



# Geometric Aljamia: A Visual Transliteration

and  
Re-Claiming the Wild Colors of Qatari Voices

VCUarts Richmond Workshop Leaders

Reni Gower / Professor / Painter

Jorge Benitez / Assistant Professor / Painter

Susan Schuld / Assistant Professor / Actress / Voice Trainer

VCUQ Partners

Khaled Saoud / Assistant Professor / Physicist

Jochen Sokoly / Assistant Professor / Islamic Scholar

Diane Woodcock / Assistant Professor / Poet

Jean Hodges / Assistant Professor / Writer

Participants

Ghadeer Alawadhi / Alsura, Kuwait

Hanane Korchhi / Doha, Qatar

Mohammed Saleh Amin / Kabul, Afghanistan

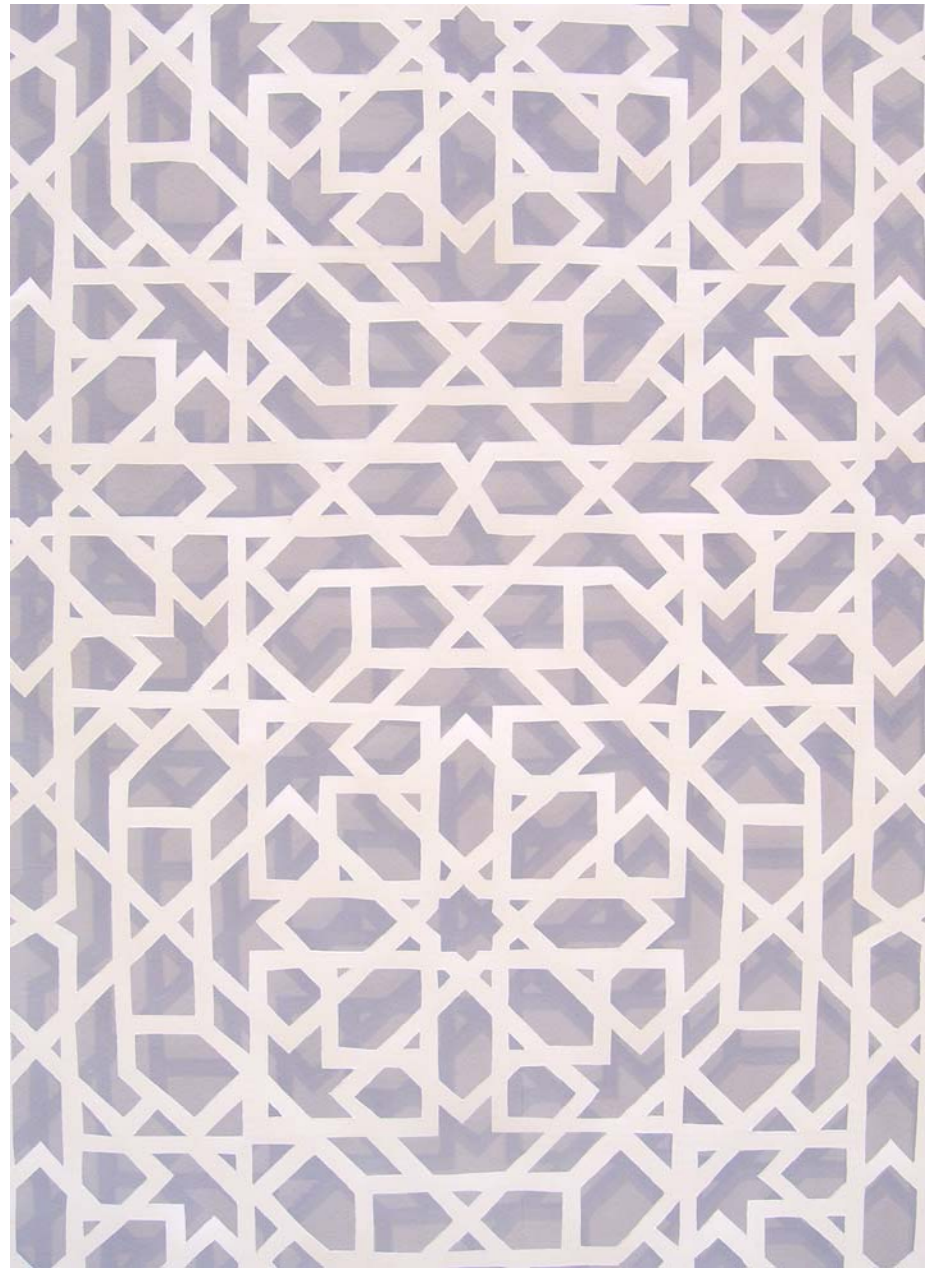
Tamim Sahebzada / Kabul, Afghanistan

Julia Townsend / Dubai, United Arab Emirates

By addressing the fundamental geometry embedded in two-dimensional art, our workshop acknowledged hybrid connections between Europe, the Mediterranean basin, and the Middle East. In the past, aljamia played a significant role in preserving Islam and the Arabic language in the West.

