religion in Late Antiquity from India to Ireland* Jas Elsner (ed), Cambridge University Press, 2019, pp. 361-395
- ‘Qusayr ‘Amra and the Continuity of Post-Classical Art in Early Islam: Towards an Iconology of Forms’ in *The Diversity of Classical Archaeology*, Achim Lichtenberger and Rubina Raja (eds), Brepols, 2017, pp. 161-197.
- ‘The Royal Veil: Umayyad Figural Art and the Bilderverbot Reconsidered’ in *Religion*, Special volume on aniconism, Milette Gaifman and Mikael Aktor (eds), vol 47 (3) (2017): 1-21.
- (In collaboration with Mattia Guidetti), ‘Umayyad Palace Iconography: Some Practical Aspects of Creation’ in *Power, Patronage and Memory in Early Islam: Perspectives from Umayyad History*, Andrew Marsham and Alain George (eds), Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2017, pp. 175-251.
- (In collaboration with Rachel Wood), ‘The Emergence of Islamic Arts’ in *Imagining the Divine* (Empires of Faith exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum), Jas Elsner and Stefanie Lenk (eds), Oxford, 2017, pp. 135-159.
- ‘Aniconism,’ in *Imagining the Divine* (Empires of Faith exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum), Jas Elsner and Stefanie Lenk (eds), Oxford, 2017, pp. 162-165.
- ‘An Abbasid Lusterware with Buddhist Imagery’ in *Imagining the Divine* (Empires of Faith exhibition at the Ashmolean Museum), Jas Elsner and Stefanie Lenk (eds), Oxford, 2017, pp. 160-161.
- ‘Pour une étude globale de l’iconographie des Omeyyades de Syrie et d’Espagne’ in *Anales De Historia Del Arte*, vol. 22 (2012): 9-26.
- ‘Qusayr ‘Amra, la peinture du personnage trônant sur l’eau: aspects pratiques de la fabrication d’une image’ in *Annales islamologiques* 40 (2006): 1-31.
- ‘Combinaisons de représentations féminines et de scènes de chasse dans les décors palatiaux omeyyades’ in *Actes du Colloque International: Rencontres Orient-Occident*, Paris, 2006, pp. 63 - 79.

Book reviews

- Garth Fowden, *Qusayr 'Amra. Art and the Umayyad Elite in Late Antique Syria* (Berkeley, 2004), *Bulletin Critique des Annales Islamologiques* 22 (2006): 111-115.
- Claude Vibert-Guigue et G. Bisheh, *Les peintures de Qusayr 'Amra* (Beyrouth, 2007), *Bulletin Critique des Annales Islamologiques* 24 (2008): 187-191.
- Sabina Antonini, *Statuaria Sudarabica in Pietra* (Rome, 2001), *Arabian Humanities International Journal of Archaeology and Social Science in the Arabian Peninsula* 11 (2003).

