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Looking Beyond the Canon: Localized and Globalized Perspectives in Art History Pedagogy

Aditi Chandra
University of California, Merced

Leda Cempellin
South Dakota State University

Kristen Chiem
Pepperdine University

Abigail Lapin Dardashti
Graduate Center CUNY

Radha J. Dalal
Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar

See next page for additional authors

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Cover Page Footnote

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Authors

Aditi Chandra, Leda Cempellin, Kristen Chiem, Abigail Lapin Dardashti, Radha J. Dalal, Ellen Kenney, Sadia Pasha Kamran, Nina Murayama, and James P. Elkins

Looking Beyond the Canon: Localized and Globalized Perspectives in Art History Pedagogy

Edited and Introduced by:

Aditi Chandra, PhD, University of California, Merced, USA

Leda Cempellin, PhD, South Dakota State University, USA

Abstract

Our pedagogical choices make art history classrooms political spaces of cultural production. Through a global exchange of ideas we consider questions of imbalance between western and non-Western materials and differing art history pedagogies in introductory courses and reveal teaching methods shaped by varied local contexts.

Kristen L. Chiem suggests re-routing students to the fundamentals of art historical inquiry rather than to a specific time or region. Abigail L. Dardashti's essay re-configures the global art history course by focusing on artworks that defy the neat West and non-West categories. Radha J. Dalal discusses a curriculum that includes a series of courses on Islamic arts in a global context, which highlight shared visual cultures as an alternative to the traditional perspective. Ellen Kenney discusses the complexities of teaching Islamic art history in a city where the art the author teaches is located. Sadia Pasha Kamran explores the post-1970s Islamization of Pakistan's art history curriculum and stresses the necessity of educators to foreground the syncretic nature of Pakistan's past and the diversity within Islamic art. Nina Murayama presents methods of teaching the global survey to Japanese students within a monocultural setting and stresses that the importance of local narratives in world art courses.

There is potential in the interdisciplinary nature of art history and specifically in the way we approach introductory courses that can enable students to become global citizens. To be globally competent is to understand the interconnectedness of our increasingly complex world and to appreciate its diversity – precisely the skills that global art history courses, that challenge the canon, can provide. The purpose of these introductory courses, then, is to cultivate students' empathy, so that they can become aware of their assumptions and welcome challenge rather than feeling threatened by difference.

Introduction

As art historians, we geographically locate and contextualize visual materials and attach meanings and identities to them; our pedagogical choices make classrooms political spaces of cultural production. Similarly, textbooks, particularly those catering to the art history survey, often show an imbalance between Western and non-Western materials. This collaborative essay endeavors to continue the conversation on the categories of West and non-West that has been

ongoing in the North American academy, but, more importantly, to also include perspectives from outside Euro-America in this dialogue. Through a global exchange of ideas, we not only consider the differing contours of art history pedagogy in introductory courses, but also reveal individual teaching methods shaped by varied local contexts across the globe.

Scholars of postcolonial studies such as Dipesh Chakrabarty have argued that, while professors of and in the third world need to refer to Europe, historians of Europe often do not feel the need to reciprocate¹—it is this tendency that permeates the construction of art history’s master narrative or canon. Underlying the reverse, which is an insistence on excavating “pure” methods of Indian/Chinese/Islamic/African/Latin American art historical analysis, is the unease with the burden of genuineness and authenticity that is demanded of the non-West and in which the non-Western hybrid and the modern get lost in a search for an “authentic” past that relegates the non-Western only to certain “timeless” pasts and essentialized categories.² The West’s failure to accept what the non-West can do with Western discourses speaks to the privileging of the West as the sole owners of that knowledge.³ What then, can be the ways forward when re-thinking art history’s canon as presented in world art history courses without falling into the trap of creating another master narrative? Christopher B. Steiner argues that, “it is not what is in or out of the canon that ought to be of concern but rather the social structure of the canon itself that must be reconsidered.”⁴ With their experiences in varied parts of the globe and in diverse classrooms, contributors in this long essay provide localized and globalized perspectives to Steiner’s predicament and suggest that the classroom can provide opportunities to question the rigidity of the canon. Through a conversation that engages varied geographies, we aim to establish a culture of global art-historical scholarship that can continuously push the edges of the canon.

Kristen L. Chiem suggests rerouting students to the nature of art historical inquiry rather than to a specific subject area or region in introductory courses. Discussing the structure of a first-year seminar meant to precede the global art course, Chiem, who teaches at Pepperdine University, focuses on concerns in art history such as art and reception, formal analysis, patrons and artists, the process of art-making, art and religion, art’s changing meaning in varied contexts, and the question of cultural ownership rather than a traditional, chronological discussion of artworks.

¹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2000), 28.

² Christopher B. Steiner, “Can the Canon Burst?” *Art Bulletin*, 78, no. 2 (June 1996): 213–17. See Steiner’s discussion on African art and the ways in which the study of African art excludes any references to contemporary influences or market forces that may continue to shape it.

³ See discussion on the burden of genuineness in Atreyee Gupta and Sugata Ray, “Responding from the Margins,” in *Is Art History Global?*, ed. James Elkins (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), 348–57.

⁴ Steiner, “Can the Canon Burst?,” 213. Steiner also argues that the formation of an art history canon is premised on the mistaken belief that aesthetic judgments and distinctions of taste can be made under objective conditions free from moral, political, economic, and social influences. Therefore, the attempt should not be to keep adding to the canon, rather to question “the social structure of the canon itself.”

This approach proposes that students with no art history background can be introduced to the methods of art-historical inquiry as a prerequisite to the historical survey. Students are encouraged to work on contextual preparation outside of class and, instead, class time is spent on methodological training.

The contribution by Abigail Lapin Dardashti includes artworks that defy the neat categories of West and non-West and explores ways in which moments of multidirectional exchange, rather than one-way influence, can reconfigure these courses. Lapin Dardashti employs post-conquest Latin American artworks to show how the West and the non-West converse with each other through hybridity. This course structure unveils power inequalities and proposes an approach based on materiality, cultural exchange, and varied definitions of temporalities as a viable alternative to the linear version favored by art history's master narrative. Teaching at the racially diverse City College of the City University of New York (CUNY), which has a large Latino student body, Lapin Dardashti uses post-conquest Latin American art to destabilize the canon and to introduce students to the significance of examining racial identity in the arts.

Radha J. Dalal discusses the curriculum at Virginia Commonwealth University's campus in Doha, Qatar, which includes a series of courses on Islamic arts in a global context, that students take as a follow-up to the traditional two-course introduction to art history. These Islamic art courses highlight shared visual cultures, as opposed to insular histories of art, and provide an alternative to the traditional art history and Islamic art introduction courses. Both Lapin Dardashti and Dalal seek to question the contemporary divisions of West and non-West, Islam and West, and counter them by focusing on moments of cultural encounter and on the ways in which cultures have been hybrid since their inception. For instance, the earliest examples of Islamic arts, such as Jerusalem's seventh-century Dome of the Rock and Jericho's eighth-century palatial complex Khirbat al-Mafjar, contain an amalgam of Byzantine, Sassanian, and Greco-Roman styles, which also included some innovations from within Islamic cultures. Therefore, the hybrid is not necessarily a question of two "pure" cultures coming together but rather, much like a Venn diagram, a variety of traditions meeting to produce shared visual cultures.

Ellen Kenney reflects on the paradoxes of teaching Islamic art in Cairo, that is, teaching arts that can also be accessed in the city of instruction. Kenney discusses how the textbook and the field trip, two important aspects of art history instruction, can potentially bring a mix of essentialism and detachment to the course. Examining the concept of the "heritage student," Kenney discusses the ways in which the past, regardless of one's cultural identity, is often a "foreign country." Much like the canon of the global art history course, she discusses the master narrative of canonical objects constructed by traditional Islamic art surveys and addresses the need to question the canon in all art history sub-fields.

Sadia Pasha Kamran explores the post-1970s Islamization of Pakistan's art history curriculum and stresses the necessity of art historians teaching there to foreground both the syncretic nature of Pakistan's past associated with India and a diversity within Islamic art itself that, contrary to popular belief, embraces figural representation. Elaborating upon the impact of Pakistan's politics on the art history classroom, Kamran shows that the choices made by the art history professor in this geographic context have a daily, lived impact, by challenging the varied political agendas that have framed the definition of "Islamic" in Pakistan.

Nina Murayama presents some methods of teaching the global art course to Japanese students within a monocultural setting and, like Chiem, also opens the discussion with fundamental questions about the significance of the visual arts and the intimate connection of humans with the visual form. Analyzing Japan's museum spaces, urban planning, and burial practices as examples, Murayama stresses that popular local narratives such as Buddhist memorial services for broken robots are useful in any global art history course to bring nuance to Japanese ritual practices that connect art and life.

The contributions in this long essay are followed by remarks by James P. Elkins, who discusses the potential pros and cons of each approach and also provides some theoretical grounding to strengthen the pedagogical choices made by the authors. A central idea brought forth by all essays is the way in which the inclusion of varied local contexts facilitates the making of the global art history course into a much more nuanced project. This global dialogue, which needs many more voices from other parts of the world, is critical for any art history instruction that aims to challenge the canon.

There is potential in the interdisciplinary nature of art history and specifically in the way we approach introductory courses that can enable students to become global citizens.⁵ To be globally competent is to understand the interconnectedness of our increasingly complex world and to appreciate its diversity—precisely the skills that global art history courses that challenge the canon can provide. The purpose of these introductory courses, then, is to cultivate students with "empathy and moral imagination": students who can become aware of their assumptions and welcome challenge rather than feeling threatened by difference.⁶

⁵ See Bill Hunter, George P. White, and Galen C. Godbey, "What Does It Mean to Be Globally Competent?," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10, no.3 (Fall 2006): 279. The authors claim that an important skillset necessary to acquire global competence is the deep understanding of one's culture, cultural barriers, and biases, so that a diverse culture is approached without judgmental attitudes. Haluk Demikran and Jim Spohrer, in "T-Shaped Innovators. Identifying the Right Talent to Support Service Innovation," *Research Technology Management* 58 (2015): 13, suggest that appreciation for diversity quickly translates into empathy towards the other, which is a competency requested of T-shaped professionals to meet the needs of an increasingly service-oriented culture.

⁶ Eliza F. Kent, "What are you going to do with a degree in that? Arguing for the Humanities in an Era of Efficiency," *Arts & Humanities in Higher Education* 11, no. 3 (July 2012): 273–84, accessed October 9, 2016, ERIC database.

**Mediating the West/Non-West Divide:
What is the Significance of Art to Humanity?⁷**

Kristen L. Chiem, PhD, Pepperdine University, USA

This essay details the development of a first-year seminar designed to investigate the divide between “Western” and “non-Western” traditions in art history. The course explores a plurality of approaches to the question: what is the significance of art to humanity?⁸ Put simply, why art? This approach acknowledges the fact that students may come to art history in ways that their instructors did not—through their lived experiences, or with new concerns and expectations.⁹ It aims to poise questions and reference points for further development in later survey courses or seminars and, in doing so, to problematize the North Atlantic canon that often dominates introductory art history courses.¹⁰ The objective is to reroute students by asking: what do art historians do, what are the concerns of our field, and what are the subjects on which we draw? By exploring topics including aesthetics, agency, and materiality through a series of universal questions such as *who* makes art, the course is intended to engage multiple histories rather than set students on a track in which many of the histories of world art seem like a detour.

