Five Years
Celebrating the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute
Leadership Letter
NYUAD Institute Team
Collaborators

2008–09
24 On the Art of the Novel
25 Stephen Hawking’s A Briefer History of Time
26 Neurolinguistics and Imaging
27 On Arabian Oral Poetry and Tribal Lore
29 Climate Change
33 The Science of Climate Change and Policy Implications

30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48 From Metaphor to Model
49 Interdisciplinary Studies in Information Security and Privacy
51 The Ethical Brain
52 Understanding Social Entrepreneurship in a Time of Urgent Threats
55 Beliefs, Markets, and Empires
56 Tolerance in a Comparative Perspective
57 Imagining the Future

48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
61
62
63
64
65
66
67
68
69
70
71
72
73
74
75
76
77
78
79
80
81
82
83
84
85
86
87
88
89
90
91
92
93
94
95
96
97
98
99
100
101
102

2010–11
2011–12
2012–13

2009–10
37 Completing the Circuit
38 The Cosmopolitan Idea
39 CO2 Rising
41 21st-century Universities in Libya
43 Higher Education in the Global Age
44 The Arabian Nights

Arts
95 The Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award
96 Celina Charlier
97 Mustafa Said, A Dream Play
98 Zeb and Haniya
100 Exhibitions
101 Film Screenings
102 NYU Abu Dhabi Institute Programs 2008–13
Our Institute programs continue to facilitate discussions, build intellectual networks among faculty, students, professionals, and leaders from around the world, and foster the spread of knowledge and ideas throughout the UAE, the Gulf region, and across the NYU global network. These programs have brought to our audience internationally renowned academic, cultural, and political figures such as former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Right Honorable Gordon Brown; Noam Chomsky, linguist and philosopher; the contemporary artist Christo; world-renowned scientist Leroy Hood; Khaled Abol Naga, Egyptian actor, director, and journalist; and H.E. Jerry Rawlings, former President of Ghana, to name just a few examples.

The Institute serves as a significant link between the Abu Dhabi and New York campuses; 19 Washington Square North in New York hosts programs that reinforce the curricular and research initiatives of NYU Abu Dhabi and fosters collaborations with colleagues at NYU New York. General areas of interest and discussion include NYUAD’s international curriculum, the society, culture, and history of the Middle East, as well as the globalization of higher education and undergraduate learning.

As the university continues to grow, public programming has provided synergy with our signature research initiatives, conferences, and workshops and have included genomics and systems biology, climate change, coral reefs of the Gulf, cloud-computing technologies, and the translation into English of classical Arabic Literature with the publication of The Library of Arabic Literature series that has produced definitive Arabic-English parallel-text editions of the classical Arabic literary heritage.

As we celebrate the accomplishments of the last five years, the next chapter is sure to provide more opportunities to support the emergence of Abu Dhabi as a leading forum for intellectual exploration, artistic performance, and scholarly engagement across disciplines and national borders.
THE ORIGINAL MUSIC OF THE EMIRATES
NYUAD Institute Team

Abu Dhabi

Reindert Falkenburg
Vice Provost for Intellectual and Cultural Outreach

Philip Kennedy
Vice Provost for Institute Public Programming

Jason Seth Beckerman
Assistant Vice Provost, Institute Administration & Executive Education

Antoine Jean El-Khayat
Associate Director, Events Management

Gila Bessarat-Waels
Manager of Academic Programs

Nils Lewis
Manager of Faculty & Student Programs

Nora Yousif
Programs and Operations Coordinator

Tarek Chehab
Institute Events & Technology Coordinator

Manal Demaghlatrous
Administrative Assistant

New York

Hilary Ballon
Deputy Vice Chancellor

Kerry Barrett
Assistant Dean of Global Education

Sharon Hakakian Bergman
Associate Director of Academic Programs

Amber Joy Deister
Assistant Manager of Academic Programs

Hasanthi Piyasena
Global Education Program Coordinator

Leigh Watts
Administrative Manager, Affiliated Faculty

Lisa Vilardi
Department Administrator

Kate Panuska
Events Manager

Danielle Cherubin
Program Coordinator
Collaborators

The Institute collaborates with a wide range of organizations and institutions across the globe. Some of these include:

| Abu Dhabi Art                     | Injazat Data Systems                  |
| Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (now TCA Abu Dhabi) | Kalima                                |
| Abu Dhabi Festival                | Khalifa University                    |
| Abu Dhabi Film Festival           | Masdar Institute of Science and Technology |
| Abu Dhabi International Book Fair | Ministry of Foreign Affairs           |
| Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation | Paris-Sorbonne University             |
| Abu Dhabi Sustainability Group    | Abu Dhabi                              |
| Abu Dhabi University              | Petroleum Institute                   |
| Advanced Technology Investment Company | The Brookings Institution         |
| Arab Image Foundation             | Theater Mitu                          |
| Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi        | Zayed University                       |
| Electra Street                    |                                        |
| Emirates Airlines Festival of Literature |                                    |
| Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research |                          |
| Emirates Writers Union             |                                        |
| Higher Colleges of Technology     |                                        |
| IEEE                              |                                        |
For all its calculations and exacting method, science is a human endeavor. A Briefer History of Time not only provides greater accessibility and clarity to Stephen Hawking’s landmark work, it also describes the human processes leading to scientific breakthroughs of the likes of Newton, Einstein, and Hawking.

Glennys Farrar began with the example of Danish astronomer Ole Rømer, who discovered that the speed of light was finite, based solely on observing the transits of Jupiter’s moons.

“This was in the mid-17th century, only 40 years after the invention of the telescope,” she said.

On the other hand, some of history’s greatest scientists have overlooked discoveries that later seemed obvious. Einstein himself failed to realize the universe was expanding, even though he had the data to support this conclusion—deciding instead to fudge the numbers by introducing the cosmological constant to make his calculations add up.

“Einstein was really embarrassed that he hadn’t predicted the expansion of the universe,” Farrar said.

“It’s reassuring to think that even minds as great as Einstein’s could have these blind spots when he could see through so many other blind spots his contemporaries could not.”

Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury, author of Gate of the Sun, was in conversation with NYUAD Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature Philip Kennedy.

If not for the kindness of an elderly Palestinian woman, Elias Khoury told the audience at the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute’s first ever public event, he would not have been able to write his acclaimed novel Gate of the Sun, a classic work of Palestinian literature.

The book centers on the Nakba, the period of Palestinian exodus in 1948 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs fled or were forced from their homes. Khoury was born in that year, and to learn of the experience, he went to the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut to talk to those who had lived through it.

“Nobody would speak to me at the camp. They thought I wanted to speak to them about stories of shame,” he said.

“The Nakba, in Palestinian consciousness, is a catastrophe, a real catastrophe—and catastrophes are shameful.

“Nobody will tell you how he left his brother dead in the field and fled, but that’s what happened. A mother will never tell you that she left behind her baby in the field because she couldn’t take care of the five children she had.

“For all its calculations and exacting method, science is a human endeavor. A Briefer History of Time not only provides greater accessibility and clarity to Stephen Hawking’s landmark work, it also describes the human processes leading to scientific breakthroughs of the likes of Newton, Einstein, and Hawking.”

Glennys Farrar began with the example of Danish astronomer Ole Rømer, who discovered that the speed of light was finite, based solely on observing the transits of Jupiter’s moons.

“This was in the mid-17th century, only 40 years after the invention of the telescope,” she said.

On the other hand, some of history’s greatest scientists have overlooked discoveries that later seemed obvious. Einstein himself failed to realize the universe was expanding, even though he had the data to support this conclusion—deciding instead to fudge the numbers by introducing the cosmological constant to make his calculations add up.

“Einstein was really embarrassed that he hadn’t predicted the expansion of the universe,” Farrar said.

“It’s reassuring to think that even minds as great as Einstein’s could have these blind spots when he could see through so many other blind spots his contemporaries could not.”

On the Art of the Novel

Lebanese novelist Elias Khoury, author of Gate of the Sun, was in conversation with NYUAD Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature Philip Kennedy.

If not for the kindness of an elderly Palestinian woman, Elias Khoury told the audience at the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute’s first ever public event, he would not have been able to write his acclaimed novel Gate of the Sun, a classic work of Palestinian literature.

The book centers on the Nakba, the period of Palestinian exodus in 1948 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinian Arabs fled or were forced from their homes. Khoury was born in that year, and to learn of the experience, he went to the Shatila refugee camp in Beirut to talk to those who had lived through it.

“Nobody would speak to me at the camp. They thought I wanted to speak to them about stories of shame,” he said.

“The Nakba, in Palestinian consciousness, is a catastrophe, a real catastrophe—and catastrophes are shameful.

“Nobody will tell you how he left his brother dead in the field and fled, but that’s what happened. A mother will never tell you that she left behind her baby in the field because she couldn’t take care of the five children she had.

“For all its calculations and exacting method, science is a human endeavor. A Briefer History of Time not only provides greater accessibility and clarity to Stephen Hawking’s landmark work, it also describes the human processes leading to scientific breakthroughs of the likes of Newton, Einstein, and Hawking.”

Glennys Farrar began with the example of Danish astronomer Ole Rømer, who discovered that the speed of light was finite, based solely on observing the transits of Jupiter’s moons.

“This was in the mid-17th century, only 40 years after the invention of the telescope,” she said.

On the other hand, some of history’s greatest scientists have overlooked discoveries that later seemed obvious. Einstein himself failed to realize the universe was expanding, even though he had the data to support this conclusion—deciding instead to fudge the numbers by introducing the cosmological constant to make his calculations add up.

“Einstein was really embarrassed that he hadn’t predicted the expansion of the universe,” Farrar said.

“It’s reassuring to think that even minds as great as Einstein’s could have these blind spots when he could see through so many other blind spots his contemporaries could not.”
For the nomadic tribes of Arabia, poetry was not just a form of entertainment, but it was a way to chronicle the secrets, beliefs, and histories of their people and convey them to future generations.

It was through encountering Nabati poetry when he was still a young boy that Saad Sowayan was able to see beyond the constituent words and grasp the greater meaning.

“It becomes a window through which you can see the cultural values and the worldview of the people who carry on tradition and their relation to each other and to their environment. Exploring this poetry is more than a literary and linguistic endeavor,” Sowayan explained. It requires an investigation of the social and cultural traditions of the time.

“You really have to understand the conditions of desert living, and then you have to understand the real difference between an oral culture and scriptural culture,” he said.

“This poetry served many functions at the same time. In an oral culture, in order for the message to be preserved, it has to be cast into rhythm, and the rhythmic poetic form helped them to memorize it. All your knowledge and all your values and the way you organize your society—everything has to be preserved in poetry or in proverbs.”

For Bernard Haykel, Sowayan’s work was crucial to seeing the nuances of Nabati poetry and to understanding Arabia’s nomadic tribes.

“You can’t understand Arabian hospitality without having access to the value systems embedded in Nabati poetry. The knowledge of the Arabs to the outsider—and to various kinds of insiders—would be impossible without the knowledge of this poetry.”

Neurolinguistics and Imaging
Progress and Prospects

Neuroimaging’s role in the study of linguistics and how the UAE and Gulf nations will take part in the future of research in this field was the focus of a conference convened for the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute by NYU Professor of Linguistics and Psychology Alec Marantz.

With the help of a sophisticated brain imaging machine at NYUAD, scientists can now detect the smallest of reactions inside the human brain. This magnetoencephalography (MEG) scanner allows for the detection, in real time, of brain functions as minute as the differences in recognition of different families of words.

Marantz said the UAE and the Middle East in general have been under-represented in neurolinguistics research despite the significant relevance of the topic to local and regional educational and development questions.

Conference participants discussed topics including the rate of dyslexia in UAE university students, how Arabic is acquired as a first language, and the interaction between children’s language and the consonantal root of Arabic.

Marantz noted that studying regional variations of a language could help to broaden the overall understanding of neurolinguistics. Arabic, for example, involves different dialects and a unique structure, with almost nothing known about the neurolinguistics of Khaleeji, or Emirati Arabic.

Since the conference, NYUAD has opened the Neuroscience of Language Laboratory to study how the brain processes different language-related functions.

Marantz said various research methods would be integrated to get the broadest picture, including electrogustometry (EGG), which measures the time variation of the degree of contact between vibrating vocal folds, and tracking eye and head movement. “We may be the only lab in the world that will combine simultaneous measurements of MEG, EGG, eye movements, and head movement, while making the MEG signal available in real time,” he said.

On Arabian Oral Poetry and Tribal Lore

Professor Saad Abdalla Sowayan, Nabati poet and scholar, and Bernard Haykel, Professor of Near East Studies at Princeton University, were in conversation with Philip Kennedy, NYUAD Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature.

For the nomadic tribes of Arabia, poetry was not just a form of entertainment, but it was a way to chronicle the secrets, beliefs, and histories of their people and convey them to future generations.

It was through encountering Nabati poetry when he was still a young boy that Saad Sowayan was able to see beyond the constituent words and grasp the greater meaning.

