

SCHEDULE *of* EVENTS

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 9		VENUE: TEATRO POLITEAMA
5–6 pm	Conference Registration	
6–7:30 pm	Opening Ceremony followed by keynote address: Shirin Neshat, <i>Contemporary Islamic Art</i> .	
8–10 pm	Opening Night Dinner	
SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10		SESSIONS, DAY I: PALAZZO STERI, UNIVERSITY OF PALERMO
8:30–9 am	Conference Registration	
9–9:15 am	Opening Remarks, Drs. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom	
9:15–10 am	William Graham, <i>Light as Image and Concept in the Qur'an and other Islamic Sources</i>	
10–10:45 am	Elaheh Kheirandish, <i>Light and Dark: The "Checkered History" of Early Optics</i>	
10:45–11:15 am	COFFEE BREAK	
11:15–12 pm	Robert Hillenbrand, <i>The Uses of Light in Islamic Architecture</i>	
12:00–12:45 pm	Renata Holod, <i>On Interiors and the Regimes of Lighting</i>	
12:45–2:30 pm	LUNCH, Palazzo Butera	
2:30–3:15 pm	Anna Contadini, <i>Facets of Light : The Case of Rock Crystals</i>	
3:15–4 pm	Oliver Watson, <i>Ceramics and Light</i>	
4–4:30 pm	Discussion, Closing	
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 11		SESSIONS, DAY 2: PALAZZO STERI, UNIVERSITY OF PALERMO
8:30–9 am	Conference Registration	
9–9:15 am	Opening Remarks, Drs. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom	
9:15–10 am	Wheeler Thackston, <i>Light in Persian Poetry</i>	
10–10:45 am	Barbara Brend, <i>The Management of Light in Persian Painting</i>	
10:45–11:15 am	COFFEE BREAK	
11:15–12 pm	Abdallah Kahil, <i>Illuminating the Void, Reflecting the Universe: Spatial Design and Light Furnishing in Mamluk Architecture</i>	
12–12:45 pm	Hakan Karateke, <i>Illuminating Ottoman Ceremonial</i>	
12:45–2:30 pm	LUNCH, Palazzo Butera	
2:30–3:15 pm	Susan Stronge, <i>By the Light of the Sun of Jahangir</i>	
3:15–4 pm	Ali Behdad, <i>Contact Vision: Reflections on the History of Photography in Qajar Iran</i>	
4–4:30 pm	Discussion	
4:45 pm	Closing Reception, Palazzo Butera	



HAMAD BIN KHALIFA SYMPOSIUM ON ISLAMIC ART
God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth
LIGHT IN ISLAMIC ART AND CULTURE

مفتوح النور في الفن والعمارة الإسلامية

FIFTH BIENNIAL HAMAD BIN KHALIFA SYMPOSIUM ON ISLAMIC ART
November 9–11, 2013
Palermo, Sicily



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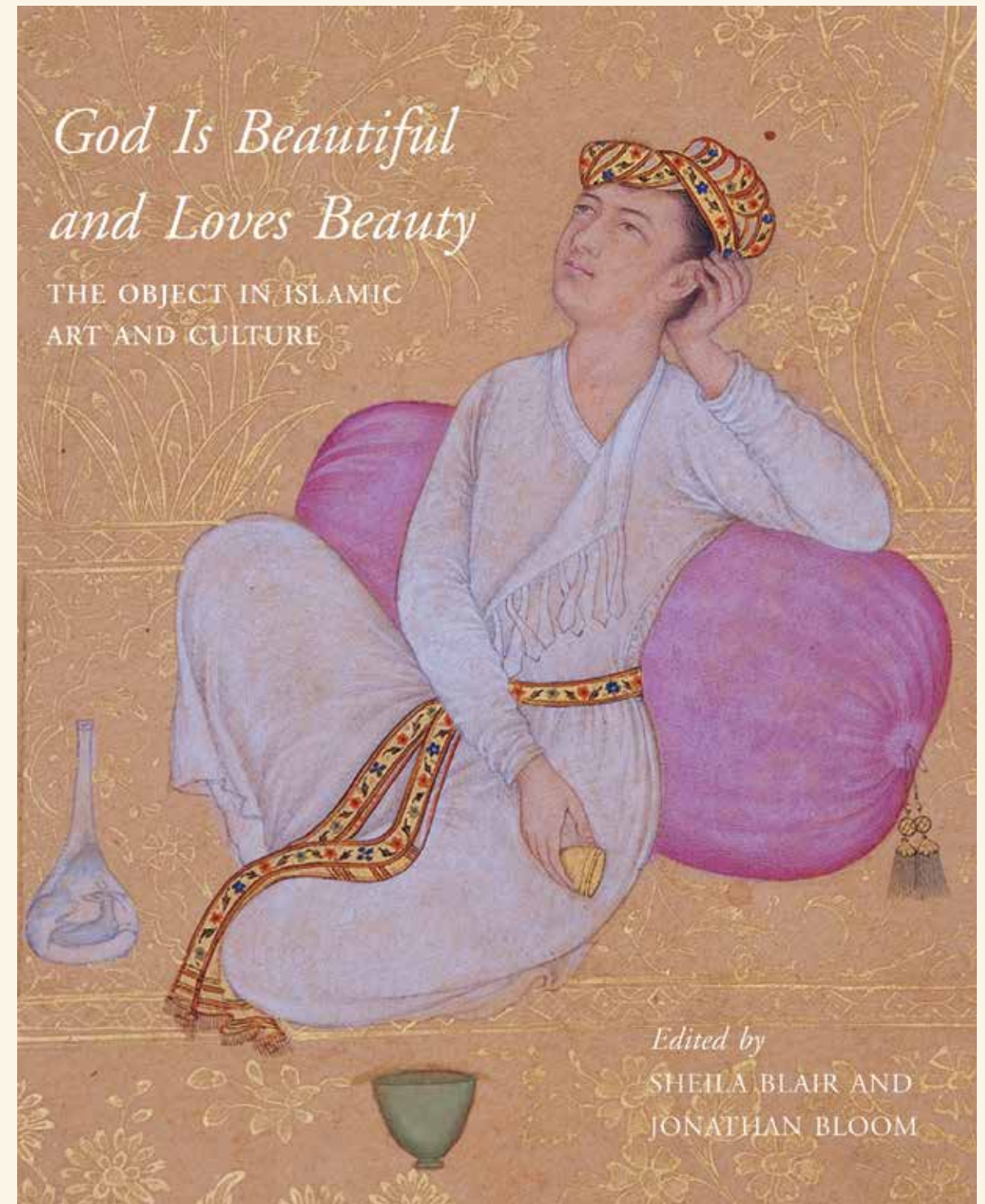
The Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art



God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth: Light in Islamic Art and Culture is the fifth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art. Sponsored by Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU) School of the Arts, VCUQatar, Qatar Foundation and Hamad bin Khalifa University and organized by Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, shared holders of the Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Chair in Islamic Art at VCU, the symposia seek to explore broad issues in the visual arts of the Islamic world.

