



**AGA KHAN  
PROFESSORSHIP**  
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES | BROWN

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It is organized by 2015 Aga Khan  
Visiting Professor Amal Sachedina,  
and Middle East Studies|Brown.



MIDDLE EAST STUDIES | BROWN

THE FOURTH ANNUAL  
AGA KHAN SYMPOSIUM

# Politics of Time, Material Culture, and Islamic Religiosity

Convened by

**AMAL SACHEDINA**  
2014/15 Aga Khan Visiting Professor  
in Islamic Humanities



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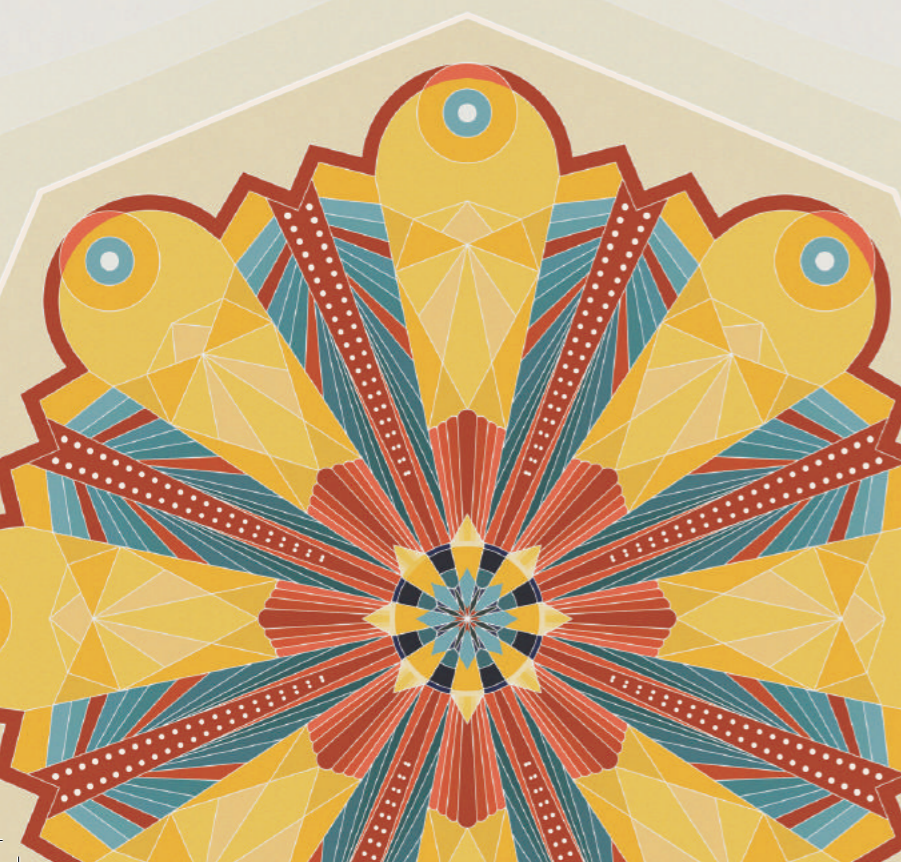
**WATSON INSTITUTE**  
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MIDDLE  
EAST  
STUDIES

FRIDAY, APRIL 24  
& SATURDAY, APRIL 25

JOUKOWSKY FORUM,  
WATSON INSTITUTE



## ABOUT:

This symposium brings together scholars who work on different regions of the historic and contemporary Middle East and Islamic world in order to explore how history-making as a modern intervention has transformed the everyday lives of people through refiguring religious and political realities on the ground. It further seeks to interrogate the processes by which material culture, time and Islam as a discursive concept and practice are co-constitutively reconfigured, their institutional possibilities and the dynamics through which such interactions generate multiple temporal experiences of history even while articulating distinctive epistemological, temporal and cultural worlds. In exploring the imagined ends and practical means of these political and social projects of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, the symposium aims to make disciplinary connections between history, religious studies, comparative literature, archaeology, anthropology, development studies, post-colonial research, heritage and material culture. This general orientation facilitates the exploration of how material objects, images and sites are enfolded into authoritative practices of historicity and time in the twentieth and twenty first centuries in ways that question the naturalist assumptions of the linearity and developmentalist trajectory of the modern nation-state.

