

MOHAMED ELSHAHED

Apollo Magazine 40 under 40 Thinkers Middle East

The London Design Biennale 2018 Medal, awarded to the most outstanding overall contribution

Curator of the Modern Egypt Project at the British Museum, London

Founder of Cairoobserver, Cairo

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Date of Birth: 28 July 1981 Address: Mexico City

EDUCATION

2014 Ph.D., New York University
 Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies (Culture and Representation Track)

2007 M.S., Massachusetts Institute of Technology
 Aga Khan Program For Islamic Art and Architecture

2005 B.A., New Jersey Institute of Technology
 The College of Architecture and Design

PUBLICATIONS

Books

Cairo Since 1900: An Architectural Guide. American University in Cairo Press. January 2020

Revolutionary Modernism: Architecture and the Politics of Transition in Egypt, 1936-1967
(Arabic). National Center for Translation, Egypt. January 2021

Book Chapters

2021 “Udo Kultermann’s History of Arab Contemporary Architecture” in *Urban Modernity in the Contemporary Gulf: Obsolescence and Opportunities*, eds. Roberto Fabbri and Sultan Sooud Al-Qassemi (Abingdon: Routledge, 2021).

2019 “Workers ’and Popular Housing in Mid-Twentieth-Century Egypt” in: *Social Housing in the Middle East: Architecture, Urban Development, and Transformational Modernity*, edited by Kivanc Kilinc and Mohammad Gharipour (Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2019), 64-87.

2016 “Cairo after the Second World War and the Rise of Arab Engineering Professionals” in: *The Arab City: Architecture and Representation*, edited by Amale Andraos and Nora Akawi (New York: GSAPP Books Columbia University Press, 2016), 79-91.

- 2016 "Ismailia 1950: Urban Discontent Between National Center and Colonial Periphery" in: *L'isthme de Suez et l'Égypte au temps de la Compagnie du canal de Suez*, edited by Claudine Piaton (Cairo: Institut français d'archéologie orientale, 2016), 333-348.
- 2015 "City of Revolution: On the Politics of Participation and Municipal Management in Cairo" in: *Participation in Art and Architecture: Spaces of Interaction and Occupation*, edited by Martino Stierli and Mechtild Widrich (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2015), 127-150.
- 2014 "The Old and New Egyptian Museums: Between Imperialists, Nationalists and Tourists" in: *Histories of Egyptology: Interdisciplinary Measures*, edited by William Carruthers (London: Routledge, 2014), 255-269.
- 2014 "The Prospects of Gentrification in Downtown Cairo: Artists, Private Investment and the Neglectful State" in: *Gentrification, Globalization and the Postcolonial Challenge*, edited by Loretta Lees, Hyun Bang Shin, Ernesto López-Morales (London: Policy Press, 2014), 121-142.
- 2014 "Egypt Builds: A Reevaluation of the History of Modernism" in: *Sweet Sixties: Specters and Spirits of a Parallel Avant-Garde*, edited by Georg Schöllhammer and Ruben Arevshatyan (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2014), 137-149.

Peer-reviewed Essays and Reviews

- 2017 "Egypt Here and There: The Images and Architectures of National Exhibitions and Pavilions 1926-1964" in: *Annales islamologiques* vol. 50, 1-37 «Architecture, cosmopolitisme et construction nationale en Égypte moderne» (Institut Français D'Archeologie Orientale)
- 2016 "Cairo Ring Road: Anthony Hamboussi's Poetic Survey of an Urban Topography" in: *International Journal of Islamic Architecture* vol. 5, no. 2, 2016, 279-300.
- 2010 Review of "Spaces of Global Cultures: Architecture Urbanism Identity and Urbanism: Imported or Exported? Native Aspirations and Foreign Plans" in: *Journal of Architectural Education* 63.2: 169-171 (Weily)
- 2010 Review of "Italian Architecture in Colonial Libya" in: *Review of Middle East Studies* 44.1: 48-50 (Cambridge University Press)

Other Writings: Selected

- 2015 "Afterward: The Future of Studying Informality" in *Housing Cairo: The Informal Response*, edited by Marc Angelil and Charlotte Malterre Barthes (Ruby Press)
- 2015 "Building the Nation: Architecture and Foreign Policy in post-Independence Africa" in *The Sixties: A Worldwide Happening*, edited by Wayne Modest and Mirjam Shatanawi (Lecturis)
- 2015 "Downtown As Seen by a Modernist" in: *Discovering Downtown: Architecture and Stories*, edited by Vittoria Capresi and Barbara Pampe (Jovis)