The course is designed as a comparative perspective on the role of art in diverse cultures throughout history. Since this is a first-year seminar open to any major, I am concerned not only about how the course not only relates to the discipline of art history but also to my students and

⁷ I am grateful to Leda Cempellin, Aditi Chandra, James Elkins, Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank, Lisa Boutin-Vitela, Elena Fitzpatrick Sifford, Elisa Mandell, and two anonymous readers for their suggestions in writing and revising this essay.

⁸ This first-year seminar was supported by an “Enduring Questions” grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Please note that my observations may not necessarily represent the views of this organization.

⁹ In addition to the increasingly diverse backgrounds of our students that require new pedagogical strategies, those who have been formally introduced to art history in high school may have taken the Advanced Placement Exam in Art History, which has expanded its content to the following sections: Global Prehistory; Ancient Mediterranean; Early Europe and Colonial Americas; Later Europe and Americas; Indigenous Americas; Africa; West and Central Asia; South, East, and Southeast Asia. AP® Art History Course and Exam Description, 25–163, <https://secure-media.collegeboard.org/digitalServices/pdf/ap/ap-art-history-course-and-exam-description.pdf>, accessed May 30, 2016.

¹⁰ The design of this first-year seminar may be useful in re-conceptualizing “Art Appreciation” courses or other introductory-level survey courses. For a detailed discussion of North Atlantic art history, see: James Elkins, *The Impending Single History of Art: North Atlantic Art History and Its Alternatives*, Chapter 2, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.jameselkins.com/index.php/experimental-writing/251-north-atlantic-art-history>.

the first-year curriculum at my institution.¹¹ I select excerpts of readings that relate to theoretical approaches commonly discussed in our upper-division art history courses but pair them with understudied objects and readings from sister disciplines such as literature or anthropology. (See Appendix A) Since most students have not studied art history previously, I reference readings on artworks and cultures and give brief introductions to frame the core concerns of each class.¹² Seven thematic units structure the seminar overall, each driven by an open-ended question that engages critical analysis of primary sources and artworks. Working in permanent, collaborative teams throughout the semester, students deliver oral presentations at sites and lead discussions of readings on each of the following topics.¹³

Unit 1: *What is the experience of art?* The seminar begins by examining the history of art as a humanistic discipline. What is the role of writing in encountering art and positioning it in history? As an introductory activity, we visit the Getty Villa, Malibu, where we read John Keats' *Ode to a Grecian Urn* and students compose odes to objects of their choice.¹⁴ Upon reflection, they often raise concerns about subjectivity, humanity, and history. We ask: what is humanism, and to what degree do we identify with this position today? We then consider prehistoric artworks, including sculptures from Mohenjo-Daro (modern Pakistan) and rock art of the San culture (modern Namibia). These works seem far removed from the familiar narratives of art history, yet they highlight the role of writing, memory, and history in the canonization of art. We transition to Susan Sontag's essay, "Against Interpretation" and ask: what can be gained (or lost) by considering certain objects as *art*?

Unit 2: *What does art look like?* In this unit, we explore notions of cognition, subjectivity, sensory perception, and beauty. How do we recognize an object as art? What is the relationship

¹¹ All students at my institution take a three-semester humanities general education course sequence that is entirely devoted to Western civilization, which American students also study at length in high school. Thus, this seminar assumes foundational knowledge of Western civilization, some background in world history, and no previous study of art history.

¹² Readings on specific objects often are drawn from primary sources, and general introductions are referenced in online learning sites, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Heilbrunn Timeline of Art History*, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/>; Smarthistory, accessed May 30, 2016, <http://smarthistory.org>; or exhibition materials pertaining to our site visits.

¹³ Teams are assigned introductory-level topics to stimulate discussion, such as introducing the history of the museum or collection when we are on-site, or a particular artwork, author, artist, or historical context in class. By researching one specific component of a much larger issue, students contribute to the class at an appropriate level, while I work to frame the topic and connect it to our discussion of specific works. I begin each class with a review of the unit and overview of the topic for the day, which is followed by a discussion of the readings and in-depth analysis of two to three relevant objects.

¹⁴ I am grateful to an anonymous reviewer, who suggested an alternate activity of involving the students in an art event, filming their interactions with artists and other participants, and then asking them to respond to videos of their experience, thus creating a multi-sensory response that gives students a direct reference point for considering these questions.

between art and nature? We consider aesthetic principles in diverse cultures, such as Xie He's "Six Canons" and the canon of Chinese art, and view Impressionist paintings in the Getty Center, Los Angeles, to debate perennial concepts such as mimesis. We examine the language we use to define objects as art, considering examples such as a Yoruba mask (West Africa, 12th–14th c. CE) and Donatello's *David* (c. 1440s CE). Finally, we reflect on the relationship between aesthetics, world cultures, and the works we see in museums.

Unit 3: *Who makes art?* In this unit, we shift our focus from art to humanity. We read biographies of artists and ask: what is an artist? We study self-portraits from the early modern world in light of "selfies" of the Internet age to probe notions of artistic agency throughout history. Then, we ask: *who* is an artist? And how do we know? To test our assumptions, we investigate portrait sculptures of the Olmec (Mexico, 1200–1000 BCE), Rapa Nui (Chilean Polynesia, 1250–1500 CE), and Benin cultures (West Africa, 1180–1897 CE). Reading on authorship, we ask: what is the significance of the *artist* for humanity?

Unit 4: *How is art made?* In this unit, we ask: what does material have to do with meaning? We consider Dogon altars in Mali and *nkisi nkondi* in the Democratic Republic of Congo. We visit the Fowler Museum at the University of California, Los Angeles, to investigate approaches to exhibiting objects with attention to their materiality. Then, we compare the ephemerality of materials in works such as Australian aboriginal paintings and Robert Smithson's *Spiral Jetty* (1970) to ask: what is the role of time and technology in making art? We conclude with a discussion of art as original or unique.

Unit 5: *What is the relationship between art and the divine?* Here, we ponder the notion of art as creation. Scholars of religion have pointed to the role of art in stimulating spiritual devotion, defining the sacred, and facilitating worship of the divine. How do these functions compare across cultures and periods? We visit the Malibu Hindu Temple after studying Hindu icons and passages from ancient scriptures. We contrast these examples with Byzantine icons and verses from the Bible. Finally, we discuss the Silk Road, the sixth-century Buddhist sculptures in Bamiyan (modern Afghanistan), contemporary iconoclasm, and museums.

Unit 6: *Where is art?* Art is at the center of many moving parts: the site of its creation, the cultural contexts it traverses, and the histories it intersects. How do the meanings of an artwork shift between cultures, traditions, and places? We read passages on Chinese garden imagery and the reception of export porcelains in Victorian England. We consider the boundary-crossing nature of objects from Syria and Egypt that came to Western Europe during the Medieval period. We read edicts by the Indian emperor Ashoka (304–232 BCE) that were inscribed on pillars throughout the empire, the images of which still appear on coinage, government insignia, and temples throughout Asia. Finally, we discuss the potentiality of art in forming perceptions of cultures.

Unit 7: *To whom does art belong?* In this unit, we visit the Los Angeles County Museum of Art to compare approaches to display in Western and non-Western gallery spaces and ask: what is lost when an artwork enters a museum? What is gained? Contemplating the issue of cultural heritage, we consider artworks in collections throughout the world, such as the “Elgin Marbles” (c. 443–432 BCE) in the British Museum and Huang Gongwang’s handscroll *Dwelling in the Fuchun Mountains* (1348–50 CE) that remains divided between Taipei and the People’s Republic of China.

Rather than first supplying students with the answers in survey courses and later asking questions in upper-division seminars, this class instead begins and ends with the most basic questions. It recognizes that not only are we evaluating the structural foundations of Western and non-Western content within art history,¹⁵ but also we are teaching with new pedagogical strategies: flipping our classrooms, promoting active learning in experiential environments, and incorporating contemplative pedagogies. Consequently, our students are poised to contribute to the field in new ways.¹⁶ As we problematize the object, museum, canon, and their related concerns at an introductory level,¹⁷ we may begin to uproot the master narratives that have guided our pedagogical approaches in the past. With the increasing ease of research, including new materials available in translation and high-quality visual resources, it seems that our work in the classroom—at every level—must be to consider new voices and frame new ways of looking at our world.

Teaching Latin American Art and Race in the Global Survey: Deconstructing Western and Non-Western Art Histories

Abigail Lapin Dardashti, The Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA

The format of the global survey course allegedly explores art internationally from prehistory through the present. However, its current outline is problematic. Popular textbooks including *Art: A Brief History* analyze art in the Western world extensively and chronologically while

¹⁵ On approaches to engaging diverse stories of art, see: James Elkins, *Stories of Art* (New York: Routledge, 2002), especially 117–54. For a survey of current practices in undergraduate curriculum, see: Kristen Chiem and Cynthia S. Colburn, “Global Foundations for a World Art History,” *Visual Resources* 31, no. 3–4 (2015): 177–99.

¹⁶ Collaborative learning, which restructures the classroom away from the traditional lecture to small-group work on complex projects, has been shown to positively impact students’ development and openness to diversity within the college or university environment. Alberto F. Cabrera, Amaury Nora, Jennifer L. Crissman, Patrick T. Terenzini, et al., “Collaborative Learning: Its Impact on College Students’ Development and Diversity,” *Journal of College Student Development* 43, no. 1 (Jan/Feb 2002): 20–34.

¹⁷ Anna Bryzski, *Partisan Canons* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007).

reviewing thousands of years of so-called non-Western art history geographically in single chapters.¹⁸ Even a more progressive textbook such as *Art Past, Art Present*, which takes a global chronological approach, tends to overlook artwork that cannot be neatly categorized as West and non-West.¹⁹ This discrepancy, along with the great majority of canonized artists being white, straight, Christian males, avoids addressing important issues including gender, ethnicity, and race. In March 2015, art historian Cara Jordan and I co-wrote a post on the blog *Art History Teaching Resources* that described three experimental classes prepared for City College, City University of New York (CCNY) addressing these concerns.²⁰

While writing the post, I thought about how to work towards a global survey that challenged these inequalities through the lens of Latin American art, my research focus. Although pre-Hispanic Art of the Americas as a broad, essentialized conception is included in the global survey, post-conquest artwork from Latin America is completely overlooked. In reformulating the course, many broad questions emerged: how do the Western and non-Western converse *with each other*, as opposed to speaking *to one another*? How can I present artwork defying these categories? The goal was to develop a course unveiling the development of transnational power relations that lead to constructed and very detrimental racial hierarchies. I also wanted students to understand that the West and non-West are invented traditions favoring a Eurocentric context. Because *Art: A Brief History* is the required textbook for the CCNY survey, in my course the book became a site of critique rather than an informative roadmap for art history. Located in Harlem, CCNY welcomes one of the most diverse student bodies in the country, so I also intended to make the survey relevant to the university's Latino contingent—one of the largest ones at the university.

This paper will discuss some works and strategies to integrate Latin American art into the global survey. While Latin American art is considered Western, this field is excluded from the global survey because of issues of hybridity. Early colonial art, for example, often incorporated formal elements drawn from pre-Columbian art such as sacred feathers, confusing the very clean boundaries of Western and non-Western art. Although hybridity is often examined in non-Western geographies, I present it as a global condition that equally affects art throughout the world and is closely linked to class in addition to race.