By understanding the visual arts as a transliteration of one form of thinking to another, our workshop revisited the ongoing impact of Islamic art, science, and philosophy throughout the world today. Our collaboration included participants from Dubai, Kuwait, Doha, Afghanistan and Richmond.

Our collaboration produced a beautiful exhibition, an insightful panel, and a transcendent performance.

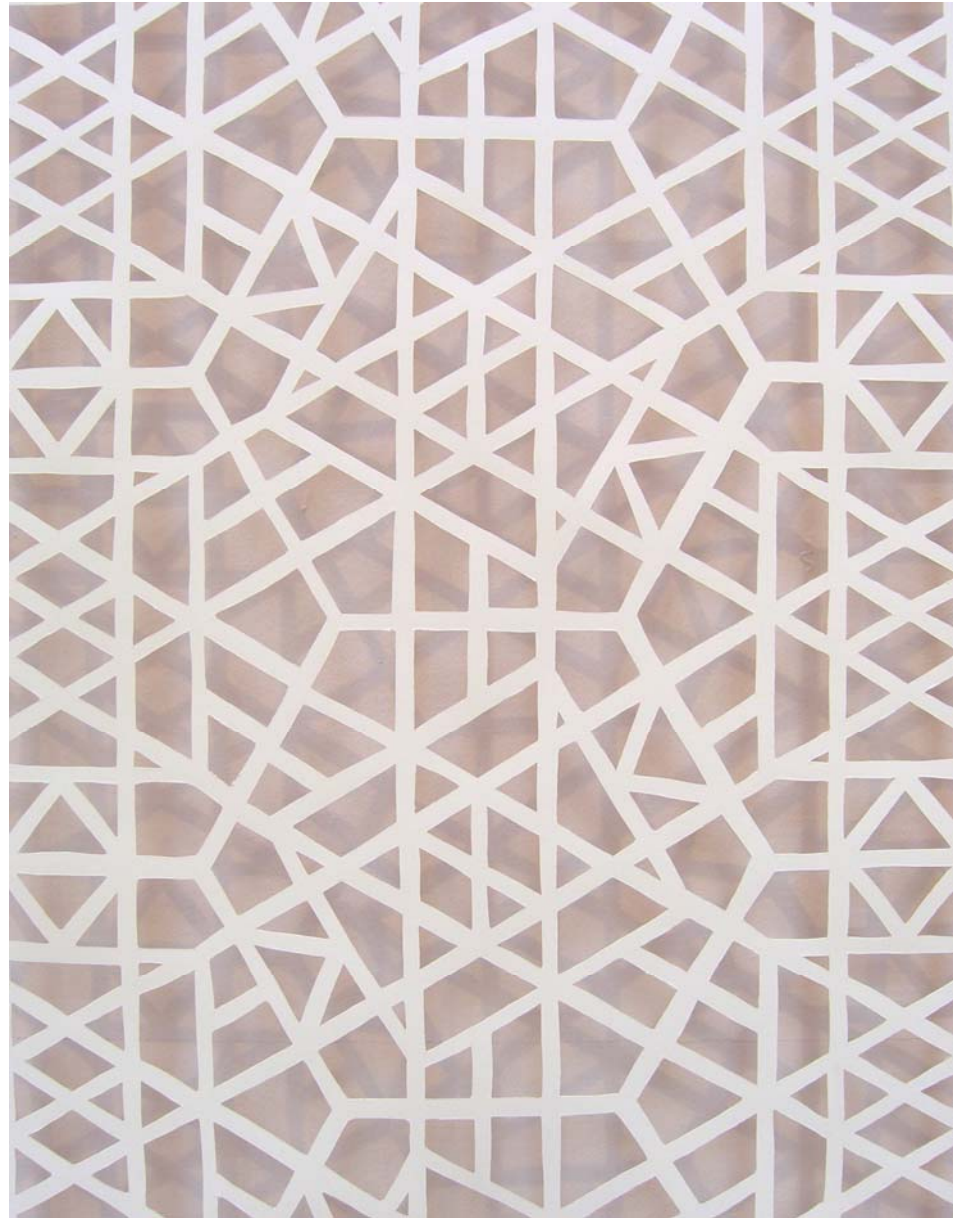


Days 1 – 3: Under Gower's guidance participants designed motifs based on Islamic tile patterns, which were used to create unique papercuts. Tessellation, mirror imaging, tiling, were used to create transitions. Our workshop partially blended with Schuld's workshop *Re-Claiming the Wild Colors of Qatari Voices*.

Day 4: Transliteration was explored through perspective. Under Benitez's guidance workshop participants transformed a traditional Islamic geometric motif into a perspectival drawing.

Day 5: The exhibition was installed and work continued on delicate wall tracings. First presentation of *Re-Claiming the Wild Colors of Qatari Voices* was performed by Jorge Benitez and Susan Schuld at the evening reception.

