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DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Robert Crews

Associate Professor, Department of History

I am honored to be the new Director of the Abbasi Program. The role has afforded me an opportunity to survey the multifaceted activities of the program and to gain a deeper appreciation of the exciting and remarkably varied work Stanford faculty and students are doing in connection with Islam and Muslim cultures and societies. Their expertise ranges across the disciplines and around the globe, stretching from the rise of Islam to the popular protests reshaping the landscape of the Middle East today.



I thank my predecessor, Shahzad Bashir, Lysbeth Warren Anderson Professor in Islamic Studies, for his extraordinary leadership of the program. Among his many contributions, Professor Bashir was responsible for a memorable highlight of the year: a stunning exhibition of contemporary Islamic art at the Cantor Arts Center (please see p. 2 in this issue of our newsletter). The event featured some of the most innovative artists of our day, presenting students with hands-on experience integrating analysis of this artwork with their coursework on Islam. The exhibition also attracted an enthusiastic public, including several groups of middle- and high-school students for whom this was their first exposure to Islamic art.

Reflecting the global lens of the program, many of our events in the 2013-2014 academic year have explored the ongoing political crises in the Middle East and the Sahel region of Africa. We have also welcomed our first Postdoctoral Fellow in Literary Cultures of Muslim South Asia, who will expand our teaching and scholarship in new directions (p. 4). In Winter quarter, the award-winning novelist Mohsin Hamid will join us for a conversation about his work, and in Spring we will host the renowned Qawwali musician Asif Ali Khan. In April, our attention shifts to Africa again for a conference featuring leading scholars from around the world to examine the Islamic public sphere in Africa (p. 8).

I invite you to learn more about our academic and community outreach events (pp. 2-3) and the scholarly work of our affiliates (p. 5). It is a special pleasure to highlight the activities of our students whose research and language work took them around the globe with the support of the program (pp. 6-7). In reviewing their field reports, I am reminded of the richness and complexity of the topics they study - and of the important contributions this program makes to the production and dissemination of knowledge about Islam and Muslim societies.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming events and welcome your feedback. Please spread word about our events, join the mailing list, and follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Vimeo. Many thanks for your support of Islamic Studies at Stanford.

BRINGING THE CLASSROOM TO A WORLD OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC ART

by Mark Rapacz

A luxurious shawl hung in front of 40 San Jose high school students at Stanford's Cantor Arts Center. At first glance, it was strikingly ornate with what looks to be gold beadwork intricately woven into cashmere fabric. However, like many of the pieces that were on display in the *Jameel Prize: Art Inspired by Islamic Tradition* exhibition at Stanford, an initial glance didn't tell the complete story. As students walked around to view the backside of the shawl, they saw that the beadwork was, in fact, the heads of more than 300,000 needles pierced through the shawl.

The shawl, made by Pakistani artist Aisha Khalid, was among more than twenty Islamic artworks displayed at Cantor from December 2012 through March 2013. The Jameel Prize Exhibition, organized bi-annually by the Victoria and Albert Museum London (V&A) and the Abdul Latif Jameel Community Initiatives, was showcased at Stanford through a collaboration between the Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies and the Cantor Arts Center. In conjunction with the exhibition, Islamic Studies organized a series of academic events, engaging Stanford- and U.S.-based scholars in conversation with the general public about artistic, intellectual, and sociopolitical dimensions of Islamic art.

In addition to many Stanford student groups and classes, over 100 students from Monterey, Pescadero, and San Jose visited the exhibition and received docent-guided tours. While students from the San Jose Unified School District were primarily drawn to Khalid's Kashmiri Shawl, Pescadero Middle-High School (PHS) students were more attracted to Hayv Kahrahman's Waraq series, which were large wooden tableaus constructed to look like giant playing cards and provoked questions of cultural identity. Pescadero students were so struck by the exhibit, they created their own Arabesque-style tiles, partly inspired by Monir Farmanfarman mirrored mosaic, *Birds of Paradise*.

