LAU
School of **Architecture and Design**

THE ARCHIVE:
VISUAL CULTURE IN THE MIDDLE EAST

PUBLISHING AS AN INTELLECTUAL DESIGN PLATFORM: LEBANON

SYMPOSIUM

Friday April 5, 2019

Chagoury Health Sciences Center Auditorium
The Lebanese American University
Byblos Campus

www.sard.lau.edu.lb   lau.art.design

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archive-visual-culture-mea/

While Middle Eastern art and architecture studies have proliferated as areas of scholarly investigation and discussion – perspectives on graphic design and visual communication of the Middle East remains a greatly untapped area of examination. Challenges reside and particularly extend from archives or the lack thereof. Is there a particular archival research method for writing graphic design research in the region? How can one write a history of regional printing practices with the limited archival documents? Do we start with the practices of regional presses during the 19th century or go back to the evolution of the Arabic alphabet and the illuminated Islamic manuscripts? These are a few questions that are addressed at the The Archive: Visual Culture in the Middle East symposium taking place in April 2019. The symposium aims to bring together scholars, authors, designer, researchers and thinkers to elucidate on a rich wealth of traditional forms of visual communication that are quickly expanding and changing within the graphic design landscape of the region today. Discussions touch upon the visual and aesthetic qualities of such design while more closely examining complex notions of visual culture. The outcome of this symposium would then serve to build and become its own form of archived material further contributing to opportunities for research, analysis, writing and teaching encompassing Middle Eastern graphic design and visual communication.

Jointly organized by Professor Yasmine Nachabe Taan and Professor Melissa Plourde Khoury, this symposium emerges as the Lebanese American University launches a new course "Graphic Design in the Middle East" and intends for this symposium to take place annually. It explores the current state and uses of graphic design history in order to facilitate fruitful discussions building upon current collections of information and investigate untapped research arenas. The history being told is strikingly homogeneous, overlooking the feminist and the non-Western. Such discussions hence, instill a next generation of graphic designers with a broader knowledge on design history, practices and their meanings within the region. This knowledge would hence, extend beyond and be distinct from more conventional studies on Western design canons. Traditional and contemporary graphic design works in or about the Middle East and North Africa region are addressed through a series of six lectures with an attempt to theorize, archive, and historicize them.

PROGRAM

10:30 am - 10:45 am	**Registration and coffee**
10:50 am - 11:00 am	**Welcome Note** by Prof. Randa Abdel Baki, Chair of the Department of Art and Design
11:00 am - 12:30 am	**Panel I:** moderated by Prof. Melissa Plourde Khoury

Writing Cultural History Based on Archival Material and Imaginaries
Dr. Sonja Mejcher-Atassi
Associate Professor of Modern Arabic and Comparative Literature at the American University of Beirut

A Critique of Storytelling
Prof. Raafat Majzoub
Architect, independent scholar and artist. Co-founded The Outpost.

Torn, Folded, Curled: Orphan photographs sourced from the Arab Image Foundation: Crafting an archaeology of the recent past, one photobookwork at a time
Prof. paula roush
London-based artist and founder of msdm

1:00pm - 2:00pm	**Lunch break**
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm	**Panel II:** moderated by Dr. Yasmine Nachabe Taan

Vying for Readers? The Disparate Aesthetics of Maqamat Publications
Dr. Hala Auji
Assistant Professor, Art History, American University of Beirut

Arabic Book Design, a History in Progress
Dr. Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès
Founding Director of the Khatt Foundation, Center for Arabic Typography

Content, Context, Form: Portal 9, a multidisciplinary approach to Arabic publishing
Ms. Nathalie Elmir
Award-winning editorial designer and communication creative director

4:00 pm	**Reception**