Day 7: The panel presentation included papers by Jorge Benitez, Khaled Saoud, and Jochen Sokoly. *Re-Claiming the Wild Colors of Qatari Voices* was presented a second time.



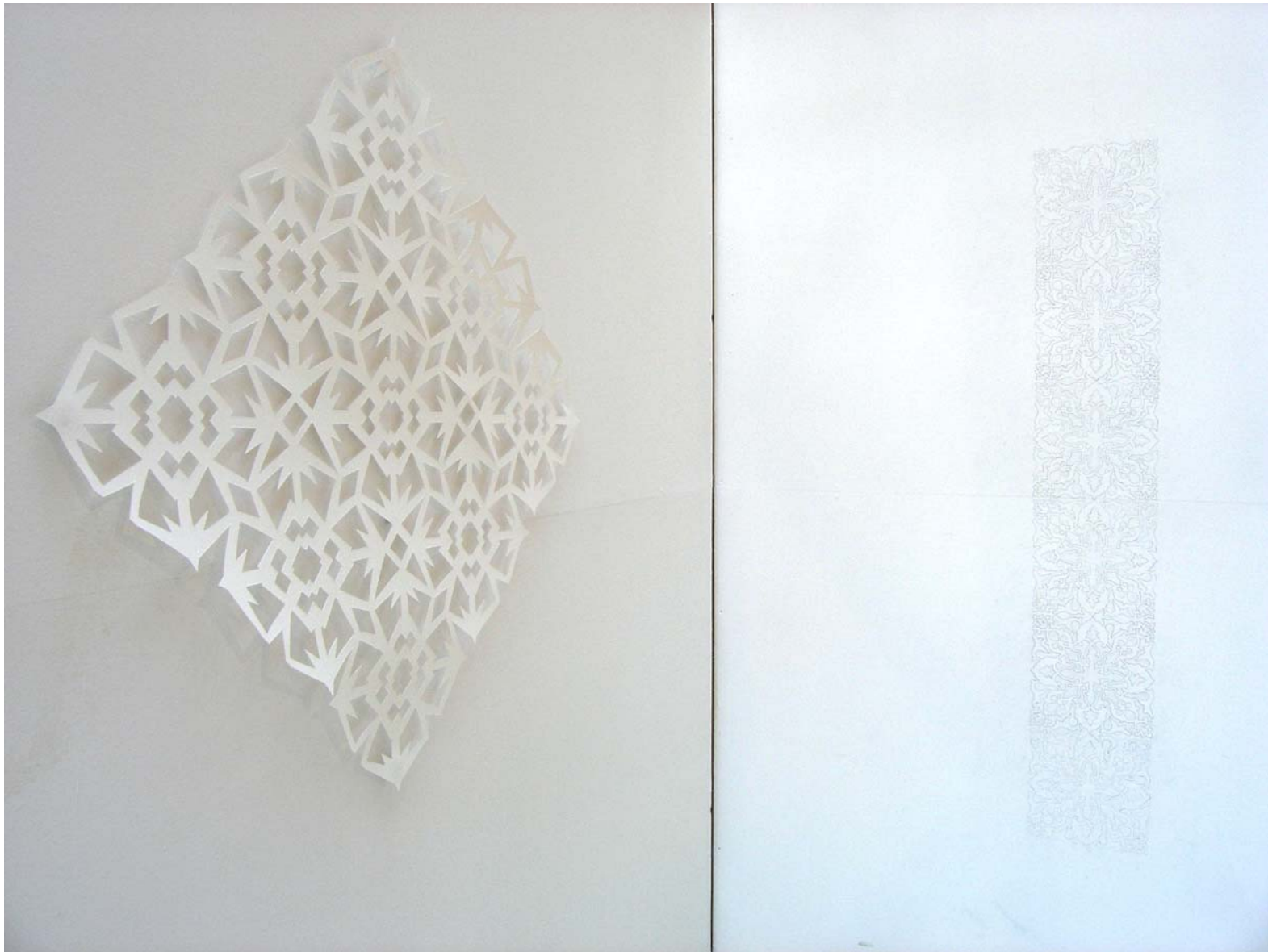




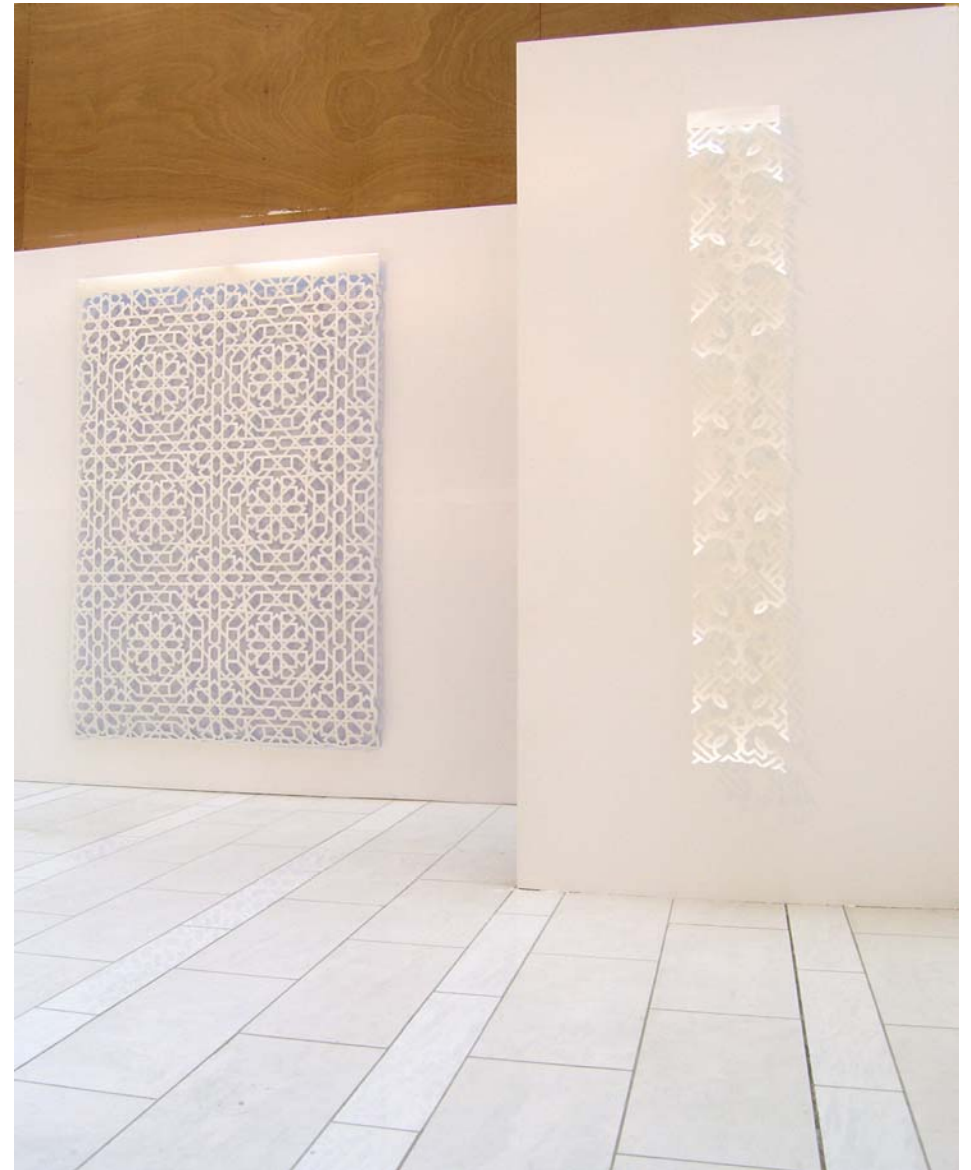
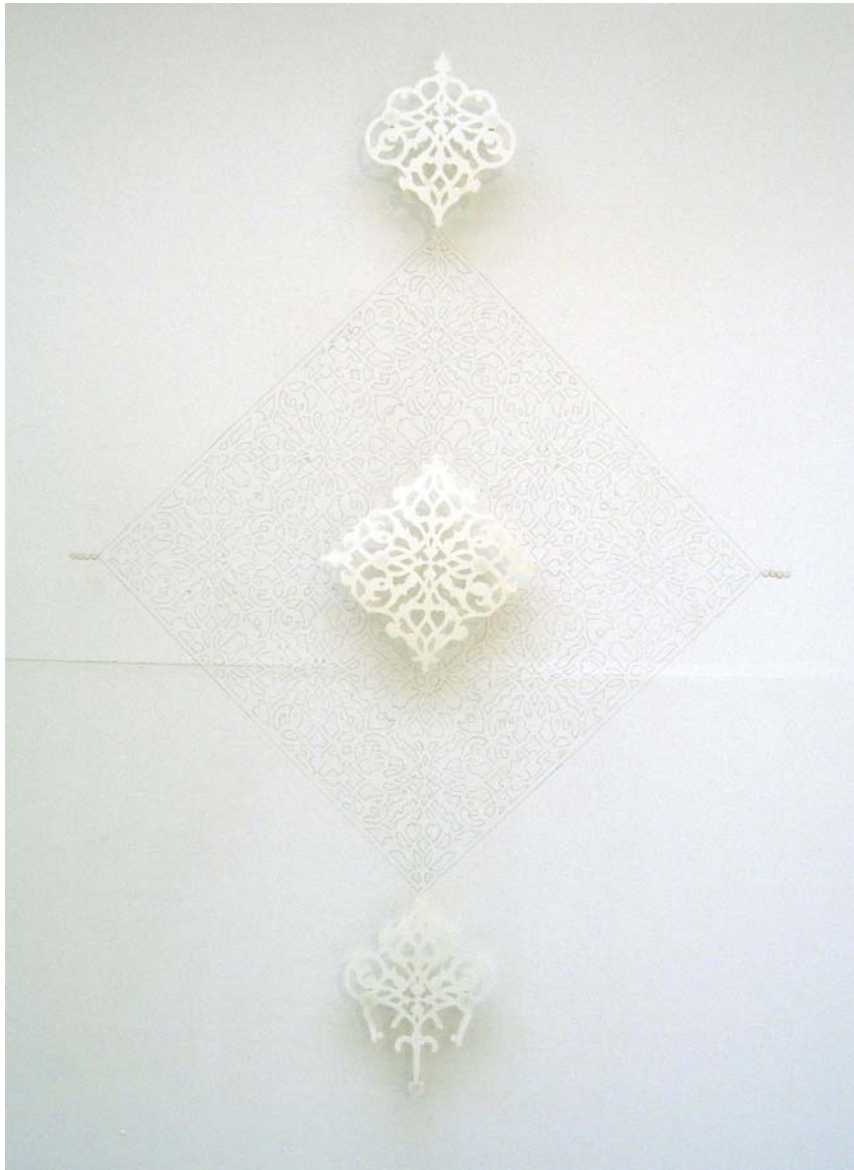
Installation View:

