

***Drama Queen/Malika: fashion, beauty, humour, in a context of constrained visibility.
Parisian workshop***

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Contemporary Western societies are stages where regimes of compulsory visibility/visuality are being implemented, that particularly impact on the public perceptions and social management of Muslim bodies. The intensification of the anti-headscarf campaign in Europe has brought to the forefront of public stages the Muslim female bodies. In this process, specific forms of injustice affecting Muslim women are embodied through specific politics of aesthetics designing borders to decide who is to be included (desired) and excluded (rejected). In this respect, religious Islamic garments operate as transnational “synecdoches” and gender, ethnicity, race and religion intersect in mapping the boundaries along which desired and rejected icons are produced and circulated in the Euro-Atlantic imaginary, making power relations more visible.

In a field that is saturated by either ideological statements or purely descriptive assessment, visual culture appears as a relevant field for developing new perspectives as it permits moving beyond the usual binary conceptions (tradition vs modernity, brown vs white women, oppressed vs emancipated subjects) and the limitations of “national models” (multiculturalism, republicanism, interculturalism, etc.). Three questions are central in our proposal: How do discursive and visual regimes operate in designing the public stages? How do they operate in organizing the increasing porosity between private and public spheres in particular on matters related to intimacy, personal choice and individual autonomy? Can we laugh about the drama experienced by Muslim women in Western contexts?

This workshop is conceived as a place where artists and scholars will engage in discussion and conversation regarding the variety of tones that compose visual cultures (including fashion, internet, contemporary art and Islamic culture, music scenes, theater experiments, comedy, advertising, etc.). The aim is to explore the impact of the intersection of norms carried by images coming from fashion, comedy, art and beauty industry and the way they interact with the figure of the Muslim(s). We wish to set up the stage for a constructive dialogue between scholars and artists that analyze the contiguity of their respective work: on the one hand, academic analysis of practicing religious people, on the other hand irony and humor, artistic

performances based on the same practicing religious people. We in particular wish to invite to participate into this session scholars and artists that have developed projects at the intersection of different disciplines and offer alternative and new modes of expression of the power relations that shape the specific unfair treatment of Muslim women in secular Western public spaces.

Through the dialogue between scholars and artists looking at similar images and subjects, we intend to map the effects and traces of these discursive productions of images and icons on public imaginaries. The theoretical framework will rely on gender and queer theories, but also discuss critically religion.