we make the road by walking

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At a time when divides between Jews and Muslims seem to be normalized, our work for this exhibition is an attempt to create a space for dialogue between the two traditions. Gloria Anzaldua wrote about "counterstance" in *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza:*

> [I]t is not enough to stand on the opposite river bank, shouting questions....A counterstance locks one into a duel of oppressor and oppressed; locked in mortal combat, like the cop and the criminal, both are reduced to a common denominator of violence....But it is not a way of life. At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes.

We Make The Road By Walking

Artists: Sama Alshaibi and Beth Krensky
Curator: Georgina Kolber, Mizel Museum

This exhibition is dedicated to our sons: Mahmood Omri Sias Gladney, Zakiriya Hilal Alem Gladney and Zev Elijah Krensky Gorfinkle. We hope you continue to make the road by walking--together.

Exhibition of the Mizel Museum, Denver, Colorado, October 11, 2007-January 24, 2008
Forward: Georgina Kolber pp. 5-7
Essay: "Forging Cultural Rites / Rights" Doris Bittar pp. 8-13
Essay: "Dislocated Identities: Reflections of an Arab Jew" Dr. Ella Shohat pp. 19-24 (Repinted with permission)

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Beth Krensky thanks: Edward Gorfinkle, Zev Gorfinkle, Dr. Elizabeth Peterson, Dr. Raymond Tymas-Jones, David Eddy, Shawn Porter, Brianna Goald, Josh Blumental, Adam Bateman, Enzo Krensky , Doris and Arthur Krensky, Bunny and David Gorfinkle, and Sama Alshaibi for engaging in dialogue and collectively creating this exhibition—your vision and artistry make a profound difference.

Sama Alshaibi thanks: Dr. Marvin Gladney, Mahmood and Zakiriya Gladney, Velma Gladney, Bill and Maha Cantello, Dr. Hameed and Intesar Alshaibi, Mahmoud and Imtithal Yacoubi, Alshaibi and Yacoubi clans, the staff at Darat al Funun, Dennis Jones, Tomiko Jones, Joseph Labate, Martina Shenal, Yana Payusova, Sherry Wiggins, Karen Zimmerman, the 6+ art collective and Beth Krensky for your determination and walking the talk. Thank you for taking the risk with me.

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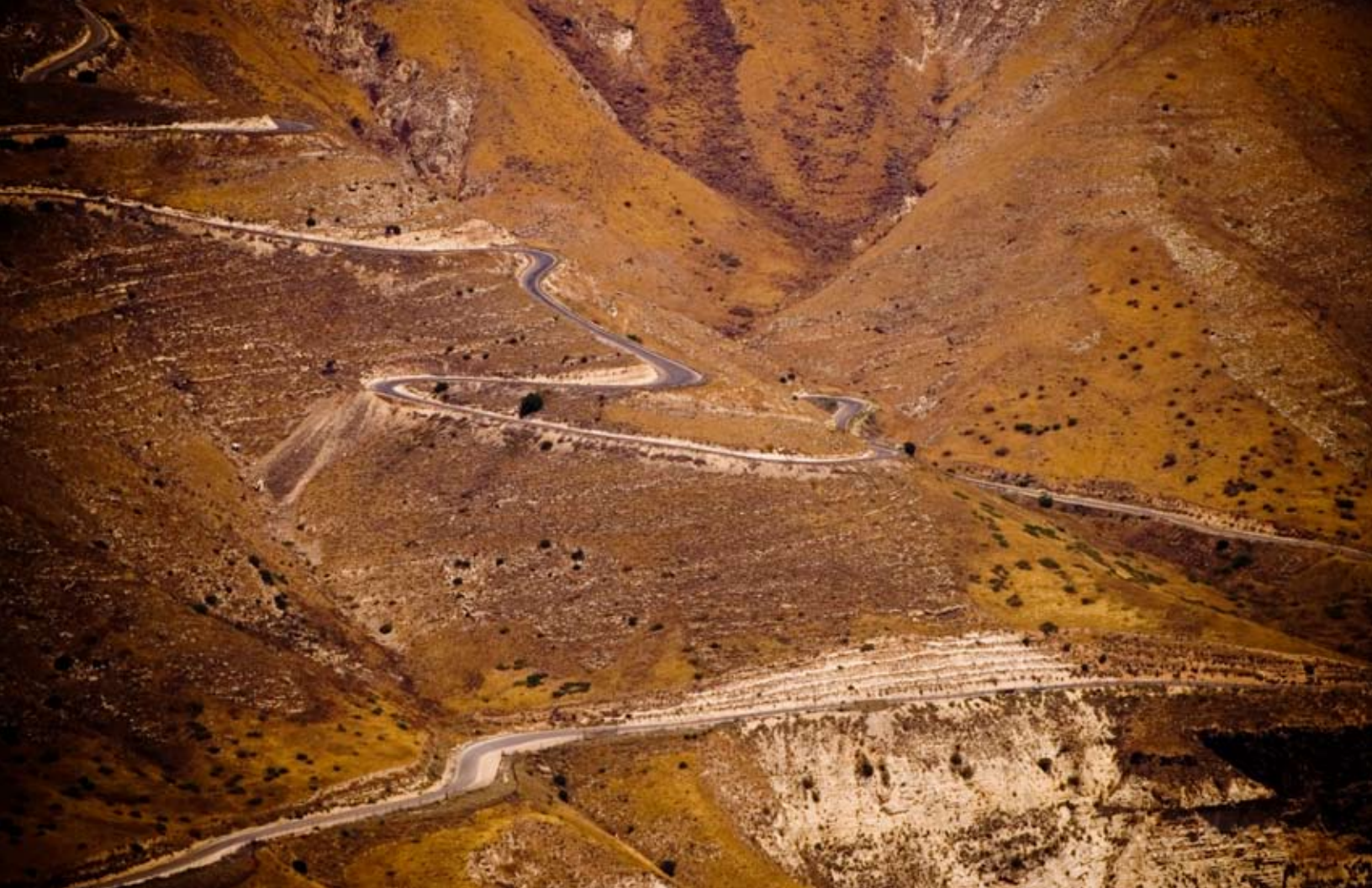
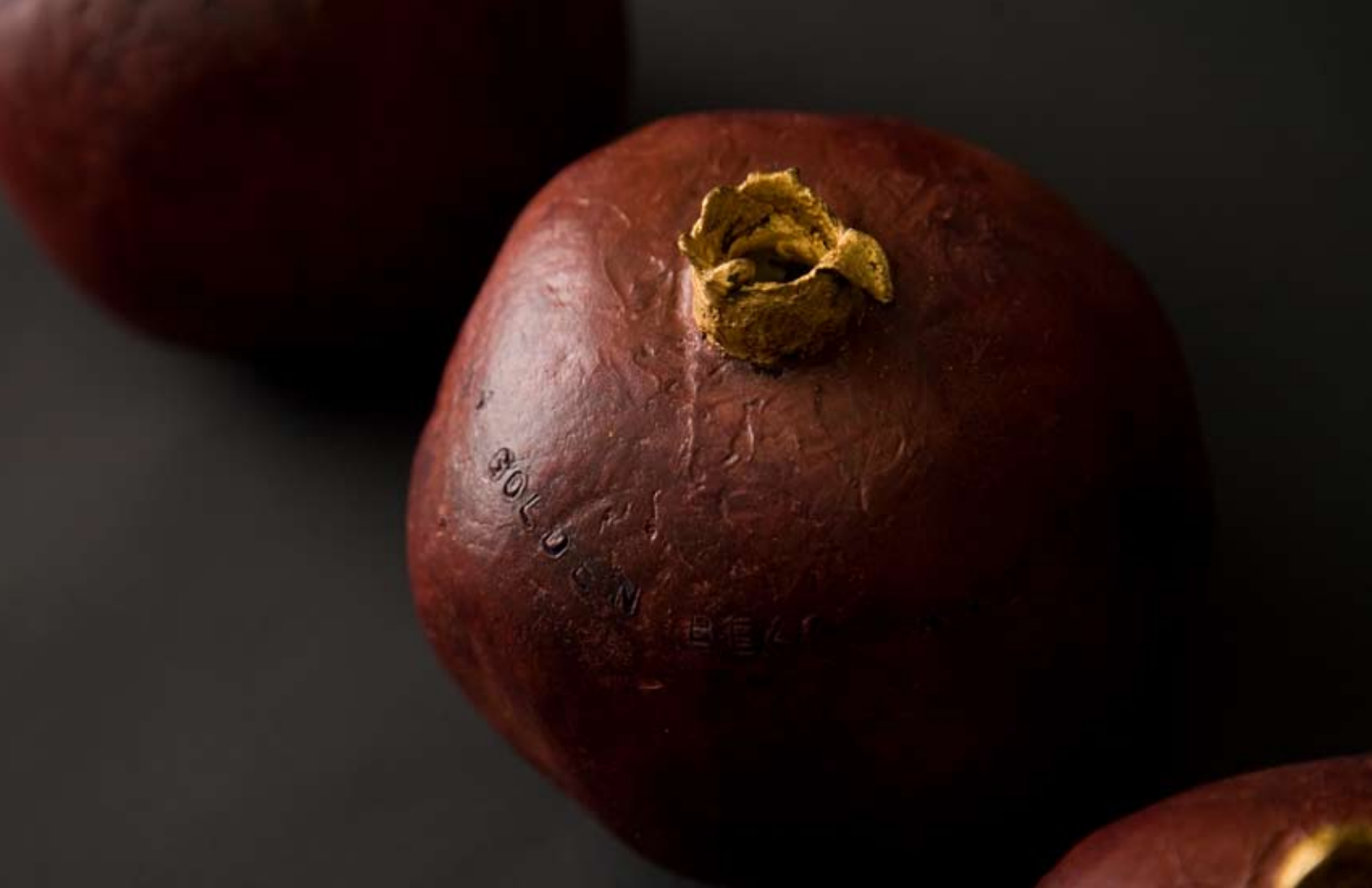
Sama Alshaibi: Darat Al Funun Artist Residency Program, University of Arizona College of Fine Art's Dean Fund, and the University of Arizona's School of Art.




