During the 1980s, Laila Shawa created a series of paintings focusing on women and the veil. This painting was the first of a series entitled "Women and Magic." The women with their blind eyes hold up Qurrâb hands that have become banners carrying the "Hand of Fatima," described in Arabic as the words ma shu' Allah ("as God wills"). As the daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, Fatima is a revered figure in parts of the Islamic world and a potent symbol against the evil eye.

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She embodies the power to alter their lives without their making the effort, since their wishbones are the bones of Satan... the tradition of magic is an ingrained in the culture and the psyche of our part of the world that it transcends religion and even education.

(Personal communication)

Shawa's interest in magic comes from her direct personal experiences of magical practices when growing up in the Middle East.
ABBOUD, Shafic
BORN: BIRJAN, IRAN, 1956 (D. 2004)
Abbood studied art at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Beirut, 1945–7. Among his professors were César Carayol (Libanese) and Georges Cyriel (French). He was a prominent artist in the foundation of the modern theater movement in Lebanon. The latter introduced him to Western schools of art, and in 1947 Abbood traveled to Paris. He worked in the ateliers of a number of renowned French artists, among them Fernand Léger and André Lhote, and studied at the École Nationale des Beaux Arts. Having settled in Paris, he participated in the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles from 1955 and, in 1962, became a member of its committee. Abbood’s work has been exhibited on numerous occasions in France and Lebanon. He has been awarded several prizes, including the Prix Victor Choquet, Paris, 1960, and the Prix du Salon d’Automne at the Sursock Museum, Beirut, 1964.

ABDEELIK, Youssif
BORN: KAFREEL, SYRIA, 1952
Abdelik graduated from the College of Fine Arts, University of Damascus, 1976, and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1986, before obtaining a doctorate in fine arts from the University of Paris VIII, 1989. His work includes posters, book designs, illustrations for periodicals and children’s books as well as caricatures. He has researched the history of caricature in Syria, and Arab caricaturists and their techniques. His work has been exhibited in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, including: in 2005 – the International Biennial Imagining the Book, Alexandria, Egypt, and solo exhibitions in Kuwait and at the Khan Assal Bacha in Damascus, Syria. Abdelik lives and works in Paris.

ABDULLAH MAHYOUD, Iran
BORN: RASHID, IRAQ, 1956
Abdullah graduated in graphic arts from the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980, then pursued his studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980–4. In 1998 she moved to Munich, Germany, where she has been living and working ever since. In 2001 she became a member of the German Association of Artists (Bundesverband Bildender Künstler – BBlK). Her work has been exhibited in a number of solo and group exhibitions in Europe, the Middle East and the United States, including the touring exhibition Strikes of Genres: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which began in the United Kingdom in 2000.

ABLA, Mohammed
BORN: BULGAS MANIOUBA, EGYPT, 1951
Abla graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria, 1977. In the 1980s he travelled extensively in Europe, exhibiting and pursuing studies in graphic arts, sculpture and art therapy. Between 1996 and 1998, together with Egyptian artist Abd el-Sive, Abla worked on a community arts project painting the walls and creating outdoor works in the deprived area of Kam Ghobab in old Cairo. His work, including oils on canvas, limited-edition prints and installations, has been exhibited in the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Abla lives and works in Egypt.
Artist Biographies

Biographies are included for artists whose works are featured in the catalogue section of this book. The information about the artists has been gleaned from a number of sources, including exhibition catalogues, artists’ monographs and the internet. Some of these sources are listed in the bibliography. In the catalogue entries the artist’s country of origin is cited first and their current place of residence second.

ABDULHADI, Shafic
Born Beirut, Lebanon, 1965 (b. 1965)
Shafic Abdulhadi studied art at the Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts, Beirut, 1984–7. Among his professors were César Córdoba (Lebanon) and Georges Cyri (French). Two prominent artists in the foundation of the modern art movement in Lebanon. The latter introduced him to Western schools of art, and in 1947 Abdulhadi travelled to Paris. He worked in the ateliers of a number of renowned French artists, among them Fernand Léger and André Ustne, and studied at the École Nationale des Beaux-Arts. Having settled in Paris, he participated in the Salon des Réalités Nouvelles from 1955 and, in 1962, became a member of its committee. Abdulhadi’s work has been exhibited on numerous occasions in France and Lebanon. He has been awarded several prizes, including the Prix Victor Chouquet, Paris, 1960, and the Prix du Salon d’Automne at the Suuçuki Museum, Lebanon, 1964.

ABDELKE, Yousef
Born Damascus, Syria, 1951
Yousef Abdelke graduated from the College of Fine Arts, University of Damascus, 1976, and the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1986, before obtaining a doctorate in fine arts from the University of Paris VIII, 1989. His work includes posters, book designs, illustrations for periodicals and children’s books as well as caricatures. He has researched the history of caricature in Syria, and Arab caricaturists and their techniques. His work has been exhibited in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, including – in 2005 – the International Biennial Imaging the Book, Alexandria Library, Egypt, and solo exhibitions in Kuwait and at the Khan Assad Bacha in Damascus, Syria. Abdelke lives and works in Paris.

ABDULLAH MAHMOUD, Imran
Born Baghdad, Iraq, 1976
Imran Abdullah graduated in graphic arts from the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980, then pursued his studies in painting at the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980–4. In 1998 he moved to Munich, Germany, where he has been living and working ever since. In 2001 he became a member of the German Association of Artists (Bundesverband Bildender Künstler – BVB). His work has been exhibited in a number of solo and group exhibitions in Europe, the Middle East and the United States, including the touring exhibition Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which began in the United Kingdom, 2000.

ABRAHIM, Mohammed
Born Bejaia, Algeria, Egypt, 1953
Abla graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts in Alexandria, 1977. From 1980 he travelled extensively in Europe, exhibiting and pursuing studies in graphic arts, sculpture and art therapy. Between 1996 and 1998, together with Egyptian artist Adel El-Sawi, Abla worked on a community arts project painting the walls and creating outdoor works in the deprived area of Kom Ghobah in old Cairo. His work, including oils on canvas, limited-edition prints and installations, has been exhibited in the Middle East, Europe and the United States. Abla lives and works in Egypt.

ADANAN, Efua
Born Accra, Ghana, 1925
Efua Adan is a writer and a painter. She studied philosophy at the Sorbonne University, Paris, and at the University of California and Harvard University, USA. She spent a number of years teaching the philosophy of art at the Dominican College of San Rafael, California, as well as giving lectures at several universities. She is the author of several books of poetry and fiction, including her novel about the Lebanese civil war, Still Marks Rost, 1977. In the 1960s she combined her skills as a writer and a painter when creating her first large-scale works. She has since continued exploring the relationship between word and image, and has created over two hundred ‘artist books’. First, and most inspired by Arabic Illumination, she also gained inspiration from French and American authors. Her work includes paintings, drawings, ceramics and tapestries. She has exhibited extensively in Europe, the Middle East and the United States. Adan lives in Paris, Beirut and California, USA.

ALANI, Ghali
Born Baghdad, Iraq, 1937
Ghali Alani studied law in Baghdad and Paris, and art at the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, and the University of Paris VIII. He practised calligraphy from an early age and studied under the Iraqi master calligrapher Hashem Muhammad al-Baghdadi, from whom he received a calligraphy diploma (jessy) in 1967. In 1975 he was awarded a second price by another celebrated calligrapher, Hamid al-Asadi, of the Turkish school. From then on, having completed his law diploma, Alani dedicated himself fully to calligraphy. Since 1993 he has been in charge of calligraphy at the École Nationale Supérieure, Paris. He has participated in a number of conferences and television programmes on Arabic calligraphy and has authored several works, including Calligraphie Arabe, 2001. His calligraphies have been shown widely in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa.

AL-NABHAN, Saleh
Born Beirut, Lebanon, 1976
Salah Al-Nabhan graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Beirut, Lebanon. Of Arabic and Persian parents, born in Beirut and having studied in the United States and Lebanon, Al-Nabhan has continued his travels, working in Kuwait, Lebanon, France and England, where she now lives. In 1973 the American artist Mark Tobey, who had been inspired by the influence of Chinese calligraphy as well as Arabic and Persian scripts, arranged and presented her first European exhibition. Since then her works have been shown widely in Europe, the Middle East and the United States, including a solo exhibition at Léighton House, London, 1993, and a retrospective at England & Co, London, 2000.

AL-OI, Waqif
Born Arabian, Jordan, 1939
Ali Al-OI is an art historian, painter and art critic. He graduated in history from the Beirut College for Women, 1961, and gained a PhD in the History of Islamic art from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1993. His art criticism began in the 1950s under Muhamma Danu, a leading artist of the modern art movement in Jordan. Ali has written, edited and contributed to a number of publications or contemporary art from the Islamic world and the Arab Contribution to Islamic art. He is the founder of the Royal Society of Fine Arts (1979) and the National Gallery of Fine Arts (1985) in Jordan, as well as founder and dean of the faculty of arts and Design at the University of Jordan (2001).

ARASHSHI, Massood
Born Mashhad, Iran, 1949
Massoud Arashshi held his first solo exhibition at the Iran-India Centre, Tehran, 1994, four years before graduating from the College of Decorative Arts, Tehran. His work includes oils on canvas, sculptures and architectural reliefs – among the latter commissions for the Office for Industry and Mining, Tehran, 1971, and the California Insurance Building, Santa Rosa, USA, 1985. His sources of inspiration include Achaemenid and Assyrian art as well as Babylonian carvings and inscriptions. Combining tradition and modernity, Arashshi has been associated with the Saqqahrah movement, whose prime exponents were Charles Hossein Zenderoudi and Parviz Tanavoli. His work has been shown in a number of solo and group exhibitions in Iran, Europe and the United States, including Two Modernist Avanion Powers with Zenderoudi, at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2001, and Iranian Contemporary Art, Barbican Centre, London, 2001. He lives and works in Tehran and California.
ABMAJANI, Siah
BORN TEHRAN, IRAN, 1930
Armajani moved from Iran to the United States in 1960 to study philosophy at Macalester College, Minneapolis, graduating in 1963. Prior to that, in 1956, he had started practicing the traditional art of calligraphy, which he revered alongside poetry and philosophy. Some of his early works, principally two dimensional, are filled with script and lines of Persian poetry. He later turned to sculpture, public art displays and architectural constructions, some of them including quotations from American literature, such as the railings with poetry by W.B. Yeats at Battery Park, New York. Armajani received many public commissions worldwide, including the Olympic Tower and Bridge, Atlanta Olympic Games, USA, 1996; the gables and garden furniture of the Villa Arcon, Nice, France, 1997; and Flowering Poetry Room, Amsterdam, Netherlands, 2005. He lives and works in Minneapolis.

