

International Conference of the
Arab-German Young Academy of
Sciences and Humanities (AGYA)

DESTRUCTION/ (RE-)CONSTRUCTION

Interdisciplinary Perspectives on
Cultural Heritage in Conflict

Beirut, 30 September – 2 October 2019

Organized by Julia HAUSER, Konstantin KLEIN,

Lena-Maria MÖLLER, and Mohammad ALWAHAIB



Destruction/(Re-)Construction

Ruins have often captured human imagination and, in one way or another, they have been inscribed into a community's records, memory, or lore. The history of destruction is as old as humanity. The past decades, however, have witnessed a considerable shift in the meaning attached to the deliberate destruction of buildings/monuments and the symbolic character of ruins. What has changed is the way in which acts of destruction are promulgated, celebrated, and perpetuated by being carefully staged and filmed as well as by distributing these records on video-sharing websites. Similarly, the reactions that destruction causes among the viewers of these records gained more and more importance. While ancient temples or statues feel no anguish or pain when they are blown up, it is societies that are distressed by their fate. During the past decades, there has

been an ever-growing number of publications, commentaries, and conferences on the destruction of cultural heritage. At the same time, artists and writers have also turned to the question of destruction, be it under circumstances of war and conflict as outlined above, or in the context of neo-liberal urbanization and gentrification, proposing ways of challenging these developments through their artworks, installations, and writings or by initiating grass-roots projects in an attempt to preserve buildings and create awareness for their value among urban authorities. An international and interdisciplinary conference organized by the Arab-German Young Academy of Sciences and Humanities (AGYA) aims at discussing the cycle of the creation and decay of architectural heritage from a transcultural and diachronic perspective.

In cooperation with



Center for Arts and Humanities



Keynote Lecture | Destruction and Us: Why a Burning Notre-Dame Affects our Emotions



Alexander FISCHER studied Philosophy, Literature, Communication Science, Literature & Film, and History in Bamberg/Germany and Waterloo/Canada. His PhD thesis was on the phenomenon of manipulation, and his book *Manipulation: On the Theory and Ethics of a Form of Influence* (Suhrkamp, Berlin 2017) was widely acknowledged in the media and the academic community. Fischer has been a Visiting Scholar at Duke University/USA and the University of Cambridge/UK. At the beginning of this year he was a visiting Assistant Professor at Bond University/Australia

and has been appointed as a Visiting Professor for Fall 2020 at the University of Notre Dame/USA. He is currently an Assistant Professor in Practical Philosophy at the University of Basel/Switzerland where he continues to analyze how we influence each other, especially when this happens in an unconscious way. Besides his academic work, Fischer trained and works as a psychotherapist. His current research focusses on emotion theory, for which he is mainly interested in the interplay of our rationality with our emotions, but also in the question of how we can conceptualize emotions on the whole. Fischer's work playfully connects philosophical theory with psychological research – building a bridge between these two disciplines.

Beit Beirut, Independence Road | 30 September 2019

- 7:00 pm Doors open – Light Refreshments
- 7:40 pm Welcome Address | Claus-Peter HAASE (Hon. Professor, FU Berlin/Germany)
- 7:45 pm Introduction of the Speaker | Konstantin KLEIN (University of Bamberg/Germany)
- 8:00 pm Keynote Lecture: Alexander FISCHER (University of Basel/Switzerland) | Destruction and Us: How a Burning Notre-Dame Affects Our Emotions

Panel Discussion | Cultural Heritage in Conflict: Perspectives from Art and Literature

Orient-Institut Beirut, Rue Hussein Beyhoum 44 | 1 October 2019

7:00 pm | Doors open at OIB ■ **7:15 pm** | Birgit SCHÄBLER (Director, Orient-Institut Beirut/Lebanon) | Welcome Address ■ **7:30 pm** | Panel Discussion

Moderated by Julia HAUSER (Kassel/Germany)



Hoda BARAKAT is a Lebanese novelist. Barakat lived much of her life in Beirut and later moved to Paris, where she now resides. A theme central to her works is trauma and war. Three of her novels are narrated by men living in the margins of society in the Lebanese civil war. In her novel *Harit al-Miyah* (1998), Niqua, the protagonist, returns to his deserted shop in the ruins of downtown Beirut, making his home, and re-living his memories, amid destruction. Barakat has received numerous grants and prizes. In 2010/11 she was a fellow at the Nantes Institute for Advanced Studies. In 2013, she was a scholar in residence at the University of Austin, Texas. In 2015, she was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize. This year, Barakat received the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) for her novel *Barid al-Lail* (2018) which tells the story of people in exile through their letters.