The selected case studies are ideal for class discussions as they exemplify transregional exchange in terms of materiality and iconography. In sixteenth-century Mexico, indigenous artists collaborated with Franciscan missionaries and produced featherworks, including the *Institution*

¹⁸ Marilyn Stokstad and Michael Cothren, *Art: A Brief History*, 6th edition (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2015).

¹⁹ David Wilkins and Bernie Schultz, *Art Past, Art Present*, 6th edition (New York: Abrams, 2008).

²⁰ "Teaching Art and Race: Bridging the Gap in the Global Survey Course," *Art History Teaching Resources*, accessed October 8, 2016, <http://arthistoryteachingresources.org/2015/03/teaching-art-and-race-bridging-gaps-in-the-global-survey-course/>

of the Eucharist at the Last Supper with St. Peter and St. Paul now at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Fig. 1). These artworks depict Christian imagery, such as the Crucifixion and the Last Supper, but are made of intrinsically Mexican materials and pigments. As Alessandra Russo explains, feathers—often quetzal feathers—were sacred to indigenous people, because they could embody deities.²¹ Missionaries appropriated the materiality and sacred implications of the plumes to attract indigenous people to Christian imagery. Exemplifying Spain’s conquest because of their brilliance, featherworks were often exported to Europe, where they were displayed in religious processions, complicating their hybrid meaning. Because featherworks can be categorized as both Western and non-Western, they challenge the validity and usefulness of these terms.

Through objects like featherworks and the trade of pigments, European experiences of the visual world shifted drastically after the conquest. Cochineal—an insect native to Latin America that, when boiled, dried, and crushed, produces a beautiful, rich carmine pigment—became widespread throughout Europe. The miter has traces of this pigment. As Elena Phipps argues, cochineal became a valued commodity in Europe and appears in the black shadows of Rembrandt van Rijn’s *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer* (1653 CE) and Alessandro Allori’s tapestry *The Gathering of Manna* (1595–96 CE) (Figs. 2 and 3).²² A global survey that incorporates materiality and exchange begins to overcome the unequal power relations produced by the current simplistic conception of art history. While materiality alone cannot debunk these existing power relations, its integration can begin to clarify the complexity of art-historical developments.

The Italian artist Agostino Brunias’ eighteenth-century painting executed in the West Indies, *Free Women of Color with Their Children and Servants in a Landscape* (1770–96 CE), equally problematizes Western and non-Western categories.²³ Hired by the British government to document Dominica’s population, Brunias developed a visual narrative that empowered black figures at the height of the anti-slavery movement in England. These images present a construct of racial harmony and tranquility that pleased investors. However, the painting was considered scandalous in England, because it represented racially mixed women in positions of power.²⁴ Brunias’ story and the execution of this painting contradict traditional narratives of art history—a European artist went to the Caribbean, represented empowered albeit romanticized black figures, and worked against the monolithic narratives of the Baroque, the Rococo, and Neoclassicism. Through racialized slavery, the colonies funded European powers and their artistic production, and Brunias’ work exposed this great inequality and geopolitical system. This painting shifts our

²¹ Alessandra Russo, “Plumes of Sacrifice: Transformations in Sixteenth Century Mexican Feather Art,” *Anthropology and Aesthetics* 42 (Autumn 2002), 228.

²² Elena Phipps, “Cochineal Red: The Art History of a Color,” *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 67:3 (Winter 2010), 32.

²³ <https://www.brooklynmuseum.org/opencollection/objects/197252>.

²⁴ Kay Dian Kriz, *Slavery, Sugar, and the Culture of Refinement: Picturing the British West Indies, 1700-1840* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 58–59.

conversation from the traditional progression of Rococo and Neoclassicism to focus on transnational exchange and issues of race and gender.

In my class, students began to understand the constructed divisions between the West and non-West through the integration of examples above and discussions about the format of the textbook in general and the absence of post-conquest Latin American art and that of so many other regions. Such thoughts were also reflected in the students' essays. In the first assignment, students write a formal analysis of an object at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. The second essay revises the first formal analysis through scholarly research on the same object. Because of class discussions and their personal interests, many students selected objects through which they can discuss inequalities of race and gender. For example, in Spring 2015, several students selected the Venezuelan-born globetrotter Marisol's Pop Art installation *Self-Portrait Looking at the Last Supper* (1982–84 CE) for their papers.²⁵ This wooden sculptural installation depicts the artist looking from a distance at an appropriation of Leonardo da Vinci's iconic work. The abruptly sharp contours and the rough wood oppose Leonardo's smooth, elegant lines and atmospheric perspective. Students related Marisol's work to her biography, discussing displacement and immigration, as well as her position as a female artist in a world dominated by men. By examining the technique of appropriation, students focused on a work that, like our course, critiques the ways in which art history is written and for whom.

Throughout my survey course, I encouraged students to develop new questions by thinking about exchange, material circulation, and other connecting elements all at once—since they all function at the same time. Despite the strategies outlined above, there may never be a 'right' way to construct the survey—especially when using a textbook, a position that is currently being discussed at length—since history is inherently flawed, and its process of creation is linked to global hegemonic powers. Indeed, the messiness of history is part of its appeal, and it must be represented instead of being constantly cleansed. Students must question dominant narratives and the way we formulate them and discover that, sometimes, there are no definite answers.

A Pedagogical Turn: Shifting Center/Periphery in Qatar's Art History Curriculum²⁶

Radha J. Dalal, PhD, Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar

Art history's pedagogical roots can be traced back to Eurocentric texts like Sir Banister Fletcher's *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (1896).²⁷ In this lavishly

²⁵<http://www.metmuseum.org/art/collection/search/484650?sortBy=Relevance&ft=marisol&offset=0&rpp=20&pos=2>.

²⁶ I am indebted to Debra Hanson and Jochen Sokoly for their insightful comments and to Amy Andres and Jörg Matthias Determann for their careful reading of the draft.

illustrated compendium, Fletcher segregates visual traditions into “historical” (Greco-Roman to Modern) and “non-historical” (non-Western). A product of colonialism, Fletcher’s work helped calibrate a linear evolution of art and architecture, placing European idioms at the progressive center and relegating the rest to the periphery. North American art history programs have inherited this sort of enduring binary. Here, I reflect on Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar’s Islamic art concentration as one that subverts colonialist legacies in pedagogy through its conceptual framework and intellectual content.²⁸

To be sure, “Islamic art” is a problematic rubric within art history. Its appellative misleadingly associates visual production with the religion of Islam rather than the political and sociocultural complexities of Islamic civilizations. Its internal classification is hinged along Western modalities of high and low arts, often disregarding culture-specific attitudes. Finally, in introductory survey texts, its temporal and geographic scope is fossilized as an intermediary somewhere between the Late Antique and Medieval periods. Regardless, undergraduate curricula begin with these Eurocentric texts, and ours is no different in this respect. The Western-heavy content of Gardner or Stokstad determines the courses’ paths. However, this uneven weighting is less of a limitation here, since the first-year survey is the only comprehensive introduction students receive on the inception and development of Western art and culture as formulated in the West. In the next three years, a chronological series of courses (Fig. 4) approach Islamic art as one of many parallel traditions while questioning, debating, and critiquing Western hegemonic narratives. Instead of adopting a solely Western paradigm, the program pursues dialogical threads across temporalities, geographies, and cultures.

The curriculum’s Islamic concentration picks up in the sophomore year. When I began teaching in 2012, I initially assumed that students would be grounded in the history of Islamic civilizations and their cultural output. This was not the case. Students showed discomfort in considering semi-nude figures and representations of Prophet Muhammad as part of the Islamic visual repertoire.²⁹ Confusion reigned in distinguishing iconic monuments like the Dome of the Rock versus the Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem, Islam’s third holiest site and a city inaccessible to many here due to protracted political disputes. Finally, the Sunni/Shia divide proved even more sensitive than figural imagery.³⁰ What also became increasingly apparent was the critical need to foreground any study of Islamic art with the field’s own historiography.

²⁷ Sir Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture on the Comparative Method* (London: Athlone Press, 1896).

²⁸ Qatar Foundation, the umbrella organization governing all foreign branch campuses in Doha’s Education City, requested that VCUQ create an art history program with a focus on the Islamic world. The program commenced in 2012, has a complement of seven full-time faculty, and serves over forty local and international students.

²⁹ Such reactions are likely embedded in the particular conservative religious context of this region.

³⁰ This is due to contemporary clashes between Gulf States and Iran instead of the ancient schism.

In upper-division courses, Islamic art is explored alongside the aesthetics of Asia, Africa, and Europe as one node in a broader global network. Introductory readings such as Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen's *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (1997) and Stuart Hall's *The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power* (1992) provide intellectual scaffolding to guide students on why a global perspective is essential instead of treating each civilizational or stylistic category independently.³¹ Subsequent weeks cover thematic examinations of visual intersections with the Islamic world. For the course *Islamic Art in a Global Context 1200–1600*, one unit reflected on the multifaceted and reciprocal nature of cultural exchange during the Crusades. Eva Hoffmann's seminal article "Christian-Islamic Encounters on Thirteenth-Century Ayyubid Metalwork" (2004) posits portable objects like the Syrian Canteen at the Freer Gallery of Art (Fig. 5) as products of a "shared visual culture."³² Reading Hoffmann stimulated students to interrogate facile binaries of a Muslim East and a Christian West and to explore intimate interactions amongst local religious communities. In addition, student familiarity with Islamic patterns and fluency in Arabic facilitated recognition of the *horror vacui* and the script on the Canteen as characteristically Islamic. Yet, the Virgin and Child ensemble in the central medallion invoked curiosity. How can an object with figural imagery and Christian subject matter be considered Islamic? The article thus spurred lively debates on the elastic definition of Islamic art.

Similarly, a unit on Renaissance mercantilism focused on diplomacy, trade, learning, and the arts. In particular, the conscious use of pseudo-Arabic in Christian imagery (Fig. 6) provoked thoughtful dialogue on pathways of transmission and the script's referential symbolism, ornamental function, and visual currency in an increasingly sophisticated European cultural milieu. Shining a spotlight on these intersections, however, does not mean neglecting regional artistic distinctiveness. The idea is to debunk myths of cultural transformations occurring in pure isolation. In this manner, students are challenged to critically consider art from their own culture and others as indices of local innovation and/or global diffusion.

Co-teaching is another method through which students are introduced to different perspectives. Recently, I paired with Debra Hanson, a specialist on American and European art, to teach *Islamic Art in a Global Context 1800–1900*. Together, we placed emphasis on direct and indirect connections between the Ottoman Empire and Europe. We explored urban transformations, lateral developments in painting and photography, political aspects of archaeology, and the production of knowledge through world expositions. Student enthusiasm when comparing two paintings of carpet sellers was most memorable. Their sophisticated analyses of French artist

³¹ See Martin Lewis and Kären Wigen, *The Myth of Continents: A Critique of Metageography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997) and Stuart Hall, "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power," in *The Formations of Modernity: Understanding Modern Societies*, eds. Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben (Cambridge: The Open University Press, 1992), 275–331.

³² Eva Hoffmann, "Christian Islamic Encounters on Thirteenth-Century Ayyubid Metalwork," *Gesta* 43, no. 2 (2004): 132.

