Mission Statement

The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture at the University of Oklahoma, College of Architecture seeks to advance knowledge of the Middle Eastern built environment and culture for its intellectual and academic values. Therefore, the Center supports scholarship that is of historical and contemporary importance, by acting as a coordinating body for participating universities and institutions whose research focus relates to this geographic area and beyond. The Center also welcomes interdisciplinary perspectives in the study of architecture and culture of the region.

Center Activities

The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture aims for all-encompassing study of building in the Middle East, “building” here being taken in a broad sense, comprising all means by which humans give shape to their environment, including architecture, town planning, landscaping, etcetera. Centering on this specific region has its justification in the fact that in building their environment, humans are required to take account of natural conditions such as climate and landscape, as well as of the social and cultural traditions of their society. Depending on these contingencies, certain large regions in the world can be discerned where architecture is characterized by certain common traits. One such large region has the Middle East as its nucleus, while also encompassing parts of north Africa and central Asia for brevities’ sake, we speak of this region as the Middle East.

The architecture and culture of the Middle East have developed distinct traits which set them apart from other regions. For building in the Middle East, it is important to take into account not only the natural, technical and economic possibilities of the region, but also
the expectations and desires of the inhabitants which are due to local traditions, as well as the demands posed by developing relations with the world outside the Middle East. Especially in a time of incisive social and technological changes, it is important that architects, scholars, and artists maintain the region’s cultural heritage in order to preserve and shape a sense of identity. The aim of the Centre is to study the architectural traditions of the region and the way these traditions, in the course of history, have been formed by social and cultural factors over the course of centuries; to contemplate the consequences of modern dynamics which presently are putting new demands on architectural developments in the region; and to make plans-based upon these insights for future activities in the countries of the Middle East. The ways the Center will pursue these aims will include teaching, research, the organization of conferences, workshops and seminars, as well as other cultural activities which may highlight relevant developments in the Middle East.

The Center for Middle Eastern Architecture and Culture acknowledges and celebrates both the similarities and diversities of the region and aims towards bridging differences through a convergent academic stance concerning architecture and its constituent cultural and technological makeup, ultimately providing an opportunity for dialog supporting the greater good of all involved.

Organization
Director

Committee Members

Dr. Khosrow Bozorgi, Professor, College of Architecture

Dr. Afshin Marashi, Associate Professor, Middle Eastern History

Dr. Ariel Ahram, Assistant Professor, College of International & Area Studies

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Dr. Farland Stanley, Professor, Department of Classics and Letters

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Dr. Misha Nedeljkovich, Professor, Film and Media Studies

Dr. Norman Stillman, Director & Professor, Judaic Studies Program

Dr. Rienk Vermi, Associate Professor, History of Science

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Dr. Kerry Magruder, Curator & Associate Professor, History of Science

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