INVITED PRESENTATIONS TO PEER REVIEWED, INTERNATIONALLY ESTABLISHED CONFERENCES, MEETINGS & SYMPOSIA

- 'His Eyes Were Aware of the Pointed Corners of His Eyes: Reflections on the Gaze in Umayyad Painting,' AKPIA Forum for Islamic Art and Architecture, Harvard University, September 23, 2021.
- 'Qusayr 'Amra: The Pandora's Box of Early Islamic Aesthetics,' Wilkinson Lecture Series 'Responding to the Classical Past in the Middle East,' Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, March 2019.
- 'Protective Images in Late Antique South Arabia,' Workshop on Zafar, Silsila Center for Material Histories, NYU, December 2018.
- 'New Discoveries at Qusayr 'Amra in light of Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Romance*,' Corpus Christi Byzantine seminar series, Oxford University, November 1st 2017.
- 'Acculturated Natives Who Rebel: Revivalist, Ottomanist and Pan-Arabist Engagements with Early Islamic Art, 1876-1930s,' Research Seminar in Islamic Art and Archaeology, Khalili Research Centre, Oxford University, October 2017.
- 'Art and Religion in Early Islamic Syria.' Panel: *Byzantines and the Others: Art and Religion at a Crossroads in Late Antiquity* at International Medieval Congress in Leeds funded by Ancient World Cluster and Lorne Thyssen Research Fund for Ancient World Topics of Wolfson College, July 2017.
- 'The Royal Veil: Umayyad Figural Arts and the *Bilderverbot* Reconsidered.' Cambridge Islamic Art Lecture Series, Pembroke College, June 2017.
- 'New Perspectives on Qusayr 'Amra', Empires of Faith: Imagining the Divine,' A Workshop at the University of Edinburgh, May 2017.
- 'The Legacy of Post-classical Art in Islam,' Prof. Jeremy Tanner's Seminar Global Antiquities, Institute of Classical Archaeology, University of London, March 2017.
- 'Early Islamic Art, Micro-identities and Everyday Religiosity', Historian of Islamic Art Association Symposium, the Courtauld Institute, London, October 2016.
- 'The Birth of Islamic Art in the Global Context of the First Millennium,' Humboldt University, Berlin, Seminar of the Summer School *Globalized Classics* organized by Jas Elsner and Finbarr Barry Flood, August 2015.
- 'The Historiography of Early Islamic Art Revisited: E. Herzfeld, L. Massignon and O. Grabar,' University of Chicago, *Empires of Faith Conference*, October 2015.
- 'Making and Viewing Images in Late Antique Syria,' International Conference, *The Colours of the Prince. Conservation and Knowledge in Qusayr 'Amra*, Rome, October 2014.
- 'The South Arabian Contribution to the Making of Islamic Art' Historians of Islamic Art Association Symposium, Metropolitan Museum, New York, October 2012.

ORGANIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

- In collaboration with Rachel Wood and my colleagues of *Empires of Faith* project, Conference *Imagining the Divine*, Corpus Christi College, Oxford, January 2018.

The conference brings together early career researchers and established scholars of the art and archaeology of Late Antiquity (c. AD 200-800), across cultures and regions reaching from Gupta India to Umayyad Iberia, to discuss how objects can inform our understanding of religions. The papers are now being published as a conference proceedings volume.

- During my tenure as faculty fellow at Silsila: Center for Material Histories (NYU), I worked with Professor Finbarr Barry Flood on the programming and organization of several lecture series and workshops. These range from three international workshops on the cities of Zafar (Yemen), Harar (Ethiopia) and Shiraz (Iran); and several lecture programs:

Magic and Material Culture in the Islamic World (fall 2018)

Replication (spring 2019)

Slavery and Material Culture in Islamic Societies (fall 2019)

Far West: The Arts of North Africa (spring 2020)

More details can be found here: <https://as.nyu.edu/content/nyu-as/as/research-centers/silsila.html>

CURATORIAL ACTIVITY

- (In collaboration with Dr Rachel Wood), curator of the early Islamic section for the exhibition *Imagining the Divine: Art and the Rise of World Religions* at the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (19 October 2017-February 2018). *The exhibition explores the inception and development of iconography now familiar in Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism, and reaches from Northern Europe to India during the first millennium CE. The emphasis is on points of exchange and encounter between the artistic repertoires of these religions. Rarely does an exhibition place Islam within the larger religious context of Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism or Zoroastrianism. One key objective with this inclusive approach inspired by Garth Fowden's work is to 'de-insularise' the moment of Islamic origins and to present Islam as part of Eurasia's cultural history. The location of the Islamic section between the Asian section and the Northern Europe section speaks to that general narrative.*

MEMBERSHIP OF SCIENTIFIC SOCIETIES

- HIAA, Historians of Islamic Art Association-Member of the nominating committee for the HIAA Majlis February 2019 and for the H. Islamart editor position 2020.

SCIENTIFIC EVALUATION/REVIEWING ACTIVITIES

- For peer-reviewed journals: *Muqarnas*, *Annales Islamologiques*, *Bulletin Critique des Annales Islamologiques*, *Bulletin d'Etudes Orientales*, *Arabian Humanities: International Journal of Archaeology and Social Science in the Arabian Peninsula*.

