

ضيقَةٌ أنتِ يا سورية  
ضيقَةٌ،

حتّى إنّي أرتطمُ بنفسِي مرّاتٍ كثيرةً في النهارِ الواحدِ،  
ولا أجدُ مكاناً أركنُ فيه ظلّي.

هنادي زرقا، الحياة هادنة في الفيترين، بيروت: دار النهضة،  
٢٠١٦، ص ٢٨.

Eng bist du, Syrien,  
So eng  
Dass ich mit mir selbst kollidiere, mehrmals am Tag,  
Und keinen Platz finde, meinen Schatten abzulegen.

Hanadi Zarka, *Das Leben ist ruhig in der Vitrine*, Beirut:  
Dar an-Nahḍa, 2016, S. 28. Übersetzung: Barbara  
Winckler.

## CONTACT

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## VENUE / REGISTRATION

RS 2  
Schlaunstraße 2 (Hofgebäude),  
access via Rosenstraße 2/9  
48143 Münster

Online participation is welcome (all times are CET).  
Access details and further information:  
[www.uni-muenster.de/ArabistikIslam/tagungen](http://www.uni-muenster.de/ArabistikIslam/tagungen)

To register and access the readings for the workshop,  
please send an email to the organizer. Registration is  
not mandatory, but warmly recommended.

## IMAGE

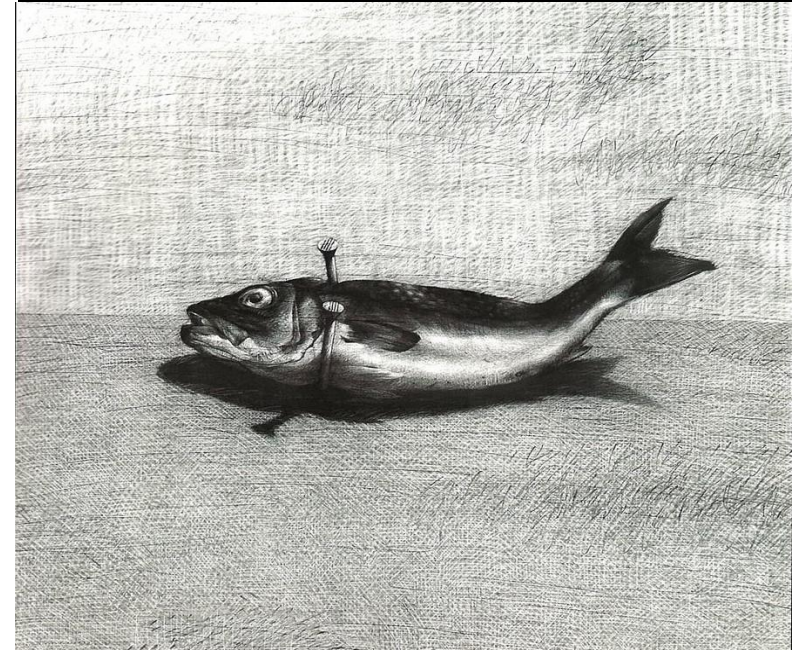
Youssef Abdelke: سمكة (Fish, 2006), charcoal on paper.  
Courtesy of the artist.

## Workshop

# THE 'SILENCES' OF SYRIAN LITERATURE AND ARTS

Strategies of Concealing and Revealing  
in the Face of Political Repression

24-25 November 2023 | Münster



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**THE ‘SILENCES’  
OF SYRIAN LITERATURE AND ARTS:  
STRATEGIES OF CONCEALING AND REVEALING  
IN THE FACE OF POLITICAL REPRESSION**

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Until recently, Western academia has shown little interest in literature and arts from Syria, perceiving Syrian literature as stuck between (social) realism and political repression, lacking the experimental character of postmodern literary texts.

With the uprisings of the ‘Arab Spring’, Syrian literary and cultural production – especially popular forms of dissent – caught the attention of researchers and media, especially with many authors and artists moving to Europe. Critics emphasized the unreserved criticism that defined large segments of post-2011 Syrian literature and arts, as compared to authors in earlier decades – especially those that stayed in Syria – who had turned to more subversive forms of expressing social and political criticism, while also experimenting with ‘silence’ as a performative device.

This workshop brings together international scholars based in Germany to explore forms and strategies Syrian writers and artists of different generations have employed to conceal or reveal critical perspectives on society, demonstrating how the new wave of open protest did not materialize in a cultural and political vacuum, but had its roots in earlier decades. The presentations will challenge paradigms of ‘resistance’ or ‘protest’, suggest new approaches to memory, cultural heritage and trauma dynamics, and add aspects of social and material conditions of cultural production. While the focus will be on fictional and non-fictional texts, such as poetry, novels and memoirs, alternative modes of intellectual and cultural production, such as songs and underground music, will also be explored. Academic presentations are complemented by poetry reading and a conversation with Syrian poet Hanadi Zarka.

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**PROGRAM**

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**Friday, 24 November 2023**

13.30–14.00 | **Welcome & Introduction**  
Barbara Winckler, University of Münster

14.00–15.30 |  
**A Symbol of Silence:  
The Memory of ‘Hama’ in Syrian Literature**  
Anna Christina Scheiter, University of Marburg

15.30–16.00 | Coffee Break

16.00–17.30 |  
**Interrogating Cultural Heritage during the Syrian War:  
Critical Reflections on Khālid Khalīfa’s *al-Mawtu*  
*‘amalun shāqq***  
Dani Nassif, University of Regensburg

17.30–18.00 | Coffee Break

18.00–19.15 |  
**“Sorrow is a Heavy Guest / الحزن ضيف ثقيل”  
Poetry Reading & Reflections on War and Other  
Existential Crises (Arabic/English/German)**  
Hanadi Zarka, Latakia, Syria /  
fellow of the DAAD Artists-in-Berlin Program  
in conversation with Barbara Winckler, University of  
Münster

**Saturday, 25 November 2023**

9.00–10.30 |  
**Trauma Dynamics in Modern and Contemporary  
Syrian Literature: The Case of Muḥammad al-  
Māghūṭ as Prose Poet**  
Stephan Milich, University of Cologne

10.30–11.00 | Coffee Break

11.00–12.30 |  
**New Readers, Actors and Institutions:  
The Changing Conditions of Syrian Literary  
Production after 2011**  
Felix Lang, Berlin

12.30–14.00 | Lunch Break

14.00–15.30 |  
**Deconstructing the Paradigm of Resistance:  
Commodification, Exotification and the Political in  
the Post-2011 Arab Underground Music**  
Fernanda Fischione, Sapienza University of Rome /  
University of Münster

15.30–16.00 | Coffee Break

16.00–17.00 | **Wrap Up Discussion**