Jean-Léon Gérôme's *The Carpet Merchant* (1887) (Fig. 7) and Ottoman artist Osman Hamdi Bey's *Persian Carpet Dealer on the Street* (1888) (Fig. 8) in terms of Orientalist tropes, professional training, and sociopolitical contexts revealed strong critical thinking skills and knowledge transference between courses.³³ Through such examples, the course disrupted the rigid boundary between the West and non-West and underscored the coeval and inextricably linked nature of these categories. It also broke new ground in demarginalizing the nineteenth century, so often declared derivative and illegitimate in the annals of Islamic art.³⁴

Challenges invariably plague any curriculum, and, as a young program, this one has its fair share. Since Qatar's secondary education is not standardized, students enter college with varied preparation in the humanities. Despite good verbal command in English, critical reading and expository writing can often be a struggle. The rigor of an American art history education in the Arab Gulf context also requires reconsidering modes through which educators traditionally establish visual literacy.³⁵ For example, in the United States, prefacing analyses of Qur'ans or mosques by stating they are indeed works of art and architecture is generally unnecessary. Here, some time has to be devoted in explaining their treatment as art objects first and devotional materials or spaces a close second. Finally, in the interest of freeing Islamic art from the framework of Western art history, it is imperative to not reverse the standard paradigm to such a degree that Islamic civilizations' numerous Others are also sidelined.

In complicating the center-periphery dichotomy, students explore the richness of intercultural connections across the globe as opposed to valorizing any single unidimensional perspective. Teaching the tools and methods of art-historical analysis in segmented periods rather than a fixed canon of masterpieces or a super narrative of teleological progress has proven to be more beneficial. Perhaps an area to test next is how this chronological model can be compressed and adopted for a freshman global survey.

³³ For example, students conducted rich comparative analyses, applying theories of gender and sexuality they had learned in the concurrent Art Historical Theories and Methods course. One student keenly noted the seated European man in Osman Hamdi's painting as potentially emasculated due to his child-like posture and dangling feet. Another commented on the direct gaze shared by the woman in blue and the carpet sellers, as opposed to the secretive presence of the woman in Gérôme's.

³⁴ See Margaret Graves, "Feeling uncomfortable in the nineteenth century," *Journal of Art Historiography* 6, (2012): 1–27.

³⁵ Other instructors have noted similar experiences in teaching and questioned the putative portability of such disciplines. See Neha Vora, "Is the University Universal? Mobile (Re)Constitutions of American Academia in the Gulf Arab States," *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 46, no. 1 (2015): 31–32.

Where It's At: Reflections on Teaching "Islamic Art" in Cairo

Ellen Kenney, PhD, The American University in Cairo

In this essay, I reflect on teaching Islamic art history at the American University in Cairo (AUC), focusing on two components of instruction: the textbook and the field trip.³⁶ While the university espouses a global mission, over 90% of its students hail from the Middle East.³⁷ Asked what they hope to learn from their Islamic art course, most students convey a desire to better understand their heritage, broadly defined.³⁸ This sparked my interest in applying a concept developed in the field of second-language instruction: the idea of the "heritage student."³⁹ If most of the students in my classes can be considered heritage learners of Islamic art and architecture,⁴⁰ how do the various pedagogical tools we employ (here, specifically, textbooks and field trips) intersect with notions of heritage and identity? Appropriating this term from the pedagogical jargon of foreign-language instruction recalls the maxim made famous by Lowenthal, "the past is a foreign country,"⁴¹ but it also highlights the development of Islamic art history as an academic field formulated outside the borders of its subject's geography. As numerous historiographic studies have demonstrated, the discipline of art history was foreign to the lands of Islamic art, and conversely, Islamic art has been cast as foreign within the discipline of art history.⁴²

³⁶ Much of my discussion here is based on the responses I have received from in-class questionnaires, classroom participation, student feedback, and conversations with colleagues. I owe my AUC students and colleagues many thanks for their observations, suggestions and questions.

³⁷ "AUC Profile 2015–16," American University in Cairo, accessed June 14, 2016, https://documents.aucegypt.edu/Docs/research_IR_Research/Profile_2015_2016.pdf.

³⁸ The perception of heritage among AUC students varies widely. Some view the concept in connection with their idea of nation and national history, some view questions of heritage at a more regional level, and some come at the issue from a pan-Islamic perspective. It bears noting that, while most students come from the region, the student body is not homogeneous in terms of ethnicity, religion, nationality, political orientation, or socioeconomic background.

³⁹ For an explanation of this designation, see, for example, Terrence G. Wiley, "On Defining Heritage Languages and Their Speakers," in *Heritage Languages in America: Preserving a National Resource*, eds. Joy Kreeft Peyton et al. (Washington, D. C.: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 2001), 29–36.

⁴⁰ Discussions of demographics in North American graduate programs in Islamic art can be found in Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, "The Mirage of Islamic Art: Reflections on the Study of an Unwieldy Field," *The Art Bulletin* 85.1 (March 2003): 152–84, and Gülru Necipoğlu and Sibel Bozdoğan, "Entangled Discourses: Scrutinizing Orientalist and Nationalist Legacies in the Architectural Historiography of the 'Lands of Rum'," *Muqarnas* 24 (2007): 1–6.

⁴¹ David Lowenthal, *The Past is a Foreign Country* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴² See, for example, Catherine B. Asher, "Islamic Art History: Yesterday, Today and the Future," *Studies in Global Asias* 1.1 (Spring 2015): 21–25; Blair and Bloom, "Mirage"; Finbarr Barry Flood, "From Prophet to Postmodernism? New World Orders and the End of Islamic Art," in *Making Art History: A Changing Discipline and its Institutions*, ed. Elizabeth Mansfield (London: Routledge, 2007), 31–53; Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," *Muqarnas* 1 (1983): 1–14 and "The Teaching of

How do our textbooks mediate the space between monuments of Islamic art and the heritage student? Most of the books available for adoption in Islamic art survey courses belong to a crop of publications that appeared during the 1990s,⁴³ partly spurred by the then-recent “enthronement of multiculturalism among the premier virtues,” to quote one review.⁴⁴ Allowing for minor variations in chronological extent, geographic scope, organization, and emphasis, these works have much in common. All but one present the whole sweep of Islamic art history inside two covers. All select the same or similar monuments, thus cementing—by the turn of this century—a fixed canon of masterpieces. And all attempt to distance themselves from the sometimes overt biases of the field’s founders and first-generation scholars. Occasionally, however, unfortunate passages have slipped into this new generation of textbooks. So it is—for example—that in some of the first readings of the semester, students will find the territorial expansion of Islam likened to an inkblot⁴⁵ and a letter in the Arabic alphabet gratuitously described as making “a sort of gagging sound.”⁴⁶

Another commonality between the first generation of surveys and the second is the evident assumption of a Western audience. While authors no longer convey what Hillenbrand critiqued as the impression “that Islamic architecture is more interesting for the light it may shed on Western architecture than as a subject worthy of study in its own right,”⁴⁷ most reach out for touchpoints drawn from Western experience to make the non-Western more relatable. Consequently, I have found myself explaining references to Washington Irving, Vitruvius, St.

Islamic Art in America,” *Arts and the Islamic World* 8.3 (1985): 38-40; Necipoglu and Bozdogan, “Entangled”; Nasser Rabbat, “Islamic Art as a Field of Historical Inquiry,” *Architectural Design* 74.6 (2004): 18–23, and “Surveying Islamic Art and Architecture,” *Eothen: Münchner Beiträge zur Geschichte der islamischen Kunst und Kultur* 5 (Munich, 2012): 267–74; and Stephen Vernoit, “Islamic Art and Architecture: An Overview of Scholarship and Collecting, 1850–1950,” *Discovering Islamic Art: Scholars, Collectors and Collections, 1850–1950*, ed. Stephen Vernoit (London: Taurus, 2000), 1–60.

⁴³ The group includes: Barbara Brend, *Islamic Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991); Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, *The Art and Architecture of Islam 1250–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) and *Islamic Arts* (London: Phaidon, 1997); Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture: Form, Function, and Meaning* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994) and *Islamic Art and Architecture* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1998); Markus Hattstein and Peter Delius, *Islam: Art and Architecture* (Cologne: Konemann, 2000); Ettinghausen, Grabar and Jenkins-Medina, *Islamic Art and Architecture 650–1250* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001). For a succinct overview of several of these publications, see Priscilla P. Soucek, “Review of Richard Ettinghausen, Oleg Grabar, and Marilyn Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650–1250* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001),” *Studies in the Decorative Arts* 12.1 (Fall–Winter 2004–5): 152–55.

⁴⁴ Walter Denny, “Review of Robert Hillenbrand, *Islamic Art and Architecture*, London: Thames and Hudson, 1998,” accessed November 5, 2015, *caa.reviews*, <http://www.caareviews.org/reviews/145>.

⁴⁵ Surprisingly, this inkblot passage appears to have been newly added to the second edition of the survey in question (Ettinghausen, Grabar, and Jenkins-Madina, *Islamic Art and Architecture, 650-1250*). It is actually a reprise of a passage earlier published in Grabar’s *Formation of Islamic Art* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973), 8–9.

⁴⁶ Blair and Bloom, *Islamic Arts*, 62.

⁴⁷ Hillenbrand, *Islamic Architecture*, 10.

Mark's, and "Staffordshire crockery"—and wondering: touchpoints for whom? Furthermore, the imagined audiences for our survey books are knowledgeable about art history in general, presenting a practical challenge when Islamic art courses are meant to serve non-majors. At AUC, Islamic art students are mostly of the region (and many of the faith), but few are immersed in the discipline of art history. The presumed knowledge strengths are flipped: while many arrive with a firm grasp on the rise of Islam and its main tenets, few have learned the rendering of perspective or how to read a plan, terms such as "relief" or "Corinthian," and antecedent or concurrent artistic traditions with which their textbooks compare Islamic works. Finally, most of these texts are thick with advanced vocabulary, complex sentence structure, and parenthetical asides.⁴⁸ Many of the most challenging passages occur in the initial chapters of the books in question—the sections one assigns in the very first weeks of class. For many of my students, this kind of ornateness verges on obscurantism; familiar heritage content is made more distant rather than more accessible.

When teaching Islamic art as a non-Western course in the United States, one customarily supplements assigned readings with a visit to the nearest museum with Islamic art holdings. For this purpose, students of Islamic art at AUC have an entire museum dedicated to their study area, Cairo's Museum of Islamic Art.⁴⁹ Furthermore, the historic city itself serves as a living, open-air architectural museum with well-preserved monuments dating from the ninth century onward, representing a range of types and providing an experiential learning opportunity matched by few places. To borrow the university's slogan, the city of Cairo is "our biggest classroom."⁵⁰ These architectural riches offer the chance to organize field trips any number of ways—by chronology, dynastic period, or architectural typology, for example—and its proximity allows multiple visits per semester.