ATTA, Sina
BORN NEW YORK, USA, 1955
Atta graduated in civil engineering from Baghdad University, 1977, and in building management from London, 1980. He turned to painting in the 1980s. His work has since been shown in a number of solo exhibitions in the Middle East and group exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, including the touring exhibition Studies of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which began in London, 2000. He currently lives in Amman, Jordan, and Dubai, UAE, where he works as a creative consultant.

AL-ATTAR, Suad
BORN BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1942
Al-Attar graduated in fine arts from the University of Baghdad, where later she taught. In 1975 she moved from Iraq to London and received a postgraduate diploma in printmaking from the Wimbledon School of Art and the London Central School of Art and Design. Throughout her prolific career she has been inspired by her Arab Iraqi heritage, including the epic of Gilgamesh and ancient and contemporary poetry. She has focused on specific subject matters, fantastic landscapes, city views and mystical figures. Al-Attar has had a number of solo exhibitions and gained several awards from international biennials, including London, 1978, Cairo, 1984, Brazil, 1985; and Malta, 1995. Recently, her work has been included in Baghdad, Paris, Artists of Iraq, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, 2005-6. She lives and works in London.

AVEDISSIAN, Gohar
BORN CAIRO, EGYPT, 1931
Avedissian studied fine arts at the School of Art and Design, Montreal, Canada, 1970-3, and printmaking at the Ecole Nationale Supérieur des Arts Décoratifs, Paris, 1974-6. He returned to Cairo in 1980, where he worked with celebrated Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900-49). Inspired by the latter, Avedissian developed a strong interest in traditional arts and local materials, which he uses in many of his works. He has worked in a wide range of media, including photography and textiles. Since 1990 he has been working with stencils on cardboard. Avedissian’s work has been shown in several solo exhibitions, including the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (1996), the British Council, Cairo (1992), Leighton House, London (1995), the Triennale, Amsterdam (1998) and the National Museum of African Art, Washington (2000). He lives and works in Cairo.

AL-ATZAWI, Dia
BORN BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1939
Al-Atzawi graduated in archaeology from Baghdad University, 1962, and in fine arts from the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1964. In 1969 he formed the art group ‘New Visions’ with some of his contemporaries, among them Kafa al-Nasiri, Mohammed Mulhiddik, Isma’il Farah, Hashem al-Sarnawi and Salah al-Jamawie. He later joined the ‘One Dimension’ group started by Shaker Hassan al-Subi, while remaining close to ‘New Visions’ until 1972. Al-Atzawi’s work includes paintings, sculptures, prints and drawings as well as books in which visual art interacts with prose and poetry. He has exhibited extensively in the Middle East, North Africa, the United States, India, Brazil and Europe, including a retrospective exhibition Dla Atzawi at the Institut du Monde Arabe (IMA), Paris, 2002. He has received several awards, among them first prizes at the International Summer Academy, Salzburg, Austria, 1975, and at the First Arab Contemporary Art Exhibition, Tunis, 1981; as well as the Jury Prize at the International Cairo Biennial, 1993. Al-Atzawi moved to London in 1970, where he worked as an art consultant at the Iraqi Cultural Centre, 1977-80. A prominent artist of the Iraq school, Al-Atzawi also plays an important role in the promotion of Iraqi and Arab art to wider audiences, notably through numerous exhibitions of his contemporaries and publications. He lives and works in London.

BEKKAIA, Farid
BORN MARRAKECH, MOROCCO, 1934
Bekkaia received several grants to study abroad. He trained at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1954-5; the Institute of Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic, 1959-62; and the Academia d’Arte, Milan, Italy, 1965-6. In 1962 he was appointed director at the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Casablanca, where he
AL-ATTAR, Saoud
Born Baghdad, Iraq, 1942
Al-Attar graduated in fine arts from the University of Baghdad, where later she taught. In 1975 she moved from Iraq to London and received a postgraduate diploma in printmaking from the Wimbledon School of Art and the London Central School of Art and Design. Throughout her prolific career she has been inspired by her Arab Iraqi heritage, including the Epic of Gilgamesh and ancient and contemporary poetry. She has focused on specific subject matters, fantastic landscapes, city views and mystical figures. Al-Attar has had a number of solo exhibitions and gained several awards from international biennials, including London, 1978; Cairo, 1984, Brazil, 1985, and Malta, 1995. Recently, her work has been included in Baghdad—Paris: Artiste d’Or, Monde du Montparnasse, Paris, 2005–6. She lives and works in London.

AVDEISSIAN, Chant
Born Caro, Yemen, 1951
Avdeissian studied fine arts at the School of Art and Design, Montreal, Canada, 1970–3, and printmaking at the École Nationale Supérieure des Arts Décoratifs in Paris, 1974–6. He returned to Cairo in 1980, where he worked with celebrated Egyptian architect Hassan Fathy (1900–85). Inspired by the latter, Avdeissian developed a strong interest in traditional arts and local materials, which he uses in many of his works. He has worked in a wide range of media, including photography and textiles. Since 1990 he has been working with starch on cardboard. Avdeissian’s work has been shown in several solo exhibitions, including the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris (1990), the British Council, Cairo (1992), Leghorn House, London (1995), the Trompe l’Oeil, Amsterdam (1998) and the National Museum of African Art, Washington (2000). He lives and works in Cairo.

BELLKHA, Farid
Born Marrakesh, Morocco, 1954
Bellkha received several grants to study abroad. He trained at the École des Beaux Arts, Paris, 1954–8; the Institute of Theatre, Prague, Czech Republic, 1969–72; and the Academy of Fine Arts, Milan, Italy, 1969–74. In 1962 he was appointed director at the École des Beaux Arts in Casablanca, where he developed his interest in traditional and popular arts and craft practices. In 1969 he abandoned oil on paper to work on copper, then moved to leather and other local materials. His work also comprises limited-edition prints for books of prose and poetry. He recently had a solo exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, May/July 2005. In 2004 Bellkha was a member of the jury for the UNESCO Visual Arts Award. He lives and works in Marrakech.

BOULIATA, Kamal
Born Jerusalem, Palestine, 1942
Brought up in Jerusalem, Boulia moved to Italy to study at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome, 1961–3. After the 1967 war he travelled to Washington DC to pursue his studies at the Corcoran School of Art, 1969–71, later teaching at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University, 1982–4. He gained several fellowships to undertake research, working, on post-Dysartian icon painting in Palestine (1970–40), granted by the Ford Foundation, New York, 2001, and Islamic Art in Morocco, a fellowship, 1970. He recently had a solo exhibition at the Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris, May/July 2005. In 2004 Bellkha was a member of the jury for the UNESCO Visual Arts Award. He lives and works in Israel.

CHORBACHI, Wassema
Born Cairo, Egypt, of Iraqi parents, 1964
Chorbachi received a BA in fine arts and philosophy from the British College for Women, Lebanon, 1966; and MA in studio painting and Renaissance art from the École des Beaux Arts in Florence, Italy, 1967; and a PhD in the history of Islamic art— which focused on the link between science and the art of design in Islamic architectural design—Harvard University, 1989. She has worked with various festival events, mainly turned to ceramics—art she first discovered as a child in Iraq using clay from the banks of the Tigris. Her work includes domestic and mural tiles, many decorated with calligraphy and abstract motifs reflecting her knowledge and interest in traditional techniques and designs. Chorbachi is an artist in residence at the ceramics programme, Harvard University, where she teaches architectural ceramics.

EHSAI, Mohammed
Born Tehran, Iran, 1949
Ehsai trained at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tehran University, where he later became a teacher of calligraphy. In 1964 he started using calligraphy in graphic design and painting. He worked on the layout and calligraphy of various publications and was commissioned to create a number of architectural design projects, including the inscriptions of the Alhajh Mosque in Tehran, 1960–1, as well as those at the Kian Katran Museum, Tehran, 1985, and the Iranian Embassy in Abu Dhabhi, UAE, 1988–91. A skilled calligrapher, Ehsai achieved a successful synthesis between this traditional art and modern painting. His works have been exhibited worldwide, including the Art—Iran America Society, Tehran, 1974; Andre International Art Fair, Switzerland, 1970–5; and the Berlin Art Centre, London, 2001. In 1976 Ehsai was awarded a UNESCO award at the Congress-Summer Festival, France, and in 2005 he received Iran’s National Award for Art and Culture.

ERIMES, Ali Omar
Born Tripoli, Libya, 1945
Erimes graduated from Plymouth School of Architecture and Design in 1970. He then returned to Libya where he began writing extensively. In 1974 he was appointed consultant to the London World of Islam Festival which took place in 1976 and in 1981, he settled in England where he has been living ever since. His work is based on the Arabic letter and he often uses images from Arabic and world literature addressing social and moral issues that have a resonance today. He is involved with numerous cultural and intellectual institutions and is Chairman of the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre, London. With over sixty solo and group exhibitions worldwide, his works have been acquired by both public institutions and private collectors alike in the Middle East, Europe, the United States and Malaysia.
Authority (IIEA). In 1995 she founded the International Network of Contemporary Iraqi Artists (INCA), which culminated in the touring exhibition Strides of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art, 2000–3. She edited the exhibition catalogue, in which she also was represented as an artist. Her works, which consist of ceramics and oils and mixed media on canvas, often refer to her concern about Iraq's lost artistic heritage. Farhan has been living in London since 1982.

FAHIM, Galbra
BORN: TEBRIZ, IRAN, 1972

Fahim received a diploma in calligraphy from Iran’s Calligraphy Association, Tehran, 1996, after obtaining a BA in graphic design from the Azad Art University, Tehran, 1995. In 1995 she was awarded a prize as best woman calligrapher, Tehran. In 2003 she travelled to France where, having been awarded a scholarship, she spent three months at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. Her work is inspired by her Iranian cultural heritage, notably architecture and the traditional art of calligraphy. She has exhibited in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, including the first Islamic World Calligraphy Festival at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, 1997. She lives and works in Iran.