“It becomes a window through which you can see the cultural values and the worldview of the people who carry on tradition and their relation to each other and to their environment. Exploring this poetry is more than a literary and linguistic endeavor,” Sowayan explained. It requires an investigation of the social and cultural traditions of the time.

“You really have to understand the conditions of desert living, and then you have to understand the real difference between an oral culture and scriptural culture,” he said.

“This poetry served many functions at the same time. In an oral culture, in order for the message to be preserved, it has to be cast into rhythm, and the rhythmic poetic form helped them to memorize it.

“All your knowledge and all your values and the way you organize your society—everything has to be either preserved in poetry or in proverbs.”

For Bernard Haykel, Sowayan’s work was crucial to seeing the nuances of Nabati poetry and to understanding Arabia’s nomadic tribes.

“You can’t understand Arabian hospitality without having access to the value systems embedded in Nabati poetry. The knowledge of the Arabs to the outsider—and to various kinds of insiders—would be impossible without the knowledge of this poetry.”
How do you draft financial mechanisms to deal with climate change that are robust, workable, and capable of making a significant difference, while also being equally fair to both developing and developed nations? And particularly when a major summit in seven months is likely to change all the rules?

That was the challenge facing the collection of experts who gathered in Abu Dhabi representing the climate finance industry, carbon market regulators, developing countries, multinational businesses, sovereign wealth funds, international organizations, NGOs, and academics.

But as conference co-convener NYU Law Professor Richard Stewart saw it, this provided the chance to address an under-appreciated aspect of one of the most important issues facing the world community. Within the global approach to tackling climate change, he said climate finance played a critical role but had received far less attention than emissions limitations and climate regulatory formats. This conference and its findings were intended to address that deficit.

He also said this was an opportunity to bring into the debate those who would be at the forefront of addressing these topics in future decades.

“Climate regulation is typical of the frontier problems the next generation of environmental lawyers will face: complex technological scientific and ethical issues with local, national, and global dimensions,” Stewart said.

The challenge for the conference was both environmental and economic, including trying to find ways to swiftly generate large-scale investment in climate change mitigation efforts, with the specific goal to find by 2030 an additional US$100 billion a year for mitigation in developing countries.

Delegates were told that, if appropriately structured, climate finance could provide major new sources of development capital and technology for developing countries and be a significant economic opportunity rather than an impediment.

The current emphasis on the economic burdens that climate regulation may impose on developing countries overlooks the significant economic opportunities that emissions trading markets and other emerging systems of climate finance can generate.

The three-day event comprised seven panels dealing with topics like new climate finance mechanisms, how they affect developing nations, the science and policy implications of climate change, industry opportunities presented by novel finance mechanisms, the climate finance designs for developed and developing nations, the impact on international trade and investment, and tax implications for climate assets and markets.

Our biggest single project at Masdar is Masdar City. Already under construction, the city will be fully-powered by renewable energy and will be home to 90,000 people.

Sam Nader, Director Masdar Carbon
From the conference came a publication, *Climate Finance: Regulatory and Funding Strategies for Climate Change and Global Development*, that outlined both the scale of the problem ahead and also a potential framework on how to meet those challenges.

“Meeting the imperative of achieving major reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in developing as well as developed countries, without sacrificing urgently needed development, requires far greater attention to the emerging subject of climate finance than it has yet received,” the report’s summary of key findings stated.

“To achieve the necessary mitigation of climate change in developing countries, additional investments of US $55–80 billion each year during the period 2010–2020 may be required, rising to US $92–96 billion per year by 2030. Carbon markets are part, but only part, of the solution.

“Innovative financing, regulation, and governance are essential.”

The report’s recommendations rejected as “neither feasible nor desirable” a single uniform design to generate public and private climate finance. It called instead for “a suite of market-based mechanisms to mobilize very large increases in private investment in developing nation mitigation.”

These included a reformed clean development mechanism and credit-offset trading schemes related to cap-and-trade schemes in developed nations.

The trading and transfer of offset credits was described as playing a key role in reaching the goals on mitigating greenhouse gases, but the report stated that these carbon markets could not operate autonomously. They had to be structured and regulated in both developing and developed nations and had to be transparent and accountable.

The World Trade Organization’s trading rules were suggested as the model to follow, but “a degree of harmonization” of individual nations’ tax systems was also needed to avoid potential for distortionary or protectionist practices to occur.

In an afterword to end the report, Stanford University Professor Thomas Heller said the challenges were many and profound. As he put it, “the view from the top is bleak” although with some promising developments visible.

Of the challenges standing in the way of a meaningful climate policy framework, he said, one was uncertainty, which had a paralyzing effect, another was striking the balance between developed and developing nations, and a third was an insufficiently robust response.

“I am perhaps more afraid of a weak climate change agreement than no agreement at all,” he said.

“My fear is that a weak climate change agreement will result in complacency and shut down efforts focused on building a framework to promote the changes that are already emerging out of the national policies of developing nations.

“This may be our greatest opportunity to mitigate global emissions reductions early, and we cannot afford to let it pass us by.”
Oppenheimer painted a very real picture of the potential impacts of climate change during his NYUAD Institute public lecture. In 2003, a summer heat wave in Europe was blamed for between 35,000 and 70,000 deaths. As global warming continues, the temperatures recorded could become normal, he noted.

“My message is really pretty direct,” Oppenheimer said. “Global warming is real, the process is well under way and unless truly global action begins soon, life for much of humanity will become even more difficult. And for much of nature, there simply won’t be any future at all.”

Almost a third of existing species are at risk of extinction if temperatures rise by up to 3 degrees Celsius, Oppenheimer said.

Even if all the sources of greenhouse gases suddenly disappeared, existing gases could still affect the environment for up to 1,000 years. Given the impossibility of this sudden cessation of pollution, and the inability of the world community to act collectively and decisively, the immediate future for climate change policy was bleak, he said.

Yet, Oppenheimer ended on a positive note:

“In the US, without any climate policy and without any energy policy, the total greenhouse gas emissions have not grown.

“It’s not because of economic collapse, and it wasn’t due to any brilliant or far-sighted climate policy. It was because the price of energy went up. The price of oil, coal, and natural gas skyrocketed, and that was the response.”
Completing the Circuit
Formula 1, Yas Island, and the Future of Abu Dhabi

Khaldoon Al Mubarak, Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management Chairman, and Mohammed Ben Sulayem, FIA Vice President for Sport, were in conversation with sports economist Victor Matheson, Department of Economics, College of the Holy Cross; Falah Al Ahbabi, General Manager, Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council; Richard Cregan, Chief Executive Officer, Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management; and Rand Abbas, Architecture & MP Manager, Yas Island Project, Aldar Properties.

The completion of the first phase of the Yas Island development project, with the Formula 1 racetrack at its heart, was a significant step forward in the transformation of Abu Dhabi into a leading world capital. But in the run-up to the inaugural race, the success and impact of this cornerstone event in Abu Dhabi’s evolution was not a forgone conclusion.

Matheson cautioned that “often, large mega events and professional sports don’t seem to contribute particularly large direct economic benefits to an economy.

“That being said, these mega events serve to put a city on the map in a way it wasn’t before. And that’s an example particularly relevant to Abu Dhabi. Here is an opportunity to expand Abu Dhabi’s footprint in the world.”

And Yas Island was more than a standalone project, whose impact could be measured in direct dollars and cents. Khaldoon Al Mubarak explained: “By setting a deadline that was immovable, many things have been interlinked. We are not just doing this for Formula 1, it is part of the Abu Dhabi Plan 2030. By using the Grand Prix as a line in the sand, everyone from ADTA to TDIC, the private sector, the hotels, the highway, to the entire Corniche redevelopment [knew that] they must be finished by November 1.”

The five years since have reflected Matheson’s projection that major sporting events can generate significant city and national pride.
**The Cosmopolitan Idea**

“The Cosmopolitan Idea” lecture series hosted by NYU Abu Dhabi’s home in New York interrogated the values and challenges of cosmopolitanism, the tensions between its global orientation and local communities, its prospects at a time of economic contraction, and its relevance in the Arab and Muslim worlds, among other issues.

In this lecture, NYU Global Distinguished Professor of Sociology Craig Calhoun began by explaining the beginnings of cosmopolitanism, which was started by Diogenes in ancient Greece. Diogenes “dressed badly, slept in a tub, and advocated public sex and unrestrained belching,” and unsurprisingly, was shunned by many of his fellow Athenians.

Thankfully the idea of cosmopolitanism has changed dramatically. “One doesn’t have to be uncivilized to be cosmopolitan,” said Calhoun. Those who consider themselves cosmopolitans today aspire to be citizens of the world. “Learning to be an effective and responsible citizen of the world…isn’t simply a matter of absorbing universal truths, it’s a matter of learning how to navigate cultural differences.”

For Vartan Gregorian, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, growing up as an Armenian in Iran meant viewing cosmopolitanism in an entirely different way: through the prism of Marxist literature. “I’ve read what happens to cosmopolitans—Siberia. Cosmopolitan for Marxists meant decadence—people without roots.”

Gregorian went on to explain that cosmopolitanism is now defined by connections that transcend boundaries, such as the link between New York and Abu Dhabi. “In this era, every woman, every man, and every child has, thanks to the Internet, access to their own library of Alexandria…you don’t have to be a pharaoh to partake in the world’s treasure house of learning and wisdom.”

Next, NYU University Professor and Professor of Law Jeremy Waldron shared how cosmopolitanism for him was reflected more by the common values that unite people than by the differences that divide them. The lecture began with an introduction by NYU Abu Dhabi’s Deputy Vice Chancellor Hilary Ballon, who highlighted the dynamism of cosmopolitanism. “Once it meant people who shed ethnic or religious ties, but those are now retained within a global village of different communities. This is what I think is central to our vision of NYU Abu Dhabi.”

The topic of climate change is often beset by difficult notions about equity between the developed and the developing worlds.

Rademacher and Volk acknowledged that everyone in the world has a reasonable expectation to seek the comforts enjoyed by the most prosperous nations. The goal is to find a green way to generate the necessary energy.

“CO₂ Rising, The World’s Greatest Environmental Challenge”

NYU Biology and Environmental Studies Professor Tyler Volk, author of CO₂ Rising, was in conversation with NYU Associate Professor of Anthropology and Environmental Studies Anne Rademacher.

For Volk, the topic of climate change is often beset by difficult notions about equity between the developed and the developing worlds. Rademacher and Volk acknowledged that everyone in the world has a reasonable expectation to seek the comforts enjoyed by the most prosperous nations. The goal is to find a green way to generate the necessary energy. “That’s news to a lot of American environmental activists, whose idea about environmental change often becomes a scenario in which everyone’s consumption patterns contract,” according to Rademacher. “When we recognize the right of everyone to achieve a similar amount of development, this conversation becomes
21st-century Universities in Libya

Creating a university, such as NYU Abu Dhabi, is challenging enough. Imagine the overwhelming task of starting 27 universities. This is what Libya set out to do in 2009, before the Arab Spring that led to the eventual overthrow of Muammar Qaddafi.

The plan for the new universities was in response to the nation’s rapprochement with the West and an attempt to make up for two benighted decades for the country’s education system. The trouble with the education system had begun 30 years before, when Libyan university professors were publicly executed on their campuses as part of a brutal crackdown on a fledgling pro-democracy movement.

Philippe Dordai and Roger Klein, principals of the international design firm RMJM architects, had their work cut out for them when they were commissioned to design two of the new universities. Dordai described Libya as poorly understood, with high levels of literacy and education alongside a discordant lack of development.

Their designs for the universities in Bani Walid and Zliten were informed by Libya itself. “In Bani Walid, we took inspiration from the desert rose, a crystal silica that forms in the desert... In Zliten, we were inspired by the date palms.”

Klein said it was important for them to portray a sense of Libyan heritage in the plans, such as the Islamic-themed gardens, which represented the idea of paradise. “When you’re building in these developing countries, there is a great concern for the loss of a sense of heritage.”

The geopolitical implications of this are the following: countries that have done almost nothing to cause the greenhouse effect are going to get not just a little greenhouse effect—they’re getting the same greenhouse effect...

The whole world is getting the same increased amount of CO2 year by year no matter what particular countries did for emitting or not emitting.

Tyler Volk
Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies

The geopolitical implications of this are the following: countries that have done almost nothing to cause the greenhouse effect are going to get not just a little greenhouse effect—they’re getting the same greenhouse effect...

The whole world is getting the same increased amount of CO2 year by year no matter what particular countries did for emitting or not emitting.

Tyler Volk
Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies

The geopolitical implications of this are the following: countries that have done almost nothing to cause the greenhouse effect are going to get not just a little greenhouse effect—they’re getting the same greenhouse effect...

The whole world is getting the same increased amount of CO2 year by year no matter what particular countries did for emitting or not emitting.

Tyler Volk
Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies
When NYU Abu Dhabi announced the Higher Education in the Global Age conference, the symposium could have just as easily been about the fledgling campus in the UAE capital instead of being located at it. And in its way, it was both.