Gower (left to right) *Papercuts: White/copper*, *Papercuts: White/emerald*, *Papercuts: White/cobalt*  
(81" x 56" / each)

Tamim Sahebzada (Wall tracing 60" x 10")



Installation / Corner View:  
(left) Ghadeer Alawadhi (papercut approx. 50" x 50")  
(right) Tamim Sahebzada (wall tracing 60" x 10")

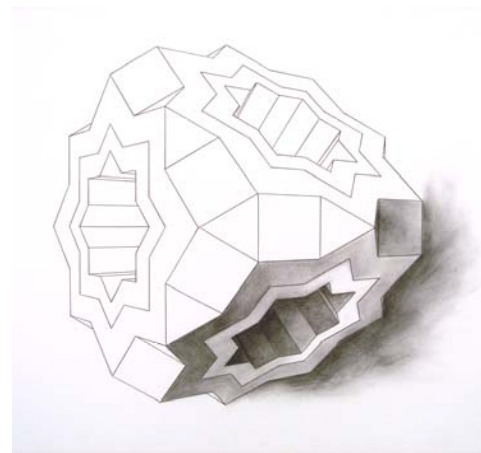
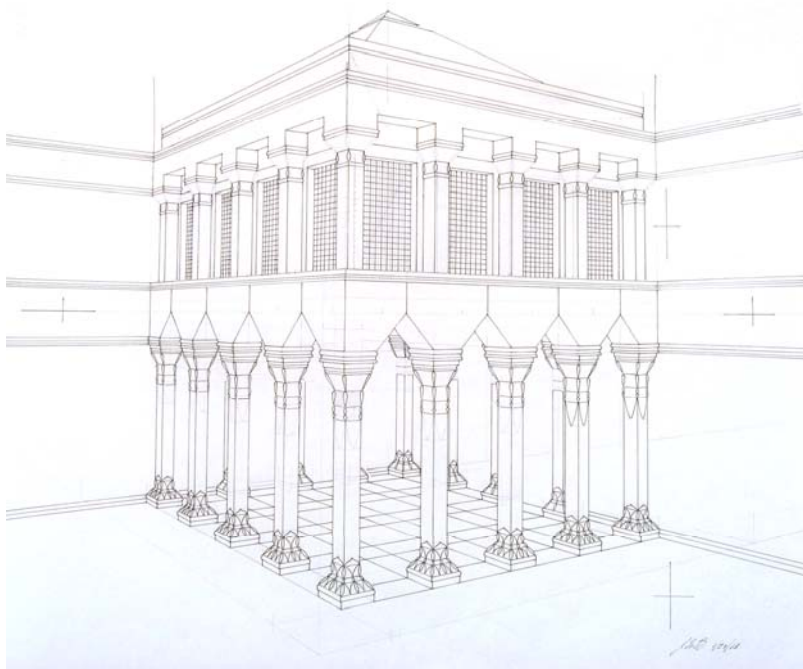


Installation Views:

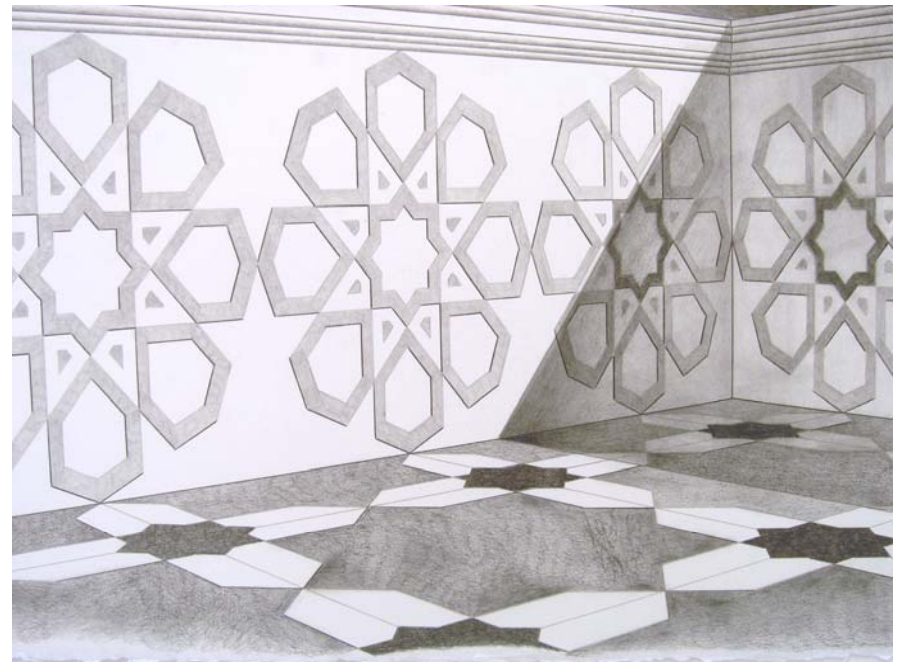
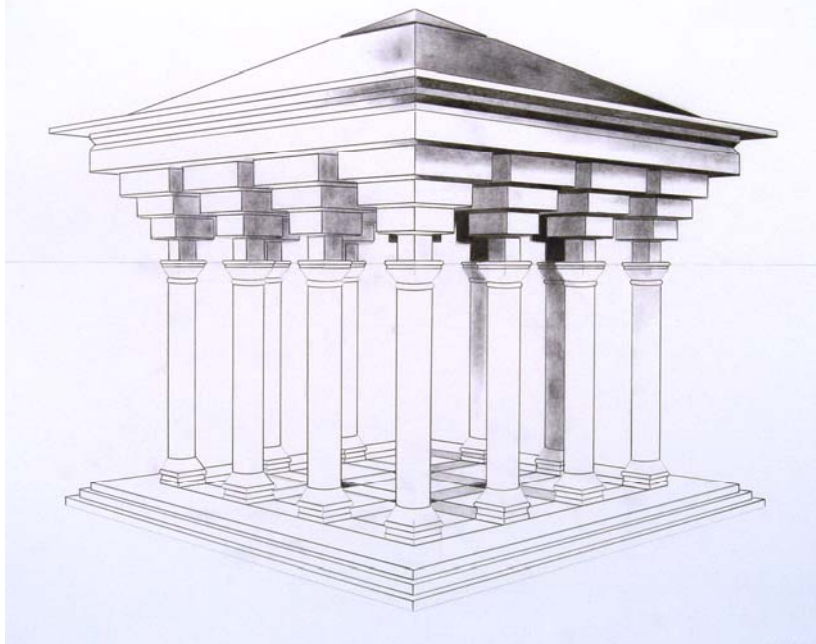
(left) Julia Townsend (papercuts and wall tracing approx. 72" x 48")

(right) Reni Gower (Papercuts: White/cobalt 81" x 56" and Hanae Korchi papercut 80" x 10")





Jorge Benitez  
Perspectival drawings  
developed from Islamic  
tile patterns  
approx. 18" x 24" / each







Jorge Benitez and Reni Gower cutting from reverse –  
Gower's Papercuts: White/cobalt in progress



Papercuts: White/cobalt  
81" x 56" Acrylic on hand cut paper 2013



Papercut and Wall Tracing  
(detail) Finished piece approx. 72" x 48"