The first symposium, entitled *Expanded Frontiers*, was held in Richmond, Virginia in November 2004. Eight scholars addressed a range of topics from the history of Islamic art to its relationships with the arts of Christian Europe. The second symposium, *Rivers of Paradise: Water in Islamic Art and Culture*, was held in Doha, Qatar in November 2007. Twelve speakers approached the many meanings and roles of water in Islamic art and society from religious, literary, archeological, architectural, and functional perspectives. *And Diverse Are Their Hues: Color in Islamic Art and Culture* was the third symposium, and was held in Córdoba, Spain in October 2009. *God Is Beautiful; He Loves Beauty: The Object in Islamic Art and Culture* was held in Doha, Qatar in November 2011 at the new Museum of Islamic Art, where twelve speakers gave original papers on objects in the Museum's collection. The holders of the chair edited the proceedings of the second, third and fourth symposia which were published by Yale University Press in extraordinarily handsome volumes of the same name.

The Hamad bin Khalifa Symposia on Islamic Art seek to make the latest and most interesting scholarship in this growing field of Islamic art available and accessible to a wide audience, ranging from students and scholars to artists, architects, designers and the interested public.



Cover of the proceedings from the previous symposium



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fifth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, *God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth: Light in Islamic Art and Culture*.

This symposium has set a tradition of quality that reflects the incredible Islamic art and design achievements that have been passed down through generations. It also gives us an opportunity to bring together the world's leading Islamic art experts for scholarship and reflection on this vast area of study. As in the past symposia, we welcome all who share our passion for the study of Islamic art.

Under the leadership of His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, former Amir of Qatar, Qatar has become a leader in the study and preservation of the most beautiful and important artifacts of Islamic culture. The Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, designed by I.M. Pei, hosts one of the most impressive collections of Islamic art. With the establishment of this museum and with the efforts of this symposium, Qatar continues to be an international center of education and scholarship in the field of Islamic art.

In 1997, Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser invited the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts to establish a campus in Qatar's Education City. As the leading design program in the Middle East and the top-ranked public university arts and design program in the United States, it is apropos for VCU to launch — and now become known for — one of the world's leading scholarly venues for the study of Islamic art and culture through the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art.

My special thanks go to our Symposium organizers, joint holders of the Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Chair in Islamic Art, Drs. Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, who have not only once again brought together the greatest minds to discuss the topic at hand, but continue to raise expectations for quality.

Joseph H. Seipel

Dean, VCU School of the Arts
Virginia Commonwealth University
Richmond, Virginia, USA



I am delighted to welcome you to the fifth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, *God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth: Light in Islamic Art and Culture*.

The Symposium is a highly successful collaboration between our esteemed Hamad bin Khalifa Endowed Co-Chairs of Islamic Art, Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, VCU School of the Arts, VCUQatar and, of course, our generous partner, Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development. All symposia papers and presentations are collected in beautifully illustrated publications and on the Symposium website, offering a significant resource for researchers of Islamic art and culture.

Established in 1998 through a partnership with Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar is the Qatar campus of the Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts. We strive to provide an engaged, learner-centered environment that fosters inquiry, discovery and innovation in a global setting. In addition to the biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, VCUQatar hosts the biennial international design conference Tasmeeem Doha, attracting globally recognized designers, artists and scholars to support sustainable university-community partnerships that enhance the educational, economic and cultural vitality of Qatar.

We trust that you will find the Symposium and the cultural experience in our host city, Palermo, both engaging and inspiring. On behalf of VCUQatar, I would like to thank you for participating in this event and contributing to the conversation.

Allyson Vanstone

Dean, VCUQatar
Doha, Qatar



It is my pleasure to welcome you to the fifth Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art. The series was inaugurated in 2004 in conjunction with the Chair in Islamic Art at Virginia Commonwealth University which was endowed by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar. Since then we have explored and celebrated on a biannual basis major themes in the visual arts of the Islamic world.

The Symposium has convened in both Doha and Richmond, and it is now taking place in Europe for the second time. Four years ago in the Andalusian city of Cordoba we considered the role of color. Here, in the equally beautiful city of Palermo in what was once the Amirate of Sicily, our attention is focused on the topic of light and we are again reminded of the profound influence of Islam upon the development of artistic technique, and upon European and world civilization. Once again I am impressed by the caliber of our speakers and participants, and I am confident that our discussions will be wide-ranging and insightful.

In less than a decade this Symposium has become a premier forum for all who are drawn to Islamic art – scholars, practitioners and the broader public. I believe we have succeeded in deepening understanding in many respects and in widening the circle of those who share our interest. This reflects the view of Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, that the achievements of Islamic artists and scholars deserve greater recognition. It is also consistent with the mission of Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), an emerging research university in Qatar that is building upon local, regional and international partnerships to contribute to the implementation of Qatar National Vision 2030. I am confident that in future years there will be ample opportunities for fruitful collaboration between this Symposium and HBKU's graduate Colleges, including the Qatar Faculty of Islamic Studies.

I thank you all for joining us at the fifth Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art and I wish the event every success.

Abdulla bin Ali Al-Thani, Ph.D.

President, Hamad bin Khalifa University
Vice President, Education, Qatar Foundation

Qatar Foundation and Hamad bin Khalifa University



The Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development is a private, non-profit organization established in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar. Qatar Foundation plays a key role in advancing Qatar's vision of a sustainable economy and society through its leadership in innovative education and research. Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser is Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and the driving force behind its initiatives. Her active engagement has helped establish Qatar as a leader in education and social reform.

Hamad bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation, is an emerging research university building upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located at Education City in Doha, HBKU seeks to provide unparalleled opportunities for scholarship, teaching, discovery, and learning for all of its students through an array of interdisciplinary programs. HBKU's partners are Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, Texas A&M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Northwestern University in Qatar, HEC Paris in Qatar, and University College London Qatar.

www.hbku.edu.qa

**SHEILA S. BLAIR &
JONATHAN M. BLOOM**

Symposium Organizers
*God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth:
Light in Islamic Art and Culture*



