



Engagement and Impact 2018

Charles Sturt University

CSU19 (CAH) - Impact

Overview

Title

(Title of the impact study)

The History of the Tentmakers of Cairo

Unit of Assessment

19 - Studies In Creative Arts and Writing

Additional FoR codes

(Identify up to two additional two-digit FoRs that relate to the overall content of the impact study.)

Socio-Economic Objective (SEO) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit SEO codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

95 - Cultural Understanding

Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) Codes

(Choose from the list of two-digit ANZSIC codes that are relevant to the impact study.)

89 - Heritage Activities

90 - Creative and Performing Arts Activities

Keywords

(List up to 10 keywords related to the impact described in Part A.)

Khayamiya

Egypt

Applique

History

Cairo

Tentmakers

Islamic art

Textiles

Craft

Khedival

Sensitivities

Commercially sensitive

No

Culturally sensitive

No

Sensitivities description

(Please describe any sensitivities in relation to the impact study that need to be considered, including any particular instructions for ARC staff or assessors, or for the impact study to be made publicly available after EI 2018.)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander research flag

(Is this impact study associated with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander content?)

NOTE - institutions may identify impact studies where the impact, associated research and/or approach to impact relates to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, communities, language, place, culture and

knowledges and/or is undertaken with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, nations, and/or communities.)

No

Science and Research Priorities

(Does this impact study fall within one or more of the Science and Research Priorities?)

No

Impact

Summary of the impact

(Briefly describe the specific impact in simple, clear English. This will enable the general community to understand the impact of the research.)

The art of the Egyptian tentmakers was threatened with extinction by modernisation and marginalisation, obliterating cultural heritage. For example, publications pre-2012 did not link the oeuvre of the tentmakers as a group or their oral histories and omitted the genre now defined as Khedival khayamiya. To address this, CSU research structured the unpublished history of khayamiya through exhibitions, films and books that engaged new audiences. Khayamiya now appears in surveys of Islamic, African, Egyptian and textile art history. The term is used by museums, auctioneers, artists and journalists, creating an extensive online presence. The global number of tentmakers increased in number from 80 to 100 since 2007. Since 2012 CSU research has documented over 250 Khedival khayamiya globally.

Beneficiaries

(List up to 10 beneficiaries related to the impact study)

The Egyptian tentmakers

Museums and galleries

Art historians

Historians

Quilters and textile artists

Visual and performing artists

Arabic studies

Islamic art

Urban heritage

Architects

Countries in which the impact occurred

(Search the list of countries and add as many as relate to the location of the impact)

Egypt
Australia
England
United States of America
Malaysia
Netherlands
France
New Zealand
Croatia
Italy
Denmark
Germany
Lebanon
Jordan
Sudan
Qatar
Kuwait
Israel
United Arab Emirates

Details of the impact

(Provide a narrative that clearly outlines the research impact. The narrative should explain the relationship between the associated research and the impact. It should also identify the contribution the research has made beyond academia, including:

- who or what has benefitted from the results of the research (this should identify relevant research end-users, or beneficiaries from industry, the community, government, wider public etc.)*
- the nature or type of impact and how the research made a social, economic, cultural, and/or environmental impact*
- the extent of the impact (with specific references to appropriate evidence, such as cost-benefit-analysis, quantity of those affected, reported benefits etc.)*
- the dates and time period in which the impact occurred.*

NOTE - the narrative must describe only impact that has occurred within the reference period, and must not make aspirational claims.)