GOLDEN

FORWARD
by Georgina Kolber

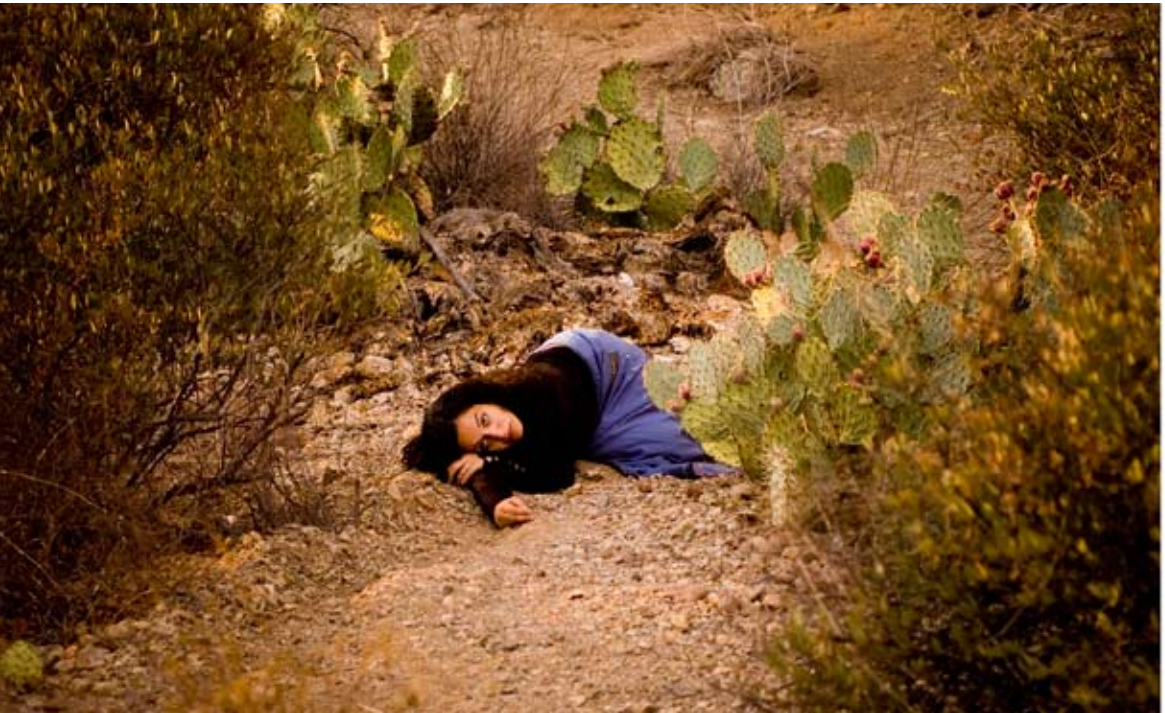
For their collaborative exhibit, *We Make the Road By Walking*, artists Beth Krensky and Sama Alshaibi explore the ways "that art, both in the process of making it and in the final product, can transcend the political for the human."[1] While accepted social constructs push them to identify themselves and their oeuvres in terms of religious and cultural histories and practices, the artists courageously rebuke the expectation to stereotype themselves, their work, and each other.

The artists use their differences as a point of entry and departure. Krensky and Alshaibi each illustrate her reverence for her ancestral past while simultaneously highlighting the reality that shared experiences in motherhood, family, and peace activism form an inherent and effortless union that takes over where differences leave off.

Beth Krensky's recent familial history begins with Jewish emigration from Russia, Austria, and Hungary at the turn of the Century. *Journey*, a compilation of sewn together historical maps, traces the immigration route of her ancestors to America. In this piece, she alludes to the geographical and social distances between where her family was then to where she is today. Her familial exodus continues, illustrated by her son's footsteps atop of the maps. Krensky is aware that her ancestors' strides, along with her own, will influence her own progeny. The artist's appreciation for the freedom she holds to construct 'home' for herself and her family is clearly reflected in *Journey*.

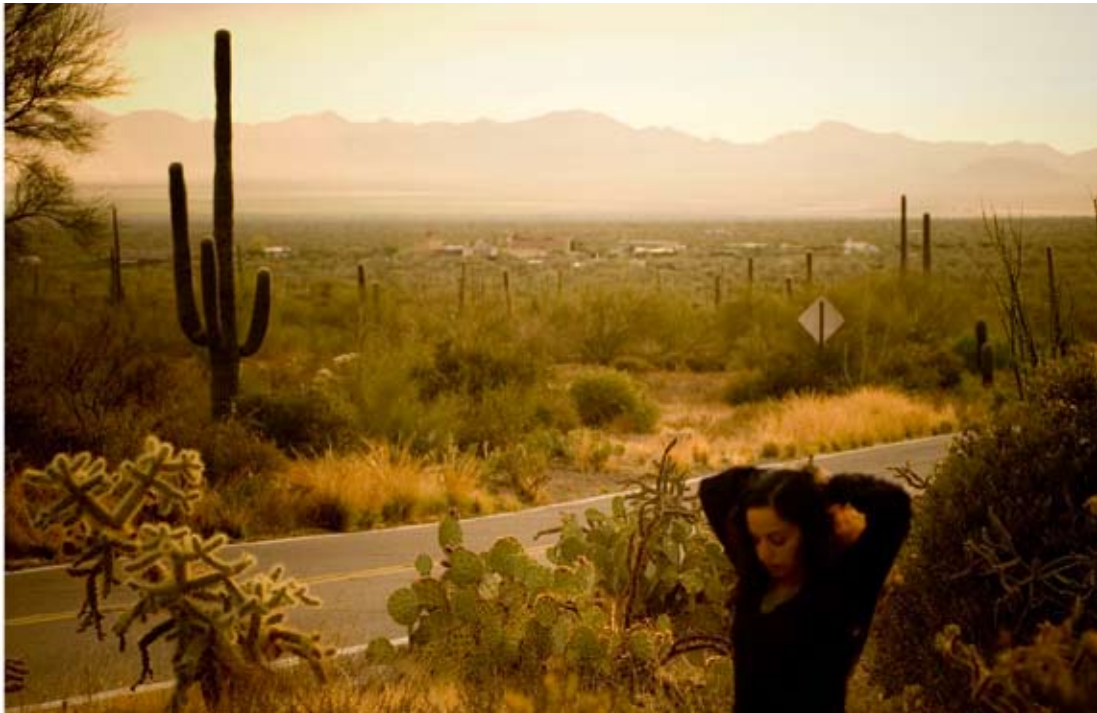
"Bridge III" implies the construction of something new, perhaps her own identity, being a product of the past, present, and future. The piece also suggests that these seemingly broken branches actually form architectural structures that serve to build bridges between then and now, silence and discussion, fear and courage. Sama Alshaibi's homeland reaches from historical Islamic Palestine and Iraq to the Southwest United States. Thus the artist has her own experience with migrations. Exile, immigration, and the construction of homeland have become a way of life. As she grapples with border patrols and mistrusting stares in her attempt to remain close to her family and friends in both the Middle East and America, she has found comfort in the ironically similar characteristics of these mystical and vast landscapes.

In *“Passage,”* shot near a border of Palestine and Israel, and *“Habitat, Budrus - Tucson,”* shot in Arizona, strikingly similar hues of gold, ochre, and green earth frame the artist’s ambivalent gaze and posture. We sense that Alshaibi feels at home amidst the red sand, cool sages, and vast skies, yet political and social complexities confuse her sense of belonging. The artist places herself in familiar and tranquil water in *“Red Sea, Hilal.”* Against a crescent moon backdrop, Alshaibi’s feminine vigor is unmistakable and of paramount importance as she continues to cross back and forth between borders, boundaries, and homelands.



For this collaborative exhibit, Krensky and Alshaibi have asked themselves and each other to challenge political and social constructs. In that process they have discovered that their physical and spiritual bodies, distinctly layered with history, tradition, and experience, have imprinted the earth's surface beyond real and imagined boundaries and borders. *We Make the Road By Walking* beautifully illustrates the notion that through dialogue and exchange, we can move together across divides, discovering common and virginal terrain.

Notes: 1. Beth Krensky's artist statement



FORGING CULTURAL RITES/RIGHTS
By Doris Bittar

Through seemingly solemn approaches and subtle wit, Sama Alshaibi and Beth Krensky metaphorically travel to their respective ancestral wells and pluck out what is most relevant to them. What they find varies, from stories and objects to images and personas. From the perch of their exilic American perspectives they reinvent their respective cultural and ethnic milieus. Their aesthetic choices reveal anxieties by showing how displaced cultures negotiate loss as they forge ahead in their adopted lands. Eventually the things or detritus they have collected conjure up parables/stories that become infused with icon-like gravitas. These icons in new contexts create a space for teaching and learning. Through different approaches Alshaibi's and Krensky's pedagogic repertoire segues into formal strategies that create templates for survival, if and when the ground underneath shifts yet again.

In *We Make the Road by Walking* we witness a chosen dialogue between an American Iraqi-Palestinian and an American Jew of Russian and Hungarian descent. We cannot divorce the individual artists from the larger context of their shared space. They examine the unwanted baggage from their cultures: the predetermined roles they may have been assigned. They command a 360-degree view of their respective cultures where they deconstruct and reconstruct the various markers of cultural authenticity.