GHADRI, Shahla
BORN: TEBRIZ, IRAN, 1974

Ghadri obtained her BA in photography from the Azad University in Tehran, 1998. She has worked at the first museum of photography in Tehran, the Alikhah-e Shahr, and has managed the first Iranian website dedicated solely to photography. Her work has been exhibited in Iran, Europe, the United States, Canada and Russia, including Iranian Contemporary Art at the Barbican Centre, London, 2001; touring exhibitions Veil, England and Sweden, 2003–4; Harun Farocki and the New School, Spain and France, 2003–4; and Women in Orient – Women in Occident, Germany, 2003–4; as well as the Sharjah International Biennial, 2003, and the photo biennial of Moscow, 2004. She lives and works in Tehran.

GHAIL, Ghassan
BORN: BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1964


HAMADANI, Mahmoud
BORN: BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1958

Hamadani graduated in mathematics and public administration from the State University of New York, 1981, and Harvard University, 1992, respectively. He spent some time working in Kabul, Afghanistan, as a political advisor for the United Nations, and planned to write on his return in 1995. Instead he turned to drawing, a medium through which he began expressing his experience of conflict and chaos in Kabul. One of the artists on the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council artist-in-residence programme at the World Trade Center, New York, 2001, Hamadani was affected by the events of 11 September. Following his experience, he created two works: On to Kabul, a set of abstract ink drawings, and On to New York, an installation of toppled white cubes, both of which were exhibited at the New Museum of Contemporary Art, New York, 2001–2. Hamadani lives and works in New York.
Authority (ULSA). In 1995 she founded the International Network of Contemporary Iraqi Artists (INCA), which culminated in the touring exhibition Strokes of Geniuses: Contemporary Iraqi Art, 2000-3. She edited the exhibition catalogue, in which she also was represented as an artist. Her works, which consist of ceramics and oils and mixed media on canvas, often refer to her concern about Iraq's lost artistic heritage. Farhan has been living in London since 1982.

FARHAN, Said
Born Baghdad, Iraq, 1933

Farhan studied in Switzerland, graduating from the Print Department, Ecole d’Art de Lausanne; and in social sciences and teacher training from the University of Lausanne. He settled in Switzerland, teaching visual arts at Reussere College, Morges. His work includes paintings and drawings as well as limited-edition prints accompanying poems of the Syrian poet Adonis and the Swiss writer Aliou Bouchet. More recently he has been working on an installation, The library of Baghdad, reflecting on the destruction of the libraries of Iraq. He is also a writer and has published translations of the works of Iraqi poet Fawzi Karim. His children’s stories published in the 1970s in Baghdad, and novels in Arabic and French. Much of Farhan’s work has been inspired by his experience of exile. His work has been exhibited in Europe, the Middle East and the United States, including the touring exhibition Strokes of Geniuses: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which began in the United Kingdom, 2000. He lives and works in Lausanne.

GHADIRI, Khashan
Born Tehran, Iran, 1974

Ghadr obtained her BA in photography from the Azad University in Tehran, 1998. She has worked at the first museum of photography in Tehran, the Alidokhani Museum, and has managed the first Iranian website dedicated solely to photography. Her work has been exhibited at the Azad University, Tehran, 2001; and the photo biennial of Moscow, 2004. She lives and works in Tehran.

GHAMIB, Rashan
Born Mashad, Iran, 1984

Ghahb received a diploma in calligraphy from Iran’s Calligraphy Association, Tehran, 1996, after obtaining a BA in graphic design from the Azad Art University, Tehran, 1995. In 1995 he was awarded a prize as best women calligrapher in Tehran. In 2003 he travelled to France where, having been awarded a scholarship, she spent three months at the Cité Internationale des Arts, Paris. Her work is inspired by her Iranian cultural heritage, notably architecture and the traditional art of calligraphy. She has exhibited in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, including the first Islamic World Calligraphy Festival at the Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran, 1991. She lives and works in Iran.

HAMADANI, Mahmoud
Born Damascus, Syria, 1951-1952

Hamadani was awarded a scholarship to study at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome, 1953-7. Upon his return to Syria, he taught art at secondary schools and, from its establishment in 1959, at the College of Fine Arts, University of Damascus – where, from 1975 to 1984, he was dean. Initially influenced by European academic figurative art and impressionism, he later established himself as one of the first artists to have used the Arabic script in the abstract art movement in Syria. Hamadani also played an important role as a teacher, inviting Italian and French lecturers to the College of Fine Arts and influencing a number of Syrian artists of the following generation. In 1987 he held a solo exhibition of public and private collections, including the National Museum in Damascus.

EL-HANANI, Jacob
Born Casablanca, Morocco, 1947

El-Hanani trained at the Ain el-Fil School of Fine Arts, Tel Aviv, 1965–9, and the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, Paris, 1969–70. When he was six he moved from Morocco to Israel, where at an early age he began work as a political cartoonist. In 1972, in Paris, he moved away from figurative art, and in 1974 he travelled to New York, where he came under the influence of the Minimalism and the American artist Sol LeWitt (b. 1928). El-Hanani’s works, principally on paper, display minute linear elements methodically arranged to culminate in elaborate compositions. He values the process of execution and one drawing may take months to be completed. His works have been exhibited extensively in the United States, Europe and Israel, including the forty-seventh biennial at the Corcoran Art Gallery, Washington DC, 2002; and recent Acquasacca at the Agano Museum of Modern Art, New York, 2003. He lives and works in New York.

HĀDI, Setāb
Born Mashhad, Iran, 1935

Hādish studied fine arts at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts, Algiers, 1976–80, and at the Instituto de Fine Arts, Moscow, Russia, 1983–4. He continued his studies in Russia, obtaining an MA in fine arts, mural painting and decorative arts from the Leningrad V. Makhlăeva College of Arts and Design, 1989. He then moved to Sweden and, later, England, where he now lives and works. In 2003 Hādish won the annual Nottinham Castle Open Art Exhibition, following which he had a solo exhibition, Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, 2004. His work includes paintings and drawings as well as mural paintings.

HASSANZADEH, Khosrow
Born Tehran, Iran, 1963

Hassanzadeh decided to follow the path he always had dreamt of – art and poetry. He began studies at the faculty of Painting, Mijama’s e-Hon University, Tehran, 1989–91 and, later, trained with his mentor, Iranian artist Ayyed Aghbashlos, 1996–8, while studying at the Faculty of Persian Literature, Azad University, Tehran. Many of Hassanzadeh’s paintings and drawings can be seen as visual diaries: incorporating his own writings, his family, self-portraits and his experience of war. He also works with installations and photographs. He participated in Children of the Dark City, 2000, a multimedia installation of sculptures, videos, photographs and paintings about the harmful effects of air pollution on children. In 2003 his work was included in Iranian Contemporary Art, Bethicn Centre, London, and in 2002 he participated in the second exhibition of conceptual art, New Art, at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. In 2003 he had his first exhibition of photographs only, Tomorrow, in Tehran. Two documentaries on Hassanzadeh’s work have been made by the journalist and film-maker Maxine Sahari, 1997–9. He lives and works in Tehran.

HONDA, Kouzō
Born Tokyo, Japan, 1946

Honda graduated from the Arabic Department of Tokyo University for Foreign Studies, Tokyo, Japan, in 1973. In 1975 he travelled to Saudi Arabia where, working as an interpreter, he was introduced to Arabic calligraphy. He returned to Tokyo in 1979, becoming a lecturer in Arabic at the Institute for Asian and African Languages and, later, at the University for Foreign Studies, 1986. He studied Arabic calligraphy with Ushud Hezam Calebi in Istanbul, receiving his diploma (jīā) in 2000. In 1987 he was appointed Instructor in Arabic calligraphy at the cultural centre of the Japan Broadcasting Corporation and in 1991 at the Arab-Japan Association. Honda has been invited to participate in calligraphy festivals and competitions in the Middle East, has had numerous exhibitions in Japan, the Middle East and Europe, and is a key artist behind the growing popularity of Arabic calligraphy in Japan. He is a professor of international relations at Datto Banka University, Tokyo.

HOUSHBAY, Shairneh
Born Sibhi, Iraq, 1955

Houshbay first trained in theatre, turning to visual arts after her arrival in London in 1974. She studied at the Chelsea School of Art, London, 1976–9, and was a junior fellow at Cardiff College of Art, Wales, UK, 1979–80; and had her first solo exhibition at Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff, 1980. By the late 1980s she had established herself as one of the leading artists of her generation. Her works were included in significant group exhibitions, among them Apero 80, the Venice Biennale, and...
1982; and Les Magiciens de la Terre at the Centre Georges Pompidou, Paris, 1982. Initially known for her sculptures, she turned to painting and drawing in 1992. In 2003 she also created a four-screen video installation, breath, in which her drawings come to life. She followed this with breath 2, 2004, a sculpture of breeze-filled bricks with audio equipment. Her work is varied but throughout imbued with her interest in abstract forms and a sense of spirituality. The poetry of the thirteenth-century Sufi mystic Jalal al-Din Rumi has been a direct source of inspiration for many of her works. In 1994 Houshiary was short-listed for the Turner Prize at the Tate Gallery, London. Her works have been exhibited worldwide and recently included in Turning Points – 20th Century British Sculpture, Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2004. She lives and works in London.

JAFAR, Mustafa
Born Naṣiriya, Iraq, 1952

Jafer is a graphic designer and, in his own words, a passionate letterer rather than a calligrapher in the traditional sense. He studied painting and design in Baghdad and Rome at the Accademia di Belle Arti, as well as Arabic calligraphy under the celebrated master Hashem Muhammad al-Baghdadi, Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1969–71. He lives and works in the United Kingdom, where he conducts workshops and teaches Arabic calligraphy at a number of museums and institutions – among them the British Museum, the British Library and the Horniman Museum, University of London. In 2002 he was the author of Arabic Calligraphy, Naskh Script for Beginners, published by the British Museum Press.

