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blue. In Persia, women ex-
tends with indigo, in an arc
ad. Eyebrow extension and
indigo and black cosmetics
in regions

carbon-based powder used to
to preserve visual wellness
North African, Turkish, and
Women could prepare kohl
materials, or with rare and
such as amber, antimony, frank-
almond shells. The simplest
collected over a fire, applied
drawn between nearly closed
black was the most common
though galena (lead sulfide)
antimony compound) were also
used for kohl. These metals were
carried by flies and contami-
nation provided some protection
against and trachoma. The irritation
of particles in one's eyes caused
if the eyes washed clean of
of and bacteria. Blue and green
made with copper, malachite,

occasions such as a wedding or the
of a guest, a woman's face might
be red, yellow, blue, and white
black paint made from carbon-
black, gold leaf, and artificial
to other usual cosmetics. Greater
after beauty were appropriate
for Muslim culture

[*Ḥammām; and Hygiene*]

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CATHERINE CARTWRIGHT-JONES

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES, WOMEN'S HISTORICAL.

As the historical textual sources of the Muslim world evince, Muslim women were active in several cultural fields, most notably poetry and music. This article focuses, however, exclusively on their role in the Islamic visual arts and crafts. The area suffers a dearth of scholarship compared with the now substantial literature successfully reassessing the role of women in Islamic social, economic, and political history or with feminist European, East Asian, and, perhaps to a lesser degree, African art historical writing. That the contribution of women to Islamic visual culture remains little explored is usually ascribed to the lack of material and textual evidence. Craftswomen were in the majority involved in fiber-based arts, which do not withstand the effects of time as do other artistic media such as clay, glass, or metal. However, while Islamic art historians all face the challenge that no need was felt in the Muslim world to develop a textual tradition specifically dedicated to art and aesthetics, a variety of sources, particularly biographical dictionaries, but also historical treatises, *waqfiyya*, or *hisba* manuals, provide insight into women's relationship with and practice of the arts. Their glossing over by Western scholars confirms the idea that primary sources are not yet sufficiently used in Islamic studies generally and, more significantly, the reality that Orientalist views of Muslim women and patriarchy continue

to inform the writing of art history. Research addressing women's role in Islamic art has effectively been impeded by the tendency to accept rather than question the established norms of the field. From the inception of Islamic art history in nineteenth-century Europe, art historians have applied the definitions, concepts, and methods used in the study of post-medieval European art to that of Islamic art, regardless of the tremendous differences between the two traditions. The former can be broadly characterized by mimesis, narrative, and the notions of individual genius and the masterpiece, while the latter privileges analogy, abstraction, collective authorship, anonymity, and functionality. Islamic arts, with few exceptions, were decorative, rather than fine, arts. The lack of distinction seems only to have consolidated the class-based taxonomy inherent to art history. Luxury commodity artifacts and monumental architecture came to be categorized as art while artistic productions catering to the general population of urban centers or those made in rural and tribal contexts in which Muslim craftswomen were especially prominent were excluded. The omission of women has equally been aggravated by the fact that, although textiles are central to Islamic art, textile, and carpet studies have developed as a somewhat separate field of inquiry in which questions of gender are also rarely highlighted and when they are it has not informed Islamic art historical scholarship.

The study of the role of women in Islamic art has concentrated on the representation of women in Islamic art and female architectural patronage with some innovative research having also been undertaken on the relationship between gender and urban or architectural space. The assumption of the absence of female artists, however, mirrors that of both art history and Orientalism. How else to explain that feminist Islamic art historians, with the exception of Walter Denny, overlook the reality that women were also makers

of art and have not, echoing feminist Western art historians, stretched the definition of art to include the textile arts, especially in light of their aesthetic, cultural, and economic importance throughout Islamic history?

Representation and Patronage. Denny's pioneering essay on the image of women in Islamic art remains relevant today in its identification of four main representational themes: women as pleasure, lover, moral example, and hero. Similar studies only appeared well over a decade later (Najmabadi; Diba) although many important questions deserve further exploration. For example, while art historians have observed that gender in Persianate painting is conveyed through clothing and adornment rather than physiognomy and anatomy, only one text thus far attempts to unravel the meaning of marking gender through social rather than biological signs. If iconographic studies highlight the diversity of ways in which women were imagined and depicted, the examination of male-produced images of women does not provide insight on self-representation.

Scholarship on female patronage emerged as part of the larger project of deconstructing the notion of Muslim women's invisibility but became the central pillar of feminist Islamic art historical scholarship positing that women patrons exercised artistic agency. As no surviving texts articulate the nature of the patron-architect relationship, the evidence put forth consists of stylistic and comparative analyses. Ülkü Bates proposes, for example, that the buildings commissioned by Turkish royal women, when compared to those financed by their male counterparts, display more inventive plans and decorative programs. Lucienne Thys-Şenocak pushes the idea further in an article devoted to the Yeni Valide Mosque. Coining the expression "optical politics," she concludes that the complex was consciously designed to ensure "visual access to the various

components of the complex for a royal female patron whose actual physical access was restricted" (Thys-Şenocak, p. 81), thus allowing the powerful *valide sultan* to appropriate the sultan's omniscient gaze.