Before 2012, the history of the Egyptian tentmakers was fragmented. This CSU project reassembled it for museum curators, artists, historians, teachers and the tentmaker community. Within the reference period, the research produced:

- social impact (new awareness of the art form, active patronage from international networks and new respect for the profession within Egypt)
- economic impact (CSU documentation of new business models for the tentmakers including the introduction of online sales via Etsy and teaching hand-applique in workshops to quilters [Ref 1])
- cultural impact (new applique designs and research into the history of the art form, documentation of endangered knowledge, key genres identified towards a chronology of khayamiya design (Ref 2))

Historic khayamiya (tentmaker appliques) were isolated by mistaken identities, absent contexts and the tentmakers' limited agency to situate their history through scholarly discourse. Disparate, inaccurate and inconsistent descriptions prevented linking of examples across collections. As a result, the unique art of khayamiya was almost excluded from the history of Islamic and Egyptian art. This research standardised the English spelling of the Arabic term khayamiya, facilitated access to unpublished collections and promoted use of this knowledge to new end-user audiences (e.g. artists, educators, and tentmakers).

Since 2013, CSU has supported Dr Sam Bowker's research, resulting in a new history of khayamiya. The manuscript for 'The Tentmakers of Cairo' was submitted in 2016 and finally expanded for publication by the American University in Cairo Press in 2018 (Bib 1). This book addresses aspects of the tentmakers overlooked by both Barakat and Gagnon in their 2003 publications. The book also includes oral histories commissioned by Durham University through an Arts and Humanities Research Council Grant (UK). These were collected and translated by Durham University and published by Dr Bowker (CSU) and Seif El Rashidi (University of London).

CSU supported regional exhibitions in Wagga (2013) and Albury (2015), after which the Islamic Art Museum Malaysia invited Dr Bowker to curate an exhibition surveying the scope of khayamiya. This was translated into Malay, English and Arabic, attracting over 8,000 visitors and extensive media coverage (Ref 3).

Timothy Crutchett (CSU) created ultra-high resolution photographs of large and fragile khayamiya textiles for online access. This gained media attention and was presented at the NVAEC 2016 conference at the National Gallery of Australia as an innovative teaching resource (Bib 2). The filmmaker Kim Beamish created a feature-length documentary recording the social situation of the tentmakers after the 2011 Egyptian Revolution. The documentary was supported by the CSU research and shown in film festivals, museums and art galleries worldwide (Bib 3).

The innovative research required to structure the tentmakers history led to Dr Bowker being invited to lecture and submit exhibition proposals for the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art in Honolulu. Dr Bowker was since awarded a prestigious Hamid Bin Khalifa Fellowship in 2017 that was presented by leading professors Sheila Blair and Jonathan Bloom at the Virginia Commonwealth University, Qatar. Dr Bowker's argument for the relationship between Henri Matisse's paper cut-outs and khayamiya has been cited by various scholars at the Tate Modern, and at Michigan, Oxford, Harvard and Colombia universities (Ref 4).

Following the CSU study, museums re-assessed historic khayamiya. Institutions now actively acquiring, displaying and requesting written assessments as case studies include the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Metropolitan Museum. These case studies were published in exhibition catalogues, books, blogs, captions and online lectures. Artists and graphic designers in Egypt adapted khayamiya for contemporary purposes, and master tentmakers like Ahmed Naguib revisited patterns from the Khedival period (1867-1914) as new designs. The Victoria & Albert Museum and the Oriental Museum in Durham have acquired important khayamiya by Hany Abdel Khader based on the 2011 Revolution (Bib 4).

Revealing the history of khayamiya enabled the creation of a unique 'Islamic Art and Design' subject for CSU (ART240; Bib 5). It is supported by an international collaboration of scholars-in-residence at the Islamic Art Museum Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur.

As a result of this CSU research, khayamiya is now present within Islamic, Egyptian, African and textile art history. It is cited in popular media, museum collections and auction catalogues. The tentmakers now possess a substantial social media following (>15,000 followers on Facebook) that promotes online sales (via an Etsy store managed by the Tentmakers) that improves the economic viability and social esteem for khayamiya as both craft and heritage in Egypt. Since 2007 the Egyptian Tentmakers have toured to numerous international quilt exhibitions with private philanthropic and NGO support, described by the American Quilt Society as the 'rock stars of the quilt world' (Ref 1). The global number of tentmakers increased from 80 to 100 since 2007, and new apprentices are taking up the profession, participating in international networks through the competitive skills of this unique craft (Ref 5).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bib 1. Sam Bowker and Seif El Rashidi, *The Tentmakers of Cairo: Egypt's Medieval and Modern Applique Craft*. American University in Cairo Press, 2018