Beth Krensky creates artifact-like objects from Judaica that invite a tactile experience, one to which a child would be attracted. Because the objects are twisted and dented, they look like they are from an archeological dig. Krensky describes her connection to the materials that she uses, "Copper has been used in religious ceremonies for millennia and is considered a medium between the spirit and physical worlds. Olive wood comes from Bethlehem and represents both ancestral roots and the contested land."[1] The piece *"Finials,"* is made up of several simple iconic objects based on decorative fragments that sit on top of elaborate torah scrolls. The finials of the scrolls are removed from the long roll that they perch as though a child has removed them to create a fantasy world of narratives. Krensky's forms speak to the multifaceted roles of ritual, not as dreary ceremony, but as playful objects to be recontextualized and reconsidered. Grouped

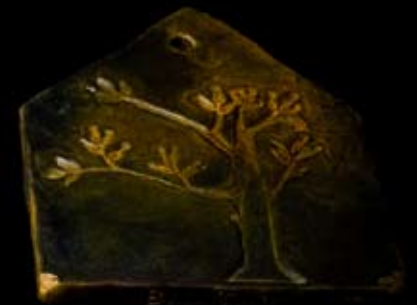
randomly or in a line they look both like toys and tools for learning basic principles. Through Krensky's ordering of forms and images, the home and home building become the central locations where these objects, routines and stories are offered to children as a way to learn about the structure of a culture or religion.

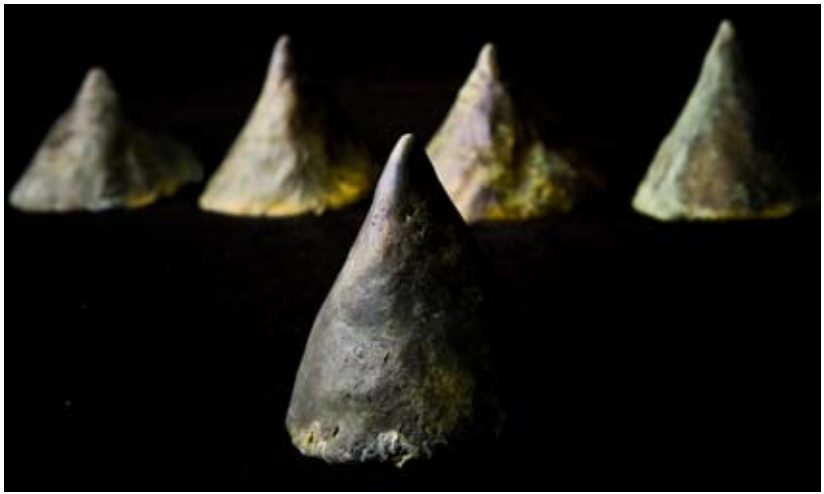
By placing the objects in random configurations, rather than ones based on decorative balance or functional arrangements, Krensky asks us to examine them as evidence or remains without forcing an explanation. Specifically, the exteriors of the incantation bowls are dark and stained while the interiors are illuminated with gold, appearing lit and ethereal. The two textures/types of metal that occupy the same space are contrasted and offer an invitation. The lit and smooth interiors may speak to an intangible epiphany as they hover within the coarse exteriors that may signify the unchangeable characteristics of her culture.

The simplicity of the objects places Krensky between two traditions that appear to be at odds with each other. One tradition stems from her identification with a religious/cultural legacy tied to the narrative of origins already mentioned. The other tradition stems from Modernism's stance after World War 2 that humanity and its realm can no longer be represented as whole and complete. Twentieth century Western art arguably can be defined as fragmented and alienated.

Being a Jewish artist and making Judaica in the 21st century, Krensky answers the post 20th century dilemma. This is best seen in *"Bridge III"* where branches and twigs cast in bronze materials are gathered for possible use, perhaps for the construction of a huppah. Krensky does not direct us except through the title of "*Bridge*." We are forced to configure them through our own filters. Through an unencumbered formalism, Krensky creates an opening for dialogue and learning. Krensky writes: "The idea of 're-membering,' or putting back together something, is a theme woven through some of the work. '*Bridge III*' can represent fragments of something disparate, or perhaps fragments that can be connected in some way to create a bridge. It is my intent that the work … move us across real or imagined divides to common ground."[2] Krensky reveals the ambiguity of these objects and creates for the possibility that a bridge could span an unforgiving chasm.


JAKHIN
BOAZ





In her first person photo narratives Sama Alshaibi expresses the impermanence of exile. Like Krensky she holds on to her cultural baggage, even the stereotypes of Arab exotic culture, as semblances of a more stable past. Often the images are the trappings from the colonial harem, her experience of her own body as it transforms, and of course, the stories of her family's exile. Sama Alshaibi was born in Basra, Iraq to an Iraqi father and a Palestinian mother displaced from Palestine 60 years ago. Currently Alshaibi resides in the United States. Living in America has become an opportunity to reflect on her immigration and how her culture is affected and transformed by that experience.

There is something fundamentally literary in Alshaibi's sequencing choices as she integrates her body into the landscape. In the photo series *"Ruins: Roadside-Roman"* and *"Red Sea,"* Alshaibi's persona is that of a scribe recording a narrative with pictures. She is both inside and outside of the narratives. The sequenced images strongly suggest words or phrases. They almost function as hieroglyphs or pictographs in their symmetry and singularity. In *"Red Sea's"* first panel "the narrator" (Alshaibi) literally points us back to the beginning. The second panel is the moon, low on the horizon, acting as an anchor point drifting us back to the first image. It acts as a pause. The panel with reflected water is a new phrase and the final panel is punctuation like the periods at the end of a sura in a highly decorated Koran. In the series *"Ruins: Roadside-Roman"* our eyes begin to follow a narrative, but get caught in the central two panels that create a visual eddy. The last panel on the far right unexpectedly changes the direction of our gaze by bringing us back to the central eddy. We discover that the narrative begins again but this time from the right side. The shifting path turns and twists, bringing us back to a central focus that urges us on to the next "phrase." Our expectations are undermined as we notice that we may be going in circles. Alshaibi has commented, "My creative research also extends into areas of collective trauma and how the role of memory containers (such as art) and memorials are used as vehicles to resist the effacement and obliteration of that history. As a Palestinian-Iraqi, my identity is rooted in a violent and traumatic past that is still being afflicted; to situate that history....connects me from my safety zone in the US back into the red zone of Iraq or the Occupied territories of Palestine...there are only circles, no lines to a path out."[3] However, there is a path out: it is not the expected path but one that leads us toward other considerations previously not available to us.

Alshaibi explores the "disinherited" from various roles, such as an Orientalist muse from the Ottoman/ European Imperial period and a sage tour guide. *"Wander-*

lust" "Passage" and *"Habitat, Budrus - Tucson"* display halting stops and mini symmetries as our eyes rush to the central figure of Alshaibi miming a curve in the landscape. In these photos the land and Alshaibi's body are tied together by a metaphoric umbilicus. These highly orchestrated "connections" are disquietingly witty and playful, especially in the piece *"Habitat, Budrus - Tucson."* Here the incongruity between a semi-veiled Alshaibi and the archetypal Arizona landscape with its authentic Saguaro cacti is both hilarious and poignant. Alshaibi's use of jarring and smooth visual directives draws us into her struggle between adaptation and reinvention.

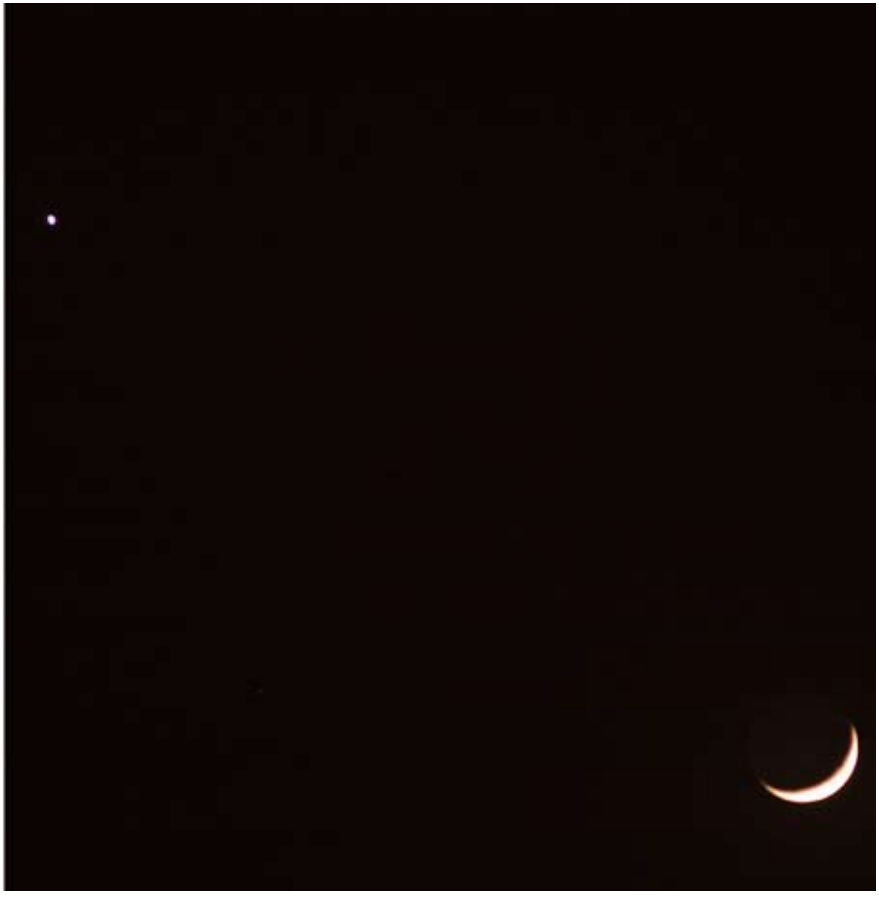
We Make the Road by Walking is a conversation where archetypal roles and the stuff of life, the detritus are carefully examined without offering hardened conclusions. Journeying to their various themes whether they are metaphorical, erroneous, mysterious or precise, Sama Alshaibi and Beth Krensky embrace their inheritances, always as starting points, starting points that their varied audiences may want to borrow. Alshaibi and Krensky are scribes for their respective cultures, writing and rewriting their cultures. The art works create an ironic space that sits beside the dusty artifacts of the past, the unmitigated violence of the present, and the fear of a dismal future. A new clearing is found where the familiar images, objects and stereotypes of their respective cultures are seen as if for the first time. Perhaps ***We Make the Road by Walking*** clears a psychic space for the possibility of a shared future.