Abed AL KADIRI double majored in Arabic Literature and Fine Arts at the Lebanese University. Since 2006, Al Kadiri has had a number of solo shows and participated in several group exhibitions regionally and internationally including Abu Dhabi, Qatar, Bahrain, Istanbul, Hungary, Paris, Cambridge, and Basel. He is the cofounder of Dongola, a publishing house for limited edition books produced by artists. He was recently awarded the Sursock Museum Prize at the 32nd Salon d'Automne (2016). Many of Al Kadiri's works revolve around the decay or destruction of cultural heritage. In his multimedia installation *The Story of the Rubber Tree*, shown at Musée Sursock in 2018, he traces the transformation of his ancestors' Beirut home, now in ruins, re-conquered, and, in a way reanimated, by nature. His series *Al-maqāma al-mosuliya* is concerned with the destruction of cultural heritage at the hands of ISIS in Iraq.



Ali CHERRI is a video and visual artist based in Beirut and Paris. He has had solo shows at Jeu de Paume, Paris (2017); Tretyakov Gallery, Moscow (2017); Galerie Imane Farès (2017) and Sursock Museum, Beirut (2016). His work has been exhibited in renowned international museums, such as the Centre Pompidou (2017), the Guggenheim, New York (2016), Sharjah Art Space (2016) and Gwangju Museum of Art, South Korea (2014). He is the recipient of Harvard University's Robert E. Fulton Fellowship (2016) and Rockefeller Foundation Award (2017). In several of his videos and installations including *Graftings* (2019), *Petrified* (2016), and *Fragments* (2016), Ali Cherri engages with the looting of cultural objects in conflict, their illegal circulation and commercialization in the art market.



Alfred TARAZI graduated with a degree in graphic design from the American University of Beirut. His work has been shown internationally and collected by prestigious institutions and private collections. His work revolves around complex historical investigations into the ultimate event horizon of the Lebanese Civil War. Tarazi deploys his visual strategies in order to dig out fields of memory, emplaced haphazardly in a vast expanse of the present tense. Tackling the Lebanese obsession with history, Tarazi playfully interrogates its questionable sources and selective archival practices, highlighting the role of the past as both origin and destination. This archaeology of the present does not aim to restore, but rather, to represent a historical condition through fragments of anomaly and singularity. Alfred Tarazi's works include the multimedia installations *The Lovers* (2019), *Dear Madness* (2017), and *Monuments to Dust* (2015).

Monday, 30 September 2019

AUB, College Hall B1

8:30 am Registration and Welcome Coffee
9:20 am Bilal ORFALI (AUB, Beirut/Lebanon) | Welcome Address
9:30 am Konstantin KLEIN (University of Bamberg/Germany) | Introduction – Scales of Loss: Why Some Buildings (Seem To) Matter More Than Others

10:00 am Historical Perspectives and Approaches – Chair: Luigi PRADA (University of Oxford/UK)
10:00 am Vivian IBRAHIM (University of Mississippi, Oxford/USA) | UNESCO’s “Common Trust”: Saving Abu Simbel from Destruction
10:30 am Sebastian WILLERT (TU Berlin/Germany) | Safeguarding “National Antiquities”: Ottoman Attempts to Preserve Cultural Heritage in Syria during the First World War

11:00 am Coffee & Tea
11:30 am Aubrey YOUNG (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore/USA) | Desired Pasts and *Spolia*. Late Antique Architectural Appropriation in Reconstruction
12 noon Rebecca MÜLLER (University of Munich/Germany) | Destruction and Gesture Politics in the 13th Century Mediterranean. Visualizing Conflict in the Italian Maritime Republics
12:30 pm Reem ALFURJANI (Scene for Cultural Heritage, Tripoli/Libya) | Community Uses of Ruins: The ‘De-Monumenting’ and ‘Re-Monumenting’ of a Colonial Symbol in the Medina of Tripoli/Libya