JALALI, Bahman
Born Tehran, Iran, 1956

Jalali is a self-taught photographer who graduated in economics. He worked as director of photography at Seychelles Press, 1976–91, and since 1983 has been a teacher of photography at a number of universities in Iran. In 1999 he was one of the founding members of the Akbarshahi Shafe, the country’s first museum of photography, where he became a curator. In 1999 he was appointed a member of the editorial board of the bi-monthly journal of photography Alqomem. During the Iran–Iraq war Jalali went into photo-journalism and war photography for an agency in Paris. However, not satisfied, he continued independently. Subsequently, his images of war were shown widely, notably in a number of solo exhibitions, 1982–4. Through his work Jalali explored many other subjects, including the 1979 Iranian revolution and the relationship between past and present driven by his fascination with old photographs. His works have been shown worldwide, including the second exhibition of conceptual art, New Art, at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002; 13 Photographic Journeys – Iran in the 21st Century, SOMAS, London, 2003; Contemporary Iranian Photography, Dubai, UAE, 2004; and Photo-Loan, Royal Academy of Art, London, 2005.

KHADIR, Salaman
Born Jaffa, Iraq, 1955

Khadir obtained a BA in art and design from the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1976; and a BA in fine arts from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, 1994. In addition, he studied stitching and printmaking at the Municipal Institute, Bereteina, Spain, 1987–8; mural painting at the University of Málaga, Spain, 1988–9; and silkscreen at Concordia University, Montreal, 1987–91. He has exhibited in the Middle East, Russia, the United States, Canada and Europe; including the touring exhibition Strates of Genss: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which began in the United Kingdom, 2000. Khadir has given lectures in Iraqi art and has participated in several events supporting contemporary creativity in Iraq, 2004–5. He lives and works in Switzerland.

KHALIL, Mohammed Omar
Born Duhok, Kurdistan, 1956

Khalil was educated in Kirkuk, where until 1963 he studied and taught at the School of Fine and Applied Arts. He later pursued his studies in fresco painting and printmaking at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. In 1999 he was a resident artist at Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan. Khalil’s work comprises paintings, prints and ‘artist books’. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions worldwide, including Perspective on Contemporary Art, the Kinda Foundation Collection at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 2002. Khalil has received several awards, among them First Prize at the International Biennial, Cairo, 1993; and First Prize in Printmaking, National Academy Award, New York, 2003. He has been living and working in New York since 1982.

AL KHEMIR, Sabiba
Born Tunisia, 1959

Al Khemir is an art historian, artist and novelist. She obtained her MA from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 1986, and her PhD in Islamic art and archaeology from the University of London, 1990. Her work includes a first novel, Walking to the Future for the Post to Come (1993), an essay in Muglag with Ammar Al Moulfi (2005), book illustrations and book covers – among the latter Naguib Mahfouz’s novel Respected Sir. She has exhibited in Europe and the United States, including the touring exhibition Dialogue of the Present, the
JAFAQ, Mustafa

Ja’far is a graphic designer and, in his own words, a passionate letterer rather than a calligrapher in the traditional sense. He studied painting and design in Baghdad and Rome at the Accademia di Belle Arti as well as Arabic calligraphy under the calligrapher Nazif Mohamed al-Beigi, Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1969–71. He lives and works in the United Kingdom, where he conducts workshops and teaches Arabic calligraphy at a number of museums and institutions—among them the British Museum, the British Library, and Britvic College, University of London. In 2002 he was the author of Arabic Calligraphy, Nahla Script for Beginners, published by the British Museum Press.

JALAL, Bahman

Born in Tehran, Iran, 1944. Jalal is a self-taught photographer who graduated in economics. He worked as director of photography at Southas Press, 1976–91, and in 1985 he has been a teacher of photography at a number of universities in Iran. In 1997 he was one of the founding members of the Alkahaneh Shahe, the country’s first museum of photography, where he became a curator. In 1999 he was appointed a member of the editorial board of the bi-monthly journal of photography Almahsah. During the Iran-Iraq war Jalal went into photojournalism and war photography for an agency in Paris. However, not satisfied, he continued independently. Subsequently, his images of war were shown widely, notably in a number of solo exhibitions, 1982–24. Through his work Jalal explored many other subjects, including the 1979 Iranian revolution and the relationship between past and present shown by his fascination with old photographs. His works have been shown worldwide, including the second exhibition of conceptual art, New Art, at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2002; 12th Photographic Journeys—her in the 21st Century, SOAS, London, 2003; Contemporary Iranian Photography, Dubai, U.A.E., 2004; and Photo-Loxond, Royal Academy of Art, London, 2005.

KHALAF, Mohammed Omar

Born in Buraim, Sudan, 1935. Khalaf was educated in Khartoum, where until 1963 he studied and taught at the School of Fine and Applied Arts. He later pursued his studies in printmaking and painting at the Academy of Fine Arts in Florence, Italy. In 1993 he was a resident artist at Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan. Khalaf’s work comprises paintings, prints and ‘artist books’. His work has been included in numerous exhibitions worldwide, including Perspective on Contemporary Art, the Kiida Foundation Collection at the Institut du Monde Arabe, Paris, 2002. Khalaf has received several awards, amongst them First Prize at the International Biennial, Cairo, 1993, and First Prize in Printmaking, National Academy Award, New York, 2003. He has been living and working in New York since 1967.

KHEDHER, Salam

Born in Hama, 1952. Khedher obtained a BA in art and design from the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1976; and a BA in fine arts from Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, 1994. In addition, he studied etching and printmaking at the Municipal Institute, Barcelona, Spain, 1981–85; mural painting at the University of Madrid, Spain, 1980–82, and silk-screen at Concordia University, Montreal, 1987–91. He has exhibited in the Middle East, Russia, the United States, Canada and Europe; including the touring exhibition Storiers of Genesis: Contemporary Print Art, which began in the United Kingdom, 2000. Khedher has given lectures on Iraqi art and has participated in several events supporting contemporary creativity in Iraq, 2004–5. He lives and works in Switzerland.

KHOIR, Sabita


KOBACH, Rachel

Born in Zinn, Algeria, 1967. Kobach studied art at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts in Algiers and Paris, 1987–75, respectively, at the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts in Aligres and Paris, 1987–75, and at the Institut d’Urbanisme at the Academe de Paris, 1973–7. His work includes drawings, woodcuts, prints, paintings, prints on silk and installations—and he often includes Arabic script as well as magical signs and symbols. He has collaborated with a number of poets and authors, among them Mahmoud Darwich, Mohammed DB, Jami: Edith Ben-Harchek, René Chab and Michel Butor. In 1995 he was one of six international artists—along with Pierre-Armand Hurelt, Hédi Souf and Roberta Matta (Chile), Robert Rauschenberg (USA) and Don You (Vietnam)—chosen for the UNESCO project Six Flags of Tolerance. He has exhibited extensively, including at the forty-ninth Venice Biennale, 2001, where his celebrated installation The path of waves was shown, and recently, at the October College, London, 2005. Karakoti is an honorary member of the Khili Sakakini Cultural Centre, Founded Ramallah, 1996. He lives and works in Paris.

MAHDJOU, Naji

Born in Tunes, 1937. Mahdjou studied at the Academy Santa Andrea, Rome, and the Department of Oriental Antiquities, Ecole du Louvre, Paris. His varied work comprises paintings, prints, tapestries, designs for fashion designer Arman Sfreg, book covers and look illustrations. In addition, he was selected by Gulf Air to design the external decoration of one of its flights, 2001, and in 2005 was a UNESCO Crafts Prize for the Arab States with a stained-glass creation. He has received many awards and has been on the committees for a number of international artistic events. Mahdjou lives and works in Tunisia while participating in numerous conferences worldwide.

MAHMOOD, Hassan

Born in Hama, 1955. Mahmod has worked in a number of roles. As an apprentice calligrapher, in 1968 he moved to Paris, where he studied figurative art and painting at the École des Beaux Arts. He continued calligraphy, creating covers for Arabic magazines to earn a living and, in 1972, performing in public, accompanied by the composer Gay Jaccetz and the musician Faouzi Al-Aibly. In 1975, upon finishing his studies, he returned with the art of calligraphy. His calligraphists have accompanied a number of texts and poems which have been drawn from world literature—medieval Suf mystic writer Ibn ‘Arabi, philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau, poet Charles Baudelaire, Chinese Tsung-Wang Tao and Virgil among many others. Massoudy has been a key figure in introducing the art of Arabic calligraphy to wider audiences. He lives and works in Paris.
MATER AL-ZIAD, Ahmed
BORN TAOFIK, SAUDI ARABIA, 1970
Mater studied medicine and surgery in Abha, Saudi Arabia. In 1995 he followed a course on drawing and photography at the Al-Miftah Art Village, King Fahed Cultural Centre, Abha, which he joined in 1996. His work, comprising drawings, paintings and photographs, has been exhibited in a number of solo and group exhibitions in Saudi Arabia. He has received several awards, among them the Abha Cultural Prize for Photography, 2001, and first place in the King Khalid University contest in drawing, 2004. Mater is the founder of the Al-Miftah cultural magazine, 2001, and instigator of a large number of art initiatives in Saudi Arabia.

MOTHIRI, Farhad
BORN IRAN, 1963
Mothiri travelled from Iran to the United States in the early 1980s to study at the California Institute of Arts, from which he graduated in 1984. He first became known for his series of large oils on canvas showing monumental jax and brush with richly textured surfaces and flowing calligraphy. His work also includes photographs, sculptures and installations. Among his more conceptual pieces are his vitrine of gilded objects, 2003, the Rogues gun installation, 2004; and The ultimate toy--Logos, 2004. Mothiri’s work has been shown in a number of solo exhibitions, including Leighton House, London, 2003, and galleries in Rome, Geneva, Dubai and New York. He has also shown at the Sharjah Biennial, 2003, and, more recently, with a group of contemporary Iranian artists at Welcome, New York, 2005, a show that he also curated. Mothiri lives and works in Tehran.