"We feel so fortunate not only to learn more about Islamic art but also to visit the Stanford's Cantor Arts Center," said PHS art teacher, Anne Ingraham. The student tours of the exhibition were organized by the Abbasi Program in collaboration with the Stanford Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education and the Cantor Arts Center.



WHAT IS NEXT FOR SYRIA?

On February 14, 2013, Joshua Landis (Oklahoma University) spoke about the history of the ethno-religious conflict and the possibilities of co-existence in Syria. Situating the Syrian civil war in the broader context of the Levant, he outlined the possibilities for a unified Syrian national movement and the future of the Alawite and Kurdish regions. A video-recording of the lecture is posted on our Vimeo Channel (<https://vimeo.com/60484910>), and a redacted version is broadcasted on Australian Broadcasting Company's Big Ideas radio show. The event was co-sponsored by the Mediterranean Studies Forum, Stanford Humanities Center, the Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford Center on International Conflict and Negotiation, and the *Stanford Initiative for Religious and Ethnic Understanding and Coexistence*, supported by the President's Fund, Center for Comparative Studies on Race and Ethnicity, Religious Studies, and the Taube Center for Jewish Studies.

ISLAM AND MUSLIMS IN EAST ASIA

In Spring 2013, we collaborated with Stanford Center for East Asian Studies in organizing two workshops about the influence of Islam on East Asian societies. Rian Thum (Loyola University of New Orleans) discussed how Muslim inhabitants of southern Xinjiang maintained a homogenous regional identity for 250 years before the advent of the 20th century Uyghur nationalism. He argued that separate histories of local heroes were linked together through custom anthology production and networked travel to shrines, creating an imagined community for Turki-speaking, sedentary Muslims across the region. Focusing on an urban neighborhood in Xi'an, Maris Boyd Gillette (Haverford College) discussed on the structural, agentive, and affective dimensions of Muslim women's empowerment. She drew on examples from her over 20 years of fieldwork in the region and also highlighted the political, cultural, and intellectual implications of "women's empowerment" as an analytic lens.



Cantor docent, Bernadette Charpin-Hallberg, explains Rachid Koraïchi's embroidered cloth banners for a group of seventh grade students from the International School of Monterey. photo by Mark Rapacz

photos by Kimberly Ambayec



Roundtable on Islamic Art, Iftikhar Dadi (Cornell University), Nada Shabout (University of North Texas), Taraneh Hemami (Curator & Artist), 2/7/13



Ziya Öniş (Koç University), "Turkey and the Arab Spring: Between Ethics and Self-Interest," 11/15/12



Ryan Crocker (Yale University), "Lessons From a Long War: the U.S., the Middle East, and Af-Pak," 5/29/13



Image as Animation: Mysticism, Magic, and Poetry in Byzantine Christian and Islamic Religious Conference Experience, 5/10/13



Kathryn Babayan (University of Michigan), "Libraries of the mind: Objects of Memory & Community in Early Modern Isfahan," 12/12/12



Rachid Korachi (Recipient of the 2011 Jameel Prize), "Eternity is the Absence of Time," 1/24/13

AFFILIATED FACULTY**ANTHROPOLOGY**

James Ferguson
Thomas Blom Hansen
Ian Hodder
Alma Kunanbaeva
Lynn Meskel
Kabir Tambar

ART & ART HISTORY

Bissera Pentcheva

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Burcu Karahan
Alexander Key
Elisabeth Mudimbe-Boyi

HISTORY

Joel Beinin
Robert Crews
Sean Hanretta
Aishwary Kumar
Richard Roberts
Aron Rodrigue
Priya Satia
Ali Yayıoğlu

IBERIAN & LATIN AMERICAN CULTURES

Vincent Barletta

INTRODUCTORY STUDIES

Ayça Alemdaroğlu

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Lisa Blaydes
David Laitin

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Shahzad Bashir
Robert Gregg
Behnam Sadeghi