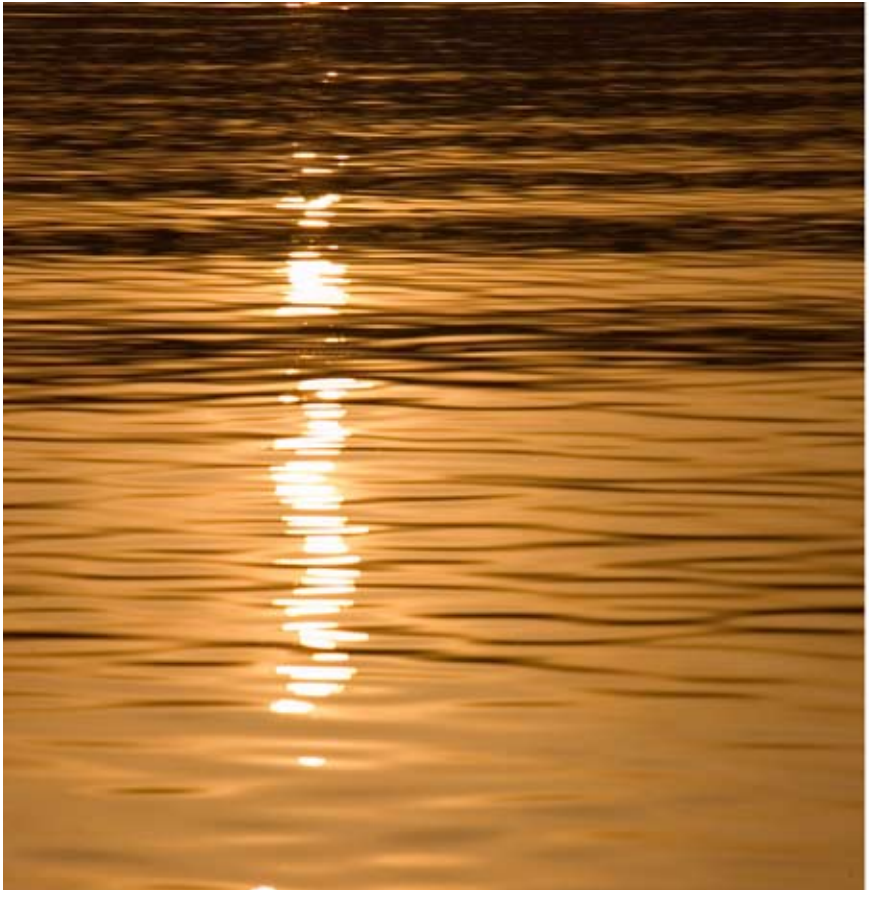
Notes:

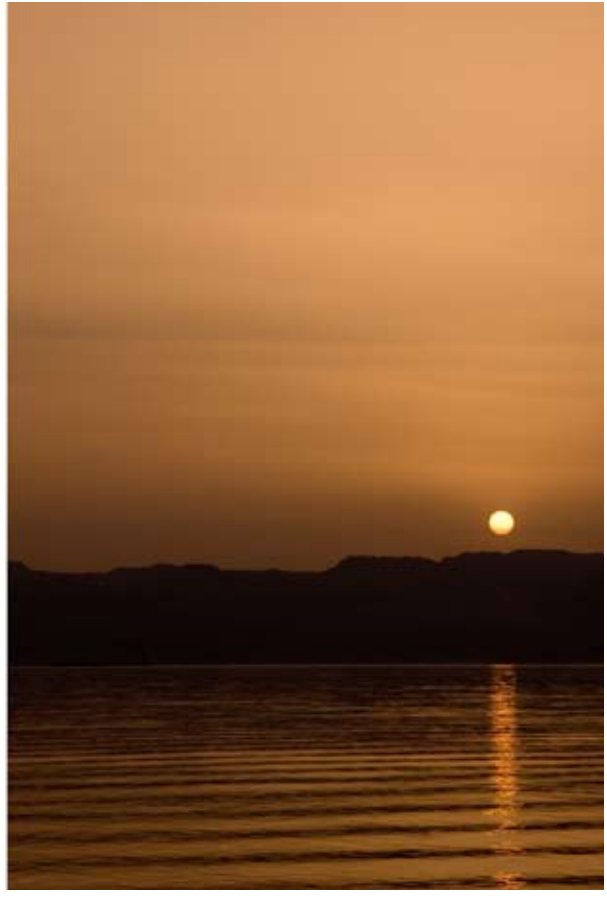
1. Beth Krensky's artist statement
2. ibid
3. Sama Alshaibi's artist statement

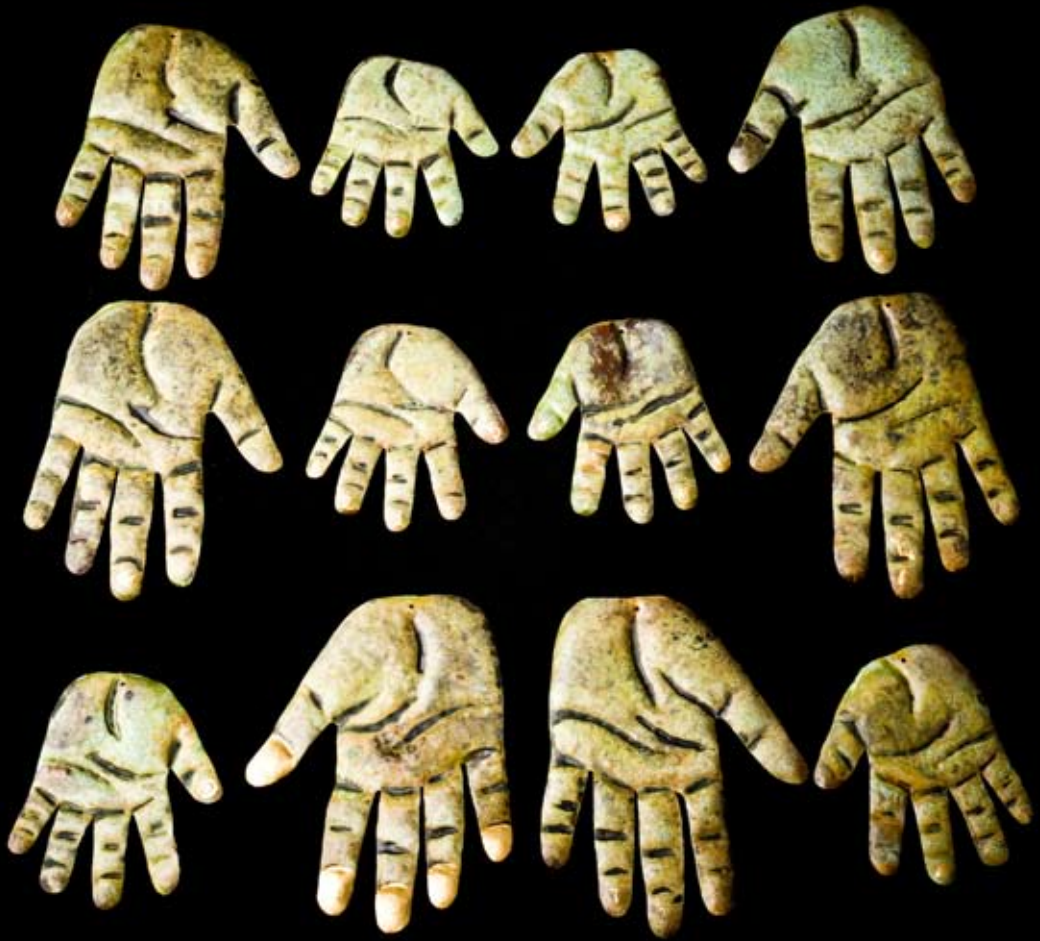
Doris Bittar

paintings, photographs and installations have been reviewed nationally and internationally in such journals as Art in America,. Bittar has received numerous awards including the Puffin Foundation Grant, California Arts Council Artist's Fellowship, and participation in the Whitney Museum of American Art Independent Study Program. Bittar writings have been widely published, including the San Diego Union-Tribune, the cultural quarterly Al Jadid magazine. The Los Angeles Times and Beirut's Alhayat. Bittar received a MFA from the University of California, San Diego. Bittar's community and conflict resolution work include serving as a board member for the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, creating and facilitating Jewish-Palestinian dialogue groups, and making appearances on radio and television. The National Conflict Resolution Center, the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee and the American Civil Liberties Union have recognized Bittar's community and artistic accomplishments. Doris Bittar has been part of the adjunct faculty at the University of California, San Diego since 1996 and taught at the American University of Beirut in 2005 among other colleges and universities. She lives in San Diego with her husband, James Rauch and two sons, Joseph and Gabriel.