METSUI, Lassaad
BORN CAIRO, EGYPT, 1963
Metsui is an artist-calligrapher. He studied at the Atelier des Beaux Arts, Gobel, 1983–7, then pursued his training in history of art in Nantes, and in Latin calligraphy in Toulouse, France, 1990–2. He teaches calligraphy (Arabic and Latin) in France, Europe and North Africa while organizing workshops and participating in a number of conferences. His work includes publications on the art of calligraphy and books where his calligraphic designs accompany text and poetry by various authors, among them Khalil Gibrain, Umar Khayyam and Mikail Choubal. Metsui lives in France.

MOUSTAFI, Ahmed
BORN CASSANDRA, GREECE, 1945
In 1966 Moustafi was awarded the highest national distinction as an accomplished figurative artist in the faculty of Fine Arts, University of Alexandria. He later taught there and, in 1974, was awarded a scholarship to the United Kingdom. He joined the printmaking department of the Central School of Art and Design, London, where he developed his interest in Arabic calligraphy and the theories of celebrated Abbasid calligrapher Ibn ‘Abd Allah (880–940). In 1978, after graduating, he received a grant from the British Council to pursue his research on the scientific foundation of the Arabic letter shapes, and in 1989 was awarded a PhD by the Council for National Academic Awards. Moustafi has since 1974 lived in London where, in 1983, he set up the Fe-Noon Ahmed Moustafi Research Centre for Arab Art and Design. His work includes lectures and workshops worldwide as well as numerous commissions, among them a competition presented by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Pakistan on the occasion of that country’s fiftieth anniversary, 1997. In 1998 he was invited by the Vatican to exhibit at the Pontifical Gregorian University, Rome. That exhibition, entitled Where the Two Oceans Meet, was heralded in the world media as the first achievement of his kind in the history of Muslim-Christian relations.

MOURAD, Fatih
BORN IRAQ, 1952, 20. 1966
Al-Mouradı, a poet, novelist, painter and sculptor, is considered a leader of the Syrian modern art movement. After an early period of Realism and Surrealism, he went to study at the Académie de Belle Arts in Rome. 1954–60. He returned to Damascus, having developed a very personal style that he described as ‘‘impressionistic and figurative with a strong element of abstraction’’. His subjects are varied, often inspired by ancient traditions, icon painting, symbols and mythologies as well as contemporary politics with which, since 1967, he became increasingly preoccupied. Between 1969 and 1972 he pursued his education in Paris, studying at the École des Beaux Arts. He then returned to Syria where, as a professor at the College of Fine Arts (established 1959), University of Damascus,
MOSHIRI, Farhad
Born Shiraz, Iran, 1951
Moshiri travelled from Iran to the United States in the early 1980s to study at the California Institute of Arts, from which he graduated in 1984. He first became known for his series of large oils on canvas showing monumental jars and bowls with richly textured surfaces and flowing calligraphy. His work also includes photographs, sculptures and installations. Among his more conceptual pieces is his vision of global objects, 2003; the Rogue gun installation, 2004; and The ultimate taj, 2004. Moshiri’s work has been shown in a number of solo exhibitions, including Curio Hands House, London, 2001; and galleries in Rome, Geneva, Dubai and New York. He has also shown at the Sharjah Biennial, 2003, and, more recently, with a group of contemporary Iraqi artists at Welcome, New York, 2005, a show that he also curated. Moshiri lives and works in Tehran.

AL-MOUCARRES, Fatouh
Born Algiers, Syria, 1952 (b. 1999)
Al-Moucarres, a poet, novelist and sculptor, is considered a leader of the Syrian modern art movement. After an early period of Realism and Surrealism, he went to study at the Académie des Beaux Arts in Rome. In 1954-56 he returned to Damascus, having developed a very personal style that he described as ‘unrealistic and figurative with a strong element of abstraction’. His subjects are varied, often inspired by ancient traditions, icon painting, symbols and mythology as well as contemporary politics with which, since 1967, he became increasingly preoccupied. Between 1969 and 1972 he pursued his education in Paris, studying at the École des Beaux Arts. He then returned to Syria where, as a professor at the College of Fine Arts (established 1959), University of Damascus, he trained and influenced generations of younger artists. Al-Moucarres had numerous exhibitions, including a retrospective at the Institut du Monde d’Arabie, Paris, 1995-6. A number of his poems and short stories have been published and translated.

MUHURIDIN, Mohammed
Born Mawla, Iraq, 1939
Muhuridin studied painting and graphic arts at the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1956-9, and at the Warsaw Academy of Fine Arts, Poland, 1966. Back in Iraq, in 1966 Moutafa was awarded the highest national distinction as an accomplished figurative artist in the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Alexandria. He later taught there and, in 1974, was awarded a scholarship to the United Kingdom. He joined theprintmaking, department of the Central School of Art and Design, London, where he developed his interest in Arabic calligraphy and the theories of celebrated Abbasid calligrapher Ibn Murug (886-940). In 1978, after graduating, he received a grant from the British Council to pursue his research on the scientific foundation of the Arabic letter shapes, and in 1989 was awarded a PhD by the Council for National Academic Awards. Moutafa has since 1974 been in London where, in 1983, he set up the Fe-noon Ahmad Moutafa Research Centre for Arab Art and Design. His work includes lectures and workshops worldwide as well as numerous commissions, among them a composition presented by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to Pakistan on the occasion of that country’s fiftieth anniversary, 1997. In 1998 he was invited by the Vatican to exhibit at the Pontificale Gregorianum University, Rome. That exhibition, entitled Where the Two Oceans Meet, was heralded in the world media as the first achievement of its kind in the history of Muslim-Christian relations.

NAIM, Sahab
Born Cairo, Egypt, 1957
Naim obtained her BFA, MFA and PhD focusing on the human body in contemporary art from the College of Art Education, Cairo, 1990, 1996 and 2003 respectively. Her work has been exhibited in a number of solo exhibitions in Egypt, Italy and The Netherlands, as well as in group exhibitions – among them the Biennale Venice 2003; the Havana Biennial, Cuba, 2003; and the touring exhibition Africa Romane: Contemporary Art of a Continent, Dietzelsaal, Germany (2004). Naim lives and works in Cairo.

NAVISI, Nader
Born Tehran, Iran, 1955
Nayesi obtained a BA in fine arts and photography from Syracuse University, New York, USA, in 1979. She pursued her studies in cinematography at the Parsons School of Design, New York, 1979-80, and in advanced photography at the International Center of Photography, New York, 1980-82. She participated in touring exhibitions, including The Photographers entre Histoire et Poètie – photographes de la collection FmC, France, Italy and Spain, 2004-5 and l’automne délicieux de l’automne – with Shadi Chalafian, France, Spain, Portugal and Russia, 2001-5. Her work has also been shown at Photo-London, Royal Academy of Art, London, 2005 and at a host of other venues. In 2007, Nayesi’s work also comprises designs for polyclotex and textiles. She lives and works in Paris.

NESHAT, Shirin
Born Qazvin, Iran, 1957
In 1974, at the age of seventeen, Neshat moved from Iran to the United States to study art at the University of California, Berkeley. As a result of the 1979 revolution in Iran, she did not travel back to her homeland until 1990. It was then, profoundly affected by her visit and the changes she noticed and experienced, that Neshat started work as a practising artist. She began with photography, many highighted with words in ink, and in the late 1990s started experimenting with video. In 1999 her video installation Turbulent won the Golden Lion Award at the Venice Biennale. She has since received a number of prizes, including the Grand Prix of the Kwantung Biennial in Korea, 2001, and the Visual Art Award of the Edinburgh Festival, 2000. Neshat’s work has been shown worldwide in numerous solo and group exhibitions. She lives and works in New York.
HAJI NOOR DEEN MI GUANJSANG
BORN SHANDONG, PROVINCE, CHINA, 1973

Haji Noor Deen is a prominent calligrapher who in 1997 became the first Chinese Muslim to be awarded the Egyptian Certificate of Arabic Calligraphy, and subsequently became a member of the Association of Egyptian Calligraphy. He teaches Arabic calligraphy at the Islamic College in Zhe Zhou, China, and is also a researcher into Islamic cultures at the Henan Academy of Science, Zhe Zhou. He has given several lectures on Islam in China and has participated in a number of workshops and talks on Arabic calligraphy worldwide, including at Harvard University, USA; the University of Cambridge, UK; and, in 2003, the Globe Theatre, London. Between 2000 and 2003 he received a grant to tour and display his work at several universities in the United States.

OMAR, Madiha
BORN ALPLEPP, SYRIA, 1968 [D. 2000]

Omar graduated from the Maria Grey Training College, London, 1983. In 1987 she taught painting at the Teachers Training School for Women, Baghdad, where later, she was appointed head of the Arts and Painting Department. In 1942 she moved to Washington DC, studying art education at George Washington University and graduating in fine arts from the Corcoran School of Art, 1950. She began exploring the possibilities of using Arabic script in modern painting in the mid-1940s and became known as the first artist to have done so. She was encouraged by the celebrated artist Nishtar Richard Tilghman, who in 1949 organized an exhibition of her works at the Georgetown Public Library, Washington. That same year she wrote a manifesto entitled Arabic Calligraphy: An Element of Inspiration in Abstract Art. Later, Omar, together with Jamil Hammoudi and others, was part of the 'One Dimension Group' formed in 1971 by Shaker Hassan al-Said.

PALANGI, Nasser
BORN LAMIAH, IRAN, 1959

Palangi graduated in visual arts from Tehran University, 1984. He pursued his education in painting and art education in Tehran until 1989, while lecturing at different universities until 1996. At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq war (1980-88), he spent three years working as a war artist, creating drawings, paintings and photographs. In addition, he created a series of mural paintings entitled My Memory of the War for the congregational mosque of Shahr negah, Iraq, 1981. He has had many commissions throughout his career, including installations and two mural reliefs for the War Memorial Museum in Khomein Mah, 1997-8; a mural painting for the Treasure Gallery, Seattle, USA, 2000; a painting for the Medicines without Border Project, Dubai, UAE; and ten sculptures, Migrants in Australia, for the National Multicultural Festival, Canberra, Australia, 2004. He has exhibited widely including at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000, and the Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, 2001. Palangi lives in Australia, where an exhibition of a selection of his works daring from 1990 to 2005 took place at the East & West Gallery, Victoria, Australia, 2005.