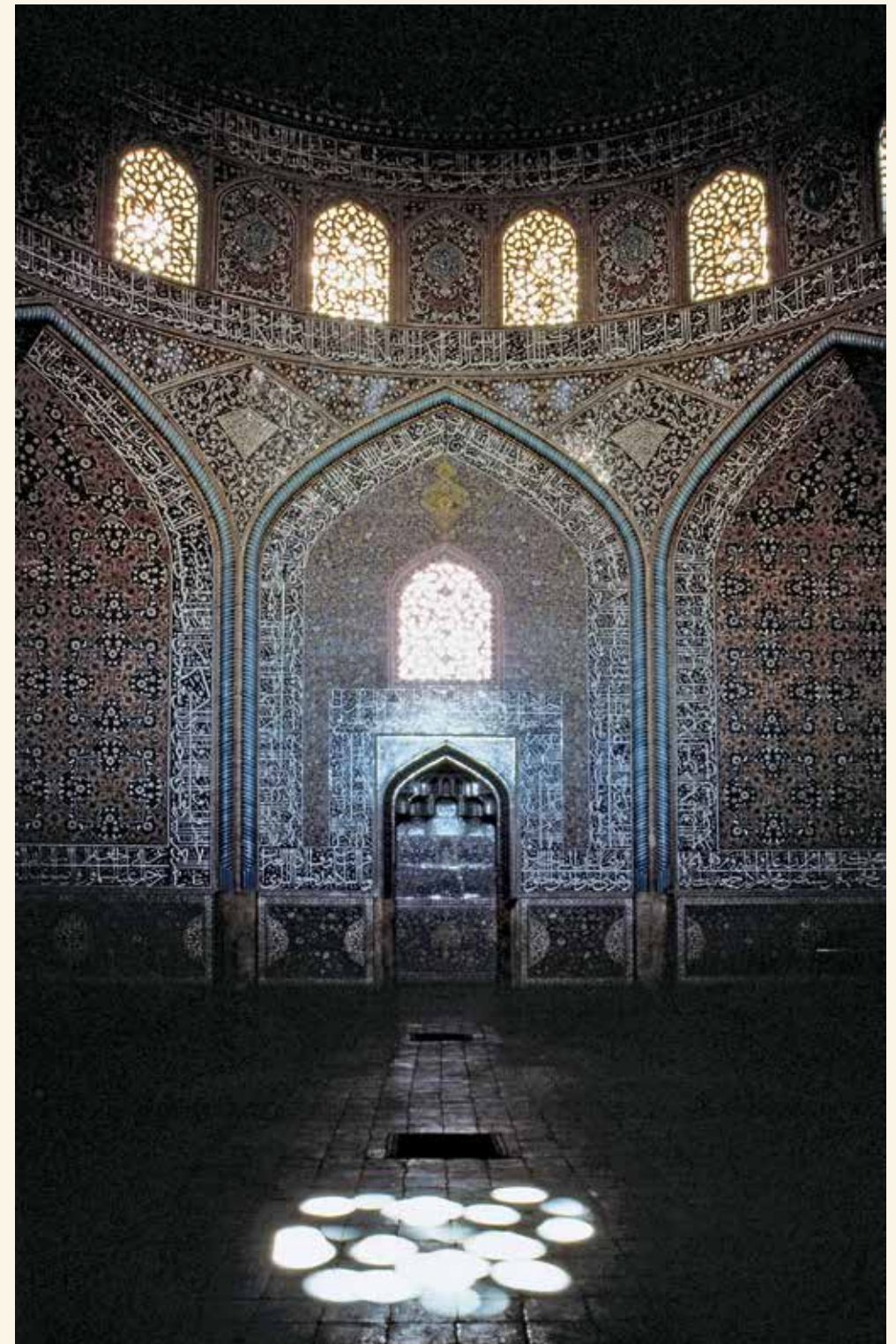
*Shared holders of the
Hamad bin Khalifa Chair of Islamic Art
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One of the most famous passages in the Qur'an, the Light Verse (24:35) majestically extols God as the Light of the Heavens and the Earth, a metaphor for His guidance and illumination over all creation. The Qur'an is rich in references to light, and light consequently permeates the culture and visual arts of the Islamic lands. This symposium investigates the topic of light in Islamic civilization from a wide range of perspectives, from the metaphoric imagery of light in the Qur'an and in the literatures of the Islamic lands to the practical role of light in buildings, paintings, performances, photography, and other works of art produced over the past fourteen centuries.

In our electrified world we often overlook the extraordinary importance in traditional societies of the production and control of light. In much of the region where Islamic civilization developed, daylight is strong, even harsh, and builders developed sophisticated systems to modulate the natural light of the sun, whether through windows or screens. Strong daylight was often hot, so people took advantage of the cooler darkness, which they made useable with artificial illumination. Lamps have the power not only to erase darkness but also metaphorically to remove ignorance. Light reveals color, form and meaning. Whether the natural light provided by the sun and moon or the artificial light provided by flame, the image of light in Islamic thought is intimately tied to revelation. Poets and mystics expanded the Qur'anic images of light, scientists investigated the nature of light and seeing, and artists and craftsmen worked to design sophisticated methods to produce and control light.

Some of the first identifiable works of Islamic art are modest oil lamps inscribed in Arabic. From these humble beginnings come elaborately decorated metal and glass lamps and chandeliers that illuminated the interiors of mosques, shrines and palaces as well as nocturnal ceremonies and festivities. The invention of photography in the 19th century made it possible to create images with light, and this process was readily adopted in the Islamic lands and continues to provide inspiration for contemporary artists. We believe that this symposium will reveal how light touched the lives of various peoples in the Islamic lands and how they in turn incorporated light into their lives.



Mosque of Shaykh Lutfallah, Isfahan, Iran

SHIRIN NESHAT
Keynote Address

Contemporary Islamic Art



Contemporary Artist

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My presentation will offer an overview of my art and how I have consolidated a vision as an Iranian-born artist, having lived outside of my country since 1996. I will share the challenges I have faced as an artist in respect to a Western audience, Iranian culture and the Muslim community at large. I will discuss as well how I have tried to balance an artistic signature that is deeply personal, yet socio-political and critical, yet sensitive to all forms of religious faiths and ideologies.

SHIRIN NESHAT is an Iranian born artist/filmmaker living in New York. She has held numerous solo exhibitions at galleries and museums internationally, and is represented by Gladstone Gallery in New York. She won the International Award of the LXVIII Venice Biennale in 1999 for two films, *Turbulent* and *Rapture*. In 2006 she was awarded the Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize and in 2009 Neshat won the Silver Lion for best director at the 66th Venice Film Festival for *Women without Men*. She is currently working on her second feature film on the Egyptian singer Oum Kolthum, which is expected to be released in 2015.



Shirin Neshat. *Rapture*, 1999. Production stills. Copyright Shirin Neshat. Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.



Shirin Neshat. *Rapture*, 1999. Production stills. Copyright Shirin Neshat. Courtesy Gladstone Gallery, New York and Brussels.

WILLIAM GRAHAM

Light as Image and Concept in the Qur'an and other Islamic Sources



Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University

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This presentation examines references to light in the Qur'an and selected classical Islamic sources such as hadith and tafsir, in an effort to show how this important scriptural term and image was treated and developed as an enduring thematic element in different strands of Islamic culture. While the "Light Verse" of Qur'an 24:35 is the most famous passage involving light, it is the only one that equates God with light; there are many other Qur'anic references to light that are echoed in other Islamic texts. The presentation will focus on qur'anic and other interpretations of nûr and further terms for light, especially in their figurative use to refer variously to guidance, wisdom, faith, angels, the Prophet, or the Qur'an itself.

WILLIAM A. GRAHAM is the Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies in Harvard's Faculty of Arts and Sciences and University Distinguished Service Professor. He served as Dean of the Harvard Divinity School from 2002–2012. He has been a member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences since 1973 and has served as Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, Master of Currier House, and Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Committee on the Study of Religion. He is former chair of the Council on Graduate Studies in Religion (U.S. and Canada). His scholarly work has focused on early Islamic religious history and textual traditions and on comparative problems in the history of religion. He received the quinquennial Award for Excellence in Research in Islamic History and Culture from the Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA) in 2000. He has held John Simon Guggenheim and Alexander von Humboldt fellowships and is a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. His major books are *Divine Word and Prophetic Word in Early Islam* (1976; ACLS History of Religions Book Award, 1978), *Beyond the Written Word: Oral Aspects of Scripture in the History of Religion* (1987), and *Islamic and Comparative Religious Studies* (2010).



Plaque on the wall of the Ulu Cami (Ulu Mosque) in Bursa, Turkey, with quoted phrase in mirror-image calligraphy from Sura 24:35: Nur'ala nur, "Light upon Light."



Streams of sunlight bathe the interior of the mosque of Hagia Sophia/Aya Sophia in Istanbul.



The Ayat al-Nur (Qur'an 24:35) inscribed in gold on black around the interior of the main dome of Hagia Sophia/Aya Sophia mosque in Istanbul.



