

تأثير العلاقات: التداخلات الثقافية بين أستراليا والعالم العربي



Framing Relations: Cultural Entanglements between Australia and the Arab World

Schedule

10.30 am	<i>Coffee and Tea with registration</i>
11.00 am	Welcome to Country
11.15 am	Ways of Framing Cultural Relations Suzannah Henty Sary Zananiri Bader Rizk Azza Zein
1.30 pm	<i>Lunch</i>
3.00 pm	Arab Australian Writing in the Shadow of Gaza Jumana Bayeh in conversation with Micaela Sahhar, Michael Mohamed Ahmed, and Lina Koleilat
5.00 pm	<i>Drinks</i>
6:00 pm	KEYNOTE, MARGARET PLANT LECTURE: Praxes of Displacement Chrisoula Lionis
7:30 pm	Finishes

11:00 am – 7:30 pm 8 August 2025
Lecture Theatre G1.04, Building G,
Monash University

Presented by Monash University's Fine Art department
with Monash University Museum of Art.

Monash University acknowledges the people of the Kulin Nations, on whose land its Melbourne campuses stand; pays respect to their Elders and Ancestors; and recognises this place where we are gathered today as a site of continuous cultural practice over 60,000 years.

(11.15 am)

Ways of Framing Cultural Relations

George Washington Lambert
in Palestine

Suzannah Henty

This paper examines the poetics of nation-building in George Washington Lambert's (1873–1930) landscapes of Palestine. Appointed as one of Australia's first official war artists in 1917, Lambert travelled to Palestine with war historian Charles Bean in 1918, where he joined ANZAC troops who had been redeployed from Egypt following the defeat at Gallipoli. While in Palestine, Lambert produced a series of minor studies and large history paintings that reimagined war as scenes of national genesis. Along with their companion pieces that mythologise the ANZAC defeat in Gallipoli, Lambert's paintings tell a story of tragedy and triumph, which immortalised the role of the Australian military in the establishment of the British Mandate in Palestine. Lambert's paintings also serve as a symbolic origin moment for the Australian nation, for which the war instilled a national spirit, for the British Mandate, and, ipso facto, the Zionist project of a Jewish-only nation-state. This paper argues that Lambert's paintings are best understood as transnational myth-making images that articulate, and, paradoxically, challenge systems of power upon which both Israel and Australia depend.

DR SUZANNAH HENTY is the Hugh Ramsay Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Melbourne, where she also teaches art history. In 2019, she co-convoked the Black-Palestinian Solidarity conference with Professor Gary Foley. Her work has been published in *Radical Philosophy*, *Index Journal*, *The Funambulist*, *Jerusalem Quarterly*, and *Kunstlicht*, among other places.

Shaping Perceptions?

Towards a History of Palestinian Cultural
Diplomacy and Australia

Sary Zananiri

This paper examines the various strategies by which Palestinian cultural diplomacy has attempted to shape Australian perceptions of Palestine in the twentieth century. It does so through two case studies, the first unofficial, but widespread, and the second through official political channels. Both case studies will be analysed through cultural studies approaches to cultural diplomacy that situate cultural products within a paradigm of transnational networks of production and consumption. The first looks at the Palestinian souvenir industry that targeted Australian troops during the world wars.

It considers the ways in which Palestinian souvenir producers mobilised particular visual vocabularies to entice the soldiers' consumption, and the gendered context of such collecting practices.

The second case study considers official Palestinian cultural diplomacy through the series of exhibitions held by former PLO Representative Ali Kazak from 1979 to the early 2000s. This considers the ways in which Kazak developed a series of exhibitions that engaged different Australian publics and how these strategies developed over a 25-year period. It also moves towards an understanding of changing Australian receptions of Palestinian diplomacy.

SARY ZANANIRI is an artist and cultural historian interested in the interaction between visual culture and modern transformations of identity in the Middle East. Zananiri's forthcoming monograph, *Photographing Biblical Modernity: Frank Scholten in British Mandate Palestine* (IB Tauris), looks at nationalist constructions of religion and masculinity in Palestine. He has co-edited three volumes with Karène Sanchez Summerer: *Imaging and Imagining Palestine: Photography, Modernity and the Biblical Lens* (Brill, 2021), *European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine: Between Contention and Connection* (Palgrave, 2021) and *Revisiting Palestine Illustrated* (AUP, forthcoming).

Recent exhibitions include the Qattan Foundation (2023), University of Groningen Library (2023), INALCO (June-July 2022), the Mawjoudin Queer Film Festival, Tunis (September 2022), the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art, Melbourne (December 2021-February 2022), the National Glass Museum, Wagga Wagga (July-November 2021), Rijksmuseum Oudheden, Leiden (May-October 2020) and Der Haus Der Kunst der Welt for ALMS, Berlin (June 2019).

Zananiri was a Postdoctoral Researcher on the NWO project CrossRoads: European Cultural Diplomacy and Arab Christians in Palestine 1918-1948 and NINO at Leiden University and an Honorary Fellow of the AAIA. He is a senior lecturer at Monash Art, Design and Architecture.