Calligraphy Calligraphy. Because of the cultural norm of gender non-mixity, Muslim women, like European women, did not have access to the necessary technical education to practice a variety of crafts from architecture to metalsmithing until the modern era. However a significant number of women are recorded as master calligraphers from the earliest period of Islamic history. Those trained in *khaṭṭ* encompass women from ruling, wealthy, or pious families, those employed as court secretaries, or still yet the large number of women copyists working for Islamic schools or on the public book market of medieval Córdoba. Two articles in European languages (al-Munajjid; Masala) and, more recently, a much-needed book (Kazan) have appeared on the topic, all drawing upon biographical dictionaries. The exclusion of women calligraphers from Western Islamic art historical scholarship is surprising not only because calligraphy is considered the highest art form in Islam and that, like patronage, it is associated with social privilege, but also because women calligraphers sometimes formed part of the chains of transmission. For example, Shuḥda al-Kātiba (d. 1178 CE) known as *Fakhr al-Nisā'* (Glory of Women) constitutes the link between the two most famous medieval calligraphers, Ibn al-Bawwāb (d. 1032) and Yāqūt al-Musta'şimī (d. 1298). The challenge for historians is that, while sources provide the names and usually minimal information about women scribes, extremely few surviving examples of their work predate the late Ottoman period. Nonetheless the very fact that women calligraphers were awarded diplomas (*'ijāza*) and reaped social and economic benefits from their art is in itself historically noteworthy.

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Textile Arts. Textiles formed the economic backbone of the Muslim world up until the modern period and women were involved in their production in massive numbers whether for domestic consumption or trade. Women were engaged in felting, carding, spinning, dyeing, embroidery, weaving, and brocade and carpet making. It is effectively impossible to overestimate the role women played in the textile arts; the irony of its non-acknowledgment is aptly noted by Denny who, referring to carpets, writes that if "these forms have been neglected by traditionally trained historians of Islamic art, there can be no question that in the West today the most popular works of art from the Islamic world are products of women artists" (Denny, p. 177). Women carpet makers were particularly recognized for both the economic benefits and artistic merits of their work, although so far no evidence would suggest that Muslim women, like European ones, belonged to guilds. Women-produced textiles were not only domestic arts, but also desired and treasured objects of public consumption that possessed public visibility in all three social contexts: urban, rural, and tribal.

While Islamic art history focuses on the luxury textiles produced in male-manned ateliers, integrating the study of the myriad textile traditions produced by women would afford a clearer understanding of both Islamic art and Muslim women. Women-crafted textiles are related to numerous wider issues: the provision of shelter (e.g., fabrication of tents or yurts), the production of gender (e.g., dowry textiles) and distinctive group identity (e.g., Amazigh weaving, Kyrgyz shyrdak), the marking of lifecycles (e.g., textiles relating to marriage or death), traditional piety (e.g., rugs offered to a mosque for a prayer answered), female-specific forms of piety (e.g., the taboo on men approaching looms in some North African contexts), artistic genealogies (e.g., transmission of motifs), politics (e.g., Uzbek khans

offering *suzanis* as diplomatic gifts to visiting dignitaries), and, of course, female economic empowerment. More appreciably, while there are recognizable stylistic and iconographic differences between women's textiles, particularly tribal and village ones, and those produced in urban, particularly court, workshops, both prefer stylized, often abstract, forms and bright colors and emerge from regimes of representation not based on the division between the subject and object of the gaze and hence on the gendered implications such a division carries in European art. Because one can posit fewer differences between male- and female-fashioned artifacts than in other traditions, women's textiles in the Muslim world only further demonstrate the necessity to address the critical question of interpretation in Islamic art. The acknowledgment and articulation of the meaning of its aniconism has been inhibited by Eurocentric norms and definitions of art, especially problematic in the case of female art traditions that, often transmitted from generation to generation, evoke the contemporary concept of *écriture féminine* referring to a psychic space that, because outside the symbolic order of language, is unhindered by patriarchy.

Future Directions. The project of rewriting women into Islamic art history is in its infancy. Its success requires redefining the concept to include artifacts made by women in all social contexts as well as in additional Muslim-majority geographical regions. Islamic art refers only to the art of the Muslim Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia; integrating Southeast Asia, East Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa into the discussion would draw awareness not only to other fiber-based arts practiced by Muslim women but also to other media such as pottery making, which has a long history as a woman's art in West Africa. The recovery project effectively involves widening the definition of art to acknowledge the various traditions of Muslim women's artistic practice

whether textiles, basketry, leatherwork, or wall painting, and thereby disputing allegedly normative definitions of art that in large part effectively account for the systemic omission of women. In the particular case of Islamic art, it also means recognizing that pre-modern non-narrative largely abstract art traditions also constitute systems of meaning. If Islamic art history is to take part in the nascent ambitious comparative endeavor known as global or world art studies, a situated approach toward Islamic art and an understanding of its visual vocabularies are essential.

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VALÉRIE BEHIERY

CULTURE AND EXPRESSION (THEORETICAL OVERVIEW).

Because women are the culture bearers of a society and because much of what is expressed about Islam in the public sphere revolves around representations of and conversations about Muslim women, it is fitting that one of the themes around which this project was organized is "culture and expression." Our particular concern was to distinguish between women's bodies, which are often the subjects and objects of patriarchy, and women's voices, which remain theirs alone to articulate.

Topics pertaining to questions of women's bodies and literary and artistic production are often lumped together in reference works in a category such as "culture and society," removing these discussions from the more important power topics of politics and economics and suggesting that women are peripheral members of society, much as art and literature are often considered to be elite pastimes that become possible to address only when the more critical issues of authority, leadership, and security have been satisfied. Such a construct also perpetuates the notion that women's issues are simply a cultural question or a matter of social concern, rather