Fellow, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture

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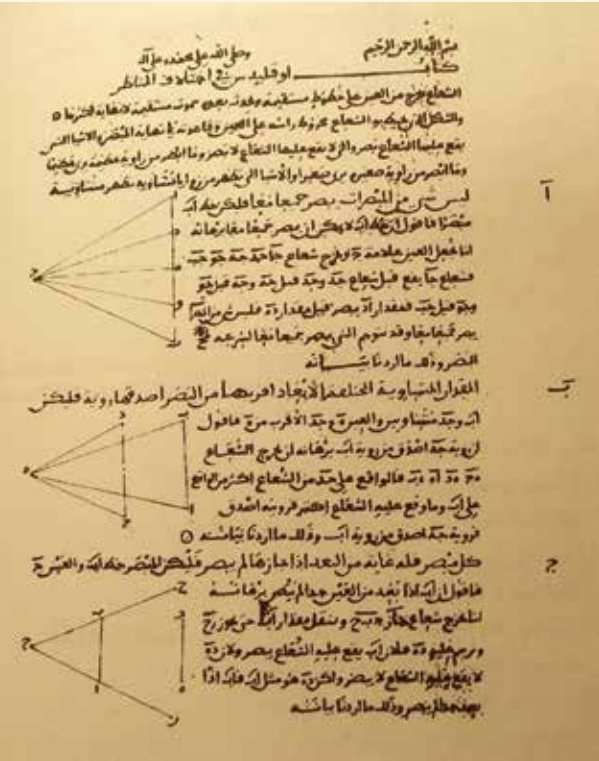
The so-called ‘checked history’ of a work such as *The Optics* of Ibn al-Haytham, one in which ‘undeserved misfortune’ is said to overlap with ‘unexpected good luck’* may be well extended to the early history of optics at large, and to the light and dark paths of the study of light itself. This presentation covers the development of optics as an early interdisciplinary study, starting from mathematical and natural studies focused on vision during ancient and medieval times, to physical and experimental studies extended to light and color in late medieval and early modern periods. It shows that the presence and absence of major works in critical times and places had notable consequences for both optics and related fields, and that it was not only *what* was or was not transmitted that directed the course of developments, but also *how* things were transmitted. The presentation includes a multimedia timeline, consisting of entries ranging from short films on ‘when optics was more than physics,’ and micro-maps marking various times and places for both the transmission and non-transmission of specific cases, to the footpaths of major works before and beyond *The Optics* of Ibn al-Haytham, and the distinct nature of their respective paths and impacts in Islamic and European lands.

*(Preface to *The Optics of Ibn al-Haytham*: A. I. Sabra, 1989, 2 vols., v. 2, xi)

ELAHEH KHEIRANDISH is a historian of science (PhD, Harvard ‘91) with a specialty in sciences in Islamic lands, and a focus on the history of mathematical and physical sciences and ‘mixed’ sciences such as optics and mechanics. Her publications include a dissertation entitled *The Medieval Arabic Tradition of Euclidean Optics* (published as *The Arabic ‘Version’ of Euclid’s Optics*, 2 vols, Springer-Verlag), and her projects range from Arabic and Persian traditions of ancient Greek sciences to the applications of advanced technologies to historical studies. She has been a lecturer at Harvard University (Departments of History of Science, Classics, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, Freshman Seminar Program, Harvard Extension and Summer Schools) and has curated exhibits at Harvard and Brown Universities. She has received awards from The National Science Foundation and The Dibner Institute for the History of Science and Technology, and produced documentary films and plays as well as interactive maps and other multi-media work. Most recently she has been affiliated with the Department of History of Art and Architecture at Harvard University and is currently a Fellow at the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture.



Alhazen (ca. 965–aft.1040CE), *Opticae thesaurus*. *Alhazeni Arabis libri septem*, ed. Friedrich Risner, Basil, 1572 (Latin), Houghton Library, Bequest of Horace A. Haven, 1851. Exhibit: *Windows into Early Science*: Elahé Kheirandish.



Euclid, *Kitab al-Manazir*, Definitions, Arabic Manuscript: Basel University Library Microfilm, Manuscript Plate V, from Elahé Kheirandish: “The Arabic Version of Euclid’s Optics,” Springer-Verlag, 1999.

ROBERT HILLENBRAND *The Uses of Light in Islamic Architecture*



*FBA, Professor Emeritus of Islamic Art,
Edinburgh University*

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The theme of light manifests itself in remarkably diverse ways in Islamic architecture. To impose order on this potentially chaotic mass of data, one may propose certain basic categories. Directed light includes oculi, windows, skylights and other openings. Reflected light invites discussion of water, smooth surfaces, glass mosaic, mirror decoration and certain kinds of tilework, especially luster tiles. Certain colors or materials were particularly favored for their capacity to absorb and to radiate light: ivory, alabaster, gold, white marble and the like, whether as outer cladding or at selected locations within a building, for example in *muqarnas* vaults. Lighting devices such as candles, pierced metal or glass lamps, or polycandela of various kinds could transform the impact of a dim interior and were often placed with special care so as to lay particular emphasis on given parts of a building, such as the *mihrab*, the bay preceding it or along a sequence of arcades leading to a vanishing point. Contrasts of open and closed spaces, and the creation of transient patterned or colored spaces by *mashrabiyya* grilles or stained glass made the most of a limited ration of light. External decoration in different degrees of relief made the most of the changing angles of sunlight throughout the day, giving a monument a subtly different character from one hour to the next. Finally, the symbolic associations of light deserve close study, from the use of appropriate Qur'anic quotations to titlature, from the inner designs of domes to the finials of minarets; in this context the role of heavenly bodies — sun, moon and stars — is crucial.

ROBERT HILLENBRAND, FBA, Professor Emeritus of Islamic Art, Edinburgh University, has published 9 books and some 160 articles, and edited or co-edited a further 9 books. He has been Slade Professor at Cambridge and has held visiting professorships at Princeton, UCLA, Bamberg, Dartmouth College, New York, Cairo and Groningen. His interests focus on Islamic architecture (especially in Iran and Umayyad Syria), book painting and iconography.



Yazd Prayer Hall, Yazd, Iran.

RENATA HOLOD



College of Women Class of 1963 Term Professor in the Humanities at the History of Art Department, and Curator, Near East Section, of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania.

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On Interiors and the Regimes of Lighting

This presentation is the third in a series of studies on the interior of the Mosque of Cordoba. Preparatory work has been carried out with the Digital Media Design group (<http://cg.cis.upenn.edu/hms/research/Archaeology/>); the second iteration correcting and expanding on these results was presented last fall. The present presentation will propose several variations on the lighting schemes, assuming that the interior was lit more or less intensely and richly depending on the daily, weekly and annual ritual cycles. By utilizing digital tools for the recreation of lighting virtually, a fuller experience of the interior could thus be proposed. Further, these variations of lighting could be used to understand more fully the aesthetic impact intended by the designers of al-Hakam’s complex extension and addition of the late tenth century CE. Only by recreating regimes of lighting in interiors can one begin to gauge aspects of historical and cultural experience in such spaces of memory.

RENATA HOLOD is College of Women Class of 1963 Term Professor in the Humanities at the History of Art Department, and Curator, Near East Section, of the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania. She has carried out archeological and architectural fieldwork in Syria, Iran, Morocco, Turkey, Central Asia, Tunisia, and Ukraine. She was the Convenor of the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. She is co-author and co-editor of *The Mosque and the Modern World* (1997) and *An Island through Time: Jerba Studies* (2009) and the two-volume *The City in the Islamic World* (2008). Her most current project is a collaborative study of Chungul Kurgan, a Qipchaq tumulus in the Black Sea steppe.