- 2015 "SOM Plan for New UAE-Backed Egyptian Capital Sparks Controversy and Questions" in: *Architectural Record* (online & print)
- 2014 "From Tahrir Square to Emaar Square: Cairo's private road to a private city" in: *The Guardian* (online)
- 2012 "Port Said 1957: Egyptian Modernism Unfurled" in: *Portal 9: Stories and Critical Writing about the City* (online & print)
- 2011 "New Additions to the Literature on Cairo" in: *Jadaliyya* (online)
- 2011 "Egypt's Government: Designed for Dictatorship" in: *Al Jazeera* (online)
- 2011 "Tahrir Square: A Collection of Fragments" in: *The Architect's Newspaper* (online)
- 2011 "Tahrir Square: Social Media, Public Space and Revolution in Egypt" in: *Places @ Design Observer* (online)

CURATED EXHIBITIONS AND DISPLAYS

- 2020 Curator, "Cairo Modern," New York Center for Architecture, New York. (postponed)
- 2019 Participant, "New Schools/Future Egyptians" with Farida Makar, commissioned by the Sharjah Architecture Triennial, Sharjah.
- 2018 Curator, "Cairo Since 1900: Recording the Architecture of a Disappearing City," Institut Français, Cairo.
- 2018 Curator, "Modernist Indignation," London Design Biennale, London. (Medal Winner)
- 2018 Curator, "The Past is Present: Becoming Egyptian in the 20th Century," British Museum, London.
- 2017 Co-curator, "Mudun: Urban Cultures in Transit," Vitra Design Museum, Weil am Rhein.
- 2017 Curator, Modern Egypt Project, "New in the Collection" Display, British Museum, London.
- 2017 Curator, "Cairo Now – City Incomplete," Beirut Design Week, Beirut.
- 2016 Curator, "Cairo Now – City Incomplete," Dubai Design Week, Dubai.
- 2015 Curator, "SURPLUS! Housing from the Periphery," Photographs by Anthony Hamboussi. Townhouse Gallery, Cairo.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- 2020 Practitioner-in-Residence, Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies at NYU, New York
- 2016-18 Curator for Modern Egypt, British Museum, London
- 2014 Commissioned by the Arab Center for Architecture to write an essay about modern architecture in Egypt 1954-2000 included in the Bahrain Pavilion publication *Fundamentalists and Other Arab Modernisms* at the 14th Venice Architecture Biennale
- 2013 Commissioned by the BMW Guggenheim Lab for contribution to the

exhibition "Participatory City: 100 Urban Trends" on view at the Solomon R. Guggenheim Museum from October 11, 2013 - Jan 5, 2014

2011-present Founder of Cairoobserver, editor of Cairoobserver.com, and Cairoobserver print publications

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- 2016-2019 Adjunct Faculty, American University in Cairo, Cairo
History and Theory of Modern Architecture, Architectural Design Studio
- 2016 Adjunct Faculty, American University in Cairo, Cairo
Urban Design Theory
- 2016 Adjunct Faculty, Arab Academy for Science, Technology & Maritime Transport, Cairo
Architectural Design Studio 5
- 2010 Adjunct Faculty, New York University, New York
The Emergence of the Modern Middle East (summer course)
- 2010 Adjunct Faculty, New York University, New York
Emergence of the Modern Middle East
- 2009 Adjunct Faculty, New York University, New York
The Making of the Muslim Middle East, 600 - 1100
- 2006-07 Teaching Assistant, Boston Architectural College, Boston
History of Modern Architecture 1750-Present, with Sibel Bozdogan

CONFERENCE PAPERS, INVITED LECTURES & TALKS (selected)