LANGUAGE CENTER

Salem Aweiss
Khalil Barhoum
Touria Boumehdi
Shervin Emami
Ebru Ergül
Eva Hashem-Aramouni
Khalid Obeid
Ramzi Salti

AFFILIATED SCHOLARS

Patricia Blessing
John B. Dunlop
Donald Emmerson
Hajnalka Kovacs
Gail Lapidus
Abbas Milani
Audrey Truschke

Hajnalka Kovacs is the 2013-2014 Postdoctoral Fellow in Literary Cultures of Muslim South Asia. She holds an M.A. in Indian and Iranian Studies from Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary, and an M.A. in Urdu Literature from Jamia Millia Islamia, India. She received her Ph.D. in South Asian Languages and Civilizations from the University of Chicago. Her postdoctoral fellowship at Stanford is sponsored by the Sohaib & Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies in collaboration with the Center for South Asia and Stanford Global Studies Division.

How did you become interested in the literary cultures of Muslim South Asia?

I began studying Indian languages and literature at Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary. My initial training included Hindi and Sanskrit, but when I travelled to India to study Urdu literature, I came across the works of the renowned literary critic Shamsur Rahman Faruqi, which opened my eyes to the poetics and aesthetics of pre-modern Urdu and Persian poetry.

Please tell us about your research.

My research explores the complex intersections between literary aesthetics and religious beliefs in Indo-Persian and classical Urdu poetry during the 17th and 18th centuries. In my earlier work, I explored the limitations of applying the notion of “Sufi poetry” to the lyrical output of a practicing Sufi such as the Urdu poet Khwājah Mīr Dard (1720-1785). In my doctoral dissertation, I focused on the Mirza Abd al-Qadir Bedil (1644-1720)’s *Muhit-i Azam* (The Greatest Ocean), illustrating the ways in which this complex mystico-philosophical poem radically transforms the saqinamah genre and embodies a unique synthesis of Ibn Arabi’s theoretical Sufism and contemporaneous Indian religious and cultural ideas.

How does your doctoral research contribute to the scholarship on South Asian literatures?

Literary aspects of Bedil’s oeuvre have been rather neglected in the scholarly literature. There has been a tendency among researchers to list themes recurring in his poetry and then illustrate them with excerpts. Bedil’s work has also been put in the service of various ideologies: He has been regarded as an enlightened Sufi in Afghanistan, as an advocate of religious pluralism in South Asia, and as a proto-socialist philosopher in Soviet Central Asia. In his work we can certainly



Hajnalka Kovacs was selected as the recipient of the new 2013-2014 postdoctoral fellowship in Literary Cultures of Muslim South Asia. photo by Mark Rapacz

find ideas which, when lifted out of context, can be used to support such statements. I however prefer not to forget that he is first and foremost a poet, and I seek to examine his works with the methods of literary criticism. For example, I always keep in view that although he explored the key issues of Sufi thought, he did it within the conventions of a particular genre. Therefore, I evaluate each thematic element in his poetry not in isolation but on the basis of its relation to the specific poem’s generic and conceptual framework as well as against the backdrop of the larger literary tradition. What emerges from such an intertextual reading is an extremely innovative and creative poet who consciously manipulated the linguistic, stylistic, and generic norms to express multiple layers of meaning.

How does the postdoctoral fellowship contribute to your career as a scholar of literary cultures of Muslim South Asia?

First of all, the fellowship gives me the opportunity to continue my research on Bedil and turn my dissertation into a book manuscript. It also allows me to diversify my teaching portfolio. I have substantial experience in teaching intermediate and advanced Hindi and Urdu. At Stanford, on the other hand, I will be teaching an undergraduate course on Urdu short stories from India and Pakistan, and an advanced reading course on Bedil’s autobiographical work, *Chahār `Unsur*.