Julia Townsend developing motifs  
inspired by Turkish designs



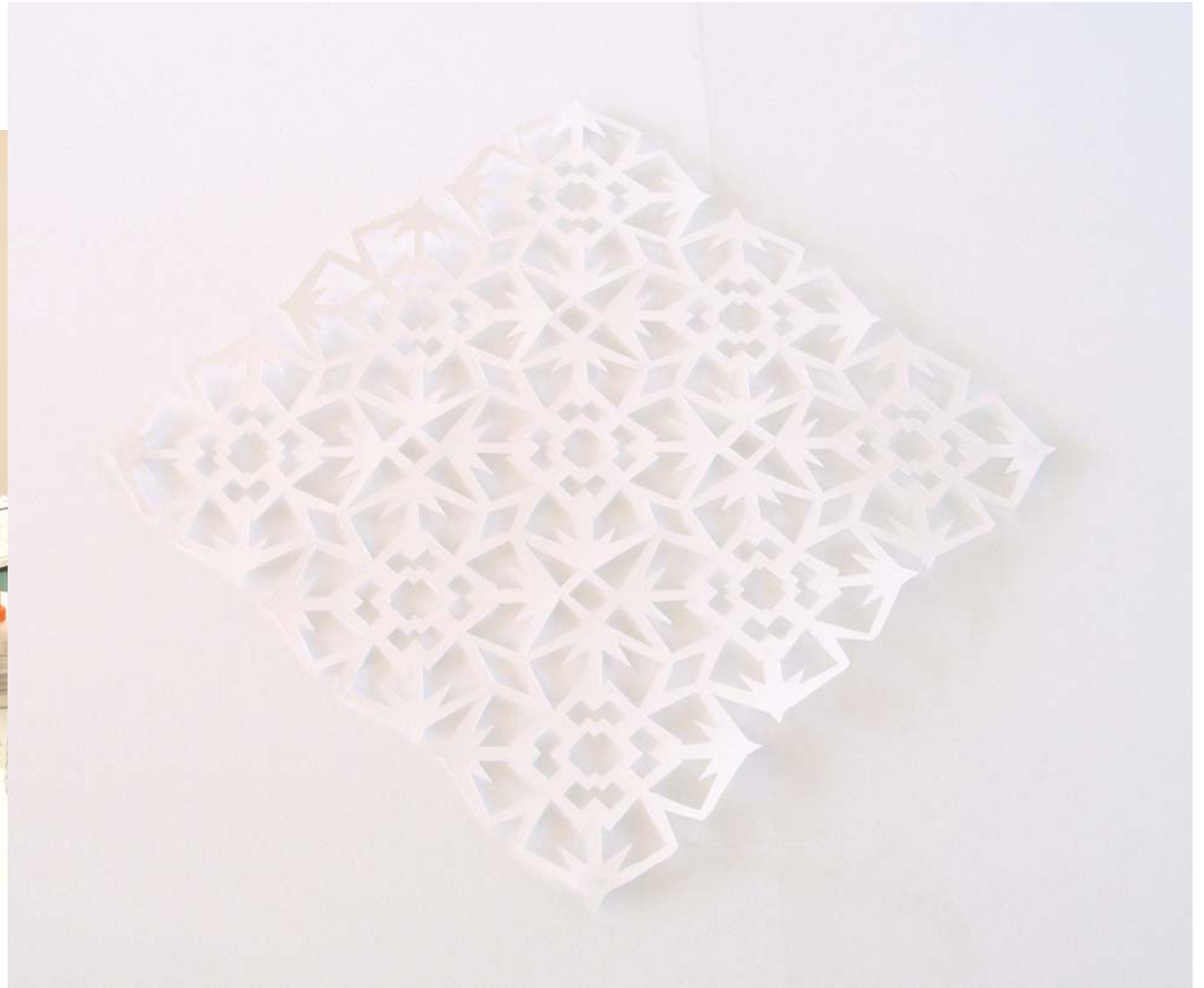


Hanane Korchi cutting motifs into strip



Finished papercut 80" x 10"

