MESA 2014: Visualizing Modernity (Washington, 22–25 Nov 14)

Washington, DC, Nov 22–25, 2014
Deadline: Jan 31, 2014

Mira Xenia Schwerda

Call for Papers

Visualizing Modernity in the Nineteenth Century: Photographs and Print Culture from the Middle East, Iran, North Africa and South Asia

Session at the 48th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
Washington, DC, Nov 22-25, 2014

Co-Organizers/Chairs:
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Panel Summary:

This session invites papers that address the forms, meanings and functions of photographic and printed works produced in the Islamic realms during the nineteenth century. During this transformative era, regional urban centers, including cities like Beirut, Cairo, Tehran and Istanbul, experienced modernization reforms, a new form of global politics, and intellectual movements that called for secular education and nationalist ideals. Throughout the 1800s, these increasingly cosmopolitan centers also witnessed widespread technological changes, including the emergence of photography and the transition from scribal modes of book production to printing technologies.

The goal of this session is to present new and unpublished research that explores the complex dynamics of such endeavors as found in the photographs and printed artifacts produced in cities within the geographic boundaries of the Middle East, Iran, North Africa and South Asia. Studies may be exclusively limited to particular examples or various aspects of photography and/or printed works. Papers may also integrate a study of text and image through material objects like newspapers, travel catalogs and advertisements, to name a few. However, of particular importance are papers that demonstrate how the visual and textual dimensions of such photographic and printed works negotiated regional perceptions of modernity. This may include, but is not limited to, addressing one or more of the following:

· The ways in which notions of technological and industrial progress diverged from/intersected with those of customary visual practices.

· How technological change resulted in shifting artistic notions of images and/or the written word.

· How print and/or photography related to issues of political, national or cultural identity.

· How the visual dimensions of modernity in regional photographic and printing practices interfaced with those of external forces of westernization.

Although this session places an emphasis on papers that deal with examples of visual and material culture produced by regional members of multi-confessional and multi-ethnic communities, projects addressing any of the above stated issues from the perspective of western residents (i.e. missionaries, orientalists, European travelers, etc.) are also welcome.

Interested speakers may submit their paper abstract (no more than 400 words) and current curriculum vitae as a Word or PDF attachment to either Hala Auji (halaauji@gmail.com) or Mira Xenia Schwerda (schwerda@princeton.edu) by January 31, 2014.

Accepted presenters will be notified by February 6, 2014, and will be expected to upload their paper abstracts to myMESA by the February 15, 2014 deadline. MESA membership is required to submit an abstract to the MESA online system. The MESA program committee will decide on the acceptance of the entire panel.

For more information on the conference, see: http://www.mesa.arizona.edu/annual-meeting/index.html

Reference:

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