Hilary Ballon, NYUAD Deputy Vice Chancellor and convener of the conference, explained that universities must become international and be able to produce a different, globally oriented kind of graduate.

The conference topics—emerging educational markets, universities as agents of global understanding, as global networks and as engines of sustainability—were all directly relevant to NYU Abu Dhabi.

At the time, NYU Abu Dhabi was still nine months away from welcoming its first students.

Philip Kennedy, Faculty Director of the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, described NYU as having “recently become a global network university with programs throughout the world.”

Then NYU Abu Dhabi Provost Mariët Westermann said an international education helped to prepare students for what would inevitably be a much more globally connected world.

“What we’re hearing here is the question of how we prepare our young people, to give them the tools and equipment to deal with this much more complex world,” she said.

“If we are to prepare our graduates to be meaningful leaders of the world or even just participants in a civil society, they need to be able to connect with people who are very different from themselves.”

Experts from the US, UAE, China, UK, Jordan, Uganda, Nigeria, Australia, South Africa and Italy discussed the recent shift that is making higher education an international operation.
The Arabian Nights
Encounters and Translations in Literature and the Arts

In the beginning, there were the Tales of One Thousand and One Nights. Before Chaucer, before Shakespeare, before Goethe, there was the tale of Scheherazade staving off execution night after night by weaving a story so fantastic and entrancing that the murderous Persian king Shahryar would spare her life for one more day so he could hear the end.

As the Arabian Nights conference participants were told, the epic tale that dates to at least the early Islamic period has defined and influenced storytelling within the Middle East and around the world.

For co-convener Marina Warner, the tale became so ubiquitous that the oriental origin of many of the related themes have been forgotten.

“All the European fairy tales that have people flying in them are post-Nights. Until then, it was not very common to fly around,” she said.

Cultural historian and novelist Marina Warner and NYUAD Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature Philip Kennedy convened a conference on the impact of traditional storytelling on the Middle East region, the West, and Asia.

In the beginning, there were the Tales of One Thousand and One Nights. Before Chaucer, before Shakespeare, before Goethe, there was the tale of Scheherazade staving off execution night after night by weaving a story so fantastic and entrancing that the murderous Persian king Shahryar would spare her life for one more day so he could hear the end.

As the Arabian Nights conference participants were told, the epic tale that dates to at least the early Islamic period has defined and influenced storytelling within the Middle East and around the world.

For co-convener Marina Warner, the tale became so ubiquitous that the oriental origin of many of the related themes have been forgotten.

“All the European fairy tales that have people flying in them are post-Nights. Until then, it was not very common to fly around,” she said.

“The cinema just took to that, because you can do it. It’s an absolute commonplace of films that are targeted for the family entertainment audience.”

A copy of the story is thought to have first arrived in Europe in the 14th century and was popularized anew by the French, who rediscovered it in the early 18th century. The story was not set in stone: Aladdin and Sinbad are modern European additions.

Experts who addressed the conference noted that an entire film genre was created in India in the 1930s based on what was known as “the Arabian Nights fantasy”.

It wasn’t just the cinema. The influences of the One Thousand and One Nights story had a permanent impact on other branches of the arts.

Voltaire, Samuel Johnson, Laurence Sterne, and Walt Disney were all influenced. So were modern writers like Elias Khoury, Gamal el-Ghitani, and Githa Hariharan, filmmaker Nacer Khemir, and theater director Tim Supple, all of whom addressed the conference.

For Warner, the story’s themes are still relevant in the present day, with the abuses of power that characterized the struggle between the king and Scheherazade mirrored in the ongoing ructions caused by the global financial crisis.

And modern audiences are making the same discovery as the Persian king: there is no end in sight to Scheherazade’s storytelling.
When modern financial analysts began to believe they had perfected economics as a science, it was only a matter of time before the material world showed the shortcomings in their sophisticated market analogies.

The classical liberals of the 19th century believed the metaphors they used to describe their world view of small governments and individual freedom were just that—metaphors.

The neoliberals who changed the face of global finance after the markets were deregulated during the late 20th century believed in the perfect equilibrium of the unimpeded rational market.

“By the end of the 1970s, the neoclassical model of the financial system as autonomous, efficient, and rational had come to seem like a self-evident truth,” said Mary Poovey, NYU professor in the humanities.

“By treatments economics as a hard science which could be predicted with incredible accuracy, it was thought computer programs could simulate or model this individual rationality,” she added.

“The thing I want to hone in on is that human behavior is algorithmic. No sophisticated model can capture it in its complexity.”

A taste of the feedback loop that would prove so pivotal in the global financial crisis came in the stock-market crash of 1987, which she said was caused in part by a computer program controlling US$50 billion worth of investments and designed to protect portfolio value in a bear market. The program prompted a sell-off that led directly to a mass loss of confidence.

“In the aftermath, the computer program used that day was outlawed by the authorities “but they did not outlaw the risk model used, or the reflexive nature of the relationship between the model and the market, by which I mean the model begins to impact on the market that it is purporting to describe.”

Although financial modeling and financial instruments both became far more complex, the similar events recurred during the most recent global financial crisis, reinforcing in neoliberal economists a taste of the humility their Victorian forebears had never lost.
Urbanization and mobility, since the beginnings of modernity in the 16th century, have allowed us to achieve a measure of anonymity that, in fact, creates the kind of freedom that is part of and typical for constitutional democracy and this anonymity in public spaces cannot be understood if you follow the private-public dichotomy.

Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law School, Harvard University

legal implications; how trusted hardware platforms affect issues such as digital rights management; the vulnerability of critical infrastructure such as energy, transport and health systems to attacks via their IT systems; and the burgeoning field of social media, in which a balance needs to be struck between privacy and access.

In addressing these issues, delegates reiterated challenges specific to IT security, including the international nature of the internet, which often extends beyond the jurisdiction of national laws. Approaches to security are further complicated by differing attitudes among different cultures toward acceptable levels of privacy.

When some of the latest wave of neuroscientists probed the way the brain can be predisposed toward a certain way of thinking, it called into question fundamental assumptions about free will and self determination.

Gazzaniga, said the research confirmed something Hollywood filmmakers worked out long ago. The mind can be manipulated.

One recent academic study showed groups of participants one of three scenarios—sad (a baby in a casket), neutral (a bowl of soup) and seductive—then asked them to interpret a facial expression. The face was exactly the same for all three groups, but the interpretations were closely correlated to the cues that had been used to prime the brain.

“Hollywood does this all the time. They want you to have a reaction to a certain scene so they’ve biased you to get your system going down a certain road,” he said.

Sometimes a person’s attitude can be pre-influenced even when the topic they are thinking about is of determinism and free-thinking, as demonstrated by the experiment on two groups of subjects who read separate texts, one full of deterministic language and the other phrased more neutrally.

“Both groups then had the task of administering the degree of punishment to someone who had committed a horrible crime,” he said.

“People who believed the world is determined gave far lesser punishment to offenders than people who thought everybody freely chose what happened. They gave far more severe punishment.”

Despite the evidence, people tend to be convinced their decisions are their own and that they are exercising free will.

“There are no ghosts in the machine. It comes down to this fundamental question: what does it mean to be free?”

“Brains aren’t free. People want their brains to act like their liver or their heart, to work in a reliable and predictable way. Nobody wants a free-will heart, believe me. Brains aren’t free. People are free.”

Professor Michael Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke on the balance between free will and determinism in consideration of ethics and the human brain.

The Ethical Brain

Professor Michael Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke on the balance between free will and determinism in consideration of ethics and the human brain.

When some of the latest wave of neuroscientists probed the way the brain can be predisposed toward a certain way of thinking, it called into question fundamental assumptions about free will and self determination.

Gazzaniga, said the research confirmed something Hollywood filmmakers worked out long ago. The mind can be manipulated.

One recent academic study showed groups of participants one of three scenarios—sad (a baby in a casket), neutral (a bowl of soup) and seductive—then asked them to interpret a facial expression. The face was exactly the same for all three groups, but the interpretations were closely correlated to the cues that had been used to prime the brain.

“Hollywood does this all the time. They want you to have a reaction to a certain scene so they’ve biased you to get your system going down a certain road,” he said.

Sometimes a person’s attitude can be pre-influenced even when the topic they are thinking about is of determinism and free-thinking, as demonstrated by the experiment on two groups of subjects who read separate texts, one full of deterministic language and the other phrased more neutrally.

“Both groups then had the task of administering the degree of punishment to someone who had committed a horrible crime,” he said.

“People who believed the world is determined gave far lesser punishment to offenders than people who thought everybody freely chose what happened. They gave far more severe punishment.”

Despite the evidence, people tend to be convinced their decisions are their own and that they are exercising free will.

“There are no ghosts in the machine. It comes down to this fundamental question: what does it mean to be free?”

“Brains aren’t free. People want their brains to act like their liver or their heart, to work in a reliable and predictable way. Nobody wants a free-will heart, believe me. Brains aren’t free. People are free.”

Professor Michael Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke on the balance between free will and determinism in consideration of ethics and the human brain.

When some of the latest wave of neuroscientists probed the way the brain can be predisposed toward a certain way of thinking, it called into question fundamental assumptions about free will and self determination.

Gazzaniga, said the research confirmed something Hollywood filmmakers worked out long ago. The mind can be manipulated.

One recent academic study showed groups of participants one of three scenarios—sad (a baby in a casket), neutral (a bowl of soup) and seductive—then asked them to interpret a facial expression. The face was exactly the same for all three groups, but the interpretations were closely correlated to the cues that had been used to prime the brain.

“Hollywood does this all the time. They want you to have a reaction to a certain scene so they’ve biased you to get your system going down a certain road,” he said.

Sometimes a person’s attitude can be pre-influenced even when the topic they are thinking about is of determinism and free-thinking, as demonstrated by the experiment on two groups of subjects who read separate texts, one full of deterministic language and the other phrased more neutrally.

“Both groups then had the task of administering the degree of punishment to someone who had committed a horrible crime,” he said.

“People who believed the world is determined gave far lesser punishment to offenders than people who thought everybody freely chose what happened. They gave far more severe punishment.”

Despite the evidence, people tend to be convinced their decisions are their own and that they are exercising free will.

“There are no ghosts in the machine. It comes down to this fundamental question: what does it mean to be free?”

“Brains aren’t free. People want their brains to act like their liver or their heart, to work in a reliable and predictable way. Nobody wants a free-will heart, believe me. Brains aren’t free. People are free.”

Professor Michael Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke on the balance between free will and determinism in consideration of ethics and the human brain.

When some of the latest wave of neuroscientists probed the way the brain can be predisposed toward a certain way of thinking, it called into question fundamental assumptions about free will and self determination.

Gazzaniga, said the research confirmed something Hollywood filmmakers worked out long ago. The mind can be manipulated.

One recent academic study showed groups of participants one of three scenarios—sad (a baby in a casket), neutral (a bowl of soup) and seductive—then asked them to interpret a facial expression. The face was exactly the same for all three groups, but the interpretations were closely correlated to the cues that had been used to prime the brain.

“Hollywood does this all the time. They want you to have a reaction to a certain scene so they’ve biased you to get your system going down a certain road,” he said.

Sometimes a person’s attitude can be pre-influenced even when the topic they are thinking about is of determinism and free-thinking, as demonstrated by the experiment on two groups of subjects who read separate texts, one full of deterministic language and the other phrased more neutrally.

“Both groups then had the task of administering the degree of punishment to someone who had committed a horrible crime,” he said.

“People who believed the world is determined gave far lesser punishment to offenders than people who thought everybody freely chose what happened. They gave far more severe punishment.”

Despite the evidence, people tend to be convinced their decisions are their own and that they are exercising free will.

“There are no ghosts in the machine. It comes down to this fundamental question: what does it mean to be free?”

“Brains aren’t free. People want their brains to act like their liver or their heart, to work in a reliable and predictable way. Nobody wants a free-will heart, believe me. Brains aren’t free. People are free.”

Professor Michael Gazzaniga, director of the SAGE Center for the Study of Mind at the University of California, Santa Barbara, spoke on the balance between free will and determinism in consideration of ethics and the human brain.

When some of the latest wave of neuroscientists probed the way the brain can be predisposed toward a certain way of thinking, it called into question fundamental assumptions about free will and self determination.

Gazzaniga, said the research confirmed something Hollywood filmmakers worked out long ago. The mind can be manipulated.

One recent academic study showed groups of participants one of three scenarios—sad (a baby in a casket), neutral (a bowl of soup) and seductive—then asked them to interpret a facial expression. The face was exactly the same for all three groups, but the interpretations were closely correlated to the cues that had been used to prime the brain.

“Hollywood does this all the time. They want you to have a reaction to a certain scene so they’ve biased you to get your system going down a certain road,” he said.

Sometimes a person’s attitude can be pre-influenced even when the topic they are thinking about is of determinism and free-thinking, as demonstrated by the experiment on two groups of subjects who read separate texts, one full of deterministic language and the other phrased more neutrally.

