

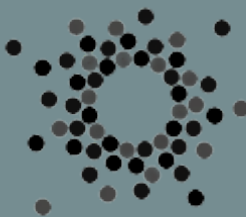
Islamic Science Fiction

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21 APRIL 2023

4:45PM

HÖRSAAL, INSTITUT FÜR
ORIENTALISTIK,
SPITALGASSE 2, HOF 4.1
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Abstract

Islam is often associated with the past: traditional practices, an ancient scripture and a long history of civilization. However, artists and scientists in the contemporary Muslim world have also created wildly ambitious future-oriented visions. Seemingly paradoxical, their brave and liberated imagination has been encouraged by literal readings of the Qur'an and facilitated by authoritarian politics. Islamic science fiction and Muslim futurism have thus been thriving even in conservative and repressive contexts.

This lecture will introduce futuristic megaprojects in the Muslim world such as Neom and the Emirates Mars Mission, while probing their political and religious contexts. The presentation will then explore the history of science fiction in the Middle East. Also covered are new religious movements combining Islamic scripture and space age mythology, especially the belief in unidentified flying objects (UFOs). Finally, the talk will offer broader conclusions about science, technology and the imagination in the Islamic world.

Bio

Jörg Matthias Determann is Associate Professor of History at Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar. He also serves as an Associate Editor of the Review of Middle East Studies and as Book Review Editor of the Journal of Arabian Studies. He holds a doctorate from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and two master's degrees from the University of Vienna. He is the author of four books including Islam, Science Fiction and Extraterrestrial Life and Space Science and the Arab World.



KOOPERATION IM RAHMEN VON
SCIENCE FICTION(S) WENN ES EIN
MORGEN GÄBE
30. MÄRZ 2023 BIS 9. JÄNNER 2024