1:00 pm Lunch

AUB, College Hall B1

2:30 pm Preserving and Rebuilding Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflicts: Case Studies from Syria I – Chair: Zeido ZEIDO (BTU Cottbus/Germany)
2:30 pm Yehya SERAG/Carsten VELLGUTH (Ain Shams University, Cairo /Egypt) | Ascertaining Damage on Sites of Historical Significance in Syria
3:00 pm Zoya MASOUD (TU Berlin/Germany) | A Snapshot of Aleppo’s Memorycide. Bearing to Witness the Old City Destruction. Between Misfortune and Organised Crime

3:30 pm Coffee & Tea
4:00 pm Preserving and Rebuilding Cultural Heritage in Armed Conflicts: Case Studies from Syria II – Chair: Zeido ZEIDO (BTU Cottbus/Germany)
4:00 pm Thomas RICHARD (University of Clermont-Auvergne/France) | Filming Ruins in Syria and Iraq. Aesthetics and Meaning
4:30 pm Ayham DALAL (TU Berlin/Germany) | Reflections on Practices of Mapping Spatial Memory and Urban Heritage among Displaced Syrians
5:00 pm Nura IBOLD (BTU Cottbus/Germany) | The Syrian Post-Conflict Narrative. Cultural Heritage between Destruction and Reconstruction
6:30 pm Transfer Hotel to Beit Beirut

AUB, Auditorium C

2:30 pm Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Debates in South Asia I – Chair: Julia HAUSER (University of Kassel/Germany)
2:30 pm Avishek RAY (National Institute of Technology Silchar/India) | Invention of Tradition and India’s ‘First Residential University’
3:00 pm Swathi GORLE (Rutgers University, New Brunswick/USA) | Catalyst to Conflict: The Role of World Heritage in the Sri Lankan Civil War

3:30 pm Coffee & Tea
4:00 pm Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Debates in South Asia II – Chair: Julia HAUSER (University of Kassel/Germany)
4:00 pm Radhika GUPTA (Leiden University/The Netherlands) | The Aura of Ruins: Heritage and Place-Making in Kargil
4:30 pm Anubhav PRADHAN (Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi/India)/ Nooreen FATIMA (Independent Scholar, Delhi/India) | Of Saints and Sultans: Mysticism, Monumentality, and Appropriation of Heritage in Sultan Garhi
5:00 pm Sarover ZAIDI (Jindal School of Art and Architecture, Delhi/India) | Of Flyovers and Muslim Mohallas: Mapping the Political Horizons of Bombay
6:30 pm Transfer Hotel to Beit Beirut

Beit Beirut, Independence Road, Sodeco (see front page)

7:00 pm Keynote Lecture | Destruction and Us: How a Burning Notre-Dame Affects our Emotions
Alexander FISCHER (University of Basel/Switzerland)

Tuesday, 1 October 2019

Hotel Le Commodore – Conference Room

9:00 am Destruction in Public History – Chair: Emilio BONFIGLIO (Boğaziçi University, Istanbul/Turkey)
9:00 am Sujatha CHANDRASEKARAN (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin/Germany) | Before and After World War Two: Agendas of Construction, Destruction and Reconstruction on Berlin’s Museum Island
9:30 am Meral AKBAŞ/Özge KELEKÇİ (Middle East Technical University, Ankara/Turkey) | From Factory to Museum: “They Have Stolen Our Stories”
10:00 am Zena KAMASH (Royal Holloway, London/UK) | Embracing Creativity: Crafting Heritage and Mental Wellbeing in the Post-Conflict Middle East
10:30 am Anush HOVHANNISYAN (Armenian National Academy of Sciences, Yerevan/Armenia) | The Ruins of Moush as Transporters of History and Memory
11:00 am Coffee & Tea

Hotel Le Commodore – Conference Room

11:30 am Living with Ruins I – Chair: Enass KHANSA (American University of Beirut/Lebanon)
11:30 am Jason BERGGREN (Georgia Southwestern State University, Americus/USA) | Beyond the Confederacy: Reimaging and Reconstructing the Cultural Landscape of the American South
12 noon Philipp GRIMBERG (University of Erlangen/Germany) | Cultural Heritage as a Political Bargaining Chip: The Case of the Yuanmingyuan in Beijing
12:30 pm Abigail STONER (Independent Scholar, Berlin/Germany) | Reconstructing the Architectural Heritage of the Bdul