“Both groups then had the task of administering the degree of punishment to someone who had committed a horrible crime,” he said.

“People who believed the world is determined gave far lesser punishment to offenders than people who thought everybody freely chose what happened. They gave far more severe punishment.”

Despite the evidence, people tend to be convinced their decisions are their own and that they are exercising free will.

“There are no ghosts in the machine. It comes down to this fundamental question: what does it mean to be free?”

“Brains aren’t free. People want their brains to act like their liver or their heart, to work in a reliable and predictable way. Nobody wants a free-will heart, believe me. Brains aren’t free. People are free.”
The popular image of the social entrepreneur trying to save the world—the lone hero who toils away 24/7 for the reward simply of making the planet a nicer place—is one of constant self-sacrifice and dedication. But Paul Light explained that this might not be the best way for people to change the world.

“People think about entrepreneurs like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates and if we can just get that kind of thinking into the social value sector then we can break through and solve problems,” he said.

“We love heroes but that’s not the only path to change. Another path is through catalytic collaboration in which networks of individuals or organizations work together to create the robust energy needed to create social value. We’re seeing more and more of that.”

Most of his students at NYU, he explained, wanted to work for non-profits and had such modest expectations for remuneration that he expected them to never be able to afford to own a home or retire.

This thinking is unsustainable in the long-term, as is the now dated theory that an organization had to be big to affect public discussion.

“We’re now thinking—and I think correctly so—of scale as the movement of an idea through launch, acceleration, and fruition. That can be done by a very small organization that engages in advocacy and a very strong dissemination of ideas.”
Beliefs, Markets, and Empires
Understanding Mechanisms of Integration in Early Societies

Globalization might be a new phenomenon but the international integration of societies has been underway for thousands of years, delegates told a conference convened by NYU Assistant Professor Andrew Monson and Stanford University Professor Walter Scheidel.

Some were motivated by trade, others by religious faith, and yet others by military conquest. A few managed to combine all three.

Whatever the motivation, the cradle of early societies stretching from the Mediterranean to Asia and the Indian Ocean had established contact thousands of years before globalization became a buzzword.

And with each contact, the known world became increasingly connected.

Monson and Scheidel, said the most prominent means of integration between regions was the exchange of goods, the spread of belief systems, and political-military expansion.

Delegates from the UAE, the US, Lebanon, Russia, and Britain discussed inter-community connections dating from the Iron Age through to the medieval Islamic period.

For some, such as Distinguished Professor of Sociology Christopher Chase-Dunn of the University of California, Riverside, within the general trend towards greater integration were times when connections prospered and others when communities became more isolationist.

He told the conference that explaining why each occurred would help shed light on the societies involved.

“Societies—defined as communities that share a common language and culture—are messy entities when we consider interaction networks,” he said.

“Many of the networks in which households are deeply involved are local, while many other important interactions strongly link the inhabitants of many different societies to one another.”

One of the criticisms of modern globalization has been the homogenization of previously diverse societies. But Chase-Dunn said history does not bear that out.

“There is no such thing as a ‘homogeneous society.’ The emergence of a middle class, even nouveau riche, population is articulated through temples.”

David Ludden, Professor of Political Economy and Globalization, NYU
If proof was needed that art is an international language with a global reach, it could have come from listening to the gathering of 20 leading artists, curators and policy makers who were invited to participate in the NYUAD Institute’s “Imagining the Future: New Worlds, New Arts, New Models” workshop. The nationalities and places of residence represented among them was enough to confirm that message. There was Egyptian documentary filmmaker Khaled Abol Naga, who attended less than three months after filming in Tahrir Square during the January 25 revolution and who was working on “Tahrir el Tahrir” about the events that were then upending much of the Arab world.

There was Pakistan’s all-women music group, cousins Zeb and Haniya, whose performances with Abu Dhabi-based percussionist Douglas Caskie and Dutch composer Merlijn Twaalfhoven involved impromptu collaboration with Togo dancer Anani Sanouvi. Less than a month earlier Twaalfhoven had been awarded by UNESCO for his work transcending boundaries in the Middle East by bringing people together, including recruiting 75 professional and amateur musicians in Bethlehem for a performance that could be heard on both sides of the concrete barriers separating Israelis and Palestinians. “The space means you cannot move as a human,” he said, “but music can. When people make music across the line, it’s a symbol that you can’t restrict everything.”

Other artists came to the colloquium from Brazil, Burma, China, France, Lebanon, the US, Vietnam and elsewhere.

The goal of the workshop was to discuss the future of making art, creativity and culture in a highly interconnected world, and the implications that would have on changing traditional patterns of political, economic and technological power. In particular, the participants questioned the type of institutions that can help to foster the work of artists from around the world. In addition to the discourse of the workshop, the event also supported collaborations and performances for both public and private audiences.

Bhikhu Parekh, member of the British House of Lords and emeritus professor of Political Theory at the University of Hull, shared how faith and tolerance can coexist, even when different religions each believe they have the universal truth.

Parekh began his lecture by providing context to the development of the social value of tolerance. The ancient Greeks did not think much of tolerance, venerating instead virtues such as wisdom, temperance, and justice. During the Roman Empire, character traits such as piety were prized, and tolerance was only seen as a primary virtue in its own right. “Tolerance dates back no further than the 17th century and comes to be valued as an important virtue a little later, with the rise of modern liberalism,” Parekh explained.

In contrast, “liberal society views tolerance as one of its most noble features and sees the tolerant person as a morally desirable human being.”

And now? “Intolerance pervades almost all areas of life. We need to ask why this is the case and what we can do about it.”

Religious beliefs, particularly those based on divine revelations, which can be found in the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, do not always embrace tolerating the beliefs of those who follow different faiths. Parekh shared his approach: while all religions have a grasp of the universal truth, “blind spots and limitations” mean that none of them have the full picture, which is why it is important to collaborate with other faiths.

“All religions need others to enrich and complement them. Other religions aren’t rivals, but partners—a shared spiritual quest,” he said.

This lecture was part of a series based on the theme of “The Demands of Tolerance.” Other lectures in this series included an assessment of US law and prisoners’ freedom of religious expression, an examination of 17th-century philosopher John Locke’s A Letter Concerning Toleration, community responses to hate crimes, religious tolerance, and women’s rights, and the cultural significance of a comic book series based on Islam.

The effect of globalization on art and how best to support those in creative endeavors were addressed at a three-day colloquium convened by Anna Deavere Smith, director of Anna Deavere Smith Works at NYU, and Professor Gideon Lester from the Columbia University School of the Arts.
Europe is on course for a decade of grinding deflation, only partially complete. Those shortcomings meant actions of the G20 in 2009, Brown said the job was higher than before the crash in 2008. But if some thought that Brown might be breathing a sigh of relief by the time of his third and most recent visit to NYU Abu Dhabi in 2013, they clearly did not understand the world view of the politician credited for helping steer the world away from financial calamity.

By then the prospects of a second great recession had receded and stock markets were hitting levels even higher than before the crash in 2008. Although the unthinkable had been averted by the actions of the G20 in 2009, Brown said the job was only partially complete. Those shortcomings meant Europe is on course for a decade of grinding deflation, 50 million people are unemployed who need not be and, worst of all, the potential for a repeat of the global financial crisis remained.

“What happened in 2009 was we underpinned the world economy. We boosted economic activity and it had an effect,” he said at the talk in February 2013.

While a great depression similar to the 1930s had been avoided, the world’s financial rules still ought to have been comprehensively rewritten so that bankers could not imperil the global financial system in the same way in the future, he said. He also called for increased international cooperation instead of nations withdrawing into policies of protectionism and austerity.

Had this happened, the world economy would have grown by two percent more over the last three years, Brown said. In human terms, that would have put 50 million unemployed people back into the workforce and would have lifted 100 million people out of poverty.

“Could 2008 happen again? I think there is a danger that you could have economic crises at more regular intervals in the future if you don’t do something about it,” he added.

“The world economy is growing at a far less optimal rate than it should be.

“Four years on from the big recession we all faced, Europe is in recession, America is not growing fast, and India, which needs high levels of growth, is not doing so well.

“I would say we haven’t learned the lessons of 2008 and 2009 sufficiently about the need for us to cooperate more effectively globally.

“I think the reason we will continue to have lower growth than we should have is because we fail to understand that nation states need to work with other countries to get high levels of growth and high levels of prosperity.”

Of the 27 political leaders in Europe when the global financial crisis began, only two —those of Germany and Sweden—were still in power by the time of his third visit.

“Almost every finance minister has been sacked in the last four years. The anger of the public in Europe about the failure to prevent the recession in the first place or then to lead quickly out of it has led to massive changes of political leadership,” he added.

However these changes opened the door for austerity and isolationism to take hold, exacerbating the impact of the recession and creating the environment in which Europe’s economy, already stagnant since 2008, was likely to continue to wallow for another five years.

At the first talk in 2011, Brown had just released his book, Beyond the Crash: Overcoming the First Crisis of Globalization, about the way the world’s leading economies had averted the worst of the financial crisis, but also failed to organize a recovery as robust as was possible.

His goal at that time was for the world’s biggest nations to create a truly global community, capable of dealing as a group not just with financial crises but also challenges like climate change. The steps taken in 2009 to adopt Keynesian deficit spending were crucial, both for restoring confidence by demonstrating political will and for creating employment.

In Brown’s second visit to address the Institute eight months later, he reiterated the message that global cooperation and integration were the ways forward for economies that sought robust growth.

But he was not confident his words would hold sway, with many countries in the West and in the developing world deliberately weakening their currencies to make their economies more competitive. The passion in Europe for austerity, Brown explained, was a “one dimensional solution” to a problem that had four separate loci: the failure of banking, high levels of debt, lack of growth, and the constraints of the Euro as a currency crossing asymmetrical economies.

“We are at a time of momentous choice,” he explained at the time. “Either we can cooperate or we can retreat into protectionism.”
Building Apps for Social Good in the Arab World

The first NYU Abu Dhabi international hackathon brought together dozens of tech-savvy innovators for three days to collaborate on the creation of a socially useful application for the Arab World. They did so under the guidance of NYUAD Associate Professor of Computer Science Sana Odeh.

Not to be confused with the activity of malicious hackers, a hackathon is a gathering of computer scientists collaborating intensively on developing a project in a short timeframe.

NYUAD’s hackathon brought together computer science students, academics, and technology experts from across the Arab World, the US, and Europe and resulted in the development of a series of practical applications addressing regional issues.

From some 50 participants, Jordan University of Science and Technology students Hamza Al Kofahi and Ahmad Malkawi were judged winners of the inaugural event for developing KineTherapy, a program for doctors to set up exercises for patients. With the help of a Kinect motion sensor from an Xbox game console, the patient would perform exercises at home and the data would be sent to a clinic, where the app would indicate if a patient was doing the exercises properly.

For a country such as Jordan where medical resources are spread thin, the app has obvious benefits that could be equally applicable in similar countries around the world.

As Odeh, also the hackathon’s founder, explained, the goal of the event was not just the end production of mobile- and web-based apps, but also to foster a culture of innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship in Abu Dhabi.

The success of this hackathon was repeated in February 2013, this time with 80 participants from 16 countries. The winner was Take Flight, designed to address the high rate of youth unemployment in the Arab world by providing a cross-language video platform enabling experts overseas to mentor Arab youths.
The Dream for True Urbanism in the Middle East

Creating a world-class city worthy of being the UAE capital was the goal of urban planners like Larry Beasley, who used lessons from the revitalization of his home city of Vancouver, Canada, and blended them with Islamic themes to create the blueprint for the future of Abu Dhabi.

Beasley has been showered with just about every kind of planning plaudit for the way he transformed downtown Vancouver, making it an international model for revitalized city centers using a method that came to be known as “Vancouverism.”

But in Abu Dhabi, he thinks he might have managed to go one better.

As he told the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute audience in New York, blending in traditional Emirati and pan-Arab themes added an extra layer to the planning philosophy he used in Canada.

Abu Dhabi’s specifically Arab version of humane urbanism, he said, “may well be the preferred approach for really smart cities in the future.”

Before then, the UAE capital had long outgrown its original city plan and seemed destined to follow a similar urban development philosophy to that of Dubai, which Beasley described as incoherent and unplanned.

“If you ask Abu Dhabians, they’ll tell you they all go to Dubai to shop, but they couldn’t live there,” he said.

Beasley, just retired from his planning role in Vancouver, had little interest in taking on a mammoth new role in a completely different culture on the other side of the world. But enticed by an offer to see the city for himself, he not only realized Abu Dhabi’s incredible potential, but also appreciated the desire to learn from Dubai’s experience. That combination convinced him to come on board to create what became the Abu Dhabi Urban Planning Council.

His design—not just a duplicate of Vancouver’s model, but one specific to Abu Dhabi—became Plan 2030, the vision for Abu Dhabi as a world-class capital city.

Long before oil was found in Abu Dhabi, poetry would be read in simple tents after the day’s work was done. In a celebration of this local tradition, some of the most distinguished poets in the Emirates once again gathered in a simple tent beside the beach garden to recite their own works.