PEACOCK, Jill
BORN TEL-AVIV, ISRAEL, 1940

Having moved to Britain in 1959, Peacock studied medicine at London University, 1968–73, and worked as a doctor before gaining her BA in fine art from St Martin’s School of Art, London, in 1984. In 1990 she moved to Scotland, where she is a member of the Glasgow Print Studio and was a visiting lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art from 1995 to 2002. In 2003-4 she was a visiting scholar at New Hall, Cambridge, researching Islamic figurative calligraphy with an award from the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

RAAD, Walid
BORN BEIRUT, LEBANON, 1967

Raad is a media artist. His work comprises photography, video and literary essays, all sometimes combined in installations, as well as performances and lectures. He is a member of the Arab Image Foundation set up in Beirut, 1996. In 1999 he established the ‘Atlas group’, Beirut and New York, aimed at researching and documenting the contemporary history of Lebanon, through archival material produced by the group and attributed to named imaginary or anonymous individuals and organizations as well as to the group itself. Raad lives and works in New York, where he teaches film, photography and video at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

AL-RAES, Abdul Qadir
BORN DUBAI, UNITED ARAB EMIRATES, 1961

Al-Raes had his first solo exhibitions in Dubai, 1974, shortly after completing his studies. His work, deeply inspired by his homeland, has since been exhibited on numerous occasions in the United Arab Emirates and the rest of the Gulf region, as well as in North Africa, Europe, South and North America, China and Australia. Al-Raes has received a number of prizes, including the Jury Award at the Sharjah Biennial, 1993, and the Golden Palm Leaf (al-sa’afa al-dhalabia) at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exhibition, 1999.
HAJJ NOORD DEEN MI GUAJANG
BORN SANSUNG-NOI-KU, CHINA, 1963

Hajj Noor Deen is a prominent calligrapher who in 1997 became the First Chinese Muslim to be awarded the Egyptian Certificate of Arabic Calligraphy, and subsequently became a member of the Association of Egyptian Calligraphers. He teaches Arabic calligraphy at the Islamic College in Zhen Zhou, China, and is also a researcher into Islamic cultures at the Heran Academy of Science, Zhen Zhou. He has given several lectures on Islam in China and has participated in a number of workshops and talks on Arabic calligraphy worldwide, including at Harvard University, USA; the University of Cambridge, UK; and, in 2005, the Globe Theatre, London. Between 2000 and 2003 he received a grant to tour and display his work at several universities in the United States.

OMAR, Madha
BORN ALLEPPO, SYRIA, 1966 [D. 2002]

Omar graduated from the Maria Goya Training College, London in 1993. In 1997 she taught painting at the Teachers Training College for Women, Ramallah. Later, she was appointed head of the Arts and Painting Department. In 1942 she moved to Washington DC, studying art education at George Washington University and graduating in Fine Arts from the Corcoran School of Art, 1950. She began exploring the possibilities of using Arabic script in modern painting in the mid-1960s and became known as the first artist to have done so. She was encouraged by the celebrated artist Richard Ettlingerhaus, who in 1949 organized an exhibition of her works at the Georgetown Public Library, Washington. That same year she wrote a manifesto entitled Arabic Calligraphy: An Element of Inspiration in Abstract Art. Later, Omar, together with Jamil Hammoudi and others, was part of the ‘One Dimensions Group’ formed in 1971 by Shaker Hassan al-Said.

PALANG, Nasser
BORN HAMASON, IRAQ

Palang graduated in visual arts from Tehran University, 1984. He pursued his education in painting and art education in Tehran until 1989, while lecturing at different universities until 1998. At the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War (1980–88), he spent three years working as a war artist, creating drawings, paintings and photographs. In addition, he created a series of mural paintings entitled My Memory of the War for the congregational mosque of Khorramshahr, Iran. He has had many commissions throughout his career, including installations and two mural reliefs for the War Memorial Museum in Khorramshahr, 1997–98, a mural painting for the Treasure Gallery, Swett, USA, 2000; a painting for the Medicines without Border Project, Dubai, UAE; and ten sculptures, Migrants in Australia, for the National Multicultural Festival, Canberra, Australia, 2004. He has exhibited widely including at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2000, and the Seyhoun Gallery, Tehran, 2001. Palang lives in Australia where an exhibition of a selection of his works dating from 1999 to 2003 took place at the East & West Gallery, Victoria, Australia, 2005.

PEACOCK, Jila
BORN TEHRAN, IRAN, 1948

Having moved to Britain in 1959, Peacock studied medicine at London University, 1968–73, and worked as a doctor before gaining her BA in fine art from St Martin’s School of Art, London, in 1984. In 1990 she moved to Scotland, where she is a member of the Glasgow Print Studio and was a visiting lecturer at the Glasgow School of Art from 1995 to 2002. In 2003–4 she was a visiting scholar at New Hall, Cambridge, researching Islamic figural calligraphy with an award from the Arts and Humanities Research Board.

RASS, Mohammad
BORN BEIRUT, LEBANON, 1967

Rassw studied painting at the Institute of Fine Arts, Lebanese University of Beirut, 1971–5. Among the artists who taught him were Arif Ali Rayan, Jenu Khalife, Shafic Abboud (then a visiting professor) and Helmi Jardad, who introduced him to drawing. Following the civil war in Lebanon, Rass moved to Syria and later to Morocco, where he taught in Rabat, 1977–9. He then travelled to London and studied printmaking at the Slade School of Fine Art, University College, 1979–81. Upon his return to Lebanon, Rass taught at the Institute of Fine Arts, 1982, and the American University in Beirut, 1992–2004, where he set up a printmaking studio at the Department of Architecture and Design. Between 1983 and 1992 he was secretary general of the Lebanese association of painters and sculptors. His work – including prints, mixed media and assemblage on canvas, panel or cardboard – often incorporates photographs, words and three-dimensional elements. He has exhibited on numerous occasions in the Middle East, Europe, the United States, Japan and, more recently, in 2003, at the First Biennial International Art Biennale, China. Rass lives and works in Beirut.

RAAL, Walid
BORN DABOUA, LEBANON, 1967

Raal is a media artist. His work comprises photography, video and literary essays, all sometimes combined in installations, as well as performances and lectures. He is a member of the Arab Image Foundation set up in Beirut, 1996. In 1999 he established the Atlas group’, Beirut and New York, aimed at researching and documenting the contemporary history of Lebanon, through archival material produced by the group and attributed to named imaginary or anonymous individuals and organizations as well as to the group itself. Raal lives and works in New York, where he teaches film, photography and video at the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art.

AL-RAES, Abdul Qadir
BORN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA, 1953

Ali-Raes had his first solo exhibition in Dubai, 1974, shortly after completing his studies. His work, deeply inspired by his homeland, has since been exhibited on numerous occasions in the United Arab Emirates and the rest of the Gulf region, as well as in North Africa, Europe, South and North America, China and Australia. Ali-Raes has received a number of prizes, including the Jury Award at the Sharjah Biennial, 1993, and the Golden Palm Leaf (al-arafa al-Rahilation) at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) exhibition, 1999.

EL-RAYES, Arif
BORN ALEX, LEBANON, 1928 [D. 2005]

El-Reyess started his career as a self-taught artist. Between 1950 and 1957 he moved to Paris, where he worked in the ateliers of Fernand Léger, Andre Lhote and Ossip Zadkine, while taking classes at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière in Montmartre. He travelled extensively between Paris and Senegal, where he learnt stone and wood carving. He returned to Lebanon in 1957, and, having received a scholarship from the Italian government, pursued his training at the Accademia di Belle Arti in Rome. 1960–3.

Back in Lebanon, he taught at the Institute of Fine Arts, University of Beirut, and in 1973 was appointed president of the Lebanese association of painters and sculptors. His work includes paintings and drawings as well as commissions from the Lebanese government, among them a tapestry series of notebooks and stones whose surfaces are animated by video projections. Raal has had over forty solo exhibitions, including a mid-career retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 2002; his acclaimed exhibition Against Order at the Atheneaum International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 2003; and, more recently, Field, co-produced by the Festival d’Autome, at the Galeries du Jue de Paume, Paris, 2005. Raal lives and works in New York and Israel.

RISAN, Kareem
BORN BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1980

Risun graduated from the Faculty of Arts, Baghdad, 1984. Shortly afterwards he joined the army, a period which he documented through a series of drawings; his work includes a variety of media. Along with some of his contemporaries – Da’a Al-Azzawi, Rafi al-Nasiri and Chassan Ghab, among others – he uses the book form, as displayed in Baghdad burning, 2001, a beoved book of twelve folios with collage, drawing and painting. He has exhibited extensively in the Middle East and Europe recently, in the touring exhibition Dulal: Contemporary Iraq Book Art, which opened in Texas, USA, 2005; and Baghdad-Paris, Artistes d’Ivois, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, 2005–6. He lives and works in Baghdad.

ROVNER, Michael
BORN SEATTLE, 1957

Rovner obtained a BA in cinema/television and philosophy from Tel Aviv University, 1981, and a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Bezalel Academy of Art and Design, Jerusalem, 1985. In 1978 she co-founded the Camera Obscura School of Art, Tel Aviv, which has since developed into a prominent institution in Israel for the study of photography, video and cinema. She began as a photographer, then moved to film, video installations – some conceived for specific sites – as well as works on paper and canvas. Among her installations are series of notebooks and stones whose surfaces are animated by video projections. Rovner has had over forty solo exhibitions, including a mid-career retrospective at the Whitney Museum of Art, New York, 2002; her acclaimed exhibition Against Order at the Atheneaum International Art Exhibition, Venice Biennale, 2003; and, more recently, Field, co-produced by the Festival d’Autome, at the Galeries du Jue de Paume, Paris, 2005. Rovner lives and works in New York and Israel.