Bib 2. Gigapixel Project <http://scci.csu.edu.au/gigapixelproject/>

Bib 3. Kim Beamish, *The Tentmakers of Cairo* <http://www.tentmakersofcairo.com/>

Bib 4. Sam Bowker, 'Another Egyptian Revolution: Khayamiya as War Art' in *The Eye on War: Constructing the Memory of War in Visual Culture since 1914*, edited by Ann Murray, 90-102. New York: Routledge, 2018

Bib 5. ART240: Introduction to Islamic Art and Design. Online subject for CSU

Associated research

(Briefly describe the research that led to the impact presented for the UoA. The research must meet the definition of research in Section 1.9 of the EI 2018 Submission Guidelines. The description should include details of:

- what was researched*
- when the research occurred*
- who conducted the research and what is the association with the institution)*

From 2012-16, Sam Bowker (CSU) and Seif El Rashidi (University College London) collected evidence regarding the origins of the tentmakers and changing use of khayamiya by identifying, comparing images, accounts and examples of khayamiya applique through archives, manuscripts, auction records, textile collections, photographs, films, interviews, correspondence and diaries (Ref 1). They defined genres through comparative analysis and published these results within frameworks established within textile scholarship and Islamic art history, noting links previously forged by quilt scholars and other witnesses (Ref 2).

This research expanded two 2003 publications by Heba Barakat (Islamic Art Museum Malaysia) and Blaire Gagnon (University of Rhode Island) (Ref 3). These were an exhibition catalogue following the IAMM's acquisition of an Egyptian tent and a thesis on Egyptian touristic appliques drawing on fieldwork by Betty Wass from the late 1970s and John Feeney's 1986 article for *Aramco World*, surveying the living tentmakers and aspects of their oral history (Ref 4). Bowker's research started in 2012 with the observation that Henri Matisse's painting 'Interior with Egyptian Curtain' (1948) depicts a historic form of khayamiya applique, leading to the observation that the Egyptian Tentmakers history was not published (Ref 4). Seif El Rashidi (UCL) joined the project in 2013, following his work in heritage conservation along the Street of the Tentmakers in Cairo (Ref 5).

FoR of associated research

(Up to three two-digit FoRs that best describe the associated research)

19 - Studies in Creative Arts and Writing

20 - Language, Communication and Culture

21 - History and Archaeology

References (up to 10 references, 350 characters per reference)

(This section should include a list of up to 10 of the most relevant research outputs associated with the impact)

Ref 1. Sam Bowker and Seif El Rashidi, 'Reading Khedival Khayamiya: Understanding the Epigrams of the Egyptian Tentmakers' *Journal of Middle Eastern and African Studies*, December 2016, 345-368

Ref 2. Sam Bowker, 'The Symmetry of Khayamiya and Quilting: International Relations of the Egyptian Tentmakers' for *Craft + Design Enquiry* #6, 2014

Ref 3. Khayamiya: Khedival to Contemporary – The Tentmakers of Cairo Exhibition curated by Sam Bowker at the Islamic Art Museum Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, 2015-2016.

Ref 4. Sam Bowker, 'Matisse and the Khayamiya: An Egyptian Curtain Unveiled' *The Burlington Magazine*,

Number 1353, Volume CLVII, December 2015.

Ref 5. Sam Bowker, 'The Urban Fabric of Cairo: Khayamiya and the Suradeq' for the International Journal of Islamic Architecture, Volume 3, Number 2, 2014

Additional impact indicator information

Additional impact indicator information

(Provide information about any indicators not captured above that are relevant to the impact study, for example return on investment, jobs created, improvements in quality of life years (QALYs). Additional indicators should be quantitative in nature and include:

- name of indicator (100 characters)*
- data for indicator (200 characters)*
- brief description of indicator and how it is calculated (300 characters).)*