Blast to Blast:

Visualising the Urbicide-Ecocide Nexus
in Armed Conflict

Bader (Bud) Rizk

As we bear witness to the unfolding horrors of armed conflict like never before, recordings of these violent atrocities are directly broadcast transnationally through social media, in parallel to the manufacture of weapons that perpetrate such violence. This project traces the origins of these missiles.

This presentation is a visual investigation into the origins and destructive capacity of the missile, reconstructing its supply chain through movements on and through architectural spaces, beginning at the

site of mining and ending at the impact crater. As the weapon metamorphoses it begins as Bauxite, the raw form of aluminium. Conceived out of a controlled explosion at the site of mining, the missile's life cycle begins and ends with explosion. This presentation argues for a condition where violent resource extraction is inherently entangled in the military weapons manufacturing complex, ultimately identifying an urbicide-ecocide nexus in the material-object supply chain.

Blast to Blast, is an ongoing PhD research project that examines the entangled resource extraction industry in military weapons manufacturing. It is interested in naming and identifying the material origins of the Bunker Buster, Mk-84 missile, a weapon which has been indiscriminately employed against the Palestinian and Lebanese people in the 2024 Arab-Israeli conflict.

BADER (BUD) RIZK, is a Lebanese born Australian designer with a background in Architecture. Bader is interested in the intersection of Art, Architecture and Politics.

Making visible the historical legacy of architecture's weaponisation in armed conflicts, he examines the violent spatial choreographies that are experienced on and through architectural built forms where space enables different modes of violence. Through his exploration he highlights how urban environments, technologies and systems interact, and often amplify the destructive capabilities of military armed conflict.

Currently undertaking a PhD at Monash Architecture, Rizk employs methods of drawing, sculpture and photography, skills he is familiar with in his architectural background, as a way of experimenting with the mechanisms of visualisation. Combining principles of art and architecture he illustrates otherwise covert spatial systems of architecture as an apparatus for violence. Through his PhD research, he questions the material, spatial and technological origins of weapons used in the 2024 Arab-Israeli conflict. The research attempts to shed light on the entangled violence of resource extraction in weapons industry supply chains, identifying architecture as both the victim and system of these violent technologies where the impact crater and mine site are connected at two ends of the material supply chain, visually elucidating the ecocide-urbicide nexus in armed conflict through design and graphic communication.

Mimesis, Subversion and Inter-iconicity: Tracing Contemporary (Arab Diasporic) Practice in Australia

Azza Zein

This paper will map how contemporary artistic practices emerging from the Arab world and its diasporas engage with the tension between the visual burden of heritage and its decolonial potential. Rather than reproducing cultural narratives through mimesis

or direct representation, these practices often adopt strategies of inter-iconicity to interrogate heritage framing and diasporic representation. In doing so, they unsettle the binaries of sacred and profane, decorative and conceptual, diasporic and local. In the Australian context, the paper also reflects on how the burden of heritage in diasporic discourse reproduces or problematises culture as 'import'. The analysis does not aim to define a singular homogeneous Arab identity or diasporic aesthetics and will problematise such a definition by comparing these diasporic practices with artistic practices from adjacent non-Arab cultures operating in the Australian art scene.

AZZA ZEIN is an interdisciplinary artist and writer living in Narm/Melbourne. Her installations and writing explore the dematerialisation of the economy, the invisibility of labour and counter-geography. She is particularly interested in revaluing the decorative act, examining migrant materials through the lens of modernity's iconoclastic aesthetics and the violence of displacement. She has published in journals like *Art + Australia*, *Kohl Journal for Body and Gender Research*, and *un Extended*. She has contributed an essay to the *Care Ethics and Art* anthology (Routledge) and catalogue essays to ACCA publications.

In 2025, she is un Projects guest editor for issue 19.2. She was a member of un Projects editorial committee (2021-2024) and the Women's Art Register committee (2021-2023). As a sessional academic, she has taught studio art and theory at several universities, including the American University of Beirut, La Trobe University and the Victorian College of the Arts. She holds an MFA from VCA and a PhD in economics from Texas A&M University.

(3.00 pm)

Arab Australian Writing in the
Shadow of Gaza

*Jumana Bayeh in conversation with
Micaela Sahhar,
Michael Mohamed Ahmed, and
Lina Koleilat*

Arab Australian writing is among the most exciting, cutting edge and innovative work published in the Australian literary scene. The issues it narrates are wide and the literary genres its authors engage with are varied. While it is the case that most Arab Australian creative works concern themselves with narratives of belonging and home, migration and mobility, alienation and displacement, the current moment has also seen a surge of writing from Palestinian Australians. What is Arab Australian writing? How might this current moment of Palestinian genocide change the shape of this ever-growing field of writing? This panel, chaired by Jumana Bayeh, will explore contemporary Arab

Australian writing through a round table discussion with Dr Michael Mohammed Ahmad, Dr Micaela Sahhar and Dr Lina Koleilat. It will drill down into questions of narrative form – the novel, the memoir, the poem – and explore how this Australian variety intersects with global Arab diaspora writing.