AL-SAQI, Shaker Hassan
BORN SHAMOKH, IRAQ, 1925 [D. 2006]

Al-Saqi graduated in social sciences from the Higher Institute of Teachers, Baghdad, 1948, and in art from the Institute of Fine Arts, 1954. He has written widely on art history by the Jewish Selim Selim, and with him co-founded the Baghdad Modern Art group, 1951. Between 1945 and 1949, after obtaining a scholarship, Al-Saqi studied in Paris at the Académie Julian, the École des Arts Décoratifs and the École Supérieure des Beaux Arts. He then returned to Baghdad, where he taught art history at the Institute of Fine Arts, 1954–60. He began his writings on art, including the Contemporaries’ Manifesto, 1966. By 1971, following the theoretical framework he had developed, Al-Saqi formed the ‘One Dimension’ group, which focused on the exploration of the different values of the Arabic script – graphic, plastic, linguistic and symbolic – in modern art. A celebrated artist, Al-Saqi received several awards and his work has been shown in numerous solo and group exhibitions worldwide.
Samir graduated from the École Nationale Supérieure des Beaux Arts, Paris. Of Saudi parentage, he began work in Saudi Arabia as a stage designer and a graphic designer before founding his own design company in Dammam. Between 1967 and 1992 he lived in Paris, where he worked as a fine arts and graphics consultant at the Institut du Monde Arabe. He later taught drawing and painting at the Collège of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan, and at his studio in Bahrain. In 2005 he was appointed artist-in-residence at the Citè Internationale des Arts, Paris, and was a member of the jury at the Alexandria Biennale, Egypt. Samir has exhibited in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the Middle East, the United States and Europe, among them his 1991 solo exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe; the eighth International Cairo Biennale, 2001; the Kheda Collection at the Institut du Monde Arabe, 2002; the Kunst Museum and the Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany, 2005. He has received several awards, including the invitation to participate in the United Nations 50th anniversary exhibition Dialogues of Peace, 50 Artists Worldwide, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995; and, in 1998, to take part in Liberta 98, celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, New York.

Al-Sayegh, Samir
Born Lebanon, 1941

Ali Sayegh was educated at Saint Saviour Convent, Joun, Lebanon. He studied history of art at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts, Paris and, in 1993, became a lecturer at the Graphic Arts Department, American University of Beirut, Lebanon. His interest in the traditional art of Arabic calligraphy as well as in contemporary art and design led him to the creation of new calligraphic typefaces. He has fashioned several logos and worked on the calligraphy of a number of publications. Ali-Sayegh also writes, including poetry and numerous articles and essays on art and aesthetics. He lives and works in Lebanon.

Selim, Rashad
Born Damascus, Syria, 1957

Of a German mother and a diplomat of Andalusian descent, Selim travelled extensively before moving to Iraq in 1971. He specialised in graphic art and worked for a number of cultural institutions. He worked for the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980. Later pursuing his studies in audio-visuals at St Martin’s School of Art, London, 1983. Between 1977 and 1978 he was the Iraqi crew-member on the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl’s reed boat expedition from the river Tigris to Djibouti, which developed his interest in history, indigenous cultures and traditional arts. His career is marked by a number of travels and residencies, including those in Turkey, Morocco, Yemen and Great Britain. He has taught extensively and has been an art advisor for the United Nations and a number of cultural institutions. His work includes film and photography, printmaking, sculpture, illustration, and stage design. Selim is from a renowned artistic family; notably his uncle, Joezad Selim, pioneer of modern art in Iraq. Rashad Selim lives and works in England.

Al-Shaarani, Mooner
Born Syria, 1952

Al-Shaarani graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus, Syria. He began calligraphy at an early age under the celebrated Syrian calligrapher Badawi al-Dinawi (b. 1967), himself a student of Turkish master calligrapher Hani Al-Atti. Shaarani’s work includes designs for books and typeface characters as well as publications and articles on calligraphy. He has exhibited on several occasions in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, including his display of calligraphies inspired by ancient Arabic poetry in Oxford, 2005. Al-Shaarani lives and works in Syria.

Al-Shammah, Mohammed
Born Baghdad, Iraq, 1962

Al-Shammah is a self-taught artist. He is a member of the UNESCO International Association for Plastic Arts (UNA), the Iraq Artist Association and the Iraq Plastic Arts Society. His works have been exhibited in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe – including the ninth Cairo International Biennale, 2001; the Frankfurt Book Fair, 2004 and 2005; the Biennale Internationale d’Art, Alexandria Library, Egypt, 2005. In 2004 he received an award from the Festival of Mediterranean People, Bregenz, Italy, and in 2003 the prize of Arab Pioneers from the Arab Pioneers Festival under the patronage of the Arab League. His work comprises book art, paintings and sculptures.

Shaw, Lalla
Born Gaza, Palestine, 1940

Shaw grew up at the Leonardo School of Art, Cairo, before going on to study fine arts from the Accademia di Belle Arti, Rome, 1957–64, and in plastic and decorative arts from the Accademia di S. Giacomo, Rome, 1960–4. Between 1969 and 1965 she followed additional classes under Italian professor and Expressionist artist Renato Guttuso, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and, in the summer, under Austrian Expressionist Oskar Kokoschka at the Oskar Kokoschka School of Seeing in Salzburg, Austria. Her work comprises oils on canvas, photographs and silhouettes as well as designs for stained-glass windows at the Cultural Centre in Gaza. Shaw has also worked as an illustrator of books for children.
SAMRA, Fathal
BORN KIBUTZtail, 1937

Samra graduated from the Ecole Nationale Superieure des Beaux Arts, Paris. Of Saudi Arabian origin, he began his career as a graphic designer before founding his own design company in Dammam. Between 1967 and 1992 he lived in Paris, where he worked in a fine arts and graphics consultancy at the Institut du Monde Arabe. He later taught drawing and painting at the College of Fine Arts in Amman, Jordan, and at his studio in Beirut. In 2005 he was appointed artist-in-residence at the Centre International des Arts, Paris, and was a member of the jury at the Alexandria Biennial, Egypt. Samra has exhibited in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the Middle East, the United States and Europe, among them his 1991 solo exhibition at the Institut du Monde Arabe; the eighth International Cairo Biennial, 2001; the Kindi Centre School at the Institut du Monde Arabe, 2002; the Kunsthalle and the Frankfurt Book Fair, Germany, 2005. He has received several awards, including the invitation to participate in the United Nations fifteenth anniversary exhibition Dialogues of Peace, 50 Artisti Worldfide, Geneva, Switzerland, 1995; and, in 1998, to take part in 0186, celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, New York.

AL-SAYEGH, Samir
BORN BASRA, 1948

Al-Sayegh was educated at Saint Saviour Convent, Joun, Lebanon. He studied History of art at the Ecole Nationale des Beaux Arts, Paris, and in 1993, became a lecturer at the Graphic Arts Department, American University of Beirut, Lebanon. His interest in the traditional art of Arabic calligraphy as well as in contemporary art and design led him to the creation of new calligraphic typefaces. He has fashioned several logos and worked on the calligraphy of a number of publications. Al-Sayegh also writes, including poetry and numerous articles and essays on art and aesthetics. He lives and works in Lebanon.

SEIIM, Rashad
BORN KAFR SHAMRAI, 1957

Of a German mother and a diplomat Iraqi father, Seiim travelled extensively before moving to Iraq in 1971. He specialized in graphic arts at the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1980, later pursuing his studies in audio visuals at St Martin’s School of Art, London, 1983. Between 1977 and 1978 he was the Iraqi crew member on the Norwegian Thor Heyerdahl’s reed boat expedition from the river Tigres to Djibouti, which developed his interest in history, indigenous cultures and traditional arts. His career is marked by a number of travels and residences, including those in Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen and Great Britain. He has taught extensively and has been an art advisor for the United Nations and a number of cultural institutions. His work includes film and photography, printmaking, sculpture, illustration, and stage design. Seiim is from a renowned artistic family – notably his uncle, Jarud Seiim, pioneer of modern art in Iraq, Rashad Seiim lives and works in England.

AL-SHAHRANI, Moamer
BORN VENICE, 1962

Al-Shahrani graduated from the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Damascus, Syria. He began calligraphy at an early age under the celebrated Syrian calligrapher Badawi al-Dinar (d. 1967). Himself a student of Turkish master calligrapher Isma’il al Attar, Shahrani’s work includes designs for books and typeface characters as well as publications and articles on calligraphy. He has exhibited on several occasions in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe, including his display of calligraphies inspired by ancient Arabic poetry in Oxford, 2005. Al-Shahrani lives and works in Syria.

AL-SHAMMAREY, Mohammed
BORN RAFIQABAD, IRAQ, 1962

Al-Shammarey is a self-taught artist. He is a member of the UNESCO International Association for Plastic Arts (IAAP), the Iraqi Artist Association and the Iraqi Plastic Artists Society. His works have been exhibited in the Middle East, North Africa and Europe – including the ninth Cairo International Biennial, 2003; the Frankfurt book fair, 2004 and 2005; Imagining the Book International Biennial, Alexandria Library, Egypt, 2005. In 2004 he received an award from the Festival of Mediterranean People, Biogolo, Italy; and in 2003 the prize of Arab Painters from the Arab Painters’ Festival under the patronage of the Arab League. His work comprises book art, paintings and sculptures.

SHAFA, Laila
BORN CAZA, PALESTINE, 1960

Shafa studied at the Lebanese School of Art, Cairo, before graduating in fine arts from the Academı̈a de Belle Arti, Rome, 1957-64, and in plastic and decorative arts from the Academı̈a St Giacomo, Rome, 1960-4. Between 1960 and 1963 she followed additional classes under Italian professor and Expressionist artist Renato Guttuso, at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome and, in the summer, under Austrian Expressionist Oskar Kokoschka at the Oskar Kokoschka School of Seeing in Salzburg, Austria. Her work comprises oil on canvas, photographs and silhouettes as well as designs for stained-glass windows at the Cultural Centre in Caza. Shafa has also worked as an illustrator of books for children, a lecturer and an art education advisor. She has had a number of solo exhibitions in the Middle East and Europe and participated in the touring exhibition Dialogue of the Present, the work of 78 Arab Women-Artists, United Kingdom, 1999-2000. She lives and works in London.

