

Magazine

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Courtesy of Rania Matar and Carroll and Sons Gallery

Rania Matar's "Stephanie, Beirut, Lebanon," 2010, is from the artist's series "A Girl and Her Room." Her work is part of "She Who Tells a Story," opening Saturday at Carnegie Museum of Art.

Women artists show Middle East in photography

By Mary Thomas

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Art notes

A visitor to the exhibition "She Who Tells a Story: Women Photographers From Iran and the Arab World" inadvertently handed a score to Kristen Gresh, an assistant curator of photographs at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

After viewing the exhibition the person said, "I thought you were only going to show images from the Arab and Iranian world."

In fact, all exhibited images are from the Middle East. That some were presumed to have been taken in the West underscored how stereotypes dominate the image of the region. That has translated to a negative reputation in recent years as headlines continue to focus on fanaticism, war and other forms of violence.

"There are so many different identities in the region. They can't be reduced to categories like territorial or ethnic," Ms.

phy scene. Shortly after she began her position at the Museum of Fine Arts, she proposed the exhibition and began in-depth research. She said all of the photographers are doing well and are engaged in new projects.

She said that there has been a lot of interest, from visitors and the press, since the exhibition opened in Boston in August 2013. It continued to draw large numbers at the Cantor Arts Center, Stanford University, where it closed earlier this month.

Ms. Gresh sees the exhibition as an opportunity to "divorce ourselves from the typical."

It offers "a moment to discover a new group of photographers, put art and culture before politics, and remove ourselves from the sounds and images we see and hear on television, online and on the radio." She hopes visitors will "think about things differently

Gresh said recently at Carnegie Museum of Art. She will speak about the exhibition and the individual photographers at 1:30 p.m. Saturday, the opening day for the exhibition at the museum.

The 12 photographers in the show come from and address multiple identities and issues, Ms. Gresh said, including Arab and Iranian, public and private, personal and religious; urbanity, war and occupation. Peoples from the areas represented are often presumed to be associated with Islam, but not all of the artists are Muslim.

The photographers employ a variety of approaches to their projects, ranging from the photo-journalistic imagery of Rula Halawani's "Negative Incursions," taken in 2002 during the Israeli incursion into the West Bank, to the text-covered portraits of Shirin Neshat, who exhibited in the 1999/2000 Carnegie International and in 2002 at Carnegie Mellon University's Regina Gouger Miller Gallery where she delivered the 18th Robert Lepper Distinguished Lecture in Creative Inquiry.

Most of the artists are exhibited for the first time in the United States. They are: Jananne Al-Ani of London; Boushra Almutawakel of Sana'a, Yemen and Paris; Gohar Dashti of Iran; Rana El Nemr of Egypt; Lalla Essaydi of Morocco and New York; Shadi Ghadirian of Iran; Tanya Habjouqa and Ms. Halawani, both of East Jerusalem; Nermine Hammam of Egypt and London; Rania Matar of Brookline, Mass.; Ms. Neshat of New York; and Newsha Tavakolian of Iran.

Settings range from teenagers' bedrooms to vignettes staged on the movie set of a conflict-devastated landscape. The exhibition title came from the Arabic word rawiya and refers to the visual stories the works tell.

Ms. Gresh lived for 10 years in Paris and Cairo, where she followed the contemporary photogra-

and put these contemporary narratives before the ones they're seeing in the media."

"She Who" continues through Sept. 28. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays, noon-5 p.m. Sundays, until 8 p.m. Thursdays. (This Saturday the gallery will be open to members only from 10 a.m. to noon.) Admission is \$19.95; seniors, \$14.95; students and children age 3-18, \$11.95; members and children under 3, free; and half-price after 3 p.m. weekdays. Admission includes Carnegie Museum of Natural History. Information: [412-622-3131](tel:412-622-3131) or www.cmoa.org.

Warhol/Pearlstein opens

The opening celebration of the exhibition "Pearlstein, Warhol, Cantor: From Pittsburgh to New York" begins at 7 p.m. Friday at The Andy Warhol Museum. The event is free with museum admission and will have a cash bar and swing-era jazz playlist provided by Mike Plaskett and Dale Abraham of Rhythm Sweet & Hot on 90.5 WESA.

Andy Warhol, noted New York artist Philip Pearlstein and Dorothy Cantor were students at the same time at Carnegie Tech (now Carnegie Mellon University) and continued their friendship as young artists breaking into the New York art world in the early 1950s. This is the first exhibition to explore that period in their lives through artworks and archival materials.

The show continues through Sept. 6 at 117 Sandusky St., North Side. Hours are 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday and until 10 p.m. Friday. Admission is \$20; students and children ages 3 to 18, \$10; half-price admission from 5 to 10 p.m. Fridays. Information: [412-237-8300](tel:412-237-8300) or www.warhol.org.

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