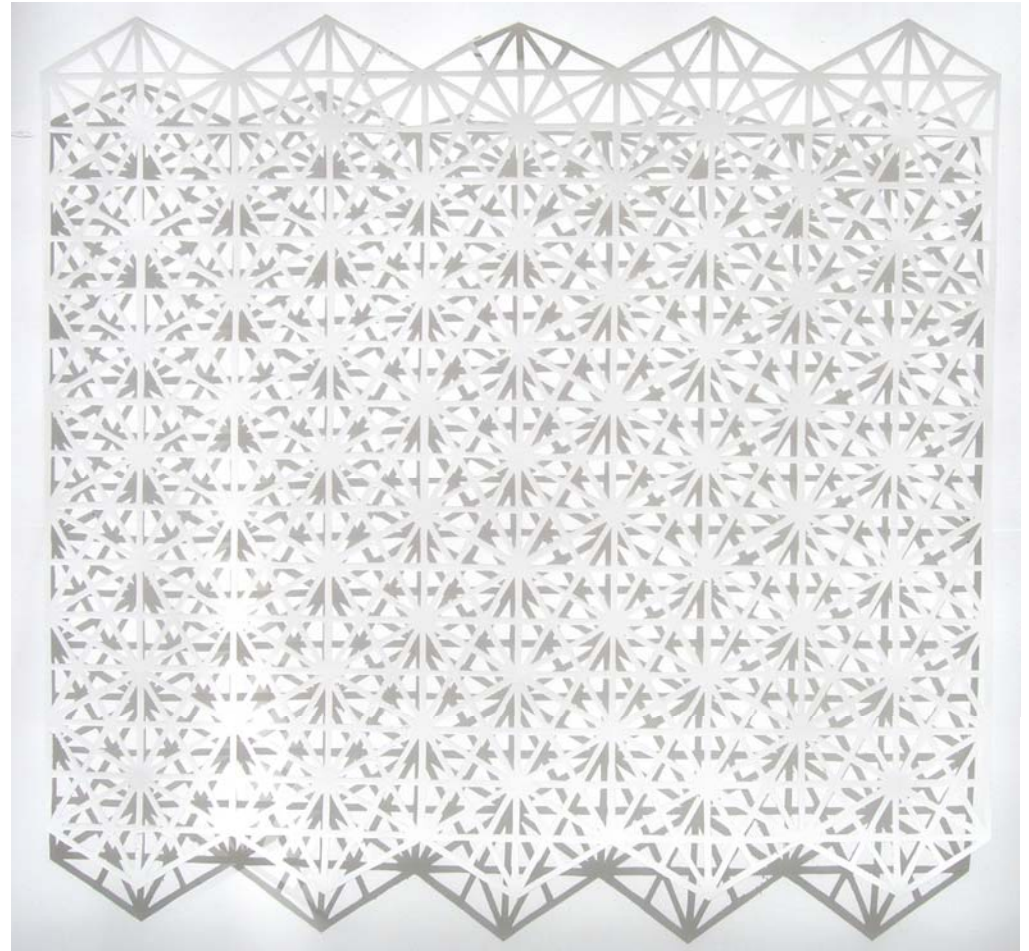




Ghadeer Alawadhi designing motifs / Finished papercut approx. 50" x 50" based upon Kirigami folded pattern

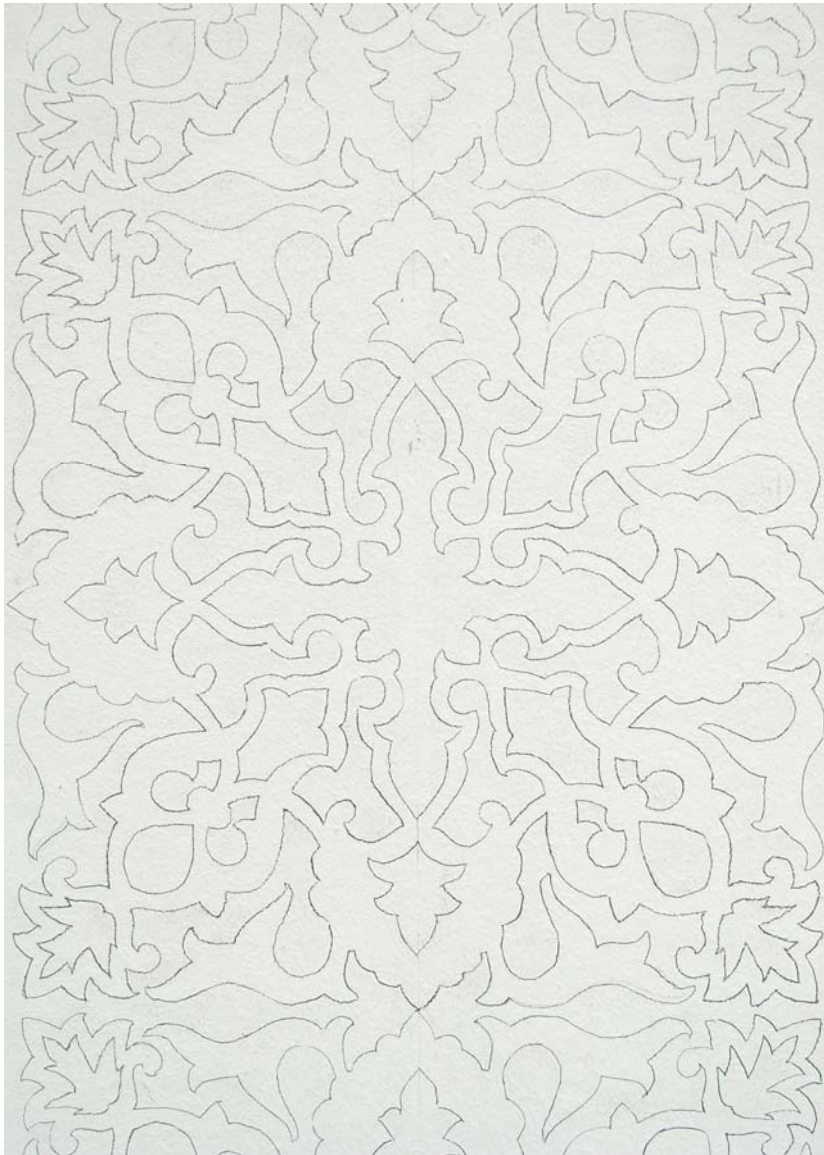


Mohammad Saleh Amin cutting multiples of traced hexagonal motif.



Finished papercut approx 64" x 80"





Tamim Sahebzada (detail wall tracing)  
2 finished tracings 60" x 10"



Tamim Sahebzada tracing hand drawn pattern  
based upon traditional Afghan designs



Susan Schuld pre-performance:  
Re-Claiming the Wild Colors  
of Qatari Voices





Jorge Benitez and Susan Schuld performing Re-Claiming the Wild Colors of Qatari Voices  
Poetry by Jean Hodges and Diane Woodcock





(Left to right) Sahebzada, Korchi, Townsend, Amin, Benitez, Gower, Alawadhi, Schuld





(Left to right) Khaled Saoud, Jorge Benitez, Reni Gower, Jochen Sokoly

biennial art + design  
conference

T A S M E E M \_

D O H A \_

H Y B R I D \_

M A K I N G