1:00 pm Lunch
2:30 pm Living with Ruins II – Chair: Enass KHANSA (American University of Beirut/Lebanon)
2:30 pm Souad SLIM (University of Balamand/Lebanon) | Restoration vs. Preservation of a Ruin, or: Two Ways of Dealing with the Destruction of Cultural Heritage
3:00 pm Paola ARDIZZOLA/Roula EL KHOURY (Lebanese American University/Lebanon) | From the Port City of Beirut to Beirut Central District: Narratives of Destruction and Re-Constructions
4:30 pm Walking Tour: Modernist Architecture in al-Hamra (for Conference Participants)

Orient-Institut, Rue Hussein Beyhum, Zokak el-Blat (see front page)

7:00 pm Panel Discussion, Orient-Insitut | Cultural Heritage in Conflict: Perspectives from Art and Literature

Wednesday, 2 October 2019

AUB, College Hall B1

9:00 am Ruins: Good to Think with – Chair: Stefan MANEVAL (University of Halle/Germany)
9:00 am Luise FISCHER (Fraunhofer-Zentrum, Leipzig/Germany) | Geography Lessons in the 18th Century: State-Building and National Identities
9:30 am Lina TAHAN (University of Cambridge/UK) | The Ruins are in Ruins: The Constant Destruction of Heritage and its Implications on Society
10:00 am Lisa MARCHI (University of Trento/Italy) | A “Poetics of Ruins”: Nadine Ltaif’s *Ce que vous ne lirez pas*
10:30 am Tarek TAWFIK (Cairo University/Egypt) | Being Selective with Heritage Maintenance and Reconstruction
11:00 am Coffee & Tea
11:30 am Ruins in the Collective Mindscape – Chair: Konstantin KLEIN (University of Bamberg, Germany)
11:30 am Andreas GRÜNER (University of Erlangen/Germany) | To Be Honest – What Do We Lose? Remarks on the Value of Ruined Ruins
12 noon Heba ABD EL-GAWAD (Durham University/UK) | Missing Millions. Amplifying the Voice, Visibility, and Validity of Middle Eastern Local Communities in Heritage Destruction/Reconstruction Discourse
12:30 pm Jan VÖLKEL (University of Freiburg/Germany) | Failing States, Fainting Researchers: How the Escalating Destruction of Humanity also Tightens its Grip over Middle East Related Scholarship

1:00 pm Lunch

AUB, College Hall B1

2:30 pm Rebuilding Heritage: Insights from the Balkans – Chair: Ana Marija GRBANOVIC (University of Bamberg/Germany)
2:30 pm Helen WALASEK (University of Exeter/UK) | Restoration as Witness. Cultural Heritage after Ethnic Cleansing in Post-Conflict Bosnia-Herzegovina
3:00 pm Yuri STOYANOV (SOAS, London/UK) | Between Destruction and Disneyfication: Modern Threats to Alevi and Bektāşi Sacral Heritage in the Balkans
3:30 pm Gruia BADESCU (University of Konstanz/Germany) | Between Radical and Reflective Reconstruction: Ruins, Rebuilding, and Dealing with the Past in Post-Yugoslav Cities

AUB, Room 310

2:30 pm Zenobia Reconstructed: Palmyra in the Digital Age – Chair: Ralf BEHRWALD (University of Bayreuth/Germany)
2:30 pm Claus-Peter HAASE (Hon. Professor, FU Berlin/Germany) | “How Much is the Rebuilding of the Bel Temple?” and Other Reactions to Destruction Images of Palmyra
3:00 pm Jennifer BAIRD (Birkbeck College, London/UK)/Zena KAMASH (Royal Holloway, London/UK)/Valeria VITALE (Institute of Classical Studies, London/UK) | Against the Archival Grain: Digital Tools for Re-Appropriation of Diasporic Archaeological Archives
3:30 pm Rory McINNES-GIBBONS (Durham University/UK) | The Lego Arch. Plural “Palmyra”. An Ancient City in the Postmodern Age
4:00 pm Konstantin KLEIN (University of Bamberg/Germany) | AGYA Project Presentation: Towards a Digital Corpus of Palmyrene Aramaic Inscriptions
4:20 pm Coffee & Tea

AUB, College Hall B

5:00 pm Concluding Remarks | The Past as Performance or The (Re-)Enchantment of the Built Landscape
Alexandra VUKOVICH (University of Oxford/UK)