JUMANA BAYEH is Associate Professor at Macquarie University, the President of the Australasian Association for Literature and Deputy Chair of Arab Theatre Studio. She is the author of *The Literature of the Lebanese Diaspora* (2015) and several articles on Arab diaspora fiction. She co-edited *Writing the Global Riot* (2024; with Helen Groth and Julian Murphet) and a special issue on “Arabs in Australia” in *Mashriq & Mahjar* (2017; with Sahar Amer). She is currently working on an Australia Research Council project that examines the representation of the nation-state in Arab diaspora literature from writers based in Australia, North America and the United Kingdom.

MICAELA SAHHAR is a writer, researcher and Lecturer in the School of Media and Communication at RMIT University. Her creative non-fiction essays, commentary and poetry have been published in *Cordite*, *Griffith Review*, *Meanjin*, *Overland* and the *Sydney Review of Books* among others. Her poetry was included in the anthology *Heaven Looks Like Us: Palestinian Poetry* (Haymarket Books, 2025) edited by George Abraham and Nour Hindi.

Her work draws on interdisciplinary methodologies, and engages with narrative history, settler-coloniality and narrative appropriation, and archives of the oppressed/archives of liberation. Her scholarship has appeared most recently in *Native American and Indigenous Studies Journal*, *Middle East Critique* and *Globalisation, Societies and Education*.

Micaela is a Wheeler Centre Next Chapter fellow (2021), a past grant recipient from the Neilma Sidney Literary Travel Fund (2022) and was commended for the Peter Blazey Prize (2024). *Find Me at the Jaffa Gate: an encyclopaedia of a Palestinian family* (NewSouth, 2025) is her first book.

MICHAEL MOHAMMED AHMAD is the founding director of Sweatshop Literacy Movement and the author of three award-winning novels: *The Tribe* (Giramondo, 2014), *The Lebs* (Hachette, 2018) and *The Other Half of You* (Hachette, 2021). He is also the editor of several critically acclaimed anthologies, including *After Australia* (Affirm Press, 2020). Mohammed received his Doctorate of Creative Arts from Western Sydney University in 2017.

LINA KOLEILAT is a writer and an Academic Fellow at the Australian National University. She is an ethnographer and an historian who spent many years in South Korea. Lina completed her PhD at the College of Asia and the Pacific at ANU. She was the recipient of the 2014 Prime Minister’s Australia Asia Endeavour Award. Her teaching and research interests are religion, race, culture, social movements and refugee studies.

(6.00 pm)

MARGARET PLANT LECTURE
Praxes of Displacement:
Contemporary Art as Method for
Cultural Resilience

Chrisoula Lionis

Artists are today subject to increased censorship, criminal trials and detention. Over the last few years, this has become particularly clear in contexts where artists’ work provides public critique of policies enabling displacement, genocidal violence and denied sovereignty. This is both evidence of the need for a greater protection of cultural rights (the most under-acknowledged form of cultural rights) and a better understanding of the relationship between contemporary art practice and the law.

This lecture will address the relationship between contemporary art practice and the protection of cultural rights. It will do this in two key ways. First, it will analyse the increasing presence of lawfare in contemporary art contexts, making clear the need for greater engagement with legal processes by artists and cultural workers. Secondly, it will examine the relationship between contemporary art practice, visual evidence and legal interventions in contexts of forced displacement. With attention focused on the key sites of Palestine, Greece and Australia, it will consider the capacity for art to operate both as an instrument of cultural resilience and as a legal tool for forcibly displaced populations.

CHRISOULA LIONIS is a writer, cultural producer and curator based in Athens. Working at the intersection of visual culture, cultural politics, and resilience studies, Lionis holds a PhD in Visual Culture (UNSW Australia, 2013) and is the author of books *Laughter in Occupied Palestine: Comedy and Identity in Art and Film* (I.B. Tauris, 2016, 2022), (ed) *Comedy in Crises: The Weaponisation of Humour in Contemporary Art* (Palgrave, 2023) and the forthcoming *Displacement and the Art of Intervention: Contemporary Art and Methods for Cultural Resilience* (Routledge, 2026). Lionis has published widely including in journals such as *Social Text*, *Third Text*, *Cultural Politics* and the *Cambridge Journal of Anthropology* and has curated individual and group projects in Greece, Australia and the United Kingdom.

Lionis is co-director of the pedagogical platform Artists for Artists and Curator at Dounias Athens. She has held several international teaching and research positions, including at the National Institute for Experimental Arts (UNSW Australia) in Sydney, the Department of Social Anthropology, Panteion University of Social and Political Sciences in Athens, and the University of Manchester both as Marie Curie Fellow (Horizon 2020 project ‘Laughing in an Emergency’) and AHRC Senior Research Fellow at the School of Languages Arts and Cultures working on project ‘Understanding Displacement Aesthetics’.