

# ContemporaryIdentities

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## **Dr. Izmer Bin Ahmad, Art Professor**

Izmer Bin Ahmad (Malaysia), teaches studio art at the College of Fine Arts & Design, University of Sharjah in the United Arab Emirates. Trained as a practicing artist as well as an academic researcher his professional activities encompass both studio practice and academic writing. As an artist, Ahmad's work focuses on drawing and painting, which has been featured in various international exhibitions, particularly in Malaysia and Canada where he previously lived and taught. His academic research and publication have been primarily on the subjects of the body and modern Malaysian art, especially in examining the manifestation of somatic nationalism in Malaysian artistic and cultural production. His recent project analysed the body politics that underscore the painterly gestures of Malaysian abstract expressionism. Ahmad's current research endeavors continue to elaborate on abstract expressionism's discourse on mark-making albeit focusing on the processes and materiality of painterly practice and images.

## **Dr. Massimo Fotino, Social Design Management Professor**

Massimo Fotino (Italy) is cultural entrepreneur and social visionary, sociologist, journalist and adjunct professor of "Social Design Management" to the University Magna Graecia of Catanzaro. He works for public and private organizations in sectors connected to education, training, project management, communication and social policies. As sociologist, in the past he was collaborator of important organizations like EU and OECD but also of no-profit enterprises on the topics related to territorial knowledge and intelligence, local development, youth behaviors and smart land. Currently is working on social network analysis SNA, social work, cooperative learning, scenario planning, unified communication & collaboration in the art's field. He follows projects in music, expressive arts and culture the topics of which related to gender issues, social movements, social behaviors, art and nature, and systemic design. His intellectual perspective is related to the relationship between society and human being in both scientific way and through the analysis of the emotional and iconic expressions of our time.

## **Dr. Majid Heidari, Philosopher**

Majid Heidari (Iran) writes on contemporary aesthetic topics. For his PhD thesis in philosophy of art he focused on *narrative truth* and *creativity process* from Ricoeur's view. Then, he wrote *The Plight of Aesthetics in Iran* and continued the same line of research with *The Tension Between*

Aesthetics. Right now, he is focused on the role of visual metaphors in aesthetics theory with papers like Visual Metaphoric Expressions of Resistance and Escape Under Oppression. He is the Head of Visual Communication Department in Ferdows Institute of Higher Education, Mashhad, Iran. And he had several start up activities like, [www.artingroom.com](http://www.artingroom.com), Tuesdays-Dialogues, and wrote a short story collections called "*The Infrastructure of the City*".

### **Dr. Sanna Lehtinen, Philosopher**

Sanna Lehtinen (Finland) is a Helsinki-based philosopher specializing in environmental and urban aesthetics and art. Her research interests lie at the intersection of the urban lifeform, ecology and technology. She works as a postdoctoral researcher (PhD 2015) at the Helsinki Institute of Sustainability Science HELSUS at the University of Helsinki and teaches aesthetics and environmental aesthetics at Aalto University. She is currently the President of the Finnish Society for Aesthetics.

### **Dr. Nadia Mehdi Alhasani, Professor**

Nadia M. Alhasani (Iraq), is Professor and Dean of the College of Fine Arts & Design at the University of Sharjah – UAE. She completed her bachelor degree in Architecture from the University of Baghdad, and graduate degrees from MIT and the University of Pennsylvania. Appointed as a member of the Task Force on the Teaching of Science in the Muslim World, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (2014-2015) and, most recently, to the Academy of Engineering and Technology of the Developing World (AETDEW) under the auspice of the UNESCO (2016-2018). Lectures and publishes on higher education in the MENA region, women in science and technology, and the role of Arts in STEM.

### **Dr. Emelia Ong, Art Historian**

Emelia Ong (Malaysia) currently teaches art history at the University Malaya, Kuala Lumpur. She received her BFA in Graphic Design from the University of Bridgeport in Connecticut, USA, and went on to earn her MA in Visual Arts at the University of Malaya. She completed her PhD at Universiti Sains Malaysia, Penang, with a thesis on the construction of identities through art practice during the independence period of Malaysia. Her research interests include modern and contemporary Malaysian and Southeast Asian art, and its intersections with culture, identity, tradition and nationalism. She is currently working on a coffee table book on contemporary Malaysian artists that presents the diversity of art practice in Malaysia, encompassing behind-the-scenes glimpses of the artist's personal histories, art process, techniques, tools, learning processes and the spaces that shape them.

### **Dr. Johan Othman, Art Professor**

Johan Othman (Malaysia), pursued his undergraduate education at Oberlin Conservatory of Music graduating in 1997 with a major in music composition and in 1999 he graduated from Yale University with a Masters of Music in composition. In 2015 he obtained his PhD in Art History and Theory from Universiti Sains Malaysia. His past scholarly research and papers which range from music and cultural studies, sound/image constitution in film, and gender/image signification, includes: "Inscribing the Rohingya By Way Of Writing And Reading Its Particular/Universal Movement" (2018), "Images and Historiography As Paradox of Marking and Sustaining the Voice of the Subaltern: The Rani of Sirmur, the Suicide and the Mutant" (2017), "*Can Medea Speak?* Tracing Euripides' *Medea's* Complex Performative Gendering in Her *Speech* from the Outside in the Outside" (2016), "Constituting Gender, Locating the Body" (2015) "The Body as Agency of Imaginary Gendering: Re-imagining Medea's Gender Formation and Positioning" (ICHSC 2011), "Privileging the Absence in Claire Denis's 'Vers Nancy'" (2nd PACIA 2011), and "Cultural Decentralization Within A Post-Colonial Territory: Movements in Malaysia's Musical Culture"(Wacana Seni 2002). He currently teaches music and art theory in the School of the Arts, Universiti Sains Malaysia since 1999.

### **Dr. Max Ryyänen, Philosopher**

Max Ryyänen (Finland), is a Helsinki-based philosopher of visual culture and the arts, with an additional history in performance art, gallery management (ROR Gallery, Kallio Kunsthalle, KLEIN), critique and art writing (Kunstkritikk, Flash Art, Art Pulse) and a variety of modes and forms of writing (essays, performative, fiction). He is senior lecturer of theory of visual culture at Aalto University and the head of the MA program Visual Culture, Curating, and Contemporary Art in the same university.

### **Anna Seaman, Art Writer**

Anna Seaman (UK), is an arts writer and editor based in Dubai. She is a former journalist, having worked in newspapers in London and Abu Dhabi, but specialized in contemporary art and Middle Eastern urban culture in 2011, when she became the editor of Brownbook Magazine. In 2013, she took the post of visual art writer and critic at The National newspaper (UAE) and has been a freelance writer, editor and consultant in the field of visual arts and culture since 2017.

### **Dr. Zoltán Somhegyi, Art Historian**

Zoltán Somhegyi (Hungary), is a Hungarian art historian, holding a PhD in aesthetics, based in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates and working as an Assistant Professor at the College of Fine Arts and Design of the University of Sharjah. As a researcher of art history and aesthetics, he is specialised in 18th-19th century art and art theory, with additional interest in contemporary fine arts and art criticism. He curated exhibitions in six countries, participated in international art

projects and often lectures in academic conferences. He is Secretary General and Website Editor of the International Association for Aesthetics, member of the Executive Committee of The International Council for Philosophy and Human Sciences and Consultant of Art Market Budapest – International Contemporary Art Fair. He is author of books, academic papers, artist catalogs and more than two hundred articles, essays, critiques and art fair reviews.

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