AFFILIATED FACULTY AND SCHOLARS

Ayça Alemdaroğlu (Stanford Introductory Studies) published “From Cynicism to Protest: Reflections on Youth and Politics in Turkey” (*Jadaliyya*, 2013).

Shahzad Bashir (Religious Studies) authored “Movement and Stillness: The Practice of Sufi Zikr in Fourteenth-Century Central Asia” (in H. Eifring (ed.) *Meditation in Judaism, Christianity and Islam*, Continuum Press, 2013).

Joel Bein (History) published “Mixing, Separation, and Violence in Urban Spaces and the Rural Frontier in Palestine” (*Arab Studies Journal*, 2013), “Egyptian Workers After June 30” (*Middle East Report Online*, 2013), “Was there a January 25 Revolution?” (*Jadaliyya*, 2013), and “Workers, Trade Unions, and Egypt’s Political Future” (*Middle East Report Online*, 2013).

Lisa Blaydes (Political Science) co-authored “The Feudal Revolution and Europe’s Rise: Political Divergence of the Christian West and the Muslim World before 1500 CE” (*American Political Science Review*, 2013) and “Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response in Egypt” (*Politics & Religion*, 2013).

Patricia Blessing (Stanford Humanities Center) published “Allegiance, Praise, and Space: Monumental Inscriptions in thirteenth-century Anatolia as Architectural Guides,” (in M. Gharipour and I.C. Schick (eds.) *Calligraphy and Architecture in the Muslim World*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013). She received the 2013 Research Award granted by the International Center for Medieval Art (ICMA) and Samuel H. Kress Foundation.

Robert Crews (History) authored “Trafficking in Evil? The Global Arms Trade and the Politics of Disorder” (in J. Gelvin and N. Green (eds.) *Global Islam in the Age of Steam and Print, 1850-1930*, University of California Press, 2013).

Ebru Ergül (Stanford Language Center) presented “Developing a Curriculum to Teach Turkish in the 21st Century” at the 2013 MESA Conference, and “Using iPad Technology in Turkish Language Class: A Toy or A Tool?” at the 2013 FLANC Conference.

Thomas Blom Hansen (Anthropology) presented “The Sacred and the City: How Religious Identity Shapes Urban Life” as part of the 2013 Distinguished Lecture Series on De-centering Urbanism at Oxford Programme for the Future of Cities.

Alexander Key (Comparative Literature) presented “Shedding Light on the Life and Times of Ragib al-Isfahani” at the 2013 Meeting of the American Oriental Society, and “Arabic Literary Theory: Poetics, Performance, and Metaphor” at the 2013 Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association.

Alma Kunanbaeva (Anthropology) organized Stanford CREES Film Series featuring new films from Kazakhstan.

Aron Rodrigue (History) authored “Reflections on Millets and Minorities: Ottoman Legacies” (in R. Kastoryano (ed.) *Turkey Between Nationalism and Globalization*, Routledge, 2013).

Ramzi Salti (Language Center) hosted two film screenings as part of the the 2013 Arab Film Festival at Stanford. His radio show, “Arabology”, was featured on Al-Hurra TV and Beirut.com.

Kabir Tambar (Anthropology) published “Historical Critique and Political Voice after the Ottoman Empire” (*History of the Present: A Journal of Critical History*, 2013). His book, *The Reckoning of Pluralism: Political Belonging and the Demands of History in Turkey*, is coming out from Stanford University Press in 2014.

GRADUATE STUDENTS

Madihah Akhter (History) presented “‘A Bad Woman’s Story’: Kishwar Naheed and the Female Body” at the 2013 Annual Conference on South Asia organized at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Firat Bozçalı (Anthropology) presented “Blood Money vs. Bloody Money: Compensation Court Cases between Kurdish Litigants and the Turkish State in a Border Province” at the 2013 MESA Conference.

