

MINNEAPOLIS COLLEGE of ART and DESIGN

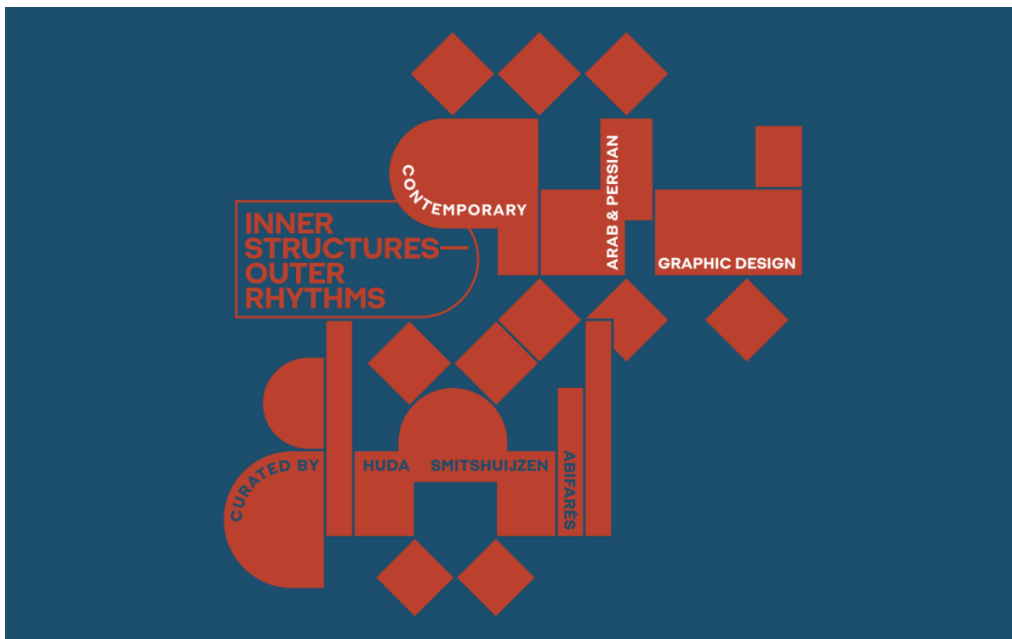
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MCAD GALLERY PRESENTS GROUNDBREAKING SURVEY OF CONTEMPORARY ARAB & PERSIAN GRAPHIC DESIGN



Design by Wael Morcos

(August 23, 2021)—The Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), in conjunction with the Khatt Foundation, presents *Inner Structures—Outer Rhythms: Contemporary Arab & Persian Graphic Design*, on view September 1–November 6, 2021. The exhibition reflects the growing interest in graphic expression from under-recognized creative regions of the world. To curate the exhibition, the college has partnered with Dr. Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès, founding director of the Khatt Foundation, Center for Arabic Typography (Amsterdam), and will also publish a book of the same title.

Central to a more inclusive global design discourse is recognizing the power of graphic design and typography to communicate social

change, local cultural concerns, and universal human and environmental challenges. “The diversity of graphic expression in Arab and Persian graphic design is linked by the creative use of the Arabic letterforms in an ever evolving and playful manner,” Dr. AbiFarès explains. “Developments in Arabic typography of the twenty-first century have been marked by fluid calligraphic designs and structured geometric compositions. Sometimes the two mix in intricate and unexpected ways, revealing complex and engaging rhythms.”

The exhibition and related publication focuses on Arab and Persian contemporary design and highlights the work of more than thirty of the best contemporary designers from the Middle East/North African (MENA) region and its diaspora. It charts certain trends that reflect the specificities of Islamic visual culture, local aesthetic trends and contemporary design applications that respond to current events and socio-political concerns. The exhibition will feature posters, videos, books, and typefaces and is divided into four broad themes: Visualizing Rhythm in Poetry and Music; Type and Lettering for Political Activism; Designing for Culture and the Arts; and Beyond Arabic Calligraphy. It will also include a viewing/reading library with dozens of informative publications on design from the MENA region.

Inner Structures–Outer Rhythms will include work by Yusef Alahmad, Mohammadreza Abdolali, Reza Abedini, Mariem Abutaleb, Azza Alameddine, Khajag Apelian, Lara Assouad, Naïma Ben Ayed, Nadine Chahine, Omaira Dajani, Rasha Dakkak, Homa Delvaray, Naji El Mir, Karim Farah, Farah Fayyad, Ayman Hassan, Hey Porter! (Tawfiq Dawi), Amir Karimian, Yara Khoury Nammour, Wael Morcos, Hussein Nasreddine, Mark Nicolas (documentary filmmaker), Hamid Mirza Qorbanpour, Kristyan Sarkis, Bahia Shehab, Studio Akakir (Walid Bouchouchi), Studio Kargah (Aria Kasaei & Peyman Pourhosein), Studio Kemistry (Hani Charaf), Studio Safar (Hatem Imam & Maya Moumne), Jana Traboulsi, and Turbo (Saeed Abu-Jaber & Mothanna Hussein).

As part of MCAD's Visiting Artist Series, Dr. Smitshuijzen AbiFarès will give a lecture about the exhibition on Wednesday, November 3, at 1:00 p.m. via Zoom.

