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**NEH AWARDS \$50,000 GRANT TO SUPPORT
GROUNDBREAKING SYMPOSIUM ON ARAB AMERICAN ART**

The Aesthetics of Solidarity symposium is a partnership between the MSU Broad Art Museum, the MSU Muslim Studies Program, and the Association for Modern + Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran + Turkey (AMCA).

East Lansing, MI – The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum) is thrilled to announce that the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) has awarded a Collaborative Research Grant in the amount of \$50,000 to support the upcoming symposium *Aesthetics of Solidarity by Arab American and Arab/SWANA Diaspora Artists in the US, 1948–Present*, taking place April 9–12, 2025, at the MSU Broad Art Museum and MSU Libraries.

Aesthetics of Solidarity interrogates the way that Arab American and Arab diaspora artists in the United States use their artistic practice to show solidarity with those facing socio-political injustices in the US and around the world. The program includes a welcome reception; two days of panel discussions with 22 speakers; a keynote lecture by renowned filmmaker and artist Mariam Ghani; the exhibition *Nabil Kanso: Echoes of War*, on view February 15–June 29, 2025, at the MSU Broad Art Museum, which is the artist’s first American museum survey; the exhibition *Entangled Solidarities*, on view February 7–May 30, 2025, at the MSU Libraries; and

a field trip to the Arab American National Museum in Dearborn, Michigan. The *Aesthetics of Solidarity* symposium is also the 2025 Association for Modern + Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran + Turkey (AMCA) conference and the 18th Annual Muslim Studies Program Faculty Symposium.

“As the home to one of the largest Arab American communities in the United States, Michigan is a powerful location for this important art historical convening,” said Steven L. Bridges, Interim Director of the MSU Broad Art Museum. “The museum is proud to be a partner in this event, which furthers our mission to emphasize the valuable role that art and visual culture play in support of teaching and research at MSU and beyond.”

The NEH grant is a firm endorsement of the MSU Broad Art Museum’s commitment to advancing scholarship and dialogue with underrepresented voices in the arts and the museum’s collaborative approach to research and programming. The funding will enable a diverse group of artists, art historians, scholars, and audiences from around the world to engage with the vital and dynamic expressions of solidarity in Arab American and Arab diaspora art as a conduit for fighting global injustices past and present.

While scholars in Latin American studies have led the way in theorizing transnational solidarities, the interdisciplinary field of Arab American studies is still working to expand the literature on this topic—particularly in Arab American art history.

“Beyond crafting new art historical narratives, this conference also emphasizes that Arab American and Arab diaspora experiences and voices matter,” noted Dr. Rachel Winter, Assistant Curator at the MSU Broad Art Museum. “I am humbled and privileged to be a part of a rich network of collaborators who are committed to sharing these stories through this groundbreaking event, which will help write a new chapter of American and Arab American art histories.”

The symposium was conceived by Winter in collaboration with Professor Salah Hassan, Director of Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities at MSU. Organized by Winter, Hassan, Professor Soma Chaudhuri (MSU Center for Gender in a Global Context), Professor Mohammad Khalil (MSU Muslim Studies Program), Tad Boehmer (MSU Libraries), and AMCA collaborators Professor Nada Shabout (University of North Texas), Professor Sarah Rogers (Middlebury College), and Professor Jessica Gerschultz (University of St. Andrews), the symposium promises to offer an important contribution to the field of Arab American art history.

Hassan commented, “This conference represents a crucial opportunity to explore and celebrate the rich history and contributions of Arab American artists, a history which is integral to the state of Michigan. We are excited to facilitate discussions on our campus that bring into focus how emerging young art historians, artists, and scholars are engaging with the work of Arab artists.”

The *Aesthetics of Solidarity* symposium is free and open to all. For those unable to attend in person, the panels will be livestreamed on Zoom. Registration for the symposium is now available at broadmuseum.msu.edu/events.

Aesthetics of Solidarity by Arab American and Arab/SWANA Diaspora Artists in the US, 1948–Present is a partnership between the MSU Broad Art Museum, the MSU Muslim Studies Program, and the Association for Modern + Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran + Turkey (AMCA), in collaboration with MSU Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities, MSU Center for Gender in a Global Context, The Nabil Kanso Estate, and the Arab American National Museum.

Aesthetics of Solidarity has been made possible in part by a major grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities: Democracy Demands Wisdom. Additional support for this convening is provided by the MSU Creating Inclusive Excellence Grant, MSU Humanities & Arts Research Program (HARP), the MSU Dr. Delia Koo Faculty Endowment, MSU Diversity Research Network Launch Awards Program, MSU Muslim Studies Program, MSU Asian Studies Center, University of Michigan Digital Islamic Studies Curriculum (DISC), MSU College of Arts & Letters Ad-Hoc Funding Request, MSU Libraries, and MSU Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities.



Aesthetics of Solidarity

The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum) connects people with art through experiences that inspire curiosity and inquiry. Presenting exhibitions and programs that engage diverse communities around issues of local relevance and global significance, the MSU Broad Art Museum advances the university values of quality, inclusion, and connectivity. Opened on November 10, 2012, the museum was designed by Pritzker Prize-winning architect Zaha Hadid and named in honor of Eli and Edythe Broad, longtime supporters of the university who provided the lead gift for its creation.

Michigan State University has been working to advance the common good in uncommon ways for more than 150 years. One of the top research universities in the world, MSU focuses its vast resources on creating solutions to some of the world's most pressing challenges, while providing life-changing opportunities to a diverse and inclusive academic community through more than 200 programs of study in 17 degree-granting colleges.

About the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH):

Created in 1965 as an independent federal agency, the National Endowment for the Humanities supports research and learning in history, literature, philosophy, and other areas of the humanities by funding selected, peer-reviewed proposals from around the nation. Additional information about the National Endowment for the Humanities and its grant programs is available at: neh.gov.



Any views, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this program do not necessarily represent those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Image: Nabil Kanso, *Birds of Prey* from the series *Kuwait*, 1991. Courtesy The Nabil Kanso Estate

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MSU Broad Art Museum representatives are available for interview.

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