However, proximity is relative and contingent. Any field trip is a round-trip journey, with a starting point, a destination, and a return. The literal journey through space and the metaphorical

⁴⁸ For example, early in the semester, students consulting the Grabar, Ettinghausen, and Jenkins-Madina volume on the works of the first Islamic dynasty will encounter this: "In fact, however, the location of the mosque on Mount Moriah, traditionally accepted as the site of the Jewish Temple and associated with many other legends and historical events, its decoration of Byzantine and Sasanian crowns and jewels in the midst of vegetal motifs, its physical domination of the urban landscape of Jerusalem, its inscriptions with their many precisely chosen Qur'anic quotations, and a number of recently rediscovered early Muslim traditions (4) suggest several purposes for the original Dome of the Rock: to emphasize the victory of Islam that completes the revelation of the two other monotheistic faiths; to compete in splendor and munificence with the great Christian sanctuaries in Jerusalem and elsewhere; to celebrate the Umayyad dynasty with a shrine containing Solomonic connotations through the representation of paradise-like trees and through references in recently published later accounts of the religious merits of Jerusalem (5)." (*Islamic Art and Architecture*, 15).

⁴⁹ At the time of preparing this piece for publication, the museum was still temporarily closed as a result of the January 2014 blast across the street ("Cairo's Islamic Museum Hit in Blast," BBC News, accessed June 14, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-25877201>).

⁵⁰ American University in Cairo website, accessed June 14, 2016, <http://www.aucegypt.edu>.

learning journey are intertwined in the endeavor, and both are affected by the new location of AUC at the outskirts of greater Cairo (Fig. 9). From the old campus in downtown Cairo, many of our destinations might have been reached by a twenty-minute taxi ride. From the new campus, the twenty-mile commute downtown takes well over an hour in light traffic. Aboard tour buses, students depart the familiar sprawl of gated communities, golf courses, and shopping malls that has grown up around the university over the last decade and disembark in the heart of the historic city that has been urbanized for over a millennium.⁵¹ It could be argued that the metaphorical distance between this university and its setting has always been great; the image of the privileged AUC student disconnected from the surrounding society constitutes a well-established trope, much as the town-and-gown conceit plays out elsewhere.⁵² The satellite location of the university perhaps only exacerbates such perceptions. If the field trip exercise unavoidably casts us in the role of tourist, what are the implications for students whose stated interest in the course identifies them as heritage learners? And to what extent do we become tourists not only of the primary source material listed in our syllabus (historical monuments) but also of the social context that surrounds that material? If Cairo's "past is a foreign country" to the primarily Egyptian students taking these courses, is Cairo's present—in some senses—a foreign country as well?

Our textbooks and classroom slide lectures tend to focus on what is considered to be the "original" phase of a given building, often reduced to a few iconic elements—an innovative floor plan, distinctive façade, or characteristic mode of decoration. The monuments we meet on our field trips have survived centuries of use, repair, disuse, and expansion—interventions that often overshadow the buildings' "textbook" features. Indeed, the field trip brings us into contact not just with the historical aspects of the architecture on the syllabus but also with a holistic experience of the buildings and their broader urban context today (Fig. 10). The students' experience of the monuments is mediated by generations of conservation professionals seeking to eliminate the unsightly or inauthentic and to position Cairo's monuments within touristic buffer zones.⁵³ Those currently residing in and working at these touristic stage-sets continue to

⁵¹ In the introduction to her recent collection of works exploring Cairo in modern literature, Samia Mehrez writes of the sense of displacement that accompanied the relocation of AUC, where she had studied and then taught for eighteen years: "My anxiety was driven home when... I received an email from Faculty Services at the university announcing, for the first time ever, a walking tour of downtown Cairo for members of the AUC community. I must admit that I was horrified at the implications of the idea, since it suddenly transformed bustling downtown Cairo into a museum, a thing of the past, which we could now watch as spectacle when, for most of the 20th century, AUC had been part of the very making of its modern history." (In *The Literary Atlas of Cairo: One Hundred Years on the Streets of the City*, ed. Samia Mehrez [Cairo: American University in Cairo, 2010], 2).

⁵² Mehrez, "The Representation of AUC in the Arab Cultural Imaginary," American University in Cairo website, accessed September, 27, 2015, <http://www1.aucegypt.edu/aucmemories/downtown.html>. See also Mark Allen Peterson, *Connected in Cairo: Growing Up Cosmopolitan in the Modern Middle East*. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

⁵³ Nezar AlSayyad, Nasser Rabbat, and Irene A Bierman, eds., *Making Cairo Medieval* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2005); Alaa El-Habashi and Nicholas Warner, "Recording the Monuments of Cairo: An Introduction and Overview," *Annales Islamologiques* 32 (1998): 81–99. See also Timothy Mitchell,

reshape their contexts, often reflecting ways of living known to many AUC students mainly from depictions in movies and television (Fig. 11).⁵⁴ Our field trips constitute a contact zone in which neo-liberal Cairo confronts its image of authentic Cairo. Often, the heritage learner of Islamic art, navigating the physical distance from the historic city and the cultural distance from ways of living within it, approaches both with the same mixture of essentialism and detachment that we problematize when encountered in the textbooks.⁵⁵

Contesting Conventions in an Art History Class — the Pakistani Way

Sadia Pasha Kamran, University of the Punjab, Lahore

Popular sociopolitical, cultural, and religious dogmas make the teaching of art history both perilous and politically relevant in Pakistan. Subsequent regimes, while visualizing the nature of the State, defined the conventions of art history in Pakistan. In such a scenario the significance of art history lectures in creating harmony within society and the role of educationists at Lahore's National College of Art⁵⁶ in making art relevant to the society have been immense, resulting in the production of art that is celebrated nationally and internationally.

Another important aspect related to art history teaching in Pakistan in general and particularly at the National College of Art is the widely practiced tradition of the oral transmission of knowledge, which propagated the teaching of art history in an informal way.⁵⁷ It follows that art

“Making the Nation: The Politics of Heritage in Egypt,” in *Consuming Tradition, Manufacturing Heritage: Global Norms and Urban Forms in the Age of Tourism*, ed. Nezar AlSayyad (London: Routledge, 2001), 213–39.

⁵⁴ For a discussion of the representations in popular culture, see Lila Abu Lughod, “Asserting the Local as National in the Face of the Global: The Ambivalence of Authenticity in Egyptian Soap Opera,” in *Localizing Knowledge in a Globalizing World: Recasting the Area Studies Debate*, eds. Ali Mirsepassi et al. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 101–30. See also essays in Diane Singerman and Paul Amar, eds., *Cairo Cosmopolitan: Politics, Culture and Urban Space in the New Globalized Middle East* (Cairo: American University in Cairo Press, 2006).

⁵⁵ So great are these distances that last year's AUC theater club students decided to construct a stage-set of a traditional neighborhood on the new AUC campus, where they performed a fair celebrating a “revival of Egyptian culture at AUC” (promotional email received March 29, 2015). For one perspective on the reception of this event, see Edmund Bower, “El-Hara: How the other 95 Percent Lives,” *Mada Masr* (April 24, 2015), accessed June 14, 2016, <http://www.madamasr.com/sections/culture/el-7ara-how-other-95-percent-lives>. Cf. Tim Winter, “Auto-exoticism: Cultural Display at the Shanghai Expo,” *Journal of Material Culture* 18.1 (2013): 69.

⁵⁶ Formerly known as the Mayo School of Art, this was the only art school in Pakistan at the time of its partition from India. It was upgraded as the National College of Art in 1958.

⁵⁷ Even though the Higher Education Commission has recently stressed the importance of writing the course outlines and of defining the aims and objectives, the Quality Education Control (QEC) is unable to keep a strict check on what is being taught in the classrooms.

history and pedagogy has not been a popular subject of research and has been mainly taught on an experimental basis and at the whim of individuals.⁵⁸

While typically a global art survey course somewhat sets up a timeline⁵⁹ for the students, in Pakistan, such courses also aim at giving meaning to the entire activity of art making. It defines art for students as historical evidence, as a document of feeling, expression, inquiry, entertainment, and as a part and parcel of life and not as an alien or irrelevant thing that happened in the past. It introduces and sensitizes students to the presence of “art” in their surroundings and prepares them for philosophical and theoretical art history courses.⁶⁰ Following are the notions that lay the basic structure of the art history curriculum at most of the Pakistani art schools.

In 1947, after independence, Pakistan inherited the British education system.⁶¹ The British approach towards Indian art was quite demeaning. In order to establish an air of supremacy to justify foreign rule, and also due to the varying aesthetic preferences between nineteenth-century India and Europe, the British propagated the idea that “India had no living art”⁶² and “had nothing to teach its own subjects.”⁶³ Such an approach reduced the status of Indian art to mere industrial craft. Today, students are introduced to local cultural heritage. Field trips to historical sites, museums, and industrial craft workshops and exhibitions not only get them interested in the subject but also introduce them to cultural expressions that they heretofore never considered important.

⁵⁸ As a matter of fact, there is hardly any survey text or any other critical writing on art written locally. I have extensively studied the art history curriculum, as well as methodologies prevalent in Pakistan and have taught at the National College of Art, Beaconhouse National University, Kinnaird College, and UCA&D, Punjab University. This particular course was designed for an upcoming University of Culture & Art, Lahore.

⁵⁹ It identifies an artwork as a product of a particular date and milieu and fixes it on the timeline of art history, while informing the student about the achievements of that era and area. As most of these surveys are written in the West, the non-Western cultures with their distinctive understanding of art are somewhat ignored or simply misrepresented.

⁶⁰ Such are the concerns when, as an art history instructor and as a member of the National Curriculum Revision Committee, I design the “big, fat art history survey course” for the foundation year at undergraduate level.

⁶¹ Among other borrowed British legacies were law and governance. While most of the inherited establishments were modified to meet the requirements of the new state, in the very early years of the Pakistani nation’s birth, art and art education remained unchanged and rather unattended. In the early days, governmental interventions in art institutions were limited. From 1947 till 1957, art was considered and practiced as a British legacy.

⁶² Holland Cotter, “Indian Modernism via an Eclectic and Elusive Artist.” *New York Times*, August 18, 2008, accessed December 12, 2011, <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/20/arts/design/20bose.html>.

⁶³ Stephen Evans, “Macaulay’s minutes revisited: Colonial Language policy in nineteenth-century India,” *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development* (2002) 23#4, 260–81: 10.1080/01424630208666469

It is a sad reality that the British, while designing the curriculum of the Mayo School of Art,⁶⁴ focused only on teaching industrial crafts—that is: metalwork, woodwork, jewelry design, and masonry with a studio-centric, skill-oriented approach, without much attention to theoretical aspects of art-making. Though the school was changed to the National College of Arts in 1958, it worked under the Department of Industries until 1963, after which the education department took over.⁶⁵ Though studio art thrived at the National College of Arts, not much attention was paid to the teaching of art history until recently. Art history survey books that reached the college library were in English—a language not fully comprehensible to most students in the early days of the college, who thus relied on abridged versions of these surveys in the form of class notes. Neither the notes nor the instructors made any impact on the students, who were otherwise brilliant in studio practice. To most of them, it was not necessary to learn or write about art, since the visual form was the only language they were interested in or needed for their self-expression.⁶⁶ In my art history class, I give them small writing assignments, stressing the importance of observing art around them and realizing that it is worth writing about their understanding of art not only to project their culture but also to survive in the contemporary art scene, where writing about one's own art is a crucial skill for an artist.

