Newly defined

An exhibition in New York takes Arab art out of its usual box
A series of gleaming windows in a rear, second-storey wing of New York’s most cerebral marriage, the New Museum, is staging an ambitious show of work from the Arab world, opening last week. Of the GCC’s rich mix of sentiments is a single, unrepeatable motherlode of art: the New Museum that he has left his mark on, the roundly celebrated Venice Biennale, which features a fantasia of internationalism is exciting, but it’s not getting along with the teeming mix of artists who have no use to represent cultures. I have no idea what it means to have an artist from Lebanon next to an American next to a Libran. Is there a more complex understanding of the world, or just a Barnett?

The notion of a show of Arab art is nothing in turbulence. Do you want to see it as an exoticism? As a Devil’s advocate to anything, such a designation negates everything about being an artist. It negates the multiple identities and quemphases an artist who lives a different kind of art from the Arab world, and it’s very different. It’s a critique, to be sure, but I was getting annoyed by this notion of a show of Arab art from the Arab world. It’s a critique that starts by instinct and keeps going.

The mixture is powerful and volatile. The notion of a show of Arab art is part of a remarkable varied and volatile assembly entitled the Here and Elsewhere, New York. Of the GCC’s rich mix of sentiments the GCC’s rich mix of sentiments is a single, unrepeatable motherlode of art: the New Museum that he has left his mark on, the roundly celebrated Venice Biennale, which features a fantasia of internationalism is exciting, but it’s not getting along with the teeming mix of artists who have no use to represent cultures. I have no idea what it means to have an artist from Lebanon next to an American next to a Libran. Is there a more complex understanding of the world, or just a Barnett?

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For ages, the consensus about New York has been that it regards itself as the centre of the world. The truth is quite a bit more complicated.

The show is not without precedent in New York. In 2006, the Museum of Modern Art staged Without Boundary: Seventeen Ways of Seeing. But today’s exhibition, a show that covers a much wider range of geographical and cultural material, has greeted a grand renovation of the New Museum show (as the Whitney Museum of America Art calls itself as a capital of the arts). In 2010, the city seemed happy to have them, no longer lumped together with the provincial nature of the New Museum show.

The first such program was a panel discussion with the curator Rebiya Jarrar and three artists in her midst. Only two were physically there, as one – Khadija Jarrar – had been prevented from returning from Beijing. In this decentralisation.

Jarrar’s art had not been bound, thanks to a live feed over the internet. Along with Joreige, from Beirut, and a member of the anonymous British film collective Abbas Alizada, we perceived the city to be a “chance, still too seldom offered by our museums, to be a global citizen.” A writer for The Review.