Rachel Gillum (Political Science) co-authored “Religiosity-of-Interviewer Effects: Assessing the Impact of Veiled Enumerators on Survey Response in Egypt” (*Politics & Religion*, 2013).

Ariela Marcus-Sells (Religious Studies) presented “From Spells to Prayers: Constructing Practice and Friendship with God in the Kunta Community” at the 2013 MESA Conference.

Erin Pettigrew (History) presented “The Heart of the Matter: Bloodsucking Accusations along the Slave Routes of Mauritania” at the 2013 African Studies Association Annual Conference.

William Sherman (Religious Studies) presented “A City between the Pen and the Grave: The Geographical Imagination of Ibn Tulun’s History of Al-Salihiya” at the 2013 MESA Conference.

Find out what our faculty and graduate students are working on:

<http://islamicstudies.stanford.edu/associated-faculty>

<http://islamicstudies.stanford.edu/graduate-students>



Kristen Alff (History): This summer I traveled to Israel and Lebanon to conduct research about late Ottoman Palestine. I examined the newly released Sursuq family papers, peasant petitions, German consular files, and documents from the Jewish National Fund. Drawing on these sources, I wrote a research paper that explored the land investments of Beirut corporations, shifting property rights, and social conflict over property ownership in the Jezreel Valley in the early 20th century. By documenting the complexity of property relations in Palestine, I challenged the limits of legal formalism and state-centered perspectives in discussions of property law for this period, and argued that law and related social practices were contested fields that changed over time.



Ali Baqeri (Undeclared Sophomore): This summer I traveled to Bahrain to conduct research about the social outcomes of the 2011 popular uprisings. I was surprised by the degree to which sectarian differences shaped everyday interactions in high schools, sports events and work places. The project strengthened my passion for academic research and my commitment to pursue a career in international relations with a focus on the Middle East.



Rebecca Gruskin (History): This summer, I visited Tunisian and French archives to research 1970s reforms to Tunisia's family planning program. I found out that the Tunisian government utilized these reforms to consolidate its authority in the provinces while securing allegiances through competition and incentives. Importantly, I also learned to navigate a variety of archives, established valuable contacts, and developed a better sense of available sources. I plan to return to Tunisia next summer to conduct further research on Tunisian provincial administration during decolonization.