DISLOCATED IDENTITIES: REFLECTIONS OF AN ARAB JEW

By Dr. Ella Habiba Shohat

I am an Arab Jew. Or, more specifically, an Iraqi Israeli woman living, writing and teaching in the U.S. Most members of my family were born and raised in Baghdad, and now live in Iraq, Israel, the U.S., England, and Holland. When my grandmother first encountered Israeli society in the '50s, she was convinced that the people who looked, spoke and ate so differently--the European Jews--were actually European Christians. Jewishness for her generation was inextricably associated with Middle Easterness. My grandmother, who still lives in Israel and still communicates largely in Arabic, had to be taught to speak of "us" as Jews and "them" as Arabs. For Middle Easterners, the operating distinction had always been "Muslim," "Jew," and "Christian," not Arab versus Jew. The assumption was that "Arabness" referred to a common shared culture and language, albeit with religious differences.

Americans are often amazed to discover the existentially nauseating or charmingly exotic possibilities of such a syncretic identity. I recall a well-established colleague who despite my elaborate lessons on the history of Arab Jews, still had trouble understanding that I was not a tragic anomaly--for instance, the daughter of an Arab (Palestinian) and an Israeli (European Jew). Living in North America makes it even more difficult to communicate that we are Jews and yet entitled to our Middle Eastern difference. And that we are Arabs and yet entitled to our religious difference, like Arab Christians and Arab Muslims.

It was precisely the policing of cultural borders in Israel that led some of us to escape into the metropolises of syncretic identities. Yet, in an American context, we face again a hegemony that allows us to narrate a single Jewish memory, i.e., a European one. For those of us who don't hide our Middle Easterness under one Jewish "we," it becomes tougher and tougher to exist in an American context hostile to the very notion of Easterness.

As an Arab Jew, I am often obliged to explain the "mysteries" of this oxymoronic entity. That we have spoken Arabic, not Yiddish; that for millennia our cultural creativity, secular and religious, had been largely articulated in Arabic (Maimonides being one of the few intellectuals to "make it" into the consciousness of the West).... If you go to our synagogues, even in New York, Montreal, Paris or London, you'll be amazed to hear the winding quarter tones of our music which the uninitiated might imagine to be coming from a mosque.

Now that the three cultural topographies that compose my ruptured and dislocated history--Iraq, Israel and the U.S.--have been involved in a war, it is crucial to say that we exist. Some of us refuse to dissolve so as to facilitate "neat" national and ethnic divisions. My anxiety and pain during the Scud attacks on Israel, where some of my family lives, did not cancel out my fear and anguish for the victims of the bombardment of Iraq, where I also have relatives.

War, however, is the friend of binarisms, leaving little place for complex identities. The Gulf War, for example, intensified a pressure already familiar to the Arab Jewish diaspora in the wake of the Israeli-Arab conflict: a pressure to choose between being a Jew and being an Arab. For our families, who have lived in Mesopotamia since at least the Babylonian exile, who have been Arabized for millennia, and who were abruptly dislodged to Israel 45 years ago, to be suddenly forced to assume a homogenous European Jewish identity based on experiences in Russia, Poland and Germany, was an exercise in self devastation. To be a European or American Jew has hardly been perceived as a contradiction, but to be an Arab Jew has been seen as a kind of logical paradox, even an ontological subversion. This binarism has led many Oriental Jews (our name in Israel referring to our common Asian and African countries of origin is Mizrahi or Mizrachi) to a profound and visceral schizophrenia, since for the first time in our history Arabness and Jewishness have been imposed as antonyms.

Intellectual discourse in the West highlights a Judeo-Christian tradition, yet rarely acknowledges the Judeo-Muslim culture of the Middle East, of North Africa, or of pre-Expulsion Spain (1492) and of the European parts of the Ottoman Empire. The Jewish experience in the Muslim world has often been portrayed as an unending nightmare of oppression and humiliation. Although I in no way want to idealize that experience--there were occasional tensions, discriminations, even violence--on the whole, we lived quite comfortably within Muslim societies.

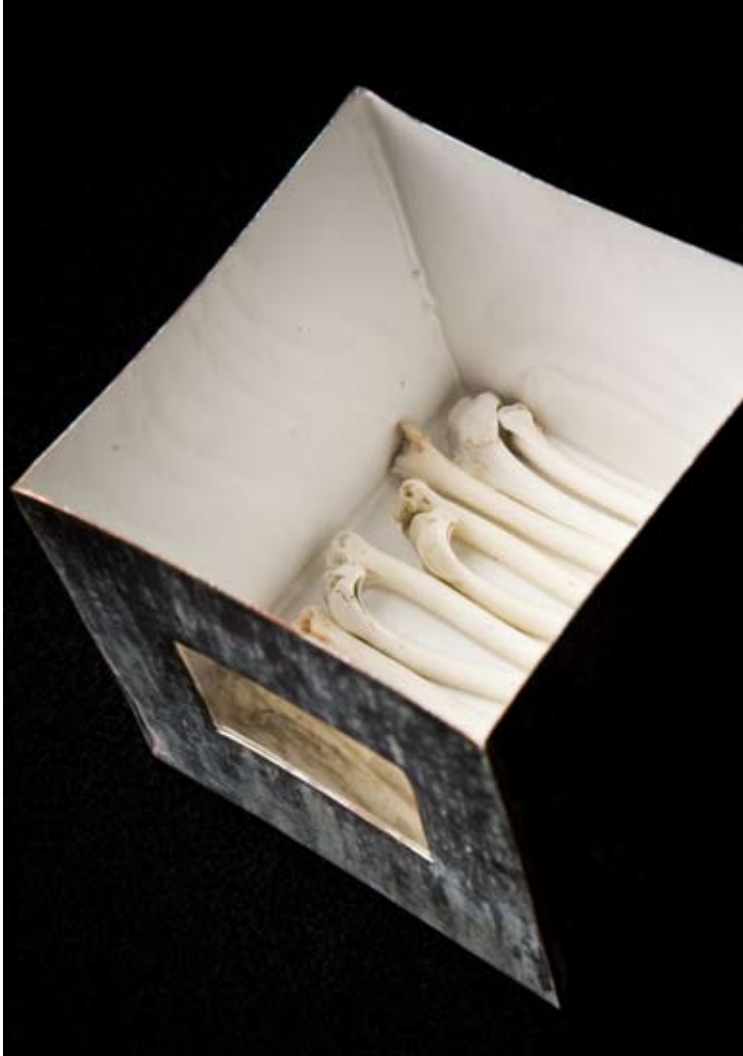
Our history simply cannot be discussed in European Jewish terminology. As Iraqi Jews, while retaining a communal identity, we were generally well integrated and indigenous to the country, forming an inseparable part of its social and cultural life. Thoroughly Arabized, we used Arabic even in hymns and religious ceremonies.

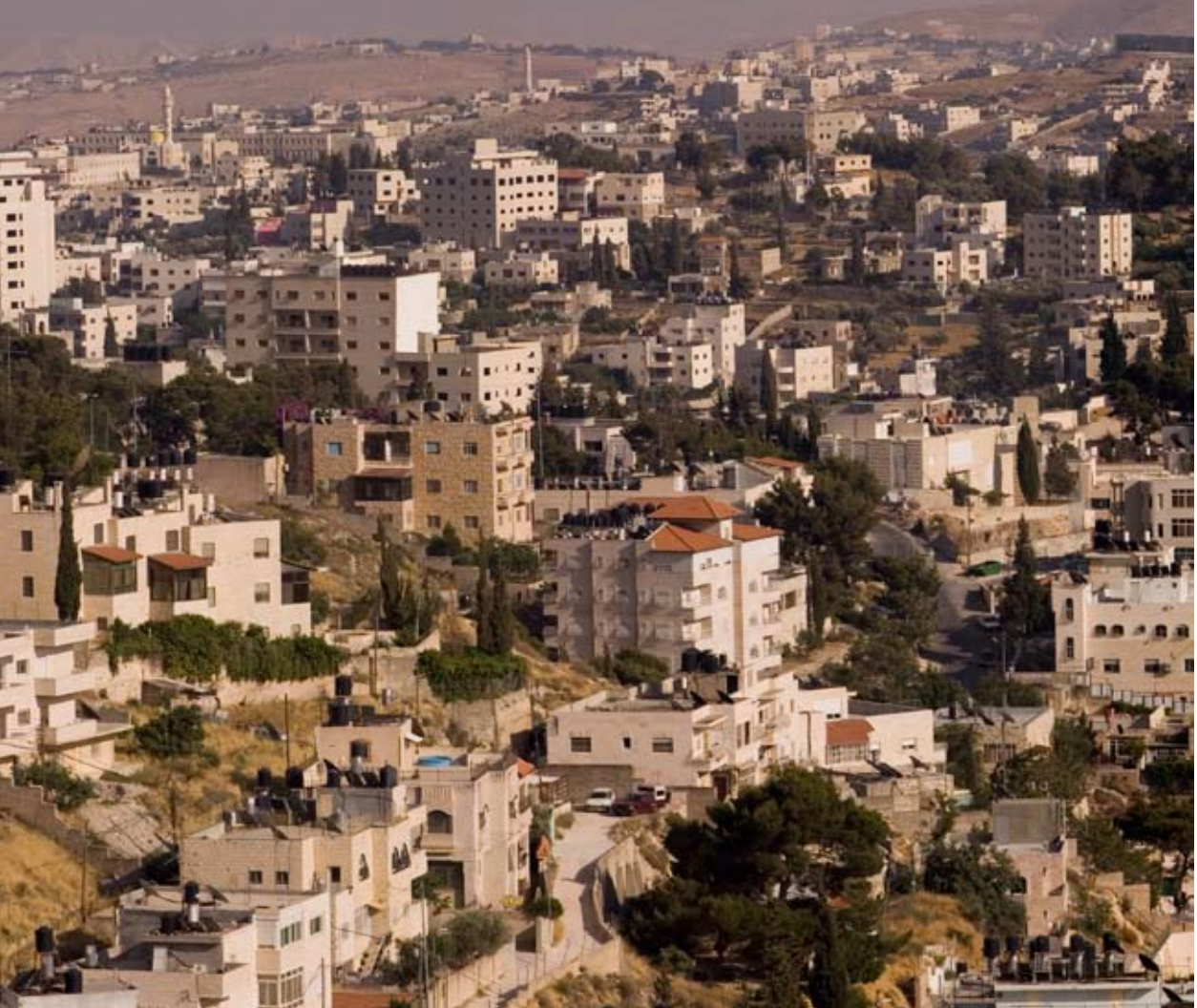
The liberal and secular trends of the 20th century engendered an even stronger association of Iraqi Jews and Arab culture, which brought Jews into an extremely active arena in public and cultural life. The liberal and secular trends of the 20th century engendered an even stronger association of Iraqi Jews and Arab culture, which brought Jews into an extremely active arena in public and cultural life. Prominent Jewish writers, poets and scholars played a vital role in Arab culture, distinguishing themselves in Arabic speaking theater, in music, as singers, composers, and players of traditional instruments.