Virtual Re-creation of Interior Utilizing Light Cache by Robert Martin, Mosque of Cordoba.



*Professor of the History of Islamic Art,
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Middle Eastern rock crystal objects of the medieval period are famous for the fantastic quality of their carved relief decoration. This decoration is unmatched and reaches its high point during the Fatimid period, from the tenth to the twelfth century. The complex carving technique is done in a way to maximize the capturing and reflection of light, making the object appear vibrant and alive. It was doubtless this unprecedented aesthetic dimension that made Middle Eastern rock crystal objects so attractive and when they reached Europe they were often transformed into reliquaries. Also to be discussed when talking about reception—in the Middle East as well as in Europe—are the symbolic properties of light that may be associated with rock crystal and the objects made of it.

ANNA CONTADINI is Professor of the History of Islamic Art, Department of the History of Art and Archaeology, SOAS, University of London, Director of the “Treasures of SOAS” and of the “Griffin and Lion” projects, and a member of the Centre for Iranian Studies at the LMEI (London Middle East Institute). She has been a Curator at the V&A (where she conducted research culminating in her book *Fatimid Art at the Victoria and Albert Museum*, V&A, 1998) and at the Chester Beatty Library, and Lecturer in Islamic Art at Trinity College, Dublin. Her doctoral thesis examined early Arab and Persian miniature painting, a research topic still central to her work, and she organized the international conference, *Arab Painting: Text and Image in Illustrated Arabic Manuscripts*, which led to an edited publication under the same title (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2007 and 2010). On the subject of painting she has also just published a monograph on *A World of Beasts: A Thirteenth-Century Illustrated Arabic Book on Animals (the Kitab Na't al-Hayawan) in the Ibn Bakhtishu' Tradition* (Leiden-Boston: Brill, 2012) and she is preparing a monograph on themes of Arab Painting for Reaktion Books.



Rock Crystal Ewer (H. 15.6 cm; Diam. of base 7.7 cm), Fatimid Egypt, 391-9/1000-8. Florence, Museo degli Argenti e delle Porcellane di Palazzo Pitti, inv. no. 1917.



I. M. Pei Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture, Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford

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Pottery, unlike glass, does not immediately suggest itself as a material suited for the exploitation of light — clay being a dense, opaque substance. Nevertheless, over the centuries potters in the Islamic lands have explored ways of “lightening” their products: by seeking ways to provide a white ground for their decoration, by developing the luster technique which in reflection transforms light, and from an early date by exploring ways of introducing translucency in the fabric itself and by manipulating the surface decoratively.

OLIVER WATSON has spent most of his career in museums: first at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, where he eventually headed the Ceramics Department (1979–2005), and after a brief period as Keeper of Eastern Art at the Ashmolean Museum (2005–8), University of Oxford, he was appointed as Director of the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha State of Qatar (2008–11). He joined the Khalili Research Centre, University of Oxford, in 2011 as the inaugural I. M. Pei Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture. He has specialized in the history of Islamic pottery.



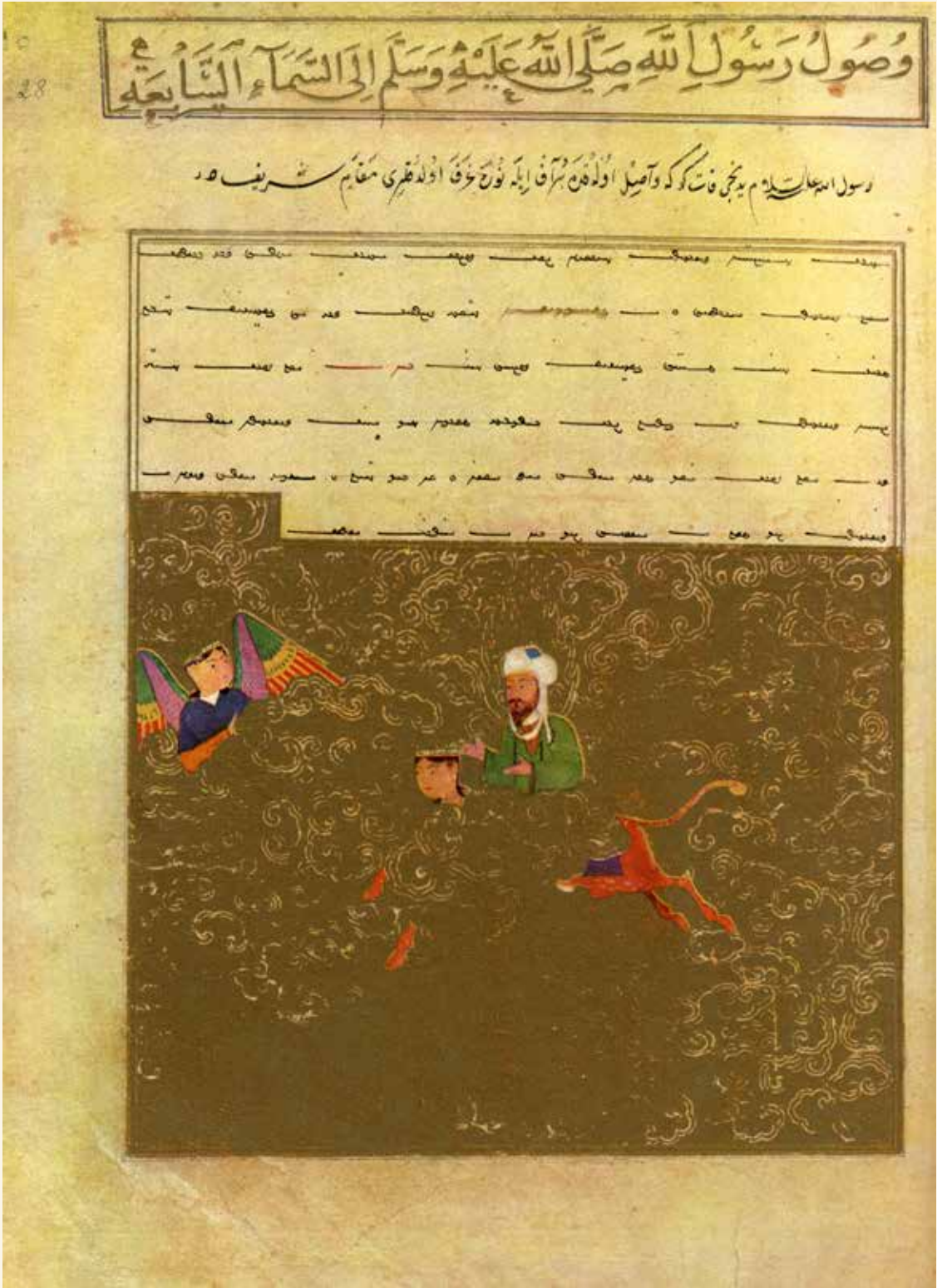
Footed bowl, Fritware with pierced decoration and painting in blue and black, Iran, 17th century, Victoria and Albert Museum, 1399–1876.



Independent Scholar
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From the familiar “light of the sun and the moon,” “guiding lights,” and “rays of the light of inspiration” to the less familiar “goblets glowing with the light of wine,” “the dazzling light of the face of the beloved,” “light of the eyes,” and “moths scorched by the light of candles”—Persian poetry is replete with images of light. The several terms for light in Persian – *nur*, *ziya’* and *raushana’l* – are often used synonymously, but sometimes they are subtly distinguished as they appear in the constant images of light used by classical Persian poets to capture an essentially visual image in poetic language. This presentation will survey various “lights” found in poetry and explain some of the idiomatic usages that are difficult to understand, even in Persian, without knowing the underlying—and unstated—concepts with examples from the major poets of the tradition.