The evening had been arranged by the NYUAD Institute as an interlude during a three-day NYU Abu Dhabi conference dealing with the challenges and rewards of translating literature between languages and cultures.

Adel Khozam, one of the three UAE-based Emirati poets performing their works that evening, said the experience gave him the chance to bridge cultures. “This has provided me with a great opportunity to explore myself and my work in the English language and to introduce my work to a larger portion of the community living here in the UAE,” he said.

“Literature provides an excellent platform for us to get to know and understand different cultures.”

The event was held in collaboration with Banipal, an independent literary magazine that specializes in publishing English translations of contemporary Arab authors, which had recently published an edition focused on the Emirates.

Banipal Editor-in-Chief Margaret Obank described the event as the chance to “bring the poetry home,” while for NYU Abu Dhabi’s Philip Kennedy title?, the platform created an opportunity to spread the word about the region’s authors.

“As we work to make Arabic literature more accessible to the global community, we hope we will contribute to a greater awareness of the region’s rich literary history, heritage, and talent,” he said.

The exposure provided by Banipal and the Institute event led to a matching reading in London in early 2012.

Celebrating Emirati Literature
(in Arabic and English)

Emirati poets Adel Khozam, Khulood Al Mu’alla, and Ahmed Rashid Thani were joined by publisher Margaret Obank and readers Alice Johnson and Frank Dullaghan for an evening of poetry in a traditional tent setting.

Poised Between the Past and the Future
The Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque

The designers and builders of the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque had a unique challenge.

This structure was to be the Islamic centerpiece of the UAE capital and fulfill all the duties of a modern place of worship, but also express an Arabian version of humane urbanism, become a tourist magnet, and inevitably, a lasting memorial for the man who commissioned it, Sheikh Zayed.

To Robert Hillenbrand, Professor Emeritus Of Islamic Art And Architecture at the University of Edinburgh, those who created the mosque met that responsibility and exceeded it in a design that melded modern and traditional elements. “It uses the past innovatively and respectfully, a past drawn from every area in the Arab world,” he said. “It looks critically and observantly at a number of different Islamic traditions and tries to bring them into a whole.”

In speeches at NYU’s Washington Square campus in November 2011 and again at NYU Abu Dhabi six weeks later, Hillenbrand described the Sheikh Zayed Mosque as an “architectural benchmark by virtue of its scale, its ambition, and its reach.”

A fundamentally postmodern creation, the mosque draws on Islamic themes sourced from styles as far removed as Mughal India and Moorish Spain. Quite apart from the structure itself is the location—selected personally by Sheikh Zayed—well away from downtown but at a site that would soon be surrounded by development, making it a potent metaphor for the city as a whole.

“It was prophetic of Sheikh Zayed to choose this site,” Hillenbrand contended. “I absolutely promise you that in 30 years’ time, the city will have engulfed it...this will be an oasis.”
In the warmest and most saline corner of the world’s oceans, the coral reefs of the Gulf have managed to establish a remarkable niche that some scientists think could be an indicator for the process coral elsewhere will undergo through climate change. But the Gulf’s coral reefs are both under researched and under attack, with 70 percent destroyed and just three percent still in relatively pristine condition.

For coral researchers like Burt, that perilous situation explains why local and international marine biology experts gathered—for the first conference of its kind in the region—to focus on bridging gaps in the understanding of the Gulf’s reefs.

“The breadth of interests and depth of knowledge was incredibly uplifting,” Burt said of the attendees.

One of them, Biodiversity Management Sector Director Thabit Al Abdul Salam of the Abu Dhabi Environment Agency, opened the conference by applauding the beginning of a dialogue between academics and regulators to increase the scientific understanding of the reef systems.

“I have no doubt that the shared information of so many international and regional experts will enhance our understanding of coral reef ecosystems as well as act as a catalyst for future research in this direction,” he said.

Also illuminated was the fact that the Gulf is not a single ecosystem, but one shared by eight countries, making regional collaboration in conservation efforts essential.

“The Gulf’s coral is remarkable, not just for withstanding temperatures of up to 35 degrees Celsius, but also for being young—less than 4,000 years old. But, Burt said, “Even Gulf coral has its limits.”

Technology has great potential to improve the lives of the world’s poorest people, but when advanced smartphones and reliable Internet connectivity are not always readily available, how can the benefits of technology be fully realized in developing regions?

NYU Abu Dhabi’s CTED was created in 2010 with precisely this dilemma in mind, and at its second annual conference, convened by NYU Professor of Economics and Principal Investigator of CTED Yaw Nyarko and Assistant Professor at NYU’s Courant Institute of Mathematical Sciences and co-principal Investigator of CTED Lakshminarayanan Subramanian, delegates discussed how customized solutions must be created for places where even the simplest mobile phone technology can change lives for the better.

In her keynote speech, UAE Minister of Foreign Trade Sheikha Lubna Al Qasimi promoted the transformative potential of technology both in highly connected nations such as the Emirates and in technologically developing regions.

“We are proud to see that NYUAD is playing a leading role in advancing our knowledge and understanding of how customized technological applications can be used to tackle a range of challenges that are unique to developing economies and communities.”

Subramanian, said the profusion of cheap mobile phones had been a “game changer” in addressing the digital divide through applications that enable simple phones to access internet information via SMS that would normally require far more expensive hardware.

“For example, SMSFind, a prototype application designed at CTED, processes search engine-style requests and provides the most suitable 140-character responses over SMS. Another app, called Esoko, which has been studied by CTED researchers, enables rural farmers in Africa who sell their produce in local markets to receive current information on market rates so they can make more informed decisions about selling prices and about what to grow.

By bringing together high-level policy makers in government, private sector stakeholders, and prominent academics in the field, the CTED conference underscored the potential of technology to spur progress in a range of development areas, including finance, education, energy, healthcare and food security.
Empowering Women and Developing the Nation
Social Reform and Education in the Middle East

As part of the lecture series “Higher Education in a Global Context,” Leila Ahmed, Victor S. Thomas Professor of Divinity at the Harvard Divinity School, and Sherine Hafez, assistant professor of Women's Studies at the University of California, Riverside, discussed the progression of Egypt’s educational system, how it led to the Arab Spring, and how empowered women are driving that change. The two speakers also considered the role of education in enabling women to join the front lines in the Arab Spring.

Ahmed reflected on her own educational experience, which began in Heliopolis in the early 1950s and followed with a classic liberal arts education at Cambridge University. She noted, however, that it was her move to the UAE that opened up new areas of interest and intellectual horizons, leading her to pursue women’s studies.

Professor Hafez, whose research into the Arab Spring uprisings has shown the empowering effects of education on both genders, added, “women in particular have come forward as a power to contend with...in Tunisia, Egypt, Yemen, Syria, and Bahrain. Some of them have put themselves in the line of fire...In Egypt alone, on any given day during the events of January 2011, 20 to 50 percent of the protesters were women.”

Although there have been significant advances, both lecturers emphasized that women, particularly in rural areas, are often denied an education — a clear pathway to empowerment.

Other topics addressed in this series included the education of girls in Afghanistan, counterproductive consequences of contact with other cultures, and the mental processes involved in critical thinking.

Data centers and cloud computing technologies are key frameworks to many large-scale Internet applications. For delegates at a conference convened by the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute’s Data Center and Cloud Computing Laboratory and Injazat Data Systems, questions on the strategic advancement and evolution of the sector were top priority.

Anyone who has searched on Google or bought a book on Amazon has used the computer networking system known as “the cloud.” Often these users had no idea they were invoking a connection of networked servers located across the globe.

But for the local and international technology experts who gathered in Abu Dhabi for the conference, driving improvements in the cloud’s back-end framework and architecture to support greater usability, security, and stability, was the principal focus.

As K. K. Ramakrishnan of AT&T Laboratories explained, the cloud has become a major force in almost every Internet application. “When I think how we’ve evolved in the last 40 years in networking and storage, we’ve evolved in how we access these resources,” he said. “We’re really taking advantage of the balance we see in terms of cost, performance, and capability for computer storage and communication.”

Participants learned that some challenges ahead will stem from the current success of the technology in shifting vast quantities of information on a reliable and secure platform.

Given the growing importance of the sector, the Data Center and Cloud Computing Laboratory was established in Abu Dhabi with close connections to a sister lab at NYU-Poly in New York. As Jonathan Chao, principal investigator at the laboratory, explained, information technology is high priority for the government of Abu Dhabi as it plans for an increasingly diversified and knowledge-based economy.
The Case for Liberal Education

Anthony Kronman, Professor at Yale Law, espouses the virtues of a broad liberal arts education as the way to answer the greatest questions facing humanity at a time when trends in education are leaning increasingly toward narrow specialization.

One of the most common criticisms of liberal arts education is that it produces graduates who aren’t prepared for a specific professional career.

But as Kronman explained, that is precisely their value.

“The point of liberal arts education isn’t to prepare one for a career. It’s not to train one for a job. It’s something larger and freer than that,” he said.

“Liberal arts education broadens one’s horizons.”

The rewards transcend the practicality of future financial income—they serve to develop “a freer soul.”

Liberal arts education—which he defined as involving study rather than practice—was the norm in Aristotle’s day and remained so through the Roman era and the European dark ages, when education in the West played a supporting role to clerical training in cathedrals. It remained in fashion, with religious overtones, through the rebirth of learning in the nascent university systems in Britain and spread to the new world.

But the last century has seen the rise of an alternative form of higher education in modern research universities that focus on highly specialized expertise in narrow fields.

“The highest value of liberal education is it allows us to see what lies beyond the vocational—what one’s life as a whole is for.”

Realizing Potential

Emirati Women at the Forefront of Social Change

Professional women from education, government and the private sector in the UAE attended this Institute workshop to discuss the politics, policies and strategies that have made Emirati women reach professional equality with their male counterparts in the Gulf, and to explore challenges and opportunities for further female empowerment.

When some of the most accomplished women in the UAE met to discuss how their already impressive progress toward gender equality could be improved, there was one group of supporters that quickly rose to the top of the list: men.

May Al Dabbagh, director of the Gender and Public Policy Program at the Dubai School of Government, explained that Emirati men were not opponents in the battle for full equality. They were essential partners in it.

“I think the best thing that we can do for women in leadership in the region is to focus on men,” she said.

“The lives of women intersect very closely with men in a variety of ways — as colleagues at work, as husbands, as sons and as people walking down the street. We are doing ourselves a disservice if we assume that men do not have something valuable to add to this process.”

It was a point reiterated by many participants at the two-day workshop in 2012 and then echoed again the following year with a follow-up conference — this time with male participants included in the conversations.

The UAE’s reputation for gender equality was amply demonstrated by the accomplished female participants who spoke at the original workshop in 2012. One was Fatima Al Jaber, Chief Operating Officer of Al Jaber Group, and another was H.E. Reem Ibrahim Al Hashimy, UAE Minister of State.

More than 30 Emirati professional women have attended each year discussing how further progress could be made through formal training, building leadership skills, mentoring and networking.

After the first workshop, Dubai School of Government’s Ghalia Gargani created a network so participants could continue to stay in contact and build relationships with peers and mentors.

Members included Nawal Al Hosany, director of sustainability at Masdar, Shamma Mohamed Al Jaber, Senior Manager at Abu Dhabi General Secretariat of the Executive Council, and Aida Al Busaidy, also from Masdar.

Ms Al Hosany served as a panel member at the second workshop, where she described a vision of leadership training, “to create a pipeline of women who are ready to be on boards, by training and by providing them with tools.”
Next Generation Multimedia Research and Development

The growing use of smartphones and tablet computers is driving new methods for efficiently transmitting, sharing and storing multimedia information in an interactive format, speakers said at a conference organized by the NYUAD Institute.

With the UAE having one of the highest rates of smartphone ownership in the world, it made sense for Abu Dhabi to be the site for a conference on where the technology will take the field next.

But as workshop co-convener NYUAD Professor Abdulmotaleb El Saddik explained, the UAE is not just the home of consumers of high-tech mobile devices but is expected to be one of the centers of development where breakthrough technologies are created.

“The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute has provided support for this workshop because we think the UAE can, should and will play a vital role in future advancements in technology,” he said.

“There are 35 speakers from all over the world discussing and providing ideas about the latest developments in research and in industry,” he said.

The experts included Professor Wolfgang Effelsberg from the University of Mannheim in Germany, who said the use of handheld devices such as smartphones and tablet computers is booming and viewing videos is their fastest growing use. However, creating high-definition video and scaling it for use on a handheld device while maintaining dynamic interactive content is a challenge, he said.

Pablo Cesar, a researcher at the National Research Institute for Mathematics and Computer Science in the Netherlands, said the next technological step will be socially aware multimedia to personalize content to each user.

For example, when many people use their smartphones to record an event, such as a concert or demonstration or sporting match, from different perspectives, software known as a “narrative engine” may create a mash-up of the various recordings that specifically and automatically matches the preferences, interests and social connections of each individual viewer. It means is that no two users will see the same combination of images, even though the anchoring theme in all cases would be the same audio track.