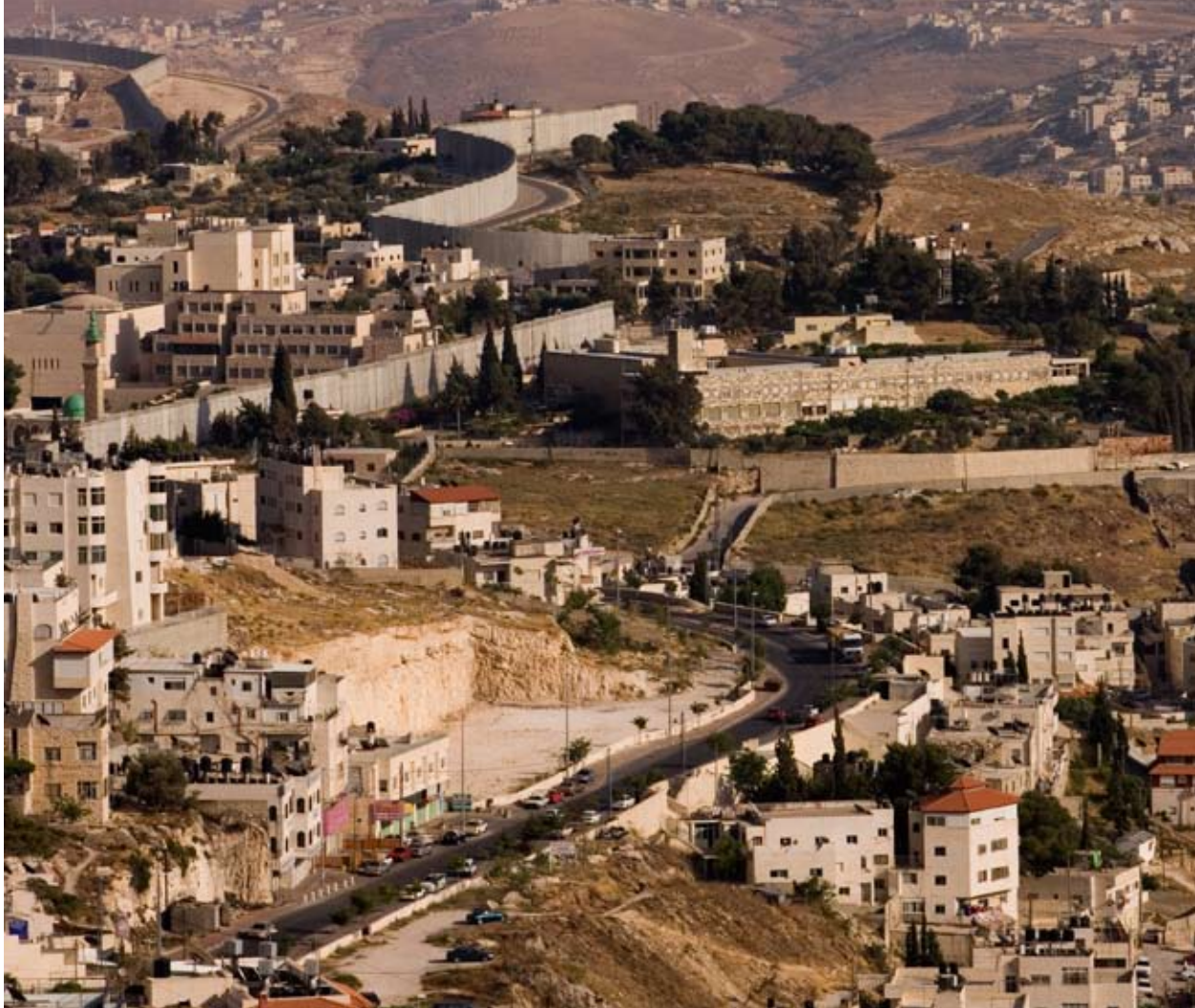
In Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq and Tunisia, Jews became members of legislatures, of municipal councils, of the judiciary, and even occupied high economic positions. (The finance minister of Iraq in the '40s was Ishak Sasson, and in Egypt, Jamas Sanua--higher positions, ironically, than those our community had generally achieved within the Jewish state until the 1990s!)

The same historical process that dispossessed Palestinians of their property, lands and national-political rights, was linked to the dispossession of Middle Eastern and North African Jews of their property, lands, and rootedness in Muslim countries. As refugees, or mass immigrants (depending on one's political perspective), we were forced to leave everything behind and give up our Iraqi passports.... Even our physiognomies betray us, leading to internalized colonialism or physical misperception. Sephardic Oriental women often dye their dark hair blond, while the men have more than once been arrested or beaten when mistaken for Palestinians. What for Ashkenazi immigrants from Russian and Poland was a social aliya (literally "ascent") was for Oriental Sephardic Jews a yerida ("descent").

Stripped of our history, we have been forced by our no-exit situation to repress our collective nostalgia, at least within the public sphere. The pervasive notion of "one people" reunited in their ancient homeland actively disauthorizes any affectionate memory of life before Israel. We have never been allowed to mourn a







trauma that the images of Iraq's destruction only intensified and crystallized for some of us. Our cultural creativity in Arabic, Hebrew and Aramaic is hardly studied in Israeli schools, and it is becoming difficult to convince our children that we actually did exist there, and that some of us are still there in Iraq, Morocco, Yemen and Iran.

Western media much prefer the spectacle of the triumphant progress of Western technology to the survival of the peoples and cultures of the Middle East. The case of Arab Jews is just one of many elisions. From the outside, there is little sense of our community, and even less sense of the diversity of our political perspectives. Oriental-Sephardic peace movements, from the Black Panthers of the '70s to the new Keshet (a "Rainbow" coalition of Mizrahi groups in Israel) not only call for a just peace for Israelis and Palestinians, but also for the cultural, political, and economic integration of Israel/Palestine into the Middle East. And thus an end to the binarisms of war, an end to a simplistic charting of Middle Eastern identities.

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Ella Shohat is Professor in the departments of Art and Public Policy and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. She has published and lectured extensively, both nationally and internationally, on issues having to do with cultural studies, postcolonial theory, and visual culture. More specifically,she has developed critical approaches to the study of Arab-Jews and the Mizrahim. Her award-winning work includes the books Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices (Duke Univ. Press, 2006), Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation, (Univ. of Texas Press, 1989), Unthinking Eurocentrism (co-authored with R. Stam, Routledge, 1994), Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation and Postcolonial Perspectives (co-edited, Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1997), Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age (MIT Press and the New Museum, 1998), Forbidden Reminiscences (Bimat Kedem, 2001). .

Artist Statement
Beth Krensky

My current work is tied to my being a mother. I continue to explore ways that art (both the process of creating art as well as the finished product) can transcend the political for the human. In particular, I am very interested in children—what happens to them, what is possible for them, and what our responsibility as adults is for them.

The work for this exhibition is based on my own and my people's traditions, rituals and texts. I have drawn both from centuries-old traditions and objects as well as from my family's more recent history of emigration from Russia, Austria and Hungary at the turn of the last century. My body holds a piece of the collective consciousness of the Jewish people as well as my individual and familial memories.

Conceptually, the ideas of lineage, motherhood, Jewish ritual and the region marking a boundary or threshold have informed all of the work. I have chosen different media to support conceptual choices. Bronze memorializes as well as reflects the materials used during a specific period of antiquity. Copper has been used in religious ceremonies for millennia and is considered a medium between the spirit and physical worlds. Olive wood comes from Bethlehem and represents both ancestral roots and the contested land.

Much of the work is reminiscent of ritual artifacts, both real and imagined. Many of the pieces are small enough to carry on one's person, just as my ancestors carried a few small possessions with them as they escaped pogroms in Russia and Eastern Europe. The physical journeys of my ancestors have become metaphorical passages that raise questions about our contemporary location(s). On what ground do I stand and in whose house?

Women—historical, biblical and contemporary—have influenced the work. Sarah and Hagar, the Jewish matriarchs, Jewish and Muslim women that have come together to work for peace, and numerous Jewish women I have interviewed are reflected in some of the pieces.