Other events that set the pace of Pakistani art history teaching are the political interventions in art education from the 1960s. Be it General Ayub Khan's government undertaking the patronage of official art bodies, Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's (1973–77) progressive policy,⁶⁷ or General Zia ul Haq's martial law (1977–88) suspending all civil rights, Pakistani art suffered when discrimination and prejudice against art were introduced. Anthropologist Sana Riaz observes that in the 1980s, education in Pakistan became “an international political issue” involving the stakeholders of the Soviet war in Afghanistan, which included the U.S. and the Arab monarchs in the Persian Gulf.⁶⁸ In the shadow of these international events, Pakistan's education policy promoted the ideologies of *Pakistaniat* and *Islamization*. Art was considered to

⁶⁴ One of the four schools of arts set up during the British Raj in India. It was set up in 1875 to promote the craft of the area.

⁶⁵ Painting, sculpture, printmaking, textile, and graphic design were considered the main disciplines only after the school was promoted to a degree-awarding institution in 1985. It took Punjab another fourteen years to establish the research and publication department, which started functioning in 1999 with the first independent publication that can be considered indigenous as well as authentic.

⁶⁶ “Of course there were exceptions, especially the ones who were fortunate to get an exposure in European universities and institutions. But overall the culture of research and writing somehow was missing.” Salima Hashmi, in discussion with the author, April 21, 2015.

⁶⁷ To pacify the religious opposition, which was gaining power with their vision of an orthodox “Islamic” state, Bhutto fused leftist poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz's pluralism-friendly and secularist ideals with those of revivalist Islamic scholars like Abul ā'la Mādūdī. Nadeem, F., Paracha. “Lost in Transition” Smoker's Corner, *Dawn*. September 16, 2012.

⁶⁸ Muntasir Sattar, “In the name of Tradition” review of *New Islamic Schools: Tradition, Modernity, and Class in Urban Pakistan* by Sana Riaz, *Dawn*, July 26, 2015. Dawn Books and Authors.

be “the Trojan horse [that had] infiltrate[d] the Islamic complexion of...society.”⁶⁹ The disciplines of history and art history were jeopardized and were co-opted by those in authority to serve their particular political agendas.⁷⁰ To encounter this ambiguity, readings in my course introduce students to perspectives that confront their misconstrued assumptions about history and art.

The mishandling of history as discussed above gave birth to a misguided, confused generation that was to face the wrath of 9/11 and the political chaos of its aftermath. Once again, the Pakistani nation was confronted on political, religious, and cultural fronts, and, as history was already being twisted by the state, it had to hide behind Islamic fundamentalists as a defense mechanism and in search of an identity.⁷¹ The misinterpretation of Islam and fabricated histories⁷² deprived Islamic art of its true, abstract, metaphysical qualities and diverse approaches, rendering it unimportant and unpopular to society. In this milieu, pre-Islamic cultures of the region such as the c. 5000–1500 BCE Indus Valley Civilization and the first-millennium BCE Gandhara culture with its Greco-Roman and Buddhist pasts were disowned. Introduction to these important milestones in the history of human civilization develops an understanding of cultural diversity while promoting tolerance towards other cultures with the idea that we share common ground as part of a larger human race and prepares students to learn about Western culture and art. Throughout the course students look at various examples of Western art and compare artworks and contexts in which they were created—all the time making connections between Western and local art-making traditions.

Today, Pakistan’s art history students are astonished when shown the female dancing figures that once adorned the *Qasr-i Amra* (eighth-century CE palace-retreat, present Jordan).⁷³ They find it

⁶⁹ Nadeem, F., Paracha. “Lost in Transition” Smoker’s Corner, *Dawn*. September 16, 2012.

⁷⁰ Though the revision of history was begun in the 1950s, but the revisions during Zia’s rule drove a stake through the heart of Pakistani history. Also see K.K. Aziz as quoted by A.H. Nayyar and Ahmad Salim. *The Subtle Subversion: The State of Curricula and Textbooks in Pakistan*. (Islamabad: Social Development Policy Institute, 2003).

⁷¹ Talibanization and Islamization provided a chance to the opportunists. Every other person claimed to be a scholar of Islam and a guide of lost Muslim souls, who, according to these speculators, desperately needed rectification. These half-baked intellectuals shaped Islam as deeply orthodox despite the fact that, in essence, it is quite a liberal religion, which is based on the betterment of society and celebrates humanity instead of dividing it on the basis of caste, class, and color. Such regressive ideas concealed the love of Islam for beauty and snatched the ideals of aesthetics from the teachings of Islam.

⁷² An example of a fabricated history would be the propagation of the notions that art making in general and the representation of human figures in particular is forbidden in Islam.

⁷³ This is mainly because the curriculum at primary, secondary, or even high-school levels in Pakistan propagates the idea that figural representation was forbidden in Islam, and the rulers and office bearers of Islamic states, considering themselves the true Muslims, would never perform an act that is against the teachings of Islam.

difficult to analyze the *M‘irājnāma*, a fourteenth-century text⁷⁴ illustrating the Prophet’s journey to the heavens.⁷⁵ The image of the Prophet PBUH⁷⁶ riding *Burāq*⁷⁷ does not make for an easily delivered and quickly grasped lecture. The presence of Buddhist pillars and Hindu carved stone slabs in the *Qutb* mosque complex, Delhi (twelfth century CE) makes no sense to them, as the pluralistic approach of Islamic culture has been erased by regressive state policies. They consider art as an alien “entity” imported from the West to serve as a luxury for the elite.

Thus, the art history class in Pakistan is not just a center of cultural production, rather it is an investigation room, a forum where contemporary realities come alive, biased information is challenged, and students are prepared to examine objects and spaces that directly question their religious dogmas. At times, the instructor is unwillingly found involved in a religious discourse just to convince a paranoid parent who has recently been introduced to the extremist’s rationale of art making. There is always a risk of crossing the thin line between logical discourse and obscure debate that can be coined as blasphemous. Thus, the art history teacher needs to not only be proficient in art, history, religion, culture, economy, and current affairs, but he or she is also supposed to be a comrade, a priest, and a confessor. While recognizing that the need of Pakistani students⁷⁸ is totally different from the West, the global survey course confronts the conventions set by various social, political, and historical factors in Pakistan. Interestingly, in such a process the only available textbooks are those that are also used in the West⁷⁹—written with a Eurocentric approach but taught and read from a non-Western perspective.

⁷⁴ The earliest surviving image of the Prophet’s ascension appears in a section on the m‘irāj as included in a fourteenth-century illustrated manuscript of Rašid-al-Din’s *Jāme‘ al-tawāriḳ* (Compendium of Chronicles).

⁷⁵ This generation grew up witnessing the issue of Danish cartoons. The controversy began after the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published twelve editorial cartoons on September 30, 2005, most of which depicted Muhammad. The newspaper announced that this was an attempt to contribute to the debate about criticism of Islam and self-censorship. Muslim groups in Denmark complained, and the issue eventually led to protests around the world, including violent demonstrations and riots in some Muslim countries. Most scholars ridiculed the very idea of depicting Muhammad PBUH, not realizing that the image of Muhammad existed in many Persian miniature paintings.

⁷⁶ PBUH stands for “Peace Be Upon Him.”

⁷⁷ The Prophet’s human-headed horse, on which he is said to have travelled to the heavens.

⁷⁸ The students coming to art school to pursue their undergraduate degree are from diverse backgrounds. They may come from government schools, where they were never introduced to the “art” or studio practice, or they may come from a Cambridge International Education system—or more recently from the International Baccalaureate—where they learn “art” from a foreign perspective.

⁷⁹ An all-time favorite text is *Gardner’s Art through the Ages*.

Designing Art History Courses: Teaching Local and Thinking Global⁸⁰

Nina Murayama, PhD, Tamagawa University, Tokyo, Japan

Imported Notions of Fine Art and Museum

Art history, as a scholarly field, is a discipline relatively new to Japan, even though there is a long Japanese tradition of artists' biographies and painting theories.⁸¹ Learning about art can provide insight of life and death in any specific cultural and political moment. Since the past can only be conceived in relation to the present, I open art history survey courses with basic but fundamental inquiries: why create art? Which came first: art or tools? Does art make progress or not? Why do humans bury the deceased? These questions aid students in the realization that art making and burial rituals are fundamental human needs.⁸²

In Japan, the concepts of an art museum and the division between fine arts and crafts are imported. Before the modernization of Japan, the visual arts were not divided into independent art mediums; rather, they were integrated into the everyday life of people at all levels of society, as objects were selected and arranged according to spaces, occasions, and formality. The Western hierarchical division between fine art and crafts was imposed by the Meiji government (1868–1912) in conjunction with the new preservation policy of antiquities.⁸³ Even though these institutional controls were reshaping national art structures and taste during the westernization of Japan, it seems that the Japanese never lost their love and respect for crafts and design objects—the highly sophisticated aesthetics of the everyday. Thus, local visual culture is integral to construction of art history.

⁸⁰ I appreciate the opportunity to present my paper at CAA 2016 and to receive genuine comments from the discussant and audience. Above all Leda Cempellin and Aditi Chandra organized the panel and put papers into a coherent whole with their intellectual enthusiasm and commitment to the future of art history as a discipline and pedagogy. I can't thank them more.

⁸¹ Tsunemichi Kanbayashi, *Bigaku Kotohajime* (Tokyo: Sogen Shobo, 2002), 41–63.

⁸² See Takeshi Yorou and Iwane Saito, *Nou to Haka, Hito ha Naze Maiso Surunoka* (Tokyo: Kobundo, 1992), 59–65.

⁸³ Toyojiro Hida, *Kougei no Ryoubun* (Tokyo: Bigaku Shuppan, 2006), 10; The concept of a museum was introduced to Japan in the 1860s through the documentation and journals of Japanese delegations who visited the United States, England, and Europe. This does not mean that Japan never had cultural institutions for the display of objects. Instead, there were venues where herbs and other natural specimens were shown as resources of medical research. Also, the sacred treasures of temples moved from one religious site to another; in modern parlance, one can say that temples sent their sacred treasures for “travel exhibitions.” Modeled after the collections of Western museums, the Japanese government Cultural Agency established a new museum in 1872. The new museum was formed for a number of reasons: the preservation of national treasures, promotion of Japanese products, and enlightenment of the public. Tokyo National Museum ed., *Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Hyakunen-shi* (Tokyo: Daiichihoki Shuppan Kabushikikaisha, 1973), 2–13, 41; See also, Hiroyasu Fujioka “Keimoushugi to Nashonarizumu no Kousaku” *Gekkan Bunkazai* 300 (September, 1988): 42–51.

Sensing Time and Space

Western art history embraces a linear notion of development, but this sense of time has different meanings outside of the west. There is an aesthetic sense of space-time concept called *Ma* in Japan.⁸⁴ Furthermore, Japanese history was generated under the influence of China, and its narrative was written so that Japan was protected from China.⁸⁵ Geography and the natural environment inspire the way we comprehend the world and what we create. A geographical sense of global history is created by powerful empires ruling trade routes throughout their regions. As an example, the Mongol Empire, historically, grew to become the largest land empire during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. This was followed by European oversea exploration; the discovery of sea routes sped globalization and led to an expansion of the world market.⁸⁶ Hence, an overview of geography and a changing world map is relevant to understanding how art unfolds in each region.