- 2019 Speaker: "Udo Kultermann's History of Arab Modernisms," Gulf Research Meeting at Cambridge University, UK
- 2019 Invited Lecture: "Architecture of the 20th Century: A View from Cairo," The Bavarian Orient Colloquium, Bamberg University, Germany
- 2019 Invited Lecture: "Modern Egypt: Architecture, Design, Material Culture," Ludwig Maximilian University of Munich, Germany
- 2019 Invited Speaker: "'If Cairo Were Destroyed': Heritage, Identity, and Permanent Crisis," Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- 2019 Speaker: "Re-imagining home," Graduate School of Design (Arab Conference at Harvard), Cambridge
- 2019 Keynote Lecture: "Architects, Patrons, and Making Cairo Since 1900," Escuela de Estudios Árabes, Granada, Spain
- 2019 Speaker: Keeping It Modern Getty Foundation Conference, Sidi Harazem, Morocco
- 2019 Invited Lecture: "Architecture of the 20th Century: A View from Cairo," Leiden University, Netherlands

- 2018 Invited Lecture: "Collecting and Displaying Modern Egypt for the Museum," Museum am Rothenbaum, Hamburg
- 2018 Invited Lecture: "Architecture of the 20th Century: A View from Cairo," Yale School of Architecture, New Haven
- 2018 Invited Lecture: "Modern Egypt: Architecture and Objects," Centro Cultural San Pablo, Oaxaca, Mexico
- 2018 Invited Speaker: "Collecting and Displaying Modern Egypt for the Museum," Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York
- 2018 Moderator: Egypt panel at the "Middle Eastern Crafts" Conference, V&A, London.
- 2018 Invited Speaker: "Cairo News: The city, the press, and the public," Oberlin College, Ohio
- 2018 Invited Lecture: "Architecture & Objects: a survey of materiality in 20th century Egypt," American Research Center in Egypt, Cairo
- 2018 Invited Speaker: "Modern Egypt: Architecture & Objects," AA School of Architecture, London
- 2018 Invited Speaker: "Collecting and displaying Modern Egypt for the museum," Museum of European and Mediterranean Civilizations, Marseille
- 2018 Speaker: "Locality and Design," Het Nieuwe Instituut, Rotterdam
- 2018 Speaker: "Egyptian Design, An Industry?" Eindhoven Design Academy, Eindhoven
- 2017 Speaker: "Modern Egypt at the Museum," Design & Empire Conference organized by the Liverpool Biennale, Liverpool
- 2017 Speaker: "Collecting and displaying Modern Egypt for the museum," European University Institute, Florence
- 2017 Speaker: "Modernismo Egípcio," Federal University of Bahia, Brazil
- 2016 Speaker and moderator: "The Art and Liberty Group (1938-1948): Modernism in Egypt beyond the Post-Colonial Lens," Centre Pompidou, Paris
- 2016 Crossing Boundaries Lecture: "Egypt Here and There: The Images and Architectures of National Exhibitions and Pavilions, 1926-1964," Virginia Commonwealth University Qatar, Doha
- 2016 Invited Speaker: "Collecting Modern Egypt: Objects, Museums, and Modernity," American Research Center in Egypt, Cairo
- 2016 Paper presentation: "Egypt Builds: A Reevaluation of the History of Modernism," Revisiting 1968 and the Global Sixties Conference, New York University Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi
- 2016 Paper presentation: "Workers' Housing and the Socialist Villa in mid-Century Egypt," Society of Architectural Historians Conference, Pasadena
- 2016 Paper presentation: "Building Alliances: Modern Architecture and Egypt's Third World Politics," College Arts Association, Washington DC