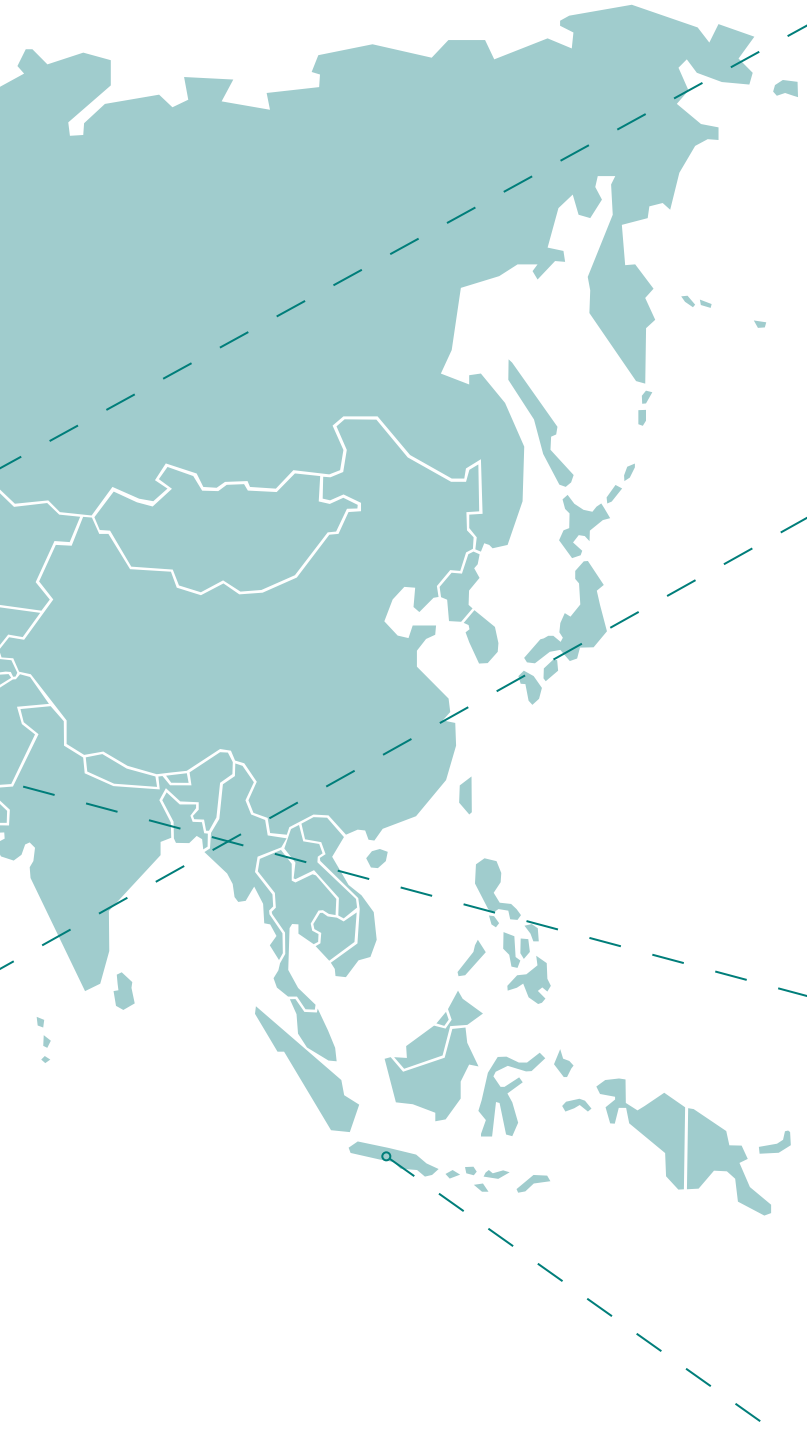
Uğur Zekeriya Peçe (History): My dissertation explores ethno-religious conflict and reconstructions of identity in Crete and Asia Minor at the turn of the 20th century. In my future research, I also plan to focus on cases from the Arabic-speaking Levant, so I completed an intensive Arabic language program in Beirut this summer. When not in class, I familiarized myself with Lebanese geography and society, acquiring a more nuanced understanding of the region's history than one can ever find in the scholarly edifice built by shelves of books and boxes of archival documents.



Your support of our activities at Stanford will enhance genuine understanding of the histories, cultures, and languages of Islam and Muslim societies.

For more information, please visit <http://islamicstudies.stanford.edu/giving/making-a-gift/>

**or contact our
Associate Director
Dr. Burçak Keskin-Kozat
(burcak@stanford.edu)**



Erin Pettigrew (History): My dissertation focuses on *l-hjab*, a potent secret Islamic wisdom of healing and protection in West Africa. This summer I conducted archival research and oral history interviews in Senegal and Mauritania about the changing role of *l-hjab* experts. I found out that the postcolonial nation-state building and the increased contact with Middle Eastern reform movements drove *l-hjab* experts underground, compelling them to use new terminology for older techniques and also alter the materiality of their prescriptions.



Megan Shutzer (International Policy Studies): This summer I conducted research in Zanzibar about anti-colonial resistance during the 1950s. Through interviews and archival research, I found out that most of Zanzibar's early and contemporary political leaders were local religious leaders. More interestingly, Islam created a powerful sense of connection that bridged different races, classes and localities. My research provided a solid basis for my master's thesis, and also allowed me to submit an article to the International Journal of African History.