A map of the world made in Japan locates Japan at the center. However, what if the current center of Japan is conceived as a void among Japanese people? When I ask my students about the center of Japan, I receive unsure answers: i.e., Tokyo Station. Interestingly, in the Japanese railway system all trains moving toward Tokyo Station are called UP, whereas trains moving

⁸⁴ Unlike the Western objective, even flow of time in space, *Ma* (間) is an elastic space-time notion in Japan. The term is used for traditional Japanese architectural elements of distance and space, but it also refers to silent moments and subtle silences during conversations and human relationships. As such, subjective responses are implied in *Ma*. See Arata Isozaki, *Ma space-time in Japan* (NY: Cooper-Hewitt Museum, 1979).

⁸⁵ “History is culture,” wrote Hidehiro Okada, a Japanese historian of China, Manchuria, Mongolia, and ancient Japan. Okada observed that the way we look at our past begins with the writing of history. In Ancient Greece and China, history was independently generated. Herodotus wrote the first history, in the fifth century BCE, that focused on the war between Greece and Barbaroi (a non-Greek speaking people). For Herodotus, the world changed with political conflicts and wars. Hence, the main task of history was to document these changes, while conceiving of Europe and Asia as eternal opponents. In contrast, in Okada’s analyses, Chinese history has no sense of changes wrought through political conflicts. Sima Qian wrote *Shiji* (the scribe’s record) between the late second century and early first century BCE. The Chinese view of history was characterized by the conceptual legitimacy (正統) of the emperor to reign over the people under Heaven’s will (天命). Therefore, changes, such as natural disasters and upheavals, meant that the emperor did not fulfill the duties of Heaven’s will and was incapable to rule. In order to document the legitimacy of the current emperor, Chinese histories avoided documenting changes. Hidehiro Okada, *Rekishito toha Nanika* (Tokyo: Bunshun Shinsho, 2001), 33, 35, 38, 59; Okada also pointed out that Ancient China had a menacing power over Japan, and Japanese history was written as a narrative in opposition to China. Japanese history was narrated in a way that was independently established from the continent. Okada, *Sekaishi no Tanjou* (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1999), 252–55.

⁸⁶ Before the European Exploration, the Mongol Empire during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries dominated trade routes across the continent. Okada thinks that history should be taught independently by region until the Mongol Empire. The Mongol Empire had a huge impact on Asia and Europe by developing the modern trade routes that are used even today. Okada, *Sekaishi no Tanjou*, 202–48.

away from Tokyo Station are called DOWN. As a central destination, Tokyo Station occupies a special place in Japanese minds, but once we pay attention, it is its neighbor, the Imperial Palace, that is the true center of Japan.⁸⁷ *Tokyo Diagram* (1992) by Yukinori Yanagi shows that routes of all underground railways avoid passing beneath the Palace (Fig. 12). This void suggests the hidden center of Japan.

When I returned to Japan in 2012 after living in New York for over a decade, I had a fresh view on museums in Japan. Museum design and display reflect a national concept of art and art history. One day, while I was visiting the Tokyo National Museum, I was surprised to find a VIP room in the very center of the museum's second floor, a room which is reserved only for Japanese royal families and national guests (Fig. 13). The door of the room is usually closed, except on New Year's Day and holidays associated with the Imperial family. If you are lucky, you can see the space on such occasions from the outside.⁸⁸ The current museum building was funded through public donations and governmental subsidy. It was completed in 1937 and given as an offering to the Imperial family. A design competition was held under stylistic regulations and based on Japanese taste.⁸⁹ Both the exterior and the interior of the museum suggest that a nationalistic sentiment in the late 1930s, before the outbreak of WWII, fueled a design dedicated to the Imperial family, including a private reception room.

It is striking to find such a private room in a public museum today. It is symbolic that the imperial family members themselves were, and still are, treated as a national treasure in the way in which they themselves occupy the museum space, even though after WWII the cultural institution's control was transferred from the Imperial Household Agency to the Cultural Agency.⁹⁰ The empty room in the Tokyo National Museum reminds me of an elusive but quietly existing cultural value of Japan. I encourage students to observe these museum spaces and the contexts in which artworks are displayed and appreciated, because spaces are charged with cultural norms, national and political concerns, and negotiations with imported foreign knowledge.

⁸⁷ See Hayao Kawai, *Chukukozo, Nihon no Shinso* (CHUOKORON-SHINSHA, INC. 1999); Roland Barthes, *Empire of Signs*, translated by Richard Howard (NY: Hill and Wang, 1982); Hiroyuki Arai, *Critique of Art about Tenno Emperor System* (Tokyo: Shakai Hyoronsha, 2014), 227.

⁸⁸ The original museum building was designed by Josiah Conder (1852–1920) in 1882, under the auspices of the Department of Interior and the Ministry of Agriculture and Commerce. Unfortunately, Conder's museum building was damaged by the great earthquake of 1923 and then demolished. This early museum was characterized by its strong ties to commerce and industry. From 1886 until the end of World War II, the management of the museum was transferred to the Imperial Household Ministry. When it started operating the museum, the emphasis shifted from commercial interests to the history and aesthetic values of the collections. Fujioka, "Keimoshugi" 44; See also, Teishitsu Hakubutsukan ed. *Teishitsu Hakubutsukan Ryakushi* (Tokyo: Kyodo Insatsu Kabushikikaisha, 1938), 3–5, 76–77, 89.

⁸⁹ *Teishitsu Hakubutsukan Ryakushi*, 198–199, 208. The new building was designed by Hitoshi Watanabe (1887–1973).

⁹⁰ *Tokyo Kokuritsu Hakubutsukan Hyakunnen-shi*, 585.

Art History with Local and Global Perspectives

If art history is global, it should allow local perspectives to interact with global agendas and concerns. For instance, the ancient civilization of Egypt has no direct link to Japanese history. However, it is relevant to consider Japanese burial practices while learning about Egyptians' customs. The tomb of Shi Huangdi, the emperor of the Qin dynasty who united China in 221 BCE, is a monumental burial ground that may be comparable to those of ancient Egypt. I assign students to research and compare the Great Pyramid of Khufu with the tomb of Shi Huangdi. Fundamental to both tombs is the preservation of the bodies of Pharaohs and the Emperor and reconstructions of the environment for their afterlife, so that it looks like their lifetime's surroundings. In the classroom, I mention that there were four female Pharaohs in ancient Egypt. Only one of them, Hatshepsut, had portraits representing her dressed as a male king. Her reign was successful, but records of her disappeared from history; her reliefs and sculptures were chiseled and broken after her death. This brings attention to the writers of history. What happens to artworks after a ruler dies? Can only a winner write history? I hope, eventually, that students generate their own inquiries in the art history classroom, while learning to reposition the past in relation to the present.

The Japanese tombs we know today are from the recent past.⁹¹ However, the anthropologist Shigeru Gorai observes that discovering a spirit in a natural stone is a trait found in animism, and Japanese devotion to stone is extended to the belief that the spirit of the deceased could be attached to a stone.⁹² Hence, it is not surprising to have a Buddhist memorial service performed for broken Aibo robotic dogs produced by SONY.⁹³ This pervasive and inherent Japanese mentality can be negotiated by others as well; recently, Gill Pratt, CEO at Toyota Research Institute, Inc. admitted, "I think a home robot can be an object of affection."⁹⁴ There is no single, rationalized, global standard in art history, except for underlying local contingent narratives, which may be as invisible as air but have the potential to demonstrate global influence.

⁹¹ Some students reported visits to their ancestor's tombs several times a year, and some do not visit at all. They know that their family tombs usually contain remains of relations as far back as the great, great grandparents, that is, generationally from around the late nineteenth century.

⁹² Shigeru Gorai, *Ishino Shukyo* (Tokyo: Kodansha Gakujutsu Bunko, 2007), 31–32.

⁹³ "Aibo 17dai Shudanso" *Chiba Nippo Shinbun*, November 20, 2015; Jonathan Soble, "A Robotic Dog's Mortality" *The New York Times*, June 17, 2015, accessed May 11, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/06/18/technology/robotica-sony-aibo-robotic-dog-mortality.html?_r=0.

⁹⁴ Gill Pratt quoted in Japanese (translation by the author) "Toyota AI ni Takusu Mirai" *Nikkei Shinbun*, June 9, 2016, 9.

Conclusion: Cross-Cultural Strategies and Discontents⁹⁵

James Elkins, PhD, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, USA

Given the geographical range of these contributions (Qatar, Egypt, Japan, Pakistan, U.S.), my response would not be so much about “teaching Western and non-Western art history,” as about teaching Islamic, Egyptian, Japanese, Latin American, or Pakistani histories of art alongside European and North American histories. This is a matter of the relation between individual traditions, nations, and regions, to art history’s “master narratives,” which structure what I like to call “North Atlantic art history.”

The question raised by Kristen L. Chiem, “What is the Significance of Art to Humanity?” does not come up in world art surveys such as Janson, Stokstad, or Gardner, but it is exactly the question that needs to be asked⁹⁶ and begs the following: 1) Which art, as interpreted by whom? Given that each culture or period has a history of appearances in art history textbooks, describing the history of the inclusion or privileging of cultures makes the political and historical contexts of judgment visible to students from the very beginning.⁹⁷ 2) What should count as art, and why? Students can be made aware from the first week that not all objects they will study counted as art for their original producers and viewers. As each new culture is introduced, students can be asked: what is gained by considering the objects they study as art? Do the students’ sense of world culture and history become richer, or more parochial, if they choose to call a Yoruba sculpture “art”?

The example provided by Radha J. Dalal concerning the need at Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar to explain the treatment of a mosque first as architecture and then as a place of worship reminds me by contrast of Hans Belting’s insistence that objects made in the European Middle Ages not be treated as art, because they were objects for worship. Belting’s own answer is anthropology, as in the book *Bild-anthropologie*; it is an example of a refusal to acknowledge much of art’s history as part of the discipline of art history.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ This is an edited version of the original notes presented at the 2016 College Art Association annual conference.

⁹⁶ A. O. Scott, the movie reviewer, has a new book called *Better Living Through Criticism*; it is reviewed in *Bookforum*. Laura Kipnis, the reviewer, notes Scott’s response to this question: “What does art do? It’s an urge to master and add something to reality. What is the greatest human purpose? A longing to restore a sense of wholeness.”

⁹⁷ Oskar Baetschmann, for example, has studied Holbein’s reception, showing how he was first introduced to the canon as part of a fin-de-siècle episode in German nationalist scholarship.

⁹⁸ In my class, I present such differences as things we cannot answer or understand: as inbuilt contradictions in the purpose and sense of the class.

I like the idea raised by Dalal of cultures that are “coeval and inextricably linked.” However, Hoffman's essay⁹⁹ provides an example of how the complexity created by hybrid and creolized cultural contexts defers questions of the pre-existing significance of the elements that are mixed – a point also brought up by Abigail Lapin Dardashti. How best to tell the history of contemporaneous thirteenth-century Christian manuscripts and architecture, and how to integrate talk about Ayyubid scholarship and architecture? It is not difficult to imagine that in twenty years most of the professional-level scholarship in art history that treats art outside the master narratives of European and North American art will be about temporalities, materialities, and circulations. But what kind of survey of world art will then be possible? If attention to multiple temporalities overcomes the master narrative (as that narrative exists in, for example, Gombrich's *Story of Art* or the large textbooks), and if attention to creolizations, circulations, and hybridities eclipse attention to monocultural practices (as it has, for example, in Terry Smith's work), then the introductory course or textbook on world art will become a series of examples of mixtures and circulations. Such a course or textbook will beg the question of what linear sequences, master narratives, or unmixed traditions¹⁰⁰ have provided the material that is then mixed and circulated.