The idea of "re-membering," or putting back together something, is a theme woven through some of the work. "Bridge III" can represent fragments of something disparate, or perhaps fragments that can be connected in some way to create a bridge. It is my intent that the work merely raise questions that can be contemplated and discussed, and perhaps move us across real or imagined divides to common ground.

Artist Statement
Sama Alshaibi

As a migrant whose travels have taken me to live in several countries and regions I have found an interesting pattern: the re-creation and reconstruction of a migrant's motherland is a process that begins in the adopted homeland. This is true despite the fact that the new surfaces of an adopted home do not hold a memory of one's history. There is no comfort in place, and there are no visual clues to trigger one's sense of identity and culture, a fact that can ultimately foster as much alienation as comfort.

Those who immigrated to lands starkly different from where they were born or raised in, even for brief periods, seem most attached to reconstructing a present memory of culture and identity in their new locations often by recreating situations and contexts that emulate elements of their homelands. Those, like myself, who by chance or intention migrated to lands whose physicality reflects the motherland, find profound comfort in place and our senses of identity not as troubled by location and relocation. The landscape breeds a security that has provided me with the much-needed reassurance of coming home. my homelands of historical Palestine and Iraq, as well as the other countries I've lived in as a child (Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates and Jordan) are all similar to the landscape of the Southwest. Indeed, the land here holds my memory; it reflects my identity in the presence of red earth, sandy dunes, warm gulf waters, rocks, shrubs, cacti, palm trees, sweltering sun, big starry sky nights, and vast spaces. These are journeyed by pilgrims and tourists en route to ancient ruins and significant spiritual destinations, as well as those looping on the crossroads of utilitarian borderlands. From this utopic position, I reflect the landscape and the earth, in return, remembers me.

As a migrant from third world states that are adversaries of the US and Israel, my body's presence at their borders causes a predictable disturbance. Similarly, my body's presence at the borders of Arab countries also raises suspicion due to my US nationality and the stamps of numerous Israeli entry and exit visas. The honest answers to questions about my travels are always unsatisfying, and my presence is disconcerting to those who police these boundaries. Like many immigrants, my life reflects the crossings back and forth between motherland and new land as I attempt to remain close and connected to my family and friends. But for first world nations, my passport reads like the story of a shifty wanderer, a shifting profile that doesn't fit in tidy spectrums of security risks.

I am Palestinian, Iraqi, naturalized American who is Muslim, married to a Christian African American. I travel alone, with professional photography equipment, but I am not a journalist, nor a protesting activist. I am a professor, a mother, possessor of an American accent, without hijab. I speak English well, I know my rights, and I am unafraid. The layers of questions, interrogation, and intimidation directed at me by borderland officials are false displays of security tactics. The existence of these images in this exhibition makes clear two simple facts; borders are negotiated and they are porous. They are liminal spaces that for some serve as insurmountable barriers while for others they are part of a daily commute. My own multiplicitous and shifting identity reflect these facts. From this anti-utopic position, I also reflect the landscape, divided and guarded.

My own borderland body, not quite the pilgrim or tourist, en route on my own personal exile, encounters the place, in both homeland and new-land, tracing and imprinting my presence in the land itself, from there to here. It constructs a visual struggle; my utopic attempts at reconstructing a whole and complete identity in the new land is countered by a fatal flaw. Governing bodies whose job requires that they control access to the land ultimately never accept my exiled identity. Being a Muslim, Palestinian and Iraqi refugee in the United States encourages an ongoing struggle with a longing for home, acceptance and belonging. Questions such as “Where are you from?” or “Where is home?” are measured in these images. Space, distance, proximity and access suggest an awkward synthesis that is my everyday reality.

Selected Exhibitions:
Exit Art, New York City, NY, 2007
Darat Al Funun, Amman, Jordan, 2007
Pingyao International Photography Festival, China, 2007
Burke Museum, Seattle, WA, 2007
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Leticia, Colombia, 2007
Ningxia Exhibition Center, Yinchaun, China, 2007
The University of Stellenbosch Art Gallery, South Africa, 2006
The Khalil Sakakini Center, Ramallah, Palestine, 2006
Al Hoash Contemporary Art Gallery, Jerusalem, 2006
Al-Kahf Art Gallery, West Bank, 2004, 2005, 2006
Zero Station, Portland, Maine, 2006
Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport, ME, 2006
Carl Nelson Gorman Museum, Davis, CA, 2006
Center for the Living Arts, Mobile, AL, 2006
La Fabrica Arte Contemporaneo, Guatemala 2003-2005
Soap Factory, Minneapolis, MN, 2005
Museo De Arte Moderno, Guatemala City, Guatemala, 2005
St. Mary's College, Notre Dame, IN
El Centro de Formación de la Cooperación Española, Antigua, Guatemala, 2004
Salon de Artes Plasticas, Mexico City, Mexico, 2004
The LeRoy Neiman Gallery, New York, NY
The Museum of Contemporary Art, Denver, CO, 2003
St. Louis Artists' Guild, St. Louis, MO, 2003

Selected Awards:
Feminist Review Trust Award, 2007
Beyond The Call of Duty Award, Deans Office, College of Fine Arts, University of Arizona
Pima Arts Council Mini Grants Award, Arizona, 2006
Faculty Research Grant, University of Southern Maine, 2006
Honorable Mention, Camera Arts Magazine, 2005
The National Graduate Seminar Fellow, The Photography Institute, Columbia University, New York City, NY
Goueter Missouri Collection Prize, St. Louis Artist, MO, 2003
Center for Humanities and Arts Fellowship, University of Colorado 2003-2004
Illinois Arts Council Grant, Individual Artist, 2000, 2001

Education:
Bachelor of Arts, Columbia College, Chicago, 1999
Masters in Fine Arts, University of Colorado at Boulder, 2005

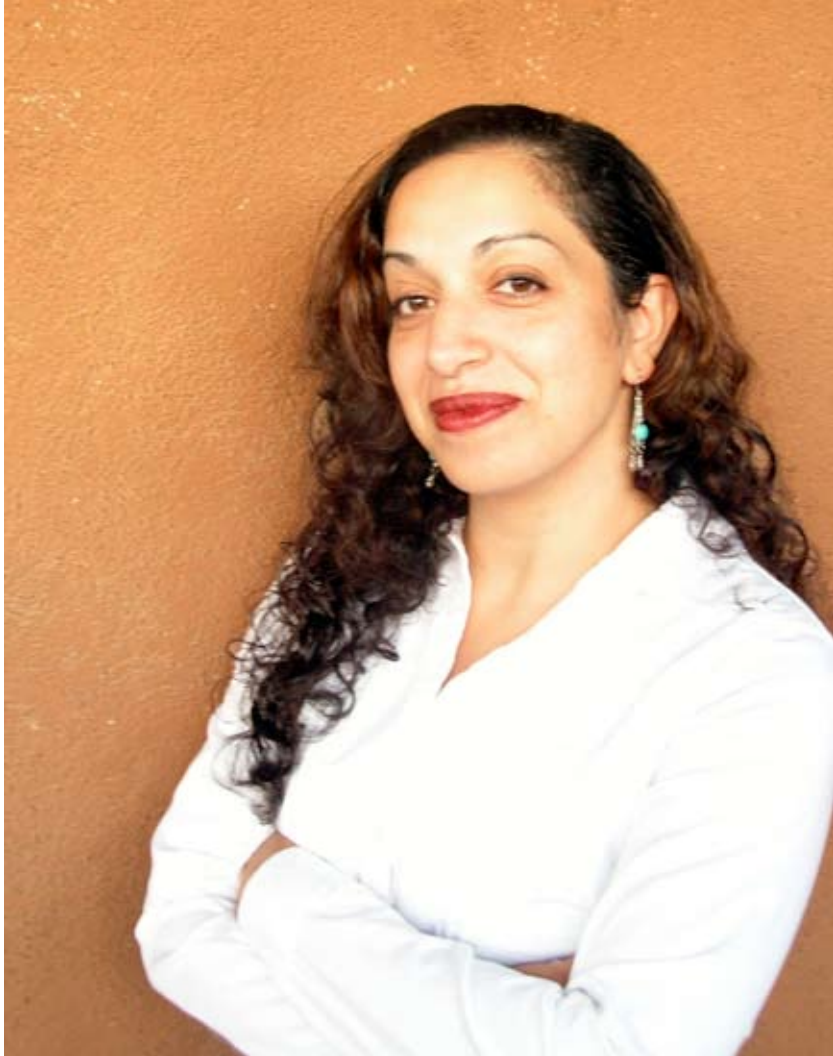
Residencies:
Darat Al Funun, Jordan, 2007
The International Center of Bethlehem, West Bank, 2005

Selected Publications:
Nueva Luz, Volume 12#1 (En Foco Inc: Bronx, NY, 2007)
Social Dynamics, (Routledge : Rondebosch : University of Cape Town, South Africa, 2007)
Palestinian Women Artists, The Land=The Body=The Narrative (Al Hoash Palestinian Art Court: Jerusalem, 2007)
Refuge & Rejection, (Arizona State University, 2007)
Sultana's Dream (Exit Art and the SAWArtCollective: NY)
Our People, Our Land, Our Images: International Indigenous Photographers (C.N. Gorman Museum: CA, 2006)
Frontiers: A Journal of Women's Studies 27:2 (University of Nebraska Press: NE, 2006)
Haydens Review #39 (Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing: Arizona State University, 2006)

Biography

Sama Alshaibi
Born: 1973, Basra, Iraq

Sama Alshaibi is Assistant Professor of Art in the Photography Department at the University of Arizona, Tucson. Born in Basra, Iraq to an Iraqi father and Palestinian mother, her photography, video and installations negotiates the shifts between personal, familial and official history, creating a context to understand the impact of war and exile. Her creative research extends into areas of collective trauma and how the role of memory containers (such as art) and memorials are used as vehicles to resist the effacement and obliteration of that history. Recently, her art and research has investigated the significance of "borderlands" as critical sites, both physically and intellectually. She is co-founder of the 6+ women's art collective and is represented by La Fabrica, Guatemala. Alshaibi lives Tucson, Arizona with her husband Dr. Marvin Gladney, and their two sons.