Vladimir Troyansky (History): This summer I completed an advanced language program in Ottoman Turkish, working on early modern and 19th century Ottoman texts. I also conducted research in Turkish and Bulgarian archives about the Circassian refugee crisis in Lebanon and Syria between 1878 and 1880. I will present my research on the communal relations between the refugees and local Arab populations at several conferences this year.



Lauren Yapp (Anthropology): My research focuses on urban heritage preservation initiatives in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim-majority country. This summer I traveled to Central Java to learn Indonesian. I also conducted research in Semarang, Bandung, and Jakarta, putting my new language abilities to very good use, making local contacts, and navigating through the thick bureaucracy necessary to conduct further research.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

WINTER 2014 WORKSHOP SERIES: INSIDE AND OUTSIDE ISLAMIC LITERATURE

Encina Hall West, Room 208, 3:30 pm

Papers are available to Stanford affiliates upon request.

January 30: Joseph Massad (Columbia University)

February 6: Burcu Karahan (Stanford University)

February 27: Selim Kuru (University of Washington)

[Co-sponsored by the Department of Comparative Literature]

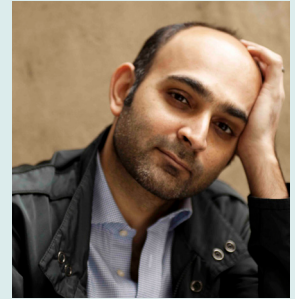
AN EVENING WITH AWARD-WINNING NOVELIST MOHSIN HAMID

Monday, March 10, 2014, 7:00 pm
Cubberly Auditorium, School of Education
(485 Lasuen Mall, Stanford)

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Mohsin Hamid received his B.A. from Princeton University, where he studied with writers Joyce Carol Oates and Toni Morrison. His essays and short stories have appeared in many national and international outlets, including the New York Times, the Guardian, and the New Yorker. He is the author of three novels, *Moth Smoke* (2000), *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007), and *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (2013). His fiction has been featured on bestseller lists, translated into over 30 languages, and adapted to cinema.

[Co-sponsored by Center for South Asia and the Stanford Initiative for Religious and Ethnic Understanding and Coexistence, supported by the President's Fund, CCSRE, Religious Studies, and the Taube Center for Jewish Studies]



DISCUSSION AND MUSICAL DEMONSTRATION SESSION:

Qawwali music with Asif Ali Khan and his ensemble

April 2, 2014, 6:00 pm

Encina Hall Central, Bechtel Conference Center
(616 Serra, Stanford)

FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Asif Ali Khan is Pakistan's reigning prince of Qawwali music. His distinctive style of this form of Sufi devotional music, dating back 700 years, is characterized by full-throated vocals and energetic rhythms. Khan can be meditative and trance-like and then suddenly thrilling and ecstatic--a genuinely inspiring experience.

[Co-sponsored by Stanford Live and Center for South Asia]

2014 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

BEYOND THE ISLAMIC PUBLIC SPHERE IN AFRICA

APRIL 4, 2014

BECHTEL CONFERENCE CENTER, ENCINA HALL CENTRAL (616 SERRA STREET)

During the last two decades, the concept of an "Islamic public sphere" has proven attractive to analysts working in a variety of traditions. At the same time, however, the very concept of a public sphere more generally has come in for increasing critique. What then should we make of the usefulness of the concept in the study of the Muslim world? What other theories might better describe the phenomena that have captured the attention of recent scholarship? What new frameworks might direct us towards unasked questions and understudied processes? This international conference will explore these questions in the context of Muslim Africa during the last 100+ years.

Presenters include Ousseina Alidou (Rutgers University-New Brunswick), Heike Behrend (University of Cologne), Kai Kresse (Columbia University), Leonardo Villalon (University of Florida), Noah Salomon (Carleton College), Alioune Sow (University of Florida), Dorothea Schulz (University of Cologne), Christopher Wise (Western Washington University), and Abdulkader Tayob (University of Cape Town).

[Co-sponsored by the Center for African Studies]