WHEELER THACKSTON is retired from teaching Persian and other Near Eastern languages. He is the author of grammars of Arabic, Persian, and Syriac and has translated numerous works from classical Persian on the Timurid Dynasty and Mughal India. Thackston was a Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University from 1972 until 2007.



Mi'rajnama, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, Suppl. Turc 190.



Independent Scholar
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Light is fundamental to the visual arts, and all painters must engage with it, whether they work with a theoretical background concerning it or not. Light has a significant place in the expression of many religions, and this is certainly true of Islam. Light was discussed in Islamic science, and light is also mentioned in one form or another at many points in Persian literature; nevertheless, it seems that for the Persian painter, the management of light was not a matter of theory, but of praxis. One aspect is the application of light-reflecting substances such as gold or silver. A second aspect, in some periods, is the use of shading, with or without an acknowledged source of light: this practice is usually associated with Chinese or European influence. On other occasions light may be implied conceptually by tokens such as the sun or moon, flames, candles or cressets. Great painters, especially in the period from the 1330s to 1560s, sometimes conveyed lighting conditions by their precise choices of color.

An independent scholar, BARBARA BREND has carried out major research on form and meaning in Persian and Mughal manuscript illustration. Her books include *Islamic Art* (1991); *The Emperor Akbar's Khamsa of Nizami* (1995); *Perspectives on Persian Painting: Illustrations to Amir Khusrau's Khamsah* (2003) and *Muhammad Juki's Shahnamah of Firdausi* (2010). Dr. Brend was Curator of the 2010 exhibition, *Epic of the Persian Kings* at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.



Mi raj (Ascent of the Prophet), Khamsah of Nizami, 949/1543. British Library, Or. 2265, 195a.

Illuminating the Void, Reflecting the Universe: Spatial Design and Light Furnishing in Mamluk Architecture



*Assistant Professor and Director of the
Institute of Islamic Art and Architecture,
Lebanese American University in Beirut*

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This presentation explores light in Mamluk architecture. Daylight and lighting at night in Mamluk buildings are evident in the spatial design and decoration of some of these buildings and the great number of furnishings to provide light such as glass, lamps, and candlesticks. In addition to surveying how light was considered in architectural design, decoration and furnishing, the presentation links Qur’anic verses and their location on the interior of some buildings to the general practice of lighting. Along with physical evidence, the paper relies on the information provided in endowment documents (*waqfiyya*) to understand how resources were allocated to maintain the illumination of Mamluk buildings.

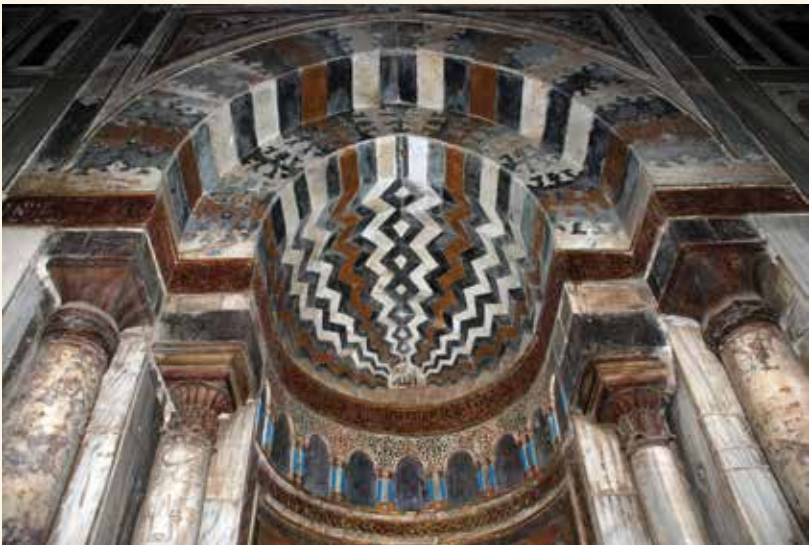
ABDALLAH KAHIL is Assistant Professor and the Director of the Institute of Islamic Art and Architecture at Lebanese American University in Beirut. A practicing artist as well as an art historian, Kahil is currently working on a book on Mamluk visual culture as well as several articles, including one about the formation of abstract painting in Lebanon, and another about gallery politics in Lebanon in the 1960s. He taught at the Fashion Institute of Technology and New York University from 1990 to 1998. His publications include *The Sultan Hasan Complex 1357–1364: A Case Study in the Formation of Mamluk Style* (2008) and *Mamluk Metalwork at the Metropolitan Museum of Art* (1994). Kahil received a Ph.D. in the History of Art and Archaeology from the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University, in 2002.



*Mosque lamp for the Mausoleum of Amir
Aydakin al 'Ala'i al-Bunduqdar, late
13th century, Egypt, probably Cairo,
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.*



Complex of Sultan Hasan, Courtyard, Cairo, c. 1357–1364.



Complex of Sultan Hasan, Tomb chamber mihrab.



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This presentation will explore the ways in which fireworks and other light-emitting media were used in Ottoman ceremonial. In particular, it will focus on wedding and circumcision ceremonies in the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries. These festivities, which in some cases lasted as long as forty days, communicated a message of dynastic continuity and fertility to their viewers and participants, and are described in a number of book-length descriptions known as *surnames*. The order of ceremonies, the objects and devices used, and the roles of participants were loaded with meaning and symbolism. The *surnames* describe the fireworks in some detail, providing important clues to the interpretation of this symbolism.

HAKAN KARATEKE is Associate Professor of Ottoman and Turkish Culture, Language and Literature at the University of Chicago. He earned his doctorate degree in Ottoman and Turkish Studies from Bamberg University, Germany (1998), completed his habilitation in the same field at Vienna University, and taught at Harvard University (2002–08) before joining the University of Chicago. Professor Karateke published his dissertation on the nineteenth-century Ottoman court ceremonies in Turkish. An annotated edition of an Ottoman protocol register appeared in 2007.



Sultan Ahmed III, along with princes, views fireworks at the 1720 circumcision ceremony. Hâfız Mehmed Efendi, şebzâdelerin sünnet düğünü: Sûr-ı hümayûn 1720. Istanbul, 2008.



Various types of fireworks at the 1720 circumcision ceremony. Hâfız Mehmed Efendi, şebzâdelerin sünnet düğünü: Sûr-ı hümayûn 1720. Istanbul, 2008.

SUSAN STRONGE

By the Light of the Sun of Jahangir



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Light is a dominant motif in the reign of the Mughal emperor Jahangir (r.1605–1627). Nur ad-Din, or Light of Religion, was part of his name. He called his wife Nur-e Jahan (Light of the World) and was often portrayed by his artists with a halo of golden light. 'Nur' was also included in the names he gave to new monuments and to categories of gold coinage: a beautiful setting in which pavilions were constructed for him outside the city of Ajmer was known as Cheshme-ye Nur, or Fountain of Light, and the largest gold coins produced in the imperial mints had names such as Nur-e shahi (Royal Light) and Nur-e sultani (Sultanian Light). This lecture considers the ways in which light was conveyed in visual terms in the arts of Jahangir's court.