About Dr. Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès

Dr. Smitshuijzen AbiFarès is the Founding Director of the Khatt Foundation and Khatt Books publishers. Based in Amsterdam, her

professional, cultural, and educational activities extend from the US and Europe to the Arab World. She holds degrees in design and design history from Leiden University (PhD, 2017), Yale University (MFA, 1990), and Rhode Island School of Design (BFA, 1987). She was a jury member of the Third Jameel Prize for Islamic Art and Design 2013 (Victoria & Albert Museum, London), and member of the grants selection committee for Mondrian Foundation (2011-2012) & The Netherlands Architecture and Design Fund (2013). She is a member of Alliance Typographique Internationale (AGI) and specializes in multilingual typographic research and design, with focus on Arabic typography and design history. She has published several books on typography, including *Arabic Typography: A Comprehensive Sourcebook* (2001/2021) and the forthcoming *Typographic Matchmaking in the Maghrib* and *The Catholic Press of Beirut: A Printing and Design Legacy in the Arab East*. She taught design and typography courses at design programs in the Middle East and Europe. She works as an independent design curator, researcher, writer, designer, and publisher.

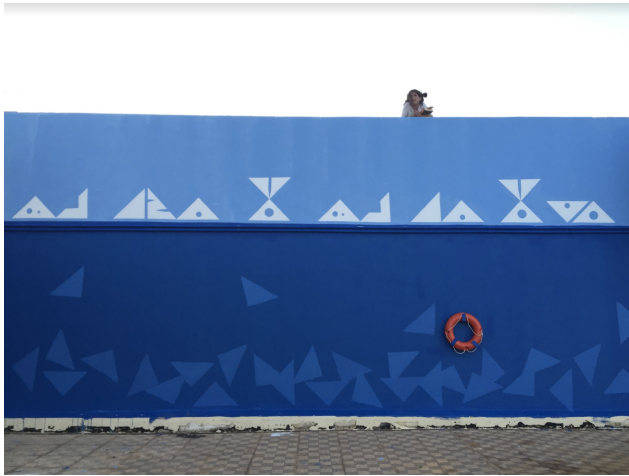
About the Khatt Foundation

The Khatt Foundation, Center for Arabic Typography is a cultural foundation and design research center dedicated to advancing design and typography in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), and their diaspora, and to building cross-cultural creative networks. Their specialized publishing house, Khatt Books, focuses on topics such as typography, graphic design, architecture, other applied and visual arts from or dealing with the MENA region. ktt.net / khattbooks.com

About MCAD

Recognized nationally and internationally for its innovative and interdisciplinary approaches to visual arts education, MCAD is home to more than 800 students and offers bachelor's degrees, master's degrees, and continuing education classes for all ages. Founded in 1886, MCAD was one of the first colleges to offer the BFA degree. The college has earned the highest accreditation possible and its four-year graduation rate is among the highest of all Midwestern visual arts colleges. College facilities contain the latest in technology with multiple studios and labs open 24/7. mcad.edu

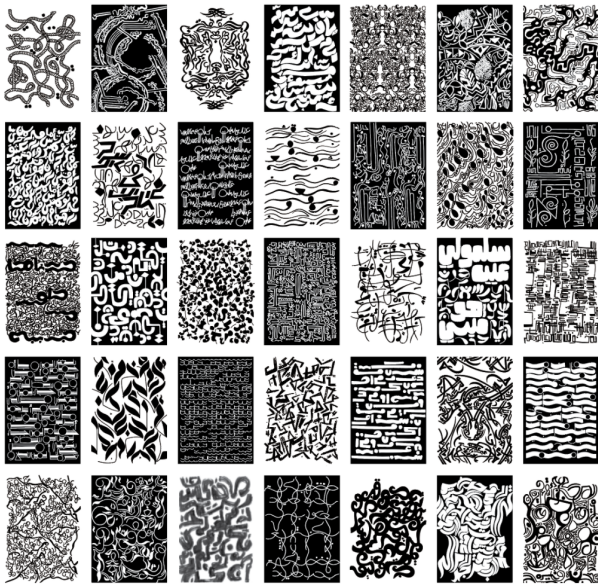
SELECTED PRESS IMAGES:



Bahia Shehab, *People Drowning at Sea*, 2016. Mural, Cephalonia, Greece.



Amir Karimian, *Shamlou Poetry*, 2016. Poster, 100 x 70 cm.



Mariem Abutaleb, *Folk Songs Archive*, visualizing folk songs through Arabic lettering project, 2019–2020. Series of 35 posters, 300 x 300 cm.



Homa Delvaray, *Poetry in Motion*, *Contemporary Iranian Cinema*, *Bagri Foundation and Barbican Centre Project*, 2019. Poster, 100 x 150 cm.



Khajag Apelian, *Some of My Favorite Things, Jazz & Ink, Salon Beirut*, 2019. Poster, 50 x 70 cm.



Mohammadreza Adbolali, *8th Tehran International Sculpture Symposium*, 2017. Poster, 120 x 80 cm.



Aria Kasaei, *Right to Left, No beginning or end. No orientation. No direction. This is the exceptional position of a circle*, 2012. Poster, 80 x 55 cm.

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