For co-convener of the conference, NYU Abu Dhabi Dean of Engineering Sunil Kumar, finding breakthrough technology requires a broad approach in which liberal arts skills are integrated into engineering to foster invention and entrepreneurship.
Folding Paper
Jahweh, Abba, Allah: One God for One World?
Boom Cities
Library of Arabic Literature
Music and Science
Genomics and Systems Biology
Hox Genes Regulation
The Original Music of the Emirates
Arab Culture and the European Renaissance
Pre-Oil Economy in the UAE
For Erik Demaine, Computer Science Professor at MIT, art and mathematics blend together when he pushes the boundaries of origami—and both sides benefit.

For most, attempts at origami rarely progress beyond the well-known paper crane. But for Demaine, the youngest professor in the history of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the end result is somewhat more ambitious. Demaine constructs complex three-dimensional designs out of single sheets of paper, creating works that have been added to the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

“I want to build a transforming robot—origami robots—to change something from one thing to another so it could fold into a butterflies and then fold into an angel fish,” Demaine said.

“There are still a lot of challenges in both the art and the math side. It really inspires us to do better art work and better math work.”

This blend of art and math benefits both disciplines, he said, and has far more practical application than simply pushing the boundaries of the traditional Japanese craft.

“Origami can save lives. There’s a company that uses origami to fold air bags in cars,” he said. “When you have a 3D airbag, you want to fold it flat for storage in the steering wheel and you want it to distribute pressure uniformly.”

For particularly complex designs—such as the scorpions, rabbits, sailboats, and multi-faceted geometric forms he displayed—Demaine uses a computer program called an “origamizer,” which creates a crease pattern from which nearly any imaginable form can be created.

The importance of blending art and science was inspired by his father, glassblower Martin Demaine.

“My father and I are both artists and both scientists,” he said. “We’re better artists because we also study science. And we’re better scientists because we also study art.”

A computer program called an “origamizer,” which creates a crease pattern from which nearly any imaginable form can be created.

The importance of blending art and science was inspired by his father, glassblower Martin Demaine.

“My father and I are both artists and both scientists,” he said. “We’re better artists because we also study science. And we’re better scientists because we also study art.”

Miroslav Volf and Shaykh Hamza Yusuf engaged in an interfaith discussion as part of a lecture series on “The New Middle East.” Both Volf and Yusuf have been named among the world’s most influential voices of their respective faiths, Christianity and Islam.

Volf is the founding director of the Yale Center for Faith and Culture and a survivor of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s. He has focused his work on addressing how communities can find reconciliation after crimes against humanity.

Yusuf is an American-born convert to Islam who studied in the UAE before becoming the president and co-founder of Zaytuna College, an Islamic studies institution in California. Yusuf is known as an outspoken critic of both American foreign policy and Islamic extremist responses to those policies. While he has drawn criticism from both sides, he has also been successful in leading former Islamic extremists to renounce violent means of opposition.

This program took place close to UAE National Day to honor the spirit of cross-cultural dialogue that informs the UAE on “Jahweh, Abba, Allah: One God for One World?” audiences had already attended lectures in the series on topics ranging from Arabic influences on the West to displays of contemporary Palestinian theater, dance, and photography. The first lecture in the series, “Rock the Casbah,” by journalist and foreign affairs commentator Robin Wright, explored the emerging social order in the Middle East and how it is replacing entrenched ways of life.
The booming economies of most of the Gulf nations have irrevocably altered their urban and cultural landscapes. This conference, organized by the Institute, assessed the impacts of change in the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia since the exporting of oil.

The influx of petrodollars might have profoundly changed the built environments of the Gulf nations, but it took recent regional events, such as the Arab uprisings, to change the way that people interacted with their cities.

That was one of the themes that emerged from the Boom Cities conference, in which a series of speakers explained that since the Arab Spring revolutions, citizens throughout the Middle East have sought public spaces to serve as the locus of their ideas, just as the Egyptians did so famously in Tahrir Square.

In each case that locus was not just physical but also symbolic and intellectual, the power of which was recognized early by other governments after the Egyptian revolution in January 2011.

Farah al-Nakib, a historian with the American University of Kuwait, said protests had been banned in the city center for 50 years. The government suddenly barricaded Safat Square in the capital, purportedly for renovation, disenchaned citizens remained in fragmented groups. Ultimately, however, blogging sites became a kind of virtual Safat Square. One site was even called “Al Safat.”

Nelida Fuccaro, a Middle East historian at the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London, confirmed the idea that gathering spaces could be virtual.

“At the bulldozing of Pearl Roundabout [in Bahrain], it’s brought about a phenomenon arising from the intensification of the political, social and ideological competition over control of key urban spaces,” she said.

Pascal Menoret, NYU Abu Dhabi social anthropologist, co-convener of the conference, said in the Saudi capital, Riyadh, the lack of a suitable gathering place meant disenfranchised youth used illegal high-speed drift racing as a form of protest.

“In other cities, people organize sit-ins,” he said. In Riyadh, they organize drive outs.
Library of Arabic Literature

The first title launched by the Library, in December 2012, was Classical Arabic Literature: A Library of Arabic Literature Anthology, a 496-page work that draws on classical Arabic poems and prose dating from pre-Islamic times through to the 18th century.

The collection was translated by renowned Arabist Geert Jan van Gelder and includes early Bedouin poems that evoke desert life and both popular and more obscure Arabic texts.

“This work is an important foretaste of what is to come from the Library of Arabic Literature,” Kennedy said.

“It’s a significant work from one of the most respected scholars in the field, and it provides a great variety of selections that may surprise people who have only a smattering of knowledge of Arabic literature.”

Kennedy promised it would produce a wide range of styles and interests.

There are currently seven published works from the Library.

Until the intervention of the library, accessing English-language versions of some of the classic texts required great perseverance and considerable luck.

Finding, for example, a translation of anecdotes by early Islamic scholar Ibn al-Jawzi demonstrated how inaccessible and dispersed the material was before, Kennedy said.

“You have to go to a 1920s fascicle of the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society to get ahold of it. You have to look here and there, and even then, you find quite a shallow representation of what exists available in English,” he said.

“If you look at the pre-modern period from the 19th century backwards to pre-Islamic, sixth-century Arabia, there’s virtually nothing translated relative to what exists in this huge corpus of literature across genres,” Kennedy added.

“There are a lot of translated versions of the Qur’an and Arabian Nights, and then there are translations of the canonical collections of the Sunna, which are the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad, but there is very little else.”

The intended beneficiaries of the collection go far beyond academics with an interest in medieval Arabic texts.

“The vision is for this to have a broad readership—from the diehard scholar, to the student at the graduate and undergraduate levels, to the curious reader in the street, to also the Muslims in the world who can’t read Arabic very well,” he added.

Despite the classic image of a translator working away alone in a room, NYU Abu Dhabi’s Library of Arabic Literature represents the collected work of many people to ensure the best works are translated and that the translations have veracity.

There are eight editors on the library board who, with Managing Editor Chip Rossetti, select the texts, commission translations, review the resulting manuscripts and vet the final translations. Behind them are the 26 members of the International Advisory Board, which provides additional guidance as needed.

“As an ambitious project, it is lucky that it has found someone with the vision to sponsor it,” Kennedy added.

To many fans of literature, compiling a list of the classics without including translations of great novelists like Leo Tolstoy, Gustave Flaubert, and Gabriel Garcia Marquez would seem monumentally short-sighted.

Philip Kennedy feels the same way about the classical works of Arabic literature. Only a select few have been translated into English, meaning that for most people throughout the world, their knowledge of Arabic fiction before the modern age begins and ends with the Arabian Nights.

But as an associate professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies and Comparative Literature at NYU Abu Dhabi, Kennedy found himself in a position to do something about it.

The result is the Library of Arabic Literature, which aims to create an English-language collection of 35 of the best examples of pre-modern Arabic writing.

[When the books come out, they have Arabic on one side and English on the other...What we’re doing here is to emphasize that it’s a conversation and that it’s tentative...[A]ll of the critiques and observations that you are making, all the readers can make too...We don’t hide the original...we’re making ourselves vulnerable.”

Michael Cooperson
Professor of Arabic, UCLA
From the locks of Beethoven’s hair collected on his deathbed nearly 200 years ago, it should be possible to sequence his DNA, which in time could unlock the secrets of both his musical genius and also his poor health.

But until technology catches up with genome researchers’ aspirations, Rajewsky said the way to appreciate Beethoven’s brilliance is to listen to his works. With that, Rajewsky took his place on a piano stool and launched into a medley of Beethoven’s tunes that enthralled the audience of the NYUAD Institute event.

Rajewsky, who earned his master’s degree in piano at the University of Cologne while also doing his PhD in theoretical physics, eventually moved into the field of biology. Currently a scientific coordinator at the Max Delbrück Center for Molecular Medicine in Berlin, he spent some time in Abu Dhabi as an NYU Global Distinguished Professor of Biology.

That Beethoven’s hair could help to provide the genetic sequence of his DNA could also answer unresolved questions about his illnesses throughout life and even shed light on the cause of his death.

“Beethoven was really terribly affected by disease. His major disease was deafness. He started getting a horrible sound in his ears—tinnitus—when he was only in his middle twenties,” Rajewsky said. “Nobody knew what was wrong with him.”

He also suffered chronic abdominal pain and dramatic swings in his overall wellbeing.

“Disease is possible to read from DNA,” Rajewsky added. “For creativity and willpower, I think it’s completely crazy that we can read this off DNA.”

Music and Science

What could modern genomics teach us about Beethoven?

Nikolaus Rajewsky is not just a world leader in genome research. He’s also an accomplished musician who used these two skills to explain both Beethoven’s troubled life and undoubted genius.

Genomics and Systems Biology

Genomics is revolutionizing biology. Discoveries by researchers in fields as diverse as neurology, oncology, biodiversity and agriculture have been assessed over three conferences hosted by the NYUAD Institute for the Center for Genomics & Systems Biology.

When James Watson and Francis Crick discovered the basics of DNA, they could never have imagined that their research might lead to passenger jets being fueled by weeds grown in seawater in Abu Dhabi.

But as these three conferences have shown, understanding the building blocks of life opens up a mind-boggling range of possibilities.

Want to understand why Beethoven went deaf so young? How cell systems change with cancer? How to get tastier and more disease-resistant dates? Or indeed, how to create biofuel from salt-tolerant plants? The answers are found in the field of genomics, in which the genetic code of an organism is analyzed, sequenced, and potentially altered.

As Brenda Andrews, Professor from the University of Toronto, explained at the conference in February 2013, we already know that genes determine physical characteristics, such as eye, hair and skin color, but we do not yet fully understand their role in traits like intelligence, athleticism, artistic talent, personality and predisposition to disease.

She also noted that one of the most explosive new areas of DNA research is on genetic networks, a theory that conceptualizes the outcomes of groups of genes working together rather than looking at an isolated gene.

The NYUAD Center for Genomics and Systems Biology was established to explore these ideas while pursuing a range of research projects in the key areas of renewable resources and regional biodiversity, disease-related chemical genomics and neuronal systems.

Fabio Piano, NYUAD provost and founding director of the NYU Center for Genomics & Systems Biology in both New York and Abu Dhabi, was involved in the first ever “molecular map” of a living organism—in this case a nematode roundworm. During the conference, he shared how this project revealed previously undiscovered levels of complexity and interaction about how the creature functioned.

Fully understanding how a roundworm operates genetically, he noted, could open the way for intervening on cancerous cells at a genetic level, with the possibility of stopping them from dividing. As with anything in genomics, he stated, the potential for future discovery is immense.
Hox Genes Regulation
Understanding the Molecular Homunculus

Denis Duboule, professor of genetics at the University of Geneva and the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology of Lausanne, shared how sequencing genes of diverse species reveals that the makeup of life is more complex than originally thought.

Duboule’s research has focused on a type of gene known as Hox genes, which determine the sequential development of embryos. Inspired by his grandmother, Duboule realized that genes could unravel themselves in a style similar to that of counting out a rosary. Naming this breakthrough the “rosary model,” he explained that the unraveling of dense clusters of embryonic mice genes—which organize the animals’ development—mirrors the way his grandmother would pray on a string of rosary beads.

Although Duboule and other geneticists have made a series of groundbreaking discoveries around embryonic development, questions remain. He explained, “We don’t understand why [the unraveling] starts, but it draws out in order until the last one, which makes it stop. For the past 15 years, we’ve tried to understand what the mechanism is that drives this.”

This lecture was part of an ongoing “Luminaries of Science” series, which has covered other topics including the role DNA plays in evolutionary science, how electrical impulses work in the body, how interrupting gene sequences can avert genetic diseases, why dogs and humans share the same enzymes, and how genes regulate cell development.

The UAE’s location on the crossroads of Asia, Africa and Europe is reflected in its music.