SUSAN STRONGE is Senior Curator, Asian Department, Victoria and Albert Museum, London. She specialises in the arts of the Muslim courts of the Indian subcontinent from the 16th to the early 19th century, and has written about many different aspects of royal patronage. Her publications include *Painting for the Mughal Emperor. The Art of the Book 1560–1650* (V&A Publications, 2002), *Tipu's Tigers* (V&A Publishing, 2009) and *Made for Mughal Emperors* (Lustre Press, New Delhi/IB Tauris, London, 2010). In 2012 she was awarded a Leverhulme Research Fellowship for her project *Jahangir's Travels and Moghul Court Arts*, an investigation into the organization of the royal ateliers in relation to the frequent displacements of the court in early 17th century Hindustan.



Gold coin depicting Jahangir (obverse), Mughal, dated AH 1020/AD 1611, Wt 10.88 grams, British Museum: MAR.836.b, Donated by William Marsden, © The Trustees of the British Museum.

ALI BEHDAD

Contact Vision: Reflections on the History of Photography in Qajar Iran



John Charles Hillis Professor of Literature and Chair of the English Department at UCLA

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I have chosen “contact vision” as the title for this presentation to point to the broader argument I hope to make: how photography, which itself is a product of actual contact between light, chemicals, and paper, was developed in such contact zones as Iran. The development of photography, both as technology and art, I hope to show, is deeply embedded in the contexts of European colonialism in the region and the cultural and aesthetic concerns of orientalism. I treat photography in Iran as a phenomenon of contact zones, which Mary Louise Pratt defines as “social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination.” I will address a broad range of technical and thematic issues—e.g., lighting, use of European backdrops, portraiture, and exoticism—to elaborate how early Iranian photography is neither derivative of its western counterparts, nor does it constitute a set of oppositional practices working against orientalist aesthetics. More particularly, I will consider a broad range of photographic images from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, including some produced by my own grandfather, to show how middle and upper class men embraced photography to foreground their social status and patriarchal values, while they also engaged in what one might call “photo-exoticism.”

ALI BEHDAD is the John Charles Hillis Professor of Literature and Chair of the English Department at UCLA. He is the author of *Belated Travelers: Orientalism in the Age of Colonial Dissolution* (Duke, 1994) and *A Forgetful Nation: On Immigration and Cultural Identity in the US* (Duke, 2005). He is currently completing a book manuscript on the history of photography in the Middle East.



Reza Akas Bashi (photographer), Ali the Midget and his sons, ca 1870s



Photographer unknown (possibly Antoin Sevrugin), Nasir al-Din Shah, ca 1880s.



Nasir al-Din Shah (photographer), Anis al-Doleh, 1879.

The Hamad bin Khalifa Travel Fellowship | 2013 Fellowship Recipients

In 2007, the Hamad bin Khalifa Travel Fellowship was created by the Symposium organizers, with sponsorship from Qatar Foundation, VCUQatar and VCUarts in order to provide financial support to scholars who wished to attend the conference, held in Doha, Qatar. That year, fifteen fellows were selected after an international competition that drew over three hundred applications from around the world. Fifteen

fellowships were awarded to the 2009 Symposium, and in 2011 the number of fellowships was increased to twenty.

The twenty fellows that follow represent a wide and talented cross-section of scholars currently engaged in the field of Islamic art, and we are pleased and honored to have them take part in *God Is the Light of the Heavens and the Earth*.



ANGELA ANDERSEN is a Ph.D. Candidate in the History of Art Department at Ohio State University and has been a Fellow of the Centre for Studies in Religion and Society at the University of Victoria, Canada, and the Turkish Cultural Foundation. Her research examines inter- and intra-religious interactions through the art and architecture of the Islamic world, with a focus on Anatolia. Her dissertation and forthcoming publications investigate the architecture used for the ceremonies of Alevi communities in central Turkey.

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STÉPHANIE BOULOGNE is a lecturer on Islamic Art at IESA in Paris and is an associate lecturer at CNRS in Aix-en-Provence. Her post-doctoral research focuses on medieval and pre-modern glass vessels in the Middle East.

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FEDERICA A. BROILO is Assistant Professor of Ottoman Art and Architecture in the Department of the History of Art at Mardin Artuklu University, Turkey, where she also teaches courses in Classical and Asian Art. She is interested in the relation between water and sacred spaces, particularly in fountains for ritual ablutions in Byzantine and Islamic context with a major focus on Spain, Turkey and Syria. She holds a Ph.D. in Oriental Studies from Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy (2009). Forthcoming publications include a book on travels and travelers from Venice to Constantinople in the 16th century (ISIS Press, Istanbul).

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MICHAEL D. CALABRIA, OFM, is a Ph.D. candidate in the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter. His doctoral dissertation explores the depiction of the ancient Egyptians in the Qur'an and Islamic exegesis. His interests include the spirituality of Islamic art and architecture, the influence of Islamic art and culture on Christianity, and Muslim-Christian relations. He is a Franciscan friar and currently serves as a chaplain-in-residence at Georgetown University.

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YOUSSEF CHEREM is Professor of Islamic Art, Federal University of São Paulo, Brazil. He holds a B.A. in International Relations (PUC-MG, Brazil) and an M.S. and Ph.D. in Social Anthropology (UNICAMP, Brazil).

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HEATHER COFFEY is Assistant Professor of the History of Art at OCAD University in Toronto. Her research specialty is Medieval Mediterranean art, encompassing themes related to Christian and Islamic cross- and intercultural relations. She has published articles concerning the spread of *mi'raj* texts in translation and the efflorescence of illustrated manuscripts of Beatus of Liébana's Commentary on the Apocalypse in Spain from c. 940–1250; and the devotional motivations for the miniaturization of Qur'anic and other religious texts within Islam.

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ANJA DREISER is a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic Art History and Archaeology at Bamberg University, where her dissertation examines medieval to early modern metal hand-mirrors from the Islamic realm, focusing on questions of the magical and cultural meanings of the mirrors and their evolving images. After receiving a first-class M.A. degree in Islamic Art History & Archaeology at the University of Bamberg in 2006, Dreiser worked as an archaeologist in fieldwork projects in Oman and Mongolia.

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BARBARA FINSTER was Professor of Islamic Art and Archaeology at the Otto-Friedrich-University of Bamberg from 1996 to 2003, and is now retired. She has conducted fieldwork in Iraq, Iran, and Yemen, and is currently engaged in research on material culture in pre-Islamic Arabia; the ornaments of Anjar, an early Islamic site in Lebanon; castles and residences in Iraq and Arabia; and Abbasid architecture.

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2013 Fellowship Recipients, continued



GRACE HOMSY-GOTTWALLES is the Chief Curator of The Archeological Museum of the Holy Spirit University and Assistant Professor of Ancient and Medieval Archaeology at the Lebanese University.

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ALI AKBAR HUSAIN heads the Department of Architecture at the Indus Valley School of Art and Architecture in Karachi, Pakistan, and teaches courses on urban open space design, landscape history, and place-making. He is particularly interested in Islamic landscapes; recent publications include a book and essays on the literary perceptions of Indo-Islamic gardens. Other areas of interest include landscapes for health care, and ethno-botany.

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MICHAEL JUNG is curator of the section of Islamic Art and Southern Arabian Antiquities at the Museo Nazionale d'Arte Orientale at Rome. He taught Islamic Art and Archeology from 2002–2010 at the University Bologna/Ravenna. From 2002–2004, he was co-director of the Islamic section of the Italian Archaeological Mission (IslAO) at Isfahan/Great Mosque, within the Italian ADAMJ project. He is currently scientific director of the Iranian-Italian archeological project at Bam of the Italian Ministry of Culture.

