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### MSU BROAD ART MUSEUM TO EXHIBIT FIRST AMERICAN SURVEY OF ARTIST NABIL KANSO

*Nabil Kanso: Echoes of War follows the artist's endeavor to create awareness about historical events and show solidarity with those suffering globally.*

**East Lansing, MI** – The Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (MSU Broad Art Museum) is pleased to share that the first American survey of artist Nabil Kanso will open at the MSU Broad Art Museum on February 15, 2025. *Nabil Kanso: Echoes of War* follows the artist Nabil Kanso's endeavor to create awareness about historical events and show solidarity with those suffering globally.

Born in Lebanon in 1940, Kanso left Beirut to study in London before moving to New York to pursue a career as an artist in 1966. While Kanso frequently traveled back to his family home in Beirut, the onset of the Lebanese Civil War in 1975 sparked a series of events that prompted him to permanently resettle outside Lebanon. After moving from New York to North Carolina, South Carolina, and Louisiana, he eventually settled in Atlanta, Georgia. There, he found a new

studio space that allowed him to work on a larger scale. He painted prolifically and read broadly about history, literature, and politics until his untimely passing in 2019.

“It has been immensely rewarding and thought-provoking to learn about Kalso’s work in preparation for this exhibition,” said Dr. Rachel Winter, Assistant Curator at the MSU Broad Art Museum and curator of *Echoes of War*. “Kalso often painted about current events globally, and the themes in his work very much resonate with our current moment. Kalso has long been overlooked by art historians and curators, much like many artists of his generation, and I am very grateful to Kalso’s children Danny Kalso and Lilly Kalso for sharing their father’s work with me and partnering with me on this project.”

The artist’s monumental, mural-like paintings consider the experience of war across key historical moments. Throughout his practice, Kalso’s work addressed topics spanning the history of the United States, the Holocaust, the Vietnam War, the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, apartheid in South Africa, and mass incarceration in the US. This exhibition focuses on Kalso’s works related to historical events in the region referred to as the Middle East, including the Lebanese Civil War (1975–90), the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait (1990), the Iraq War (2003), and the Syrian Refugee Crisis (2011–present). Collectively, Kalso’s paintings illustrate that these experiences of conflict are often shared across history, much like the factors that spark conflict reoccur over time. By learning about these important moments, Kalso provides us as viewers the opportunity to think about how to imagine a future free of conflict.

“Here at the MSU Broad Art Museum we feel it is important, necessary even, to not turn away from the difficult realities and circumstances that people face the world over, past and presently. The work of Nabil Kalso reminds us of the significance of bearing witness to the traumas of others,” offered Steven L. Bridges, Interim Director of the MSU Broad Art Museum. “In the end, Kalso’s work is a call for the recognition of our shared humanity and our shared responsibility to one another—a message we need today more than ever.”

For those interested in learning more about solidarity and Arab American art histories, the international art history symposium *Aesthetics of Solidarity by Arab American and Arab/SWANA Diaspora Artists in the US, 1948–Present* offers presentations by artists, art historians, and scholars from around the world. The symposium, which was inspired by the *Echoes of War* exhibition, will take place at MSU from April 9–12, 2025. Those interested in attending *Aesthetics of Solidarity* either in person or virtually can register at [broadmuseum.msu.edu/events](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu/events).

The MSU Broad Art Museum is open Wednesday–Saturday from 10am–6pm. Admission is always free. Learn more at [broadmuseum.msu.edu](http://broadmuseum.msu.edu).

***Nabil Kalso: Echoes of War*** (Feb. 15–Jun. 29, 2025) is organized by the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University and curated by Dr. Rachel Winter, Assistant Curator, with support from Laine Lord, former Curatorial Research Assistant. Support for this exhibition is provided by the MSU Federal Credit Union with additional support from the Salwa Mikdadi Research Award provided by the Association for Modern + Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran + Turkey (AMCA). This exhibition was developed in partnership with Professor Salah Hassan, MSU Global Studies in the Arts and Humanities, and The Nabil Kalso Estate. This partnership was the catalyst for the international art history symposium *Aesthetics of Solidarity* that will take place at MSU from April 9–12, 2025.



***Aesthetics of Solidarity by Arab American and Arab/SWANA Diaspora Artists in the US, 1948–Present*** is the 2025 Association for Modern + Contemporary Art of the Arab World, Iran + Turkey (AMCA) conference and the 18th Annual Muslim Studies Program Faculty Symposium. The symposium was inspired by themes in the *exhibition Nabil Kanso: Echoes of War*, on view at the MSU Broad Art Museum from Feb. 15–Jun. 29, 2025. The exhibition *Entangled Solidarities*, on view at the MSU Libraries from Feb. 7–May 30, 2025, also explores similar themes.

This symposium is a partnership between the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Museum at Michigan State University (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](http://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, *Scorching Sparks* from the series *Lebanon*, 1983. Courtesy The Nabil Kanso Estate

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MSU Broad Art Museum representatives are available for interview.

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