Selected Exhibitions:
Gallery of the School of Fine Arts, Ningxia University, Yinchuan, China, 2007
Rhys Gallery, Boston, Massachusetts, 2007, 2006
Academia de San Carlos Gallery, Mexico City, Mexico, 2007
Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Escuela de Artes, Medellin, Colombia, 2007
Ha'Kibbutz Art Gallery, Tel Aviv, Israel, 2007
Utah Museum of Fine Arts, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2006, 2004
Al Kahf Gallery, The International Center of Bethlehem, Palestine, 2006, 2004
Khalil Al Sakakini Cultural Center, Ramallah, Palestine, 2006
Fort Collins Museum of Contemporary Art, Fort Collins, Colorado, 2006
Central Utah Art Center, Ephraim, Utah, 2006, 2005
Salt Lake City Arts Council Finch Lane Gallery, Salt Lake City, Utah, 2005
Oventic Caracol, Chiapas, Mexico, 2005
Salon de Artes Plasticas, Mexico City, Mexico, 2004
Governor's Palace, Tlaxcala, Mexico, 2004
Gallery Sovereign, Boulder, Colorado, 2004
Sangre de Christo Arts Center, Pueblo, Colorado, 2004, 2003
Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art, Boulder, Colorado, 2003
Corriente Alterna, Lima, Peru, 2003
Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas, Taxco, Mexico, 2003
Center for the Visual Arts, Denver, Colorado, 2003

Selected Awards:
Marquis Who's Who in American Education, 8th Edition, 2007-2008
AcademicKeys Who's Who in Fine Arts Higher Education, 2007
University Research Committee, Faculty Fellow, University of Utah, 2007
College of Fine Arts Dean's Creative Research Award, University of Utah, 2007, 2005
Fine Arts Faculty Scholar, College of Fine Arts, University of Utah, 2006
Puffin Foundation, Artist Support Grant, 2004
Colorado Council on the Arts, Project Grant, 2001
Arts and Humanities Assembly of Boulder, Artist Grant, 2001, 1999
President's Fund for the Humanities Grant, 1995

Education:
Ph.D., The University of Colorado at Boulder, 2002
Ed.M., Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991
Center for Advanced Visual Studies, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1991
B.F.A., School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts, 1988

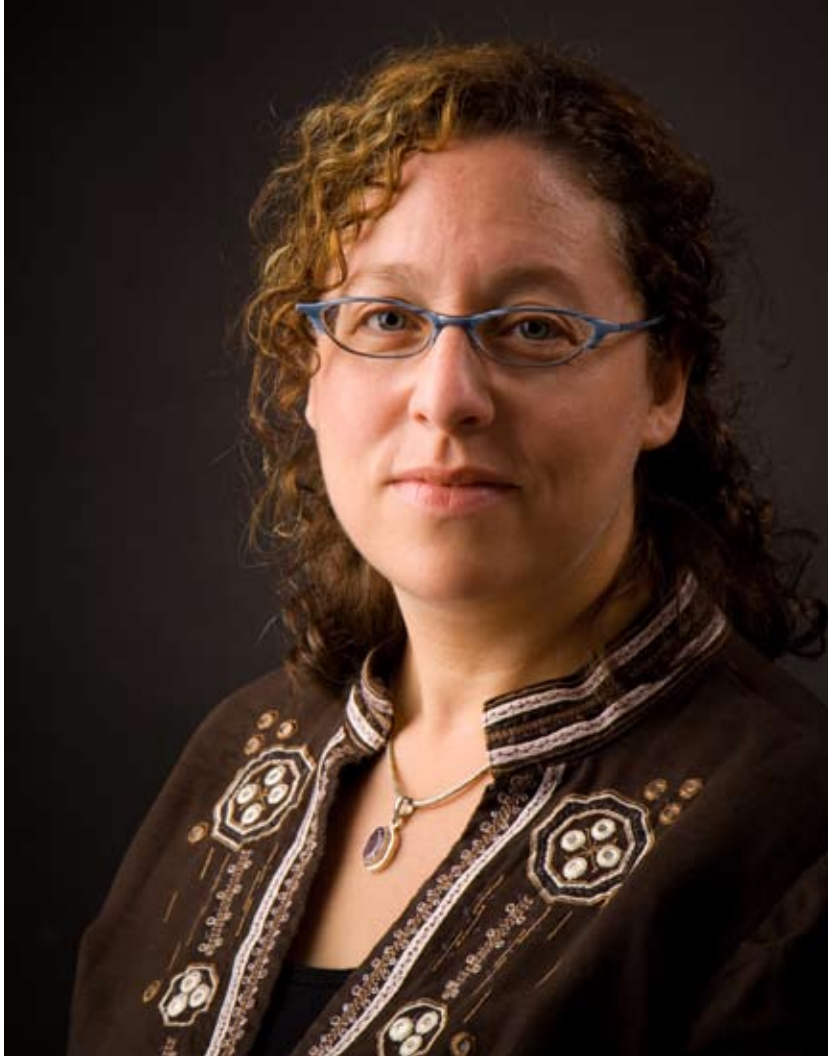
Selected Publications:
The Practitioner's Guide to Community-Based Art Education: Community Art in Theory and Practice, with S. Steffen (AltaMira Press: MD, 2008)
Critic's Choice (The Denver Post, May 28, 2006)
Triumph of Our Communities: Four Decades of Chicana/o Art (The Bilingual Press: AZ, 2005)
Internacional: Obra de Beth Krensky (Difusión de la academia y la cultura, 1:11, Mexico City, Mexico)
Rites in the Making: A Selection of Contemporary Art: Beth Krensky, (Chicago Art Journal, Volume 11, Chicago, IL)

Biography

Beth Krensky
Born: 1965, New York City, NY

Beth Krensky is an Assistant Professor of Art Education and the Area Head of Art Teaching at the University of Utah. She is an artist, activist and educator. She received her formal art training from the Boston Museum School. She has exhibited widely throughout the United States and internationally. She is a founding member of the international artist collective, the Artnauts. Her work is intended to provoke reflection about what is happening in our world as well as to create a vision of what is possible.

She is also a scholar in the area of youth-created art and social change. She received a master's degree with a focus on critical pedagogy and art education from the Harvard Graduate School of Education and a Ph.D. in Education from the University of Colorado at Boulder.



Front Cover: Beth Krensky, Bridge III, Installation Shot*, Bronze, each approximately 1"w x 12"h x .25"d, 2007
(p 3) Sama Alshaibi, Detail from Passage Series:
No-Man's Land (along the Jordan-Israeli-Syrian border), 24"h x 34"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
(p 4) Beth Krensky, Vestment--Detail*, Bronze, 5"h x 18"w x 5"d, 2005
(pp. 6-7) Sama Alshaibi, Habitat Series (left to right):
Burdrus/West Bank: 24"h x 34"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
Face: 24"h x 24"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
Tucson: 24"h x 34"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
(p 10) Beth Krensky, Tree Amulets--Detail*, Bronze, each 5"h x 3"w x .25"d, 2007
(p 11) Beth Krensky, Pileum Cornutum, Installation Shot*, Bronze, each approximately 3.5"h x 3"w x 3"d, 2007
(pp. 14-15) Sama Alshaibi, Red Sea Series (left to right):
Aqaba: 24"h x1 7.3"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
Hilal: 24"h x 24"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
Red Sea: 24"h x 24"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
Eilat–Taba: 24"h x 14.3"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
(p 16) Beth Krensky, Incantation Bowl, Installation Shot*, Bronze, 3"h x 9"w x 9"d, 2007
(p 17) Beth Krensky, Portal, Installation Shot*, Copper and Gold Leaf, 36"h x 36"w x 2"d, 2005
(p 19) Beth Krensky, Hamsa, Installation Shot*, Copper and Gold Leaf, 36"h x 30"w x .50"d, 2007
(pp. 22-23) Sama Alshaibi, Contested Land Series (left to right):
Mount of Olives-East Jerusalem, 24"h x 24"w, Digital Archival Print,2007
Divided Mount of Olives-East Jerusalem, 24"h x 24"w, Digital Archival Print, 2007
(p 25) Beth Krensky, Yad, Installation Shot*, Bronze, 7"h x 4"w x 3"d 2007
(p 27) Sama Alshaibi, Detail from Trespass, Digital Archival Print, 2007
(p 29) Marvin Gladney, Portrait of Sama Alshaibi, 2007
(p 31) Josh Blumental, Portrait of Beth Krensky, 2007
**installation and detail photographs of Beth Krensky's artwork by Josh Blumental*

We Make The Road By Walking
Artists: Sama Alshaibi and Beth Krensky

Mizel Museum Executive Director: Ellen Premack
Mizel Museum Curator: Georgina Kolber
Mizel Museum Grant Writer: Joe Mauro
Educational Materials: Beth Krensky and Megan Hallett
Catalogue Designer: Sama Alshaibi
Catalogue Editor: Dr. Marvin Gladney
Catalogue Printed at Integrity Print Group, Denver

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“We Make the Road By Walking” comes from a line by the Spanish poet Antonio Machado: “Se hace camino al andar,” or “You can make the way as you go.” The phrase was also used as the title for a book by Paulo Freire and Myles Horton on education and social change. In the tradition of this phrase, we are also attempting to forge a new road as we go.