

Brooklyn Paper **BP**

Beyond the veil: Two exhibits highlight the lives of Muslims in Brooklyn



Arabian sights: Mona Saeed Kamal's installation, "1001 Migrations," at Bric's "Beyond Geographies" exhibit, features 1,001 paper boats to represent the movement of people across borders.

By Rose Adams
Brooklyn Paper

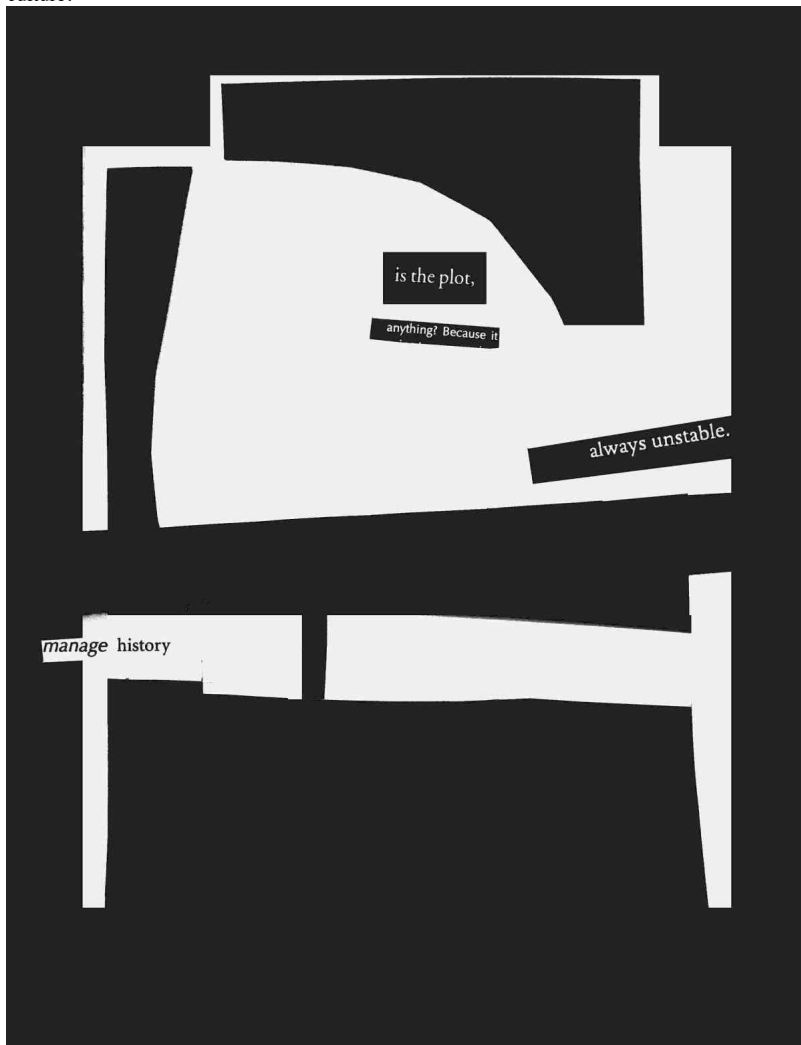


Bric

Feminist creatures: Artist Morehshin Allahyari turned a spiritual creature for Islamic mythology into a feminist statue, called “Aisha Qandisha,” the name of a prominent woman from Moroccan folklore.



Cultural blend: Artist Asif Mian stitched together Persian rugs and polyester carpets to represent her Iranian family’s assimilation into American culture.



Kameelah Janan Rasheed

Sight and sound: Brooklyn artist Kameelah Janan Rasheed overlaid cut-out words onto 11 black-and-white prints, each of which correlate to an oral history recording.

We’re doubling down on Islamic art!

A pair of Brooklyn galleries are shedding light on the experience of the borough’s Muslim residents through sculptures, prints, projections, and multimedia exhibits. The twin display of work by Muslim artists marks a milestone for Kings County, according to one curator.

“There really hasn’t been a show of Muslim artists in Brooklyn,” said Elizabeth Ferrer, who organized a 35-piece exhibit for Fort Greene arts group Bric.

The two shows, at the Bric House and the Brooklyn Historical Society in Brooklyn Heights, expand on the Society’s oral history project “[Muslims in Brooklyn](#),” which launched in December of 2018. The new show at the Historical Society consists of a single installation, titled “An Opening,” which pairs recordings of those oral histories with large prints that collage barely legible words and blacked-out sentences into black-and-white shapes. The images depict a feeling of uncertainty, according to the artist.

“I wanted the sounds of people thinking,” said Kameelah Janan Rasheed. “I kept coming back to this idea of tuning, of coming in and out of these stories.”

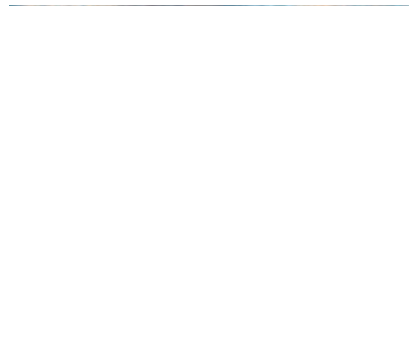
The images reflect the sounds and occasional gaps in communication found in the recordings, which visitors can hear through headphones.

“You hear laughing, snorting, chuckling, going back and trying to reframe something,” she said.

Meanwhile, the Bric exhibit “Beyond Geographies,” opening on Sept. 13, will offer a splash of color, with sculptures, video projections, and photography that bring to life the experiences of its eight Muslim artists.

In one room-sized installation, Iranian artist Morehshin Allahyari projects images of jinn, spiritual beings from Islamic mythology, on the wall behind a statue of a woman with tentacles and exaggerated features, as a way of making a feminist statement, said the show’s curator.

“She takes one jinn that she refigures as a feminist figure,” said Ferrer. “It’s a way of taking agency.”



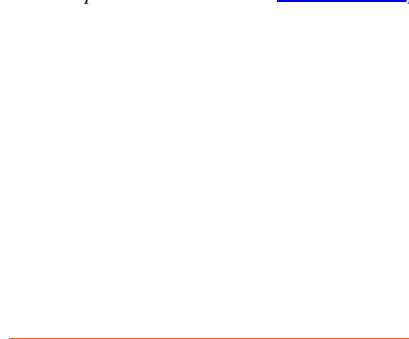
The exhibit also includes deconstructed Persian rugs, colorful paper boats, and photos that communicate the complex identities of Muslims in America. The wide variety of art reflects contemporary style, rather than using Arabic script, patterned tiles, and veils associated with older, Middle Eastern iconography, said Ferrer.

“Brooklyn is such a center of contemporary creation, so I wanted to include artists using contemporary subject matter,” she said. “There’s no one monolithic Muslim identity.”

“An Opening” at Brooklyn Historical Society [128 Pierrepont St. at Clinton and Henry streets in Brooklyn Heights. (718) 222-4111. www.brooklynhistory.org.] Open Wed-Sun, Noon-5 p.m. \$10 (\$6 for seniors and teachers, students free).

“Beyond Geographies” at Bric House [647 Fulton St. at Rockland Places in Fort Greene, (718) 855-7882, www.bricartsmedia.org]. Open through mid-November; Tue-Fri, 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sat and Sun, 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Free.

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