

14th SeSaMO Conference

PATHS OF RESISTANCE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

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SOCIETÀ PER GLI STUDI SUL MEDIO ORIENTE

TITLE: Resisting through art: aesthetic forms of defiance in the Middle East and North Africa

CONVENORS: - Francesca Romana Russo
- Carlotta Mingardi

ABSTRACT:

The so-called Arab Uprisings have witnessed an explosion of artistic forms of defiance during the demonstrations that have agitated the Middle East and North Africa in 2011. Their spectacular visibility has generated studies and investigations on the various artistic forms of disobedience displayed in many various countries in the region. However, the powerful impact that art may have in shaping power relations goes beyond times of revolution. Indeed, the relevance of artistic forms of protest preceding the Arab Uprisings have often been overshadowed by the presence of authoritarian systems of power. Also, the contribution of art to the perpetuation of resistance in post-revolutionary in the region times remains understudied.

This panel focuses on aesthetic practices of resistance in the Middle East and North Africa. On a theoretical level, it seeks to address the relation between artistic productions, power and resistance and to explore how art may represent a form of defiance and an effective tool to challenge systems of power. On an empirical level, papers should focus on selected case studies from the Middle East and North Africa and think about how these cases may contribute to conceptualize the ways in which art can intervene in and have an impact on relations of dominance and subordination, inclusion and exclusion.

We welcome papers that take into consideration various forms of artistic productions (dance, music, visual art poetry, theatre, street art) and investigate how these have intervened in the relations between power and resistance in the Middle East and North Africa.

CONVENORS' ACADEMIC PROFILE:

Francesca Romana Russo is a graduate from the School of Oriental and African Studies with an MSc in Middle East Politics. Currently based in Tunis, her main research interests are relations between art, power and resistance, sectarianism and neoliberalism in Lebanon and the evolution of Islamist movements.

Carlotta Mingardi is a graduate from the School of Oriental and African Studies with an MSC in Middle East Politics and a MA in International Relations from Ca' Foscari University. Her research interests cover artistic resistance in women's movements of the MENA region and gender-based violence in migration contexts.