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AKEL KAHERA is Professor of Architecture and Associate Dean of the College of Architecture, Arts and Humanities at Clemson University. He also serves on the Editorial Board of the *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*. Akel received his Ph.D. (with Honors) from Princeton University; his Master of Architecture from Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Bachelor of Arch. from Pratt Institute. His most recent publication is *Reading the Islamic City: Discursive Practices and Legal Judgment* (Rowan & Littlefield 2011).

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ZAHRA KAZANI was research assistant at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, Canada, and has interned at the Royal Ontario Museum and the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization. This fall, she began her second M.A. in Islamic Art at SOAS, University of London.

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YASMIN KHAN is a Senior Book Conservator in the Conservation Division of the Library of Congress where she has worked since 1996. At present, she is involved in an analytical study with research scientists to identify the constituents of mixed inks on early parchment leaves of the Qur'an (8th–12th centuries) in the collection of the Library of Congress.

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SUMRU KRODY is Senior Curator of Eastern Hemisphere Collections at The Textile Museum in Washington, DC. Over the years she has curated many exhibitions there and authored or co-authored four books written to accompany them, including *The Sultan's Garden: the Blossoming of Ottoman Art* (2012), *Colors of the Oasis: Central Asian Ikats* (2010), *Harpies, Mermaids, and Tulips: Embroidery of the Greek Islands and Epirus Region* (2006) and *Flowers of Silk and Gold: Four Centuries of Ottoman Embroidery* (2000).

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AYALA LESTER has been the Curator of Islamic Archaeology at the Israel Antiquities Authority since 1990, where she specializes in Islamic Glass and Fatimid Metalware and Jewelry. Lester worked for a number of years at the Archives of the L.A. Mayer Memorial, Museum of Islamic Art in Jerusalem. She later founded the Study Collection of Islamic Archaeology at the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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MARYAM MAHVASH is a research associate at the Centre for Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures (CCSMSC), Simon Fraser University in Vancouver where her current research focuses on the comparative study of daylighting in Safavid and Saljuq mosques of greater Persia. Mahvash's doctoral dissertation, *On the Qualitative Presence of Light in Architecture: Vitalizing Mass and Polishing Space in Historical Persian Mosques*, will be published in Persian in late 2013.

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2013 Fellowship Recipients, continued



SIMONA SCHNEIDER is a Ph.D. Candidate in Comparative Literature & Film and Media Studies at the University of California, Berkeley.
schneider@berkeley.edu



MICHAL SHABTAY is Director of the Messis Foundation, a filmmaker and a curator. She is presently working on a publication of the arts of Islamic cultures in Dutch collections as well as on a dissertation on the influence and inspiration of oriental carpets on western visual art and design.
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SANDRA WILLIAMS graduated from Boston College with a B.A. in Islamic Civilizations and Societies, and completed her M.A. thesis at NYU's Institute of Fine Arts on the work of Antoin Sevruguin. Her research interests include 19th and 20th century photography from Iran and modern and contemporary art from the Middle East.
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Photos from the 2011 Symposium
God Is Beautiful; He Loves Beauty: The Object in Islamic Art and Culture
October 2011 in Doha, Qatar



Islamic Art History at VCU



It is with great pleasure and profound gratitude that the department of art history at VCUarts participates in the fifth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa symposium on Islamic Art. The Symposium, which has so superbly fostered the production and dissemination of knowledge in a dynamic field of inquiry, has also cultivated a growing interest in Islamic art at VCU since it was first convened in Richmond, Virginia, in 2004.

In the 2012–13 academic year, students at VCU participated in a number of activities centered on Islamic art. On a weekend in September 2012, our new class of ten Ph.D. and M.A. students traveled to New York City and the Metropolitan Museum of Art where they spent two days with Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom, the joint holders of the Hamad bin Khalifa Chair of Islamic Art at VCU, studying the Met’s collection of Islamic art, exploring individual objects in depth and considering the museum’s exhibition strategies.

Another opportunity for the study of Islamic art at VCU occurred in the Spring 2013 semester, when a group of undergraduate art history majors participated in a seminar on the Islamic art and architecture of Spain. The seminar featured guest lectures by Jonathan Bloom, who spoke on the Great Mosque of Córdoba, and Glaire Anderson, who spoke on art patronage in Umayyad al-Andalus. At the end of the semester, the students traveled to Spain, where they spent a week visiting the sites they had studied in Córdoba, Seville, and Granada with art historians and students from the University of Córdoba, one of VCU’s International Partnership Universities. Three professors from VCUQ joined the group in Spain, thus setting the stage for future collaborations that align with the department’s global approach to research and teaching, and with its commitment to studying the permeability of geographic, temporal, and theoretical boundaries which in the past separated and defined the world.

Michael Schreffler

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Islamic Art History at VCUQatar



It is particularly significant to announce here the 2012 launch of VCUQatar’s new B.A. in Art History, as the only undergraduate degree program of its kind in the Gulf region that offers a concentration in Islamic art and architecture within a global perspective. We have worked closely with our colleagues at VCU to create a curriculum that provides a rich diversity and breadth of core art history courses, with distinctive focus on the interchanges between the Islamic world, the Western world and the non-Islamic cultures of Asia. Such an approach reflects the geographical location and historical involvement of Qatar, which since antiquity has been part of international trade routes linking both the central Islamic lands, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. Its location at the crossroads has created a rich and diverse culture in Qatar up to the present day, and this unique program is suited for such an environment, with a curriculum that explores cultural and artistic exchanges between the Middle East, Europe, Asia, and the Americas. Palermo, the site of the fifth biennial Hamad bin Khalifa Symposium on Islamic Art, indeed embodies the essence of these historical cross-cultural dialogues.

The VCUQatar Art History program takes advantage of the world-class museums in Doha, under the auspices of the Qatar Museum Authority, and offers students the opportunity to gain firsthand experience in exploring the works of art at the Museum of Islamic Art, The Orientalist Museum, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Sheikh Faisal Museum, as well as several private galleries within Doha. Furthermore, at VCUQatar, a dynamic exhibition program is also scheduled annually in our Gallery. This program is intended to reflect, compliment and contribute to the diversity of the university’s art and design curricula, as well as contribute to the artistic life of Qatar and the region. In addition to this, *Crossing Boundaries* is an annual curated lecture series which highlights the cross-disciplinary nature of invited speakers, each of whom are representatives of excellence in the fields of art, design and creative thinking.

Dina Bangdel, PhD

Associate Professor and Director
Art History Program, VCUQatar
Doha, Qatar

VCUQatar: Selected Events and Exhibitions



Children of Gaza featured the work of international photographers Giuseppe Aquili, Jim McFarlane and Anthony Dawton. November 9 – December 3, 2011.



Equilibrium featured new works by John O'Connor. September 9 – 29, 2012.



The Beaded Prayers Project was exhibited in The Gallery at VCUQatar from March 13 – April 19, 2012.



VCUQatar presented its 14th Annual Fashion Show, *Fingerprint*, to full houses on April 16, 17 and 18, 2013.



Work by graduating MFA students on display at VCUQatar, May 5 – June 30, 2013.



Students from Richmond and Doha campuses collaborate in the mobile printmaking studio at Tasmeem Doha, the biannual international design conference held at VCU Qatar, March 2013.