## MATERIAL CULTURE, TIME AND IN/VISIBILITY:

This theme explores how the tactics of history making and its material products have become integral towards securing the parameters of political and religious belonging. Time and its temporal dimensions have tied together issues of governance, knowledge production, memory and authority. Over the course of the 20th and 21st centuries, across the Muslim world (historical and contemporary), the roles and contexts of monumental structures ranging from the mesquita-cathedral of Cordoba to the medieval Islamic centres of Cairo, Damascus and Sana'a, ancient pre-Islamic sites such as the Bamiyan Buddhas, pilgrimage sites such as shrines to Sufi saints, prophets or exemplary figures from early Islamic history, iconographies that instantiate the parables of Karbala, sacral relics such as the footprints of the Prophet, old shari'a manuscripts and daily artefacts have been displaced only to be redefined and re-configured as the result of shifting colonial and postcolonial conditions. How have these material remains become sites for political, epistemological and ethical struggles in the course of modern statehood and aspirations towards global legitimacy? How have institutional strategies of public visibility or concealment fashioned the space and boundaries of temporal, religious and communal belonging?

## MATERIAL CULTURE, TIME AND ISLAMIC RELIGIOSITY:

This theme engages with exploring heritage as an active process that imbricates material forms in ways that open up new configurations in context based relationships between politics and Islamic religiosity. In particular, the symposium will explore how regimes of historicity, embodied in these material forms, have been integral towards the ongoing formulation and debates on Islam, its past, material practices, concepts and institutions. Issues at stake here are how acts of construction, preservation as well as destruction of material culture intersect with the differing ways in which relationships to time are translated.

The symposium is composed of five thematic panels and one open discussion panel over two days.

# Friday, April 24

8:00 A.M. **REGISTRATION AND COFFEE SERVICE**

8:45 A.M. - 9:00 A.M. **WELCOMING REMARKS**

9:00 A.M. - 9:40 A.M. **KEYNOTE ADDRESS**

Charles Hirschkind *keynote speaker*.....

9:40 A.M. - 11:10 A.M. **HISTORICITY, MATERIAL RELIGION AND THE MAKING OF SPACE**

Sheila Bonde *panel chair*.....

Michele Lamprakos

*"The Afterlife of the Great Mosque of Cordoba"*.....

Caroline Williams

*"Cairo as an artifact of 19th century imagery"*.....

Kishwar Rizvi

*"Historicism and Post-modernity: Transnational Mosques in the Contemporary Middle East"*.....

11:10 A.M. - 11:25 A.M. **COFFEE SERVICE**

11:25 A.M. - 12:55 P.M.

**THE POLITICS OF HISTORICAL NARRATIVES AND FACTS ON THE GROUND**

Faiz Ahmed *panel chair*.....

Shahzad Bashir

*"On Chroniclers' Eyes: Frames, Gazes, and Viewpoints in Islamic Historiography"*.....

Kabir Tambar

*"Histories of Violence and the Ethics of Expectation in Turkey"*.....

Jamal Elias

*"Martyred Innocence: Children, Sacrifice and the Rationalization of War in Modern Iran"*.....

12:55 P.M. - 2:00 P.M. **LUNCH**

2:00 P.M. - 3:30 P.M. **HERITAGE AND HISTORY AS PERFORMATIVE PRACTICES**

Ian Straughn *panel chair*.....

Amal Sachedina

*"Shifting Terrain: Destroying While Preserving the Dalla (Coffee Pot) and the Ethos of Neighbourliness in the Sultanate of Oman"*

Nathalie Peutz

*"Soqatra's Musealization of the Present and Mobilization of the Past"*

Rosie Bsheer

*"Appropriating the Past: Materiality, Power, and the Politics of History in Arabia"*.....

# Friday, April 24 (Cont 'd)

3:30 P.M. - 3:45 P.M. **COFFEE SERVICE**

3:45 P.M. - 5:15 P.M. **APPROACHES TO THE TEMPORALITY OF TRADITION: RELATIONS BETWEEN PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE**

Vazira Zamindar *panel chair*.....

Karen Ruffle

*"Material Subversions: Somatic Shi'ism and the Development of a Deccani 'Grammar of Tradition' during the Qutb Shahi Dynasty"*.....

Syed Akbar Hyder

*"Escaping the Prison of Prose: Aesthetics of Mourning and the Story of Hind"*.....

Katherine Miller

*"Materializing Multiple Histories: The ethics and politics of life amid ongoing cultural heritage management in Hunza, Northern Pakistan"*.....

# Saturday, April 25

9:15 A.M. - 9:35 A.M. **COFFEE SERVICE**

9:35 A.M. - 10:45 A.M. **TIME, SPACE AND THE EMERGING MUSLIM SUBJECT**

Sarah Tobin *panel chair*.....

Katherine Pratt Ewing

*"Jahiliyya: Mapping Secular Spaces through an Islamic Notion of Time and Place"*.....

Aryo Danusiri

*"The Entanglement of Religion and the Urban in Post-Authoritarian Indonesia"*.....

10:45 A.M. - 11:45 A.M.

**OPEN FORUM/THEMED DISCUSSION**

Charles Hirschkind *discussion leader*.....

11:45 A.M. **LIGHT LUNCH**

————— **End of Program** —————