- 2015 Paper presentation: "A Modernist Architect's History of Downtown Cairo," Middle East Studies Association Conference, Denver
- 2015 Moderator: "Artists as Urban Catalysts," Creative Cities Cairo Conference, at the American University in Cairo
- 2015 Invited Speaker: "Writing the City: On the Need for Architectural Journalism in the Arab World," at Columbia University's GSAPP Studio-X, Amman
- 2015 Speaker: "What if Cairo were destroyed: Reflections on the Destructive Present in Arab Cities," at Disappearing Cities in the Arab World, the British Museum, part of Shubbak: A Window on Contemporary Arab Culture, London
- 2015 Speaker: "An Introduction to Urban Planning in Egypt After WWII," at Desert Cities: Urban Design to the Test, ETH Zurich
- 2015 Speaker: "Right to Housing in Cairo: Resisting Gentrification and the Neglectful State," City Debates, American University in Beirut
- 2014 Speaker: "Egypt's Architectural Culture 1945-1967," at Architecture and Representation: The Arab City, Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation, New York
- 2014 Paper presentation: "Cairo on the Eve of 1952: Architects, the Press, and Royalty," World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, Ankara
- 2014 Paper presentation: "Participants and Conscripts in Egypt's Urban Spaces," World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies, Ankara
- 2014 Invited Lecture: "From Cairo to the Urban Margins of Egypt: Centralization, Local Administration and Developmentalism 1945-1965," Zentrum Moderner Orient, Berlin
- 2013 Speaker: "Towards a Polycentric Narrative: The Case of Egypt's Architectural Modernism," Europe in the Middle East – The Middle East in Europe Seminar Series, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin
- 2013 Invited Speaker: "Reading Le Corbusier in Arabic and Other Fragments of Modernity," Home Works 6: Forum on Cultural Practices organized by Ashkal Alwan, Beirut
- 2013 Invited Speaker: "The City and Local Administration Between Revolutions," Navigating the Tides: Urban Transformations in the Arab World organized by The Yale Arab Alumni Association in association with the American University of Beirut. Doha
- 2013 Chair and discussant: Learning from Cairo Conference. The American University in Cairo
- 2013 Panelist: The first Middle East regional meeting of the "Modern Heritage Observatory," Beirut
- 2013 Invited Speaker: "Egypt Builds: A Reevaluation of the History of Modernism," Parallel Modernities: On some travelling agendas of late Modernism in the shadow of the Cold War 1960s, hosted by Ashkal Alwan (Beirut) and Tranzit (Vienna), Beirut
- 2012 Invited Lecture: "1950s Architecture in Egypt: Between International Modernism and Nasserism," Cairo University Department of Architecture

- 2012 Presenter and Discussant: “Revolutionary Modernism? Architecture and the Politics of Transition in Egypt 1936-1967,” International Summer Academy: Aesthetics and Politics: Counter-Narratives, New Publics, and the Role of Dissent in the Arab World held in Cairo and hosted by the American University in Cairo, the Center for Translation Studies, and the research program ‘Europe in the Middle East ’Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin
- 2012 Paper presentation: “Building Egyptians: Schools and Culture Palaces in Nasser’s Egypt,” Cultures of Decolonisation, c.1945-1970 at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies School of Advanced Study, University of London
- 2012 Paper presentation: “Modern Flats: From Private Homes to Social Housing in Nasser’s Egypt,” 12th Annual Southwest Graduate Conference in Middle Eastern and North African Studies, University of Arizona, Tucson
- 2011 Public Lecture: “Politics in the City: Tahrir Square and a History of the Future of Cairo,” American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), Cairo
- 2011 Paper presentation: “Ismailia 1950: Urban Discontent on the Eve of a Coup,” L’Isthme et l’Egypte, au temps de la Compagnie universelle du canal maritime de Suez (1858-1956), Ismailia
- 2011 Keynote Speaker: “Tahrir Square and the Expansion of Egypt’s Public Sphere,” 48TH International Federation of Landscape Architects (IFLA), Zurich

WORKSHOPS ORGANIZED

- 2015 Writing Histories of Now: Modern and Contemporary Middle East Art and Architecture, co-organized with Clare Davies, supported by Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices and the Forum Transregionale Studien, held at Humboldt University’s Institute for Art and Visual History, Berlin

AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS AND GRANTS

- 2018 London Design Biennale “Most Outstanding Overall Contribution” Medal
- 2018 American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) Fellowship
- 2017 Vila Sul Residency, Goethe Institut Salvador Bahia, Brazil
- 2015 Ford Foundation and National Center for Translation in Egypt for the translation into Arabic and publication of Ph.D. dissertation
- 2014-15 Art Histories and Aesthetic Practices Post-Doctoral Fellowship, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin
- 2013-14 Europe in the Middle East—The Middle East in Europe Fellowship, Forum Transregionale Studien, Berlin
- 2013-15 Research grant, part of the research program “Producing the Public: Space, Media, and Participation,” the Arab Council for Social Sciences (ACSS), Beirut

2012 New York University Provost's Global Research Initiatives Dissertation Writing grant
2010-11 International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) from the Social Sciences Research Council (SSRC)
2010-11 American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE) Fellowship
2007-12 The Henry M. MacCracken Award, New York University
2005-07 Massachusetts Institute of Technology Research Assistantship
2004 The American Institute of Architects, the Clarence Tabor Memorial Scholarship Award

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
College Art Association (CAA)
Society of Architectural Historians (SAH)

LANGUAGES

Fluent: English, Arabic (native)
Basic: Spanish, Italian, French