



World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies

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Panel “(Hyper)realities on Stage in the Arab Gulf”

Organisers: Katrin Bromber (Berlin), Christian Steiner (Mainz), Steffen Wippel (Berlin/Leipzig); **Chair:** Benjamin Zachariah (Berlin)

Abstract: The panel focuses on postmodern urban development in the Arab Gulf. Large-scale waterfront and infrastructure projects, theme parks, gated communities, the commodification of heritage, innovations in architecture and style and new practices of urban experience characterise the Gulf cities of the 21st century. According to post-modern theories, many of these projects can be interpreted as a kind of hyperrealities that often lack historical and cultural embeddedness. Whereas the return on investment of many of these development projects will be contested, their global impact on collective imagery and location branding for the dawning post-oil era is not.

Against this background, the question arises of the role the mentioned projects are going to play for the future social, cultural and economic development of the region. The panel invited papers that contribute to a theoretically informed interpretation of the materiality, meaning or aesthetics of postmodern phenomena that address these issues.

Denis Bocquet (Dresden/Berlin): Transport Infrastructures and the Risk of Splintering Urbanism: The Dubai Metro Project and the Stakes of Modernity in a Gulf City

Katrin Bromber (Berlin): Simulated Difference – Serial Reproduction of Architecture through Sports

Luca Ciabbari (Halle/Pavia): Dubai style: The Resonances of Gulf’s Grandeur along the Trading Link Dubai-Somaliland

Delfina Serrano (Madrid/Abu Dhabi): The Raha Beach Waterfront Project in Abu Dhabi

Christian Steiner (Mainz): Simulated Urbanity: The Hyperrealisation of Urban Development in Dubai

Steffen Wippel (Berlin/Leipzig): Between Reality and Hyperreality: Port and Tourism Development in Oman (with Special Reference to Salalah)

For more details see: <http://wocmes.iemed.org/en/preorg-hyperrealities>

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