Several of these contributions show that, outside of large universities in North America, students are often monocultural. Sadia Pasha Kamran writes against the Islamization of the Pakistani curriculum. Before Zia ul Haq's martial law, she says, Pakistani textbooks began with the most ancient, pre-Islamic civilizations in an effort to show that Pakistan's identity is more than its Islamic present. Once students are introduced to a complex history of Pakistan, they can be asked if they feel they might be inheritors of this history or if they feel disconnected.¹⁰¹ During museum visits, such as those explained in the contribution by Ellen Kenney, “in which neo-liberal Cairo confronts its image of authentic Cairo,” students could be told to ask themselves: What is happening to my idea of the museum? Am I more or less of a tourist now? Do I feel the museum is more or less necessary to my country's, or my city's, sense of itself?

⁹⁹ Eva Hoffmann, “Christian Islamic Encounters on Thirteenth-Century Ayyubid Metalwork,” *Gesta* 43.2 (2004): 129-142.

¹⁰⁰ It is, however, possible to conceive of traditions as being always-already shared as the introduction in this paper points out.

¹⁰¹ In Iran, which I visited in 2011, the deeper history is embedded in the Islamic curriculum; the government effectively claims Persepolis and other ancient sites as Iranian. However, the South Asian context, which has seen the partition of the subcontinent into India and Pakistan and immense religious conflict between Hindus and Muslims, is different from that in Iran, and it is indeed desirable to highlight shared cultural pasts in India and Pakistan. There are two questions at play here: 1) the appropriation of historic sites by present-day government (Iran) to construct a glorious past, which is problematic and 2) the rejection of certain syncretic pasts by another government (Pakistan) to push towards Islamization. In the latter case, building a connection for students with the pre-Islamic pasts of Pakistan is desirable and dismantles the government's repressive policies.

Nina Murayama claims that, “I encourage students to observe these museum spaces and the contexts in which artworks are displayed and appreciated, because spaces are charged with cultural norms, national and political concerns, and negotiations with imported foreign knowledge.” An interesting point of reference here is Shigemi Inaga’s meditation on *Le Japon des avant-gardes, 1910-1970*, at the Pompidou Center. He recalls that he felt “awkward” for three different reasons. First, in the West, products (usually crafts), which are not categorized as art, are excluded from the avant-garde. Second, Western art historians assign these elements to the “Japanese tradition” so that Japanese art is disallowed from participating in modernism. And third, the West selects those modern Japanese arts which already have a similarity to the Western avant-garde, and then searches for their Japanese-ness. Inaga could not bring himself to accept this “perverse” [*tousaku*] logic in the name of “crosscultural sociability,” but neither did he want to allow himself to simply feel “pain looking at a distorted image of my home country as a faithful patriot” might. The conjunction of two impossible positions left him uncomfortable [*igogochi no warusa*]; “Who am I,” he asks, “talking about this gap, and where am I located?” The “violence” [*bouryokusei*] of the historical tradition that excludes Japanese craft, and that “perversely” [*tousaku*] searches for Japaneseness in those remnants of the tradition that can be considered sufficiently modern—i.e., Western—is irreparable. Post-Renaissance Western thinking on art is predicated on the distinction between art and craft, whether the craft is Western or non-Western, so it is not possible simply to right the imbalance and begin again. The only “solution,” if it can be called that, is to foster awareness akin to Inaga’s *warusa* (“discomfort”).¹⁰² The awareness of the psychological, affective result of cultural misrepresentation is one of the most promising strategies in teaching and writing about world art. It is not really a matter of explaining the histories of different concepts, it is more a question of attending to how the cultural situations make us feel. (Inaga's account can be found in the book *Is Art History Global?*, 2007.)

The art history survey is a fascinating problem. I think of it like an eclipse: the thing that is in front is art history’s ongoing interest in postcolonialism, identity, transculturality, and globalization; the thing that's hidden right behind it is the freshman survey. Many professional art historians have spent their careers writing about how to study and represent the world’s art; virtually none of those have spent time actually working on the survey. It is an invisible division of labor within art history, and it has produced a radical under-theorization of the world art survey. This collection goes a long way to bridge that gap.

¹⁰² These two paragraphs are from a book I'm working on, *The Impending Single History of Art: North Atlantic Art History*.

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Appendix A

Kristen L. Chiem, Proposed Readings, First-year Seminar, Pepperdine University

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Figures



Fig. 1: Anonymous, *The Institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper with St. Peter and St. Paul*, mid-16th century, Mexico. Feathers and colored paper on wood, gilt wood frame. Wings: 19 x 6 ¼ in. Center: 19x 12 ½ in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Gift of Coudert Brothers, 1888.



Fig. 2: Rembrandt Harmenszoon van Rijn, *Aristotle with a Bust of Homer*, 1653, Oil on canvas, 56½ x 53 ¾ in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, special contributions and funds given or bequeathed by friends of the Museum, 1961.



Fig. 3: Alessandro Allori, *The Gathering of Manna*, 1595-96, Wool and silk, 168 x 175 in. Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Purchase, The Isak and Rose Weinman Foundation Inc. Gift and Rogers Fund, 2004.

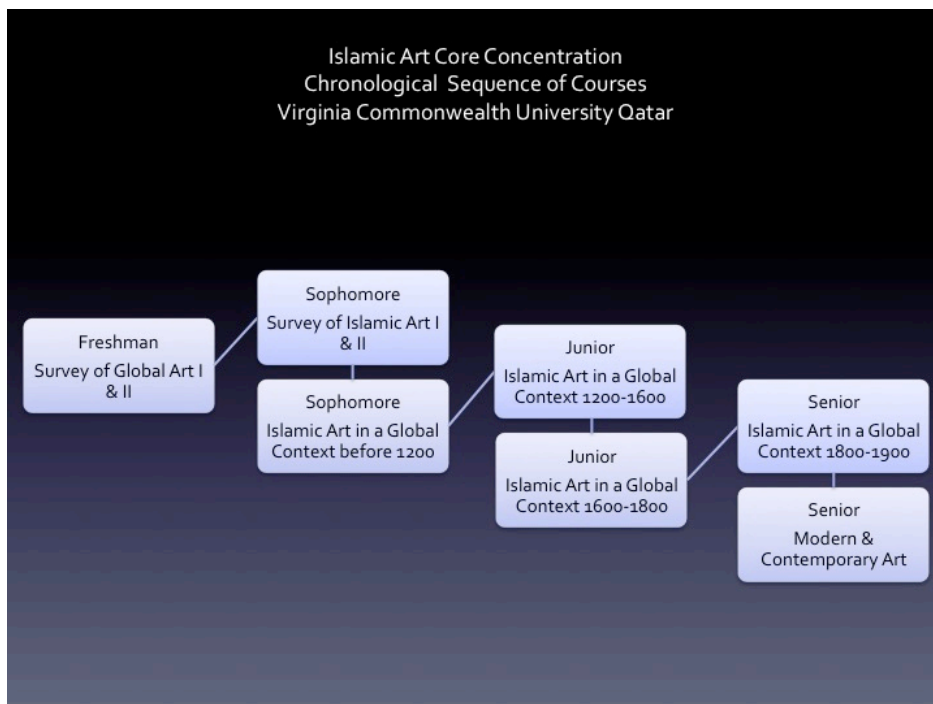


Fig. 4: Islamic Concentration Curriculum Map, Virginia Commonwealth University. Source: Author's creation.



Fig. 5: *Ayyubid Canteen*, 13th Century, Syria, Brass and silver inlay, 17.5 x 14 in. Freer Gallery of Art, Washington DC, Purchas F1941.10.



Fig. 6: Pseudo-Arabic text in the Virgin's halo. Gentile da Fabriano, *Madonna of Humility*, 1420-23, Tempera on panel, 22 x 16 in. Museo Nazionale di San Matteo, Pisa, Public Domain] via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 7: Jean-Léon Gérôme, *The Carpet Merchant*, 1887, Oil on canvas, 33.9 × 27.1 in., Minneapolis Institute of Arts, Minneapolis, Minnesota, [Public Domain] via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 8: Osman Hamdi Bey, *Persian Carpet Dealer on the Street*, 1888, Oil on canvas, Alte Nationalgalerie, Berlin, [Public Domain] via Wikimedia Commons.



Fig. 9: The American University Campus, New Cairo, Fall 2015.
Photo: the author.



Fig. 10: Field trip to the 9th-century CE Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, Fall 2011.
Photo: the author.



Fig. 11: View of Sayyida Nafisa Square in Cairo taken during a field trip, Spring 2015. Photo: the author.

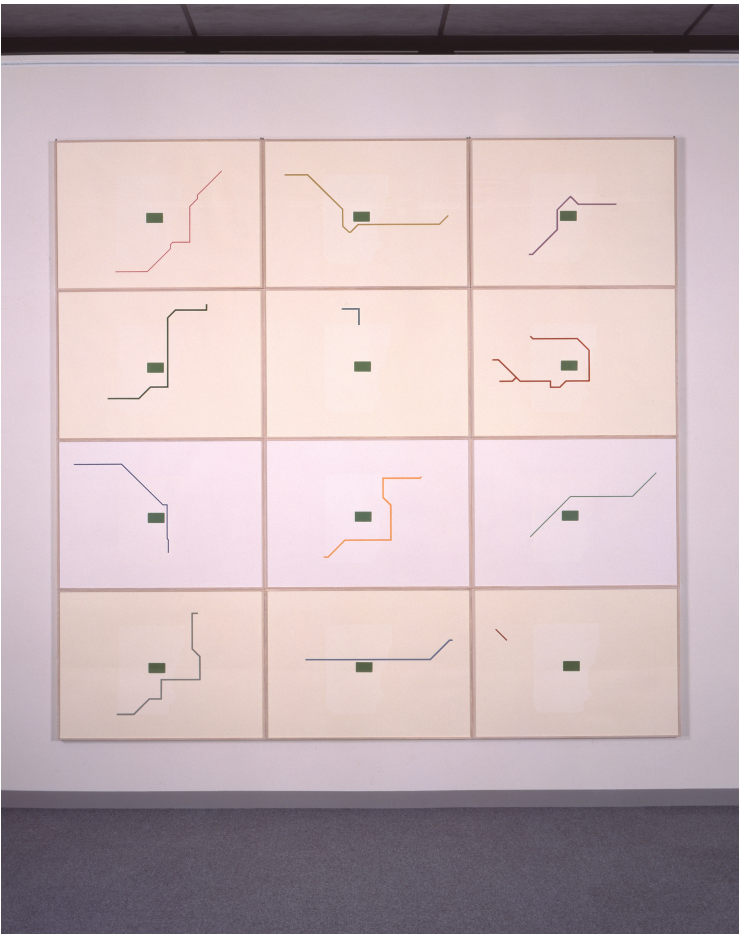


Fig. 12: Yukinori Yanagi, TOKYO DIAGRAM, 1992, acrylic, paper, 12 pieces, 80x110 cm © Yukinori Yanagi, Courtesy of the artist.



Fig. 13: Tokyo National Museum, architect Jin Watanabe, completed in 1937. Photo: the author.