SFI, Walid
BORN DOCH, IRAQ, 1954

Sfi graduated from the Institute of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1976. He then travelled to Slovenia, where he obtained a BA and MA from the Academy of Fine Arts in Ljubljana, 1977-82. In 1984 he moved to London, where he has been living ever since. Sfi is a printer and a painter. He has drawn most of his subject matter from his experience of war, pain and loss. He has exhibited in Europe, the Middle East, Russia and Asia, including several solo exhibitions in the United Kingdom — among them Leighton House College of Arts and Design, USA, returning to Iran in 1964 to become head of sculpture at Tehran University until 1979. Tanavoli has been at the origin of many art initiatives. He created the Atelier Koubod, Tehran, 1960 — where many of his contemporaries subsequently exhibited – organized a touring exhibition of Iranian artists in the United States, starting in Minnesota, 1967; and, in the ’60s, was a key member of the Saqqahpalash movement with Charles Hossein Zenderoudi. He is a celebrated artist, often described as the pioneer of modern sculpture in Iran, as well as a collector, teacher, scholar and artist. He founded the Tehran Rug Society, 1973, and organized a number of exhibitions of tribal rugs from Iran. His collections of Iranian and Islamic metalwork have been exhibited and were published in 1976 and 2000 respectively. His career throughout is infused with a deep passion, knowledge and understanding of Iran’s rich visual and literary heritage as well as crafts traditions. Tanavoli lives and works in Tehran and Vancouver, Canada. His works have been exhibited regularly in Iran, Europe and the United States including a retrospective at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003, as well as at the Eliotti Lewis Gallery, Vancouver, 2006.

TANAVOLI, Parviz
BORN TEHRAN, IRAN, 1957

Tanavoli graduated from Tehran’s High School of Fine Arts in 1966. He then travelled to Italy, where he studied at the Accademia di Belle Arti, Carrara, until 1957. The following year, after an exhibition of his works at the Mahvahan Hall, Tehran, he was awarded a scholarship to pursue his studies in Italy. He went to the Accademia di Belle Arti di Bress, Milan, 1958-60, where he worked under the Italian sculptor Marino Marini. Between 1962 and 1963 he taught at the Minneapolis College of Arts and Design, USA, returning to Iran in 1964 to become head of sculpture at Tehran University until 1979. Tanavoli has been at the origin of many art initiatives. He created the Atelier Koubod, Tehran, 1960 — where many of his contemporaries subsequently exhibited – organized a touring exhibition of Iranian artists in the United States, starting in Minnesota, 1967; and, in the ’60s, was a key member of the Saqqahpalash movement with Charles Hossein Zenderoudi. He is a celebrated artist, often described as the pioneer of modern sculpture in Iran, as well as a collector, teacher, scholar and artist. He founded the Tehran Rug Society, 1973, and organized a number of exhibitions of tribal rugs from Iran. His collections of Iranian and Islamic metalwork have been exhibited and were published in 1976 and 2000 respectively. His career throughout is infused with a deep passion, knowledge and understanding of Iran’s rich visual and literary heritage as well as crafts traditions. Tanavoli lives and works in Tehran and Vancouver, Canada. His works have been exhibited regularly in Iran, Europe and the United States including a retrospective at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art, 2003, as well as at the Eliotti Lewis Gallery, Vancouver, 2006.

WAQALLA, Osman
BORN KUROK, BUZURQ, 1959

Waqalla graduated from the Gordon Memorial College, Khartoum, Sudan, 1985; the School of Design, Khartoum, 1996; and, having received a scholarship, Camberwell School of Arts and Crafts, London, 1994. He later travelled to Egypt, where he trained as a calligrapher under the master Sayyid Mohammed Ibrahim (d. 1994) at the School of Arabic Calligraphy, Cairo. He taught at the College of Fine and Applied Arts in Khartoum, 1994-95 and, in 1995 founded Studio Osmania, a meeting place for artists and intellectuals in Sudan until 1964. He received several commissions, including calligraphic designs for the first Sudanese currency, and is considered one of the first artists of the modern art movement in Sudan to have
explored calligraphy. He moved to England in 1967 and worked as a consultant calligrapher to the firm of banknote makers, De La Rue. His work has been exhibited in Africa, the Middle East, the United States and Europe, including the touring exhibition Seven Stories about Modern Art in Africa, which began at the Whitechapel Art Gallery, London, 1995. He has recently returned to Sudan.

YAHYA, Nazar
BORN BAGHDAD, IRAQ, 1961
Yahya obtained his BA in fine arts from the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, 1986. His work has been included in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, among them the touring exhibitions Stripes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which opened in London, 2000, and Dafir: Contemporary Iraqi Book Art, opened University of North Texas, USA, October–November 2005 – where the artist also gave a lecture on Iraqi ‘artist books’, as well as Baghdad-Paris, Artiens d’Iraq, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, 2005–6. He currently lives and works in Amman, Jordan.

ZENDEROUDI, Charles-Hossein
BORN TEHRAN, IRAN, 1957
Zenderoudi graduated from Tehran’s High School of Fine Arts in 1958. He became a chief exponent of the Sapatkhaneh movement, 1960s, integrating Iran’s heritage to the modern art movement. After a selection of his work was sent to and received awards at the Paris biennials of 1959 and 1961, he moved to Paris, where he has been living ever since. In 1971 he was included in the French magazine Connaissance des Arts list of the ten best living artists, alongside Frank Stella, Mark Tobey, Andy Warhol and Zao Wou-ki. Commissioned works include the monumental tapestries and paintings for Riyadh and Jeddah airports, Saudi Arabia; the cover and serigraphy accompanying the text of the Holy Qur’an, published by Lebaqd 1972 and 1980, which received the international prize of The Most Beautiful Book of the Year from UNESCO; and illustrations for the Divan of Hafez, The Dance of Life, published 1988. In 2002, Zenderoudi had a retrospective exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. More recently his paintings and photographs were shown in Europe, including the FNAIC galleries, Paris, 2005, and in the United States at the Grey Gallery, University of New York, 2003.

Bibliography

This list includes works cited in the text as well as a selection of general works and exhibition catalogues. These are relevant to the subject of contemporary Middle Eastern art as a whole or to the artists included in this book. Many more references can be found through the Internet by looking up individual artists. There are also extensive bibliographies in Wajid Al’s Modern Islamic Art, in Yafaia Nazir’s A (recherche d’une modernité arabe) and L’art de l’écriture arabe: pastel et présent and in the University of Oslo library website on contemporary Arab art: http://folk.uio.no/wnamt/ara-art.pdf.

All translations from the Qur’an are from A.J. Arberry, 1955, The Koran Interpreted. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.
Bibliography

This list includes works cited in the text as well as a selection of general works and exhibition catalogues relevant to the subject of contemporary Middle Eastern art as a whole or to the artists included in this book. Many more references can be found through the Internet by looking up individual artists. There are also extensive bibliographies in Miyala Ali’s Modern Islamic Art in Syria: Nafis Als. À l’Aube de l’expérience. The exhibition was held at the Inaugural City of Damascus, Damascus. 


All translations from the Qurʾān are from A. J. Arberry, 1955, The Koran Interpreted. George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

ZENDBERGUI, Charles-Hossein

Zenderoudi graduated from Tehran’s High School of Fine Arts in 1958. He became a chief exponent of the Shah’s own modernist movement and 1960s, integrating Iran’s heritage to the modern art movement. After a selection of his work was sent to and received awards at the Paris Biennale of 1959 and 1961, he moved to Paris to continue his education. He has been living there ever since. In 1971 he was included in the French magazine Connaissance des Arts list of the ten best living artists, alongside Frank Stella, York Tociety, Andy Warhol, and Zao Wou-Ki. Commissioned works include the monumental tapestries and paintings for Riyadh and Jeddah airports, Saudi Arabia, the cover and serigraphy accompanying the text of the Holy Qur’an, published P. Lehou in 1972 and 1980, which received the international prize of the Most Beautiful Book of the Year from UNESCO and illustrations for the Divan of Hafiz, The Diones of Life, published 1988. In 2002 Zenderoudi had a retrospective exhibition at the Tehran Museum of Contemporary Art. More recently his paintings and photographs were shown in Europe, including the FNAQ galleries, Paris, 2005, and in the United States at the Grey Gallery, University of New York, 2003. 

YOSHI, Naruhisa

Yoshi obtained his BA in fine arts from the Academy of Fine Arts, Baghdad, in 1980. His work has been included in a number of solo and group exhibitions in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, among them the touring exhibitions Strokes of Genius: Contemporary Iraqi Art, which opened in London, in 2000, and Dafjar: Contemporary Iraqi Art, opened at University of North Texas, USA, October - November 2005 — where the artist also gave a lecture on Iraqi ‘artist books’ as well as Baghdad–Paris, Artists of Iraq, Musée du Montparnasse, Paris, 2005. He currently lives and works in Amman, Jordan.
Fig. 2: Photograph courtesy of Stephen Stapleton

Fig. 3: © ARS, NY and DACS, London, 2006

Fig. 4: Photograph courtesy of Masoumeh Faraj

Fig. 5: © Photos BMNH/Joan Gilles Benet

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Fig. 7: Courtesy of the artist and Cagno Gallery, photo Rob McKeever

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Artist portraits: Youssef Abdelmassih: photo Ammar Albeik

Ghassan Almasri: © Groupe Frasace, 2001: Ghassan Almasri, Le Calligraphe Arab, p. 72

Abdallah Benmatar: photo Dzhana Benmatar

Kamel Boullata: photo Serge Benigni

Masoumeh Faraj: photo Gary Swain (Swain Photography)

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Khosrow Hossainrai: photo Eugene Duberg

Shirazeh Houshiary: photo Shereen Olksanan

Saba Al-Khemi: photo O Horacio Montevede

Rachid Koraichi: photo the October Gallery

Sahab Naim: photo Muhammad Abba

Shaim Nafea: photo courtesy of Glaedlie Galley, New York

Mohammad Rawas: photo Gilbert Hage

Michel Rosner: photo Dan Zagar, 2005

Lalla Shawa: photo H. Schenkel

Pavel Tchernov: photo Tonino Tchernov

Omar Wazir: photo Aadh El Zorr

Wilkinson: photo October Gallery

Cats 2, 3 and 8: Extracts from the Qur’an from the Koran transcribed by A.J. Arberry. Copyright © 1955 George Allen & Unwin Ltd.

Cat. 53: Extract from verse by Layla bint Lu’ay, translated by Suhail Bagdadi, from Jaldal al-Mahdi by S. Al-Azmi. Copyright © 2004 Al-Madani Foundation.


Venetia Porter is a curator at the British Museum, specializing in the collections of Islamic art and the contemporary art of the Middle East.