A performance of traditional Emirati music, with compositions that blended musical influences from Africa, Europe and Asia, and reflected the differences between the Emirates’ desert, mountain and seafaring communities, was hosted by the NYUAD Institute.

NYU Silver Professor of Biology and NYUAD Affiliated Faculty Claude Desplan introduced Duboule as “one of [his] scientific heroes.” He went on to describe Duboule’s work on the implications of the surprisingly small genetic differences between fruit flies and humans.

The UAE was once a desert, mountain and seafaring community, and now it has evolved into a modern country rich in history and culture. The traditional music of the Emirates reflects this evolution.

The music of the Emirates is a blend of influences from different regions. The UAE has a long history of trade and travel, which has led to a rich cultural diversity. The music of the Emirates reflects this diversity, with influences from Africa, Europe, and Asia.

The performance featured traditional instruments such as the oud, the rababa, and the shawm. These instruments are played to create a rich tapestry of sound that reflects the diversity of the Emirates.

The music is not only a reflection of the history of the Emirates, but also a celebration of the rich cultural heritage of the region. The performance was a testament to the beauty and diversity of traditional Emirati music.
War is not the most obvious or ideal way to enable an exchange of ideas between cultures, and especially when the conflict in question is the Crusades. But, as Professor Alastair Hamilton of the Warburg Institute in London put it, in the clashes between the Arabic/Islamic and Christian/European worlds, each side had an influence on the other that went beyond just religious-inspired bloodshed.

“There’s a slightly positive side of these very bellicose encounters,” he said. “We can see the emergence of something that was to become common cultural heritage.”

This interaction through war occurred on three principal occasions: the Crusades, the Ottoman Empire era, and the imperialism and colonization by European forces of the Arab world in early 20th century. It went beyond just practical arts, such as the Arabic superiority in the sciences in the Middle Ages, but also Arabic influences on European literature.

One of the themes of the conference was that this cross-influence of cultures did not end with the Renaissance that saw European civilization emerge from the Dark Ages. NYU Abu Dhabi Vice Provost, Institute Public Programming Philip Kennedy described that ongoing influence as having been mostly ignored.

Many of the speakers came from the Warburg Institute’s Centre for the History of Arabic Studies in Europe (Chase), which was formed in 2012. Others were from NYU Abu Dhabi, organizations within the UAE, and from the US and Britain.

For conference co-convener Jan Loop, the academic coordinator of Chase, his expertise matched the breadth of the influence from the Arabic world to Europe in areas of both science and arts.

Dr Loop addressed the conference twice, on the transmission of scientific knowledge and then later on the discovery of Arabic poetry in early modern Europe. Others spoke of the impact of Arabic medical expertise at the Royal College of Physicians in London, the network of scholars across the eastern Mediterranean and how metalwork from the Mamluk period from the 13th to 16th centuries appeared in Italian markets.
Pre-Oil Economy in the UAE
The Work-a-Day World before Oil

Oil now dominates the UAE’s finances, but the economy for thousands of years before that was the focus of this conference convened by NYU Abu Dhabi Vice Provost, Institute Public Programming Philip Kennedy and James Toth, a special advisor to the NYUAD Institute.

Those who lived in Abu Dhabi and Dubai knew wealth, but they also experienced the sudden disappearance of that prosperity and the privations of life that followed. But as United Arab Emirates University History Professor Fatima Al-Sayegh told the conference, all this happened before oil was first pumped out of the ground.

For thousands of years, wealth on the Gulf’s southern coast was based around pearling, providing a valuable commodity to trade with passing merchants, but the trade collapsed in the 1920s when the Japanese invented cultured pearls.

Al-Sayegh, the granddaughter of a pearl merchant, said from that time until the discovery of oil, the Trucial Coast was much poorer.

When World War II interrupted trade in the region and worsened the situation, those in the northern emirates talked about “sanat al-ji,” the year of hunger.

Other speakers in the fields of archaeology, sociology, economics and history, and hailing from within the UAE, Britain, the US, and Canada, outlined the fundamentals of the Emirati economy before oil, which was based around four interrelated and interdependent economic sectors: nomadic desert or herding activity; agriculture; the marine economy, characterized by fishing and pearling; and trading. The mixing of these sectors had the effect of lessening the distinction between the settlers and the nomads.

Some, such as NYU Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Archaeology and History Daniel Potts, contended that the traditional focus on the Trucial Coast’s economy in isolation is misguided because it underplays the deeper historical patterns of cross-Gulf and intra-Gulf social, political and economic interaction that have characterized the region since prehistory.

Others such as art historian Ron Hawker sought to correct what he saw as an oversimplification in early documentation by the British about distinctions between the types of farming systems that were used by the tribes based in the Hajar mountains.
Arts

ZEB AND HANIYA
Mirari, the artwork that won the inaugural Christo and Jeanne-Claude Award, was designed to be at home in almost any environment, bringing a new dimension to each of the various locations in which it was displayed.

Since being selected last year, the mirage-inspired collection of stainless steel and mirrored triangles created by Sheikha Maryam bint Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan has been displayed at the downtown campus of NYU Abu Dhabi, the Al Majaz waterfront in Sharjah, in the remote town of Ruwais and amid the dunes at the Qasr al Sarab Hotel in the Empty Quarter.

Sheikha Maryam, who was then a fourth-year art and design and visual arts student at Zayed University, said: “Each triangle has three points and each point represents past, present and future. It is inspired by Sheikh Zayed, who said: ‘Those who don’t have a past, don’t have a future.'" "I have been playing with the concept of what is real and what is not real a lot lately. I tried different approaches of articulating this idea. I wanted something that was very abstract, something to have a scattered look somehow. But if you walk around the piece and view it from different points, it will not all look the same. This is the effect that I want.”

The winner of the award is granted up to US$5,000 to produce and exhibit their proposed artwork. Christo, who has been a frequent visitor to the UAE since the 1970s and is developing a permanent installation artwork in the dunes near the town of Liwa, has announced future iterations of the award to assist the winner in gaining additional practical experience in the art world.

The avant-garde installation artist Christo has collaborated with the NYU Abu Dhabi Institute, in partnership with the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation, to offer an annual prize for new artwork created by UAE-based university students and recent graduates.
Brazilian flutist Celina Charlier has performed professionally as a soloist, chamber musician, and orchestral musician. As NYUAD Visiting Assistant Professor of Music and Director of Music Performance she has brought her experience to the Institute through four musically diverse programs, and with the Institute’s support she produced “Dia de Lua” with composer, guitarist, and vocalist Marcio Miele.

In Charlier’s first Institute performance she collaborated with pianist Eshantha Peiris to present Fantasies—free music form that empowers the performer’s creativity in interpretation—from various cultures and periods, from Japan to Germany and France to Hungary, with a world premiere finale that blended Arabic and Brazilian styles.

She later organized a music recital, “Baroque Pearls,” with Fábio Pellegatti, cellist and professor of cello performance at the Municipal Conservatory of Guarulhos, in which the duo presented a fresh interpretation of Baroque music.

In 2013, young poets from Khalifa University (mentored by Aisha Al Kaabi), Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi, and NYUAD participated in a performance curated by Charlier that featured original songs in special bossa nova style. Their poetry, recited in Arabic, English, and French, was inspired by the music and complemented the upbeat and romantic tones of the Brazilian songs. At the heart of the show was Charlier and Miele’s belief in the capacity of human relationship to generate art and art to generate human relationship.

In her most recent Institute performance, Charlier partnered with her longtime mentor, composer, and pianist Maestro Edmundo Villani-Côrtes in a recital that combined the cheerful lyricism of Brazilian instrumental genres with the best form of Brazilian classical music.

![Celina Charlier performing with her flute](image)

**Celina Charlier**

A renowned oud player, chanter, composer, music researcher, and specialist in traditional Arab and oriental style, Mustafa Said performed for the Institute’s audience on two occasions.

In collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture & Heritage’s Sound of Arabia Festival in 2010, Said accompanied his talk on music throughout history in the Arab world with a performance on the oud.

In 2012 he participated in a program curated by Gulf cultural expert and musicologist Neil van der Linden and organized in collaboration with the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation. Mixing performance and discussion, this presentation covered the music of the Arabic Renaissance and its relation to the political and social movements of the period.

Said founded the Asil Ensemble for Interpretive Traditional Arab Oriental Music in 2003. He has taught oud, chanting, the art of improvisation, and Arab ensemble music (takht) at the Music Institute at Antonine University in Lebanon, since 2006. He has two albums to his name, has participated in several collaborative recordings, set music to several works of theatre as well as documentary films, and participated in numerous music festivals locally and internationally both as solo player and in ensembles.

![Mustafa Said performing](image)

**Mustafa Said**

The play tells the story of a mythological being who descends to earth to understand the human condition. A marked departure from the traditional model of storytelling in the early 20th century, the play was an early exploration into dramatic expressionism and symbolism and remains one of Strindberg’s most renowned dramas. *A Dream Play* takes the ethereal and surreal form of a dream, moving across periods in time and space of the protagonist’s human experience.

Rubén Polendo, director of Theater Mitu and head of NYUAD’s Theater Program, said: “The play is beautiful and has a number of symbolically charged moments taking on some of the questions we’ve been asking forever. A theme that particularly stands out is the attachment individuals develop towards their function in society, and the way that it can both define and confine them. The play is about balance and letting go, it touches on family, age, love, work, among other things.”

“Theater plays an important role in bringing the community together by supporting a cross-cultural connection and dialogue amongst people in that shared space,” he added. “It puts us all in a bus and takes us somewhere.”

![A Dream Play](image)

**A Dream Play**

Theater Mitu, the professional theater company in residence at NYU Abu Dhabi, returned for its third public production in Abu Dhabi, performing August Strindberg’s 1901 classic, *A Dream Play*. 
Zeb and Haniya

Melding traditions from the South Asian sub-continent, through Central Asia, and all the way to Turkey and the Balkans, Pakistani musical duo Zeb and Haniya weave an aural tapestry that speaks of joint histories, collective cultural memories, and the oneness of human experience.

The concert they performed in 2013 in the garden of NYUAD's Downtown Campus brought together a diverse group of musicians in order to explore musical styles and languages, and to create an innovative sound from these intersections, which is both familiar and unique.

Zeb Bangash, a vocalist, and Haniya Aslam, a rhythm guitarist and vocalist, were accompanied by bass guitarist Zain Ali, accordion player Patrick Farrell, lead guitarist Zeeshan Mansoor, drummer and percussionist Kamran Paul, and clarinetist Michael Winograd.

Similarly, Zeb and Haniya’s first performance for the Institute’s audience in 2011 included diverse accompaniment from percussionist Douglas Caskie, rabab player Siddiq Samer, and composer and keyboardist Merlijn Twaalfhoven. On this occasion, renowned dancer Anani Dodji Sanouvi of Togo and Gabon also performed.
Exhibitions

The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute helped to give the work of several visual artists greater prominence in Abu Dhabi, with some also having their work displayed at NYU’s Washington Square campus in New York.

Mohammed Kazem

Before going on to represent the UAE in the nation’s first solo show at the Venice Biennale, Dubai-based Emirati artist Mohammed Kazem created Directions, an installation artwork on the NYU Abu Dhabi campus, belonging to his Directions series that conceptually uproot sites from their GPS locations. Kazem, together with artist Jessica Mein, discussed their work with the Abu Dhabi public at NYU Abu Dhabi.

Nadia Benchallal

The Award-winning French-Algerian photographer Nadia Benchallal captured images of Muslim women from diverse communities across Algeria, Palestine, Bosnia, Burma, Malaysia, Iran and France with the intention of breaking through preconceived and reductive expectations of how Muslim women should appear. “The world of Muslim women is far richer than that,” she said. Her work, Sisters, went on display at NYU Abu Dhabi in September 2012.

Zubin Shroff

Faces from six continents and almost every walk of life—from pilgrims to office workers, artists, construction workers, actors, and some of Shroff’s own family and friends—formed the basis for The Cosmopolitans, the large-format portrait series that has been shown around the world. Shroff grew up between London and Mumbai but is now based in New York, which contributes to his global perspective.

Film Screenings

Collaborations with the Abu Dhabi Film Festival in 2011 and 2012 and a screening of a Martin Scorsese behind-the-scenes documentary about one of the world’s most famous musicians ensured that the Institute offered variety to cinephiles in Abu Dhabi. The following are a few highlights:

George Harrison Living in the Material World

MARCH 7, 2012
After former Beatle George Harrison died in 2001, his family entrusted Academy Award-winning director Martin Scorsese to combine unseen archival footage and interviews with Harrison’s friends and family to create the journey of his life—as a member of the most famous band in history, as a solo musician and as a religious devotee. Scorsese was described as having created a film that inspired the audience in the same way Harrison inspired the world. The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute event included a question and answer session with Harrison’s widow, Olivia Harrison, who was a producer on the film, and David Tedeschi, who was an editor on the film.

