



**Culture
& Digital Transformation**
Conference

Challenges and Opportunities for Southwest Asia and North Africa
Dar al-Kalima University 24th International Conference | 10-11, June 2022 / Cyprus



جامعة
دار الكلمة
DAR AL-KALIMA
UNIVERSITY

DAR AL-KALIMA 24th INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

Culture and Digital Transformation: Challenges and Opportunities for Southwest Asia and North Africa June 10-11, 2022 - Cyprus

The [Dar al-Kalima University](#) will be holding its 24th International Conference on *Culture and Digital Transformation* in Cyprus¹ on June 10-11, 2022. The conference is organized by the university and the [Christian Academic Forum for Citizenship in the Arab World \(Cafkaw\)](#).

As digital transformation has impacted the way we create, display, experience, and consume culture, the conference is dedicated to the exploration of current practices and future trends in the use of emerging and interactive digital technologies and platforms in different Southwestern Asian and North African (SWANA) cultural realms such as in arts and religion, as well as the effects of digital transformation on tradition, identity, cultural diversity management, and sustainable development.

The aim of this conference is to promote critical and interdisciplinary approaches and dialogue between participants from diverse fields and backgrounds on digital advances. It provides an excellent forum for academics, artists, and practitioners to present and discuss the latest advancement and problems, as well as future directions in digital transformation and culture in today's SWANA environments challenged by the pandemic "new normal".

¹ Venue to be confirmed later on depending on Covid-19 restrictions. The alternative country/venue would be Jordan.



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Conference Panel Themes:

1- Digital Visual and Performing Arts: Current Practices and Future Trends.

Digital arts have boomed in the last few years on a global level: from NFTs to CryptoArts and Digital Tokens, these new forms of arts and art platforms are attracting collectors, investors, and artists alike. While traditional art forms are still holding their rightful place in the Southwestern Asian and North African art world, digital arts are on the rise, they are shifting the contemporary art landscape, and are paving the way for the future. What are the current practices of digital art -- especially digital visual and performing arts -- in Southwestern Asia and North Africa? What are the obstacles that artists have to overcome? How are governments supporting artists and the cultural/creative sector during the Covid-19 pandemic? What could future art ecosystems look like, at the crossroads of art, science, technology, and commercial industry?

2- Religious Practices in the Digital Age: Opportunities and Challenges.

How is religion represented online? What are the current uses of digital technologies and platforms in religious engagement and practice in Southwestern Asia and North Africa -- how do digital technologies and platforms shape the practice of contemporary religion? How new media can influence and alter faith and spirituality, and how are they employed by religious groups and individuals? What are the moral, ideological, and ontological implications of the digital lives of individuals and communities? What are the opportunities and the challenges of religion and spirituality in a digitalized world?

3- Impact of Digital Transformation on Tradition and Identity.

Digital transformation is changing traditional practices, customs, and values (family and social hierarchization and communication, gender perceptions and relations, work culture,) and is having a progressive effect on individual/collective identity in Southwestern Asia and North Africa. The Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated divides and isolation brought with these changes, but it also opened doors for new forms of connection, new values, new social practices, and identity reconstructions.



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4- Impact of Digital Transformation on Cultural Diversity Management and Sustainable Development.

The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated digital transformation initiatives worldwide, but how governments and companies have been able to better manage diversity and create sustainable environments through digital transformation in Southwestern Asia and North Africa? What are the projects that put cultural pluralism towards inclusive societies and sustainable development at the core of digital transformation strategies? What are the dangers of using digitization for hacking and surveillance, confirming the complexity of the threats to civic space, especially in the most fragile democracies? The World Economic Forum, in its 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG), delineates how the power of technology can be harnessed to facilitate sustainable and inclusive growth, and this is especially relevant for Southwestern Asian and North African countries, as new studies are showing that governments and companies with high investments in sustainability through digital transformation are correlated with resilience, social cohesion, better governance, operational performance, and success, despite the risks and vulnerabilities brought about by the pandemic.

Guide for Submission:

The Dar al-Kalima University invites academics, artists, and practitioners -- from the fields of visual and performing arts, cultural studies, cultural heritage, social/political studies, theology/sciences of religions, computer science, artificial intelligence, among others -- **to submit by March 19, 2022**, an abstract of their research paper/talk or a description of a live artistic production/performance on one of the themes of the conference.

Live artistic productions/performances can be:

- Visual digital arts: fractal/algorithmic art, data-moshing, digital calligraphy, 2D/3D digital painting, pixel art, digital photography, digital collage, integrated art, etc.
- Performance digital arts: digital music and dance, digital theatrical short spectacles, digital opera, digital circus arts, etc.

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To submit an abstract of a research paper/talk or a description of a live artistic production/performance, kindly fill out the following [FORM](#) by March 19, 2022.

Noting that papers and talks should be based on critical and creative thinking, and their presentation at the conference should contain visuals (ex. PowerPoint presentation, audio-visual material).

Speakers have 10 minutes of presentation time, followed by a discussion with the conference participants. As for the live artistic productions/performances, their time limits can be discussed between the artists and the organizers.

Accepted participants' abstracts/descriptions will be published in the conference abstract booklet which will be available at the conference.

For the participants who wish to develop their research papers presented at the conference for publication in a book, they can send their final papers no later than September 30, 2022, for peer review. The papers must be original scientific papers that have not been published before.

In addition, the conference recorded sessions and live artistic productions/performances will be available on the university's website.

Conference Format:

The conference format is hybrid (in-person and virtual attendance/participation).

Conference Languages:

Arabic and English.

Important Dates:

Deadline for submission of abstracts and descriptions: March 19, 2022.

Notification of abstract/description acceptance: March 31, 2022.

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Conference program announcement: April 30th, 2022.

Conference dates: June 10-11, 2022.

Deadline for submission of papers for review and publication: September 30, 2022.

Travel and Accommodation:

Travel arrangements and expenses during the conference (flight ticket, visa cost, PCR tests, airport-conference venue transportation, accommodation, meals) will be made/covered by the Dar al-Kalima University.

About Dar al-Kalima University and Cafcaw:

Founded in 2006 as an accredited college, then a university college in 2013, Dar al-Kalima was accredited as a university in 2021 by the Ministry of Higher education in Palestine and expanded its cultural perspective to accommodate more emphasis on culture and art education. The Dar al-Kalima University is the only one of its kind in Palestine, with a focus on the visual and performing arts as well as design and culture. It provides young Palestinians with access to academic education and training that meet international standards. It promotes tolerance and respect for the thinking and beliefs of others and encourages dynamic communication which contributes to the establishment of a professional network among artists, filmmakers, musicians, actors, designers, and tour guides from Palestine and the rest of the world. Through establishing an institution for higher learning, Dar al-Kalima University is committed to building a culture of democracy and free expression, thus contributing to the strengthening of civil society in Palestine.

The Christian Academic Forum for Citizenship in the Arab World (Cafcaw) was launched in 2014 by DIYAR Consortium in Bethlehem. It brings together scholars, young graduates, and activists in civil society to share research, experiences, and insights. The Forum seeks to educate for, and promote, a culture of full citizenship for all among the Arab people in order to create more peaceful, democratic, and prosperous societies.

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**For any inquiries regarding the conference,
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