The Circle

SEPTEMBER 5, 2012
The first feature film by Emirati filmmaker Nawaf Al Janahi revolves around the character of Ibrahim, a poet and a journalist who discovers he does not have much longer to live. As he tries to make sure his wife is supported financially after his death, he meets Shihab, a professional thief who plans to quit crime to take care of his sister, and each begins to see the world from a different perspective. The NYU Abu Dhabi Institute screened the film, along with “Layers,” a short by Manal Wicki, followed by a question and answer session with the filmmakers.

Midaiq Alley

NOVEMBER 3, 2011
On the centenary of the birth of Naguib Mahfouz, Egypt’s Nobel Laureate for literature, the Institute screened Midaiq Alley, the 1963 feature film based on his 1947 novel of the same name which won him the Nobel Prize. The film version by Hassan al-Imam portrays the hardships of life in the impoverished back alleys of Cairo’s Old Quarter, and sees that the location acts as a microcosm of the world. Mahfouz, who died in 2006, has been described as the most prolific and influential writer on the Middle East with a body of work spanning 30 novels and more than 100 short stories.

Nadia Benchallal
The Award-winning French-Algerian photographer Nadia Benchallal captured images of Muslim women from diverse communities across Algeria, Palestine, Bosnia, Burma, Malaysia, Iran and France with the intention of breaking through preconceived and reductive expectations of how Muslim women should appear. “The world of Muslim women is far richer than that,” she said. Her work, Sisters, went on display at NYU Abu Dhabi in September 2012.
NYU Abu Dhabi Institute
Programs

2008

OCTOBER 7
On the Art of the Novel
Elia Kazan, NYU
Philip Kennedy, NYUAD

NOVEMBER 10
Banking the World
Jonathan Morduch, NYU

NOVEMBER 12
Stephen Hawking's A Briefer History of Time
Glennie Fanar, NYU

NOVEMBER 15
Elections 2008: A Look back and the Road Ahead
Hassan Pajouh, The National
Bob Shrum, NYU

NOVEMBER 18
"Outside the Box" Alternate
Jonathan Morduch, NYU
Alec Marantz, NYU

DECEMBER 11
Imaging: Progress and Modernities
Edward J. Sullivan, NYU
Mary Brabeck, NYU

DECEMBER 17
Banking the World
Richard Allen, NYU

2009

OCTOBER 7
On the Art of the Novel
Elia Kazan, NYU
Philip Kennedy, NYUAD

JANUARY 14
Brain Imaging: A New Window into the Human Mind
David J. Heeger, NYU

JANUARY 18
The Search for Social Entrepreneurship
Paul C. Light, NYU

JANUARY 20-22
Education, Media, and Human Development
Mary Brabeck, NYU

JANUARY 22
In the Public Eye: Media and Civil Society in the Arab World
Raja Khouri, American University in Cairo

FEBRUARY 26-MARCH 22
Muslim Cultures of Bombay Cinema
Richard Allen, NYU
Ira Bhaskar, Jawaharlal Nehru University

MARCH 1-3
The African-Arab Gulf Relationships
Yaw Nyarko, NYU

MARCH 16
Mumbai and the Indian Ocean: A Gulf's eye view of Globalization
Anur Agnani, NYU

MARCH 20
Islamicate Cultures of Bombay Cinema
Richard Allen, NYU
Ira Bhaskar, Jawaharlal Nehru University

APRIL 15
The Two Europes: Islam and Christendom 711-1215
David Levering Lewis, NYU

APRIL 21
On Arabian Oral Poetry and Tribal Lore
Saad Abdalla Sowayan, King Saud University
Philip F. Kennedy, NYUAD Institute

May 3
Climate Change: Financing Green Development
Richard Stewart, NYU

SEPTEMBER 21
Building Big: A Critical Examination of the Planning of Mega Urban Transportation Projects
Harry Dimmou, University College, London

SEPTEMBER 29
An Enduring Romance: Contemporary Art and Human Rights
Ayreen Anastas, Artist, New York

SEPTEMBER 29
Christian Images in Islamic Art
Yasser Tabbas, King's Academy, Jordan

OCTOBER 1
Le Corbusier's Toward an Architecture
Jean-Louis Cohen, NYU
Yasser Tabbas, King's Academy, Jordan

OCTOBER 4
Reconceptualizing Urban Heterogeneity: Consequences for Understanding and Enhancing Ecological Processes to Foster Sustainability
Mary Cadenaasso, University of California, Davis

OCTOBER 15
Completing the Circuit: Formula 1, Yas Island and the Future of Abu Dhabi
Marit Westerman, NYUAD
H.E. Khaldoon Al Mubarak, Abu Dhabi Motorsports Management
H.E. Mohammed bin Suleyem, Automobile and Touring Club UAE

OCTOBER 19
The Silk Roads: A New Historical Perspective
Joanna Waley-Cohen, NYU

OCTOBER 20
Strategic Issues Facing the Ports of New York and Dubai
Asaf Achar, University of New Orleans

OCTOBER 21
Cosmopolitanism, Multiculturalism and the Promise of Literature
Cyrus R. K. Patell, NYU

NOVEMBER 5
The conservation of Islamic Heritage Architecture in Cairo and the UAE
Peter Schefer, Abu Dhabi Heritage for Culture & Heritage
Nicholas Warner, NYU
MARCH 21 The Gender of Democracy: Why It Matters in the Middle East and North Africa Valentine Moghadam, Purdue University Gayatri Gopinath, NYU Rahma Abdulkadir, NYUAD

MARCH 21 A Modern Oedipus: A Reading and Discussion of Wajdi Mouawad’s Sadeh Ruben Polonko, NYU Peter Meineck, NYU Judith Miller, NYU

MARCH 23 The Risks of Film: A Global Story Mette Hipt, Lingnan University, Hong Kong Seung-hoon Jeong, NYU

MARCH 23 Assessing Higher Education Richard Shavell, Stanford University Roger Boardman, Council for Aid to Education

MARCH 24 On Chaos in Abu Dhabi Working through Pirandello Riaz Hassan, NYUAD

MARCH 25 Mo Ogrodnik, NYUAD

MARCH 26 Caricato and Neighbors Mo Ogrodnik, NYUAD Elisa Habiba Shohat, NYUAD Peter Scarlet, Abu Dhabi Film Festival Robert Stam, NYU

MARCH 27 Tolerance in a Comparative Perspective Bhishu Parekh, University of Hull

MARCH 30 Completing the Urbanization Project Paul Romer, NYU

APRIL 4 Markets: A Novel Approach to Assess Sovereign Debt Risk Ed Alfram, NYU

APRIL 9 The Silence of the Palace (Hamlet at Qurayqur) Mo Ogrodnik, NYUAD Elisa Habiba Shohat, NYUAD Peter Scarlet, Abu Dhabi Film Festival Robert Stam, NYU

APRIL 10-11 Nationalization of the Workforce in the GCC Countries II Samira A. Atallah, NYU

APRIL 11 Healthcare Reform in the U.S. and the Barriers to Implementing These Changes Andrew Rubin, NYU Langone Medical Center Dolce Cosgrove, Cleveland Clinic

APRIL 11 The Meaning of Locke’s Letter Concerning Toleration Ingrid Crispell, The George Washington University John Dion, King’s College, Cambridge Don Garrett, NYU

APRIL 11 Gender, Race, and Citizenship in the Global Village: The Resurgence of Islam Shereen Razack, University of Toronto Rahma Abdulkadir, NYUAD

APRIL 14 Are Tolerance and Neutrality Incompatible Ideals? Catriona Mcinnkon, University of Reading

APRIL 15 Do You Trust Your Chip? Battling Hardware Trojans and Defects by Design-For-Excellence in Electronics Ozgur Sinanoglu, NYU

APRIL 16-19 3D Integration Workshop for High Performance Computing Systems Hai (Henry) Li, NYU Yuan Xi, Penn State University H. Jonathan Cho, NYU

APRIL 16 Intel Labs: Staying ahead of the Technology Tanay Karnik, Intel Labs

APRIL 19 Hope: A Conversation Concerning Toleration Laura Baladi, Artist Livia Alexander, ArtEast

APRIL 20-22 Imagining the Future: New Worlds, New Arts, New Models Anna Deaves Smith, NYU Gideon Lester, Columbia School of the Arts

APRIL 21 A Conversation with Khalid Abol Naga Khalid Abol Naga, Distinguished Egyptian actor, director, and journalist Philip Kennedy, NYUAD

APRIL 21 Zeb & Hanita, Merlijn Twalhoven and Anani Dodji Sanouvi Merlijn Twalhoven, Composer Zeb & Hanita, Singers, Songwriters Anani Dodji Sanouvi, Chorogapher and Dancer

APRIL 21 Against Intolerance Patricia O’Neill, The Working Group John Shattuck, Central European University Faysa Ginsburg, NYU

APRIL 23 Salut Cousin! Ella Habiba Shohat, NYUAD Mo Ogrodnik, NYUAD Peter Scarlet, Abu Dhabi Film Festival


APRIL 27 The Making of a Market: How the Ethiopia Commodity Exchange Came to Be Elien Gabre-Madhin, Ethiopia Commodity Exchange (ECX)

APRIL 28 Women’s Voices in the Muslim World Anne Rasmusen, College of William and Mary Walter Zve Zapf, NYUAD

APRIL 28 Market Dynamics in the Arab Gulf and Other Emerging Economies Chetan Dave, NYUAD Yaw Nyarwo, NYUAD

MAY 2-5 Classical and Quantum Turbulence Victor S. Llov, Weizmann Institute of Science Ladiowsk-Stark, Charles University K.R. Sreenivasan, NYU William F. Viren, University of Birmingham

MAY 2 From Angstroms to Light Years: What is the Connection? Kaelapuli Sreenivasan, NYU

MAY 2 A Bicycle Built for Two: Humans and Computers Making Music Together Rebecca Federkin, Princeton University

MAY 4 Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses Richard Arum, NYU Josipa Roksa, NYU School of Law

MAY 4 La Grande Voyage Peter Scarlet, Abu Dhabi Film Festival Robert Stam, NYU

MAY 5 The Body as a Weapon: Understanding Suicide Riaz Hassan, NYU

MAY 10 Translating al-Shi’i ‘Isa al Razza Hassan, NYU

MAY 27 An Egyptian Pantheon at the Origin of European Painting F. Files, NYU

MAY 27 A Cosmopolitan Pantheon: Panel Paintings from Roman Egypt Thomas F. Mathews, NYU

MAY 28 An Egyptian Pantheon at the Origin of European Painting F. Files, NYU

MAY 29-31 JANUARY • 2021 Bahar Behbahani: The Chronicle of Her Innocence Bahar Behbahani, Artist

MAY 29-31 JANUARY • 2020 Bahar Behbahani: The Chronicle of Her Innocence Bahar Behbahani, Artist Sand Baradari, Artist Reoriented

MAY 30 Media, Islam, and the Washington University Mohammed El-Nawawy, Queens University of Charlotte Mohamed Abol Naga, Zayed University

MAY 31 Khan Al Khali Abu Dhabi Film Festival

JUNE 8 What the Global Economy Needs Gordon Brown, The Right Honorable MP Former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Distinguished Global Leader in Residence Peter Henry, NYU

JUNE 8 The Obesity/Diabetes Threat and the Rise of Surgical Treatment Philip Schauer, Cleveland Clinic

JUNE 12 The Somali National Movement’s Rise, Failure, and Reconstruction Rahma Abdulkadir, NYUAD

JUNE 16 A Bottom-Up Approach to the Rebuilding of Somalia: The Azania Case Mohamed Abdi, University of Minnesota

JUNE 17 Rock the Casbah: The New Social Order of the Middle East Robin Wright, Author

JUNE 27 A Conversation with Mohammed Achaari, 2011 Arab Booker Prize Winner Mohammed Achaari, Writer and Politician Sari Kouvo, Afghanistan Analysis Network Rahma Abdulkadir, NYUAD

JUNE 28 An Unseen War: Listening for and Learning from Students’ Ways of Making Meaning Patricia M. King, University of Michigan

JUNE 30 How Reaching the Story Behind the Silence: An Important Component of Cultural Resistance Xiaoqing Lin, Cambridge University

JULY 22 Sapaq and To 11 Alzheimer’s Disease Augustine Mathai, Washington University

AUGUST 10 Hellopolis and Spring 99 Abu Dhabi Film Festival

SEPTEMBER 8 City of Life Abu Dhabi Film Festival

SEPTEMBER 19-21 National Security and Counter-Terrorism: Human Rights Perspectives Jayme Hackerbury, NYU Margaret Sattanthalawale, NYU

SEPTEMBER 24 A Decade Lost: Gender Locating liner in US Counter Terrorism Jayme Hackerbury, Global Justice Clinic; NYU School of Law

SEPTEMBER 25 The Silencing of the Palace Lara Baladi, Artist

SEPTEMBER 25 Light Years: What is the Connection? Kaelapuli Sreenivasan, NYU

SEPTEMBER 26 The Christo and Jeanne-Claude: A Conversation... The Christo and Jeanne-Claude: The Story: An Important...