

Laila Shereen Sakr

Department of Film and Media Studies
2433 Social Sciences & Media Studies Building
University of California, Santa Barbara
Santa Barbara, CA 93106-4010

(mobile) +1-202-462-6242
ssakr@filmandmedia.ucsb.edu
vjumamel.com

EDUCATION

2015 **PhD, Media Arts and Practice**, University of Southern California
2009 **MFA, Digital Arts and New Media**, UC Santa Cruz
1998 **MA, Arab Studies**, Georgetown University
1993 **BA, English Literature**, University of Cincinnati (*cum laude*)

ACADEMIC APPOINTMENTS

July 2015-present Assistant Professor, Department of Film and Media Studies, UCSB
Faculty Affiliate, Feminist Studies Department, UCSB
2010-2015 Teaching and Research Assistant, School of Cinematic Arts, USC
2009-2010 Research Associate, Digital Arts New Media MFA Program, UCSC
2007-2009 Teaching and Research Assistant, Arts Division, UCSC
2001-2007 Multimedia and Publications Editor, Center for Contemporary Arab
Studies, Georgetown University
1993-1995 U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer, Instructor, Fes Sais University,
MOROCCO

AREAS of RESEARCH and TEACHING EXPERTISE

Media Theory/Practice, Art & Technology, Algorithmic Culture, Feminism, Middle East Studies, Arab Digital Media, Global Human Rights, Data Visualization, Creative Coding, Interactive Design, Glitch Art, Live Cinema, Virtual/Augmented Reality, World Building

GRANTS and AWARDS

2017 UCSB College Letters and Sciences Conference Grant
2016 Academic Senate Faculty Research Grant
2016 Open Society Foundation, Human Rights Initiative Grant
2015, 2017 Interdisciplinary Humanities Center Faculty Collaboration Grant
2013-2015 Arab Council on Social Sciences (ACSS) Research Grant
2012 Future Leadership Award by Egyptian American Association
2012-2013 Arab Digital Expression Foundation Award
2010-2011 MacArthur Foundation HASTAC Scholar award
2010-2015 Annenberg PhD Fellowship, USC
2009 Jack Shaheen Media Scholarship
2006 Puffin' Grant for the Guerrilla Poetry Insurgency
2005 Washington Peace Center, Peace and Justice Award

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE and SERVICE

- 2016-present Co-Founder, Wireframe Digital Media Studio, UCSB
 Research Collaborator, Global Media Technologies & Cultures Lab, MIT
 Advisory Committee, Digital Arts & Humanities Commons, UCSB
 Steering Committee, Center for Information Tech & Society, UCSB
 Executive Committee, Middle East Studies Program, UCSB
- 2015-present Undergraduate Committee, Film and Media Studies Department, UCSB
 Modern Middle East Lecture Committee, Middle East Studies, UCSB
 Graduate Student Funding Committee, Middle East Studies, UCSB

Editorial Committee Service

- 2016-present *Media Theory*, open access journal
 2015-present *After Video* (a paperback book and video stored on
 Raspberry Pi in a VHS case) published by Open Humanities Press

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Articles and Book Chapters

- Digital Activism and Arabic Software Localization. In Mark LeVine, editor, *The Five-Year Old Who Toppled the Pharaoh*. Volume is under contract with UC Press.
- Reflections on Ev-ent-angement. In Elizabeth Losh and Jacqueline Wernimont, editors, *Feminist Debates in Digital Humanities*. University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2017.
- On Developing a Teaching Module on Arab Social Media. *Cinema Journal Teaching Dossier: The Integration of Production and Theory/History in Cinema and Media Studies Courses* 4.1 (June 2016).
- From Archive to Analytics: Building Counter-Collections of Arabic Social Media. In Anthony Downey, editor, *Archival Dissonance: Contemporary Visual Culture and Knowledge Production*. I.B. Tauris/Ibraaz, 2015.
- The Virtual Body Politic: A Networked Political Mobilization of Information Patterns and Materiality. *Networking Knowledge: Journal of the Media, Communication, and Cultural Studies Association* 8.2 (May 2015).
- A Digital Humanities Approach: Text, the Internet, and the Egyptian Uprising. *Middle East Critique* 22.3 (2013).
- The Materiality of Virtuality: Internet Reporting On Arab Revolutions. In Adel Iskander and Bassam Haddad, editors, *Mediating the Arab Uprisings*. Tadween Publishing, 2013.
- Security or Uncertainty: Stabilizing R-Shief Twitter Analysis during the Jasmine & Egyptian Revolutions. *ThoughtMesh: Critical Code Journal* (February 2011).

The R-Shief Initiative: Proof of Concept. *Parson's Journal for Information Mapping 2* (2009).

Book Reviews

Hanan al-Cinema, Laura Marks (MIT Press, 2016). *Journal of the Society for Contemporary Thought and the Islamic World*, forthcoming 2017.

CREATIVE WORKS

Installations

- 2017 Ten-year Anniversary Glitch Prints. *Storyboard of the Arab Resistance Part I*, Bossa Bistro Art Gallery (Washington, DC)
- 2016 Egyptian Insurgency Data Visualization. *After Tahrir film festival*, Michael Douglas Lobby at Pollock Theater (Santa Barbara, CA)
- 2015 Ruptured Destruction: An Anarchists Vision. *Scents of Places*, Flaherty Film Seminar (New York, NY)
- 2013 Performing and Archiving the Middle East Internet. Levantine Cultural Center (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2012 Egyptian Body Politic Remix. *iMappening*, USC (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2011 Egyptian Body Politic Remix. *Digital Festival* (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil)
- 2011 Mother of Hope Words, Museum of Art & History (Vienna, Austria)
- 2009 Archiving Gaza in R-Shief. *interACTIVATE*, Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History (Santa Cruz, CA)
- 2008-2009 Conversation Map by Warren Sack. *Art of Participation: 1950- Now*, curated by Rudolf Frieling. Produced video and website for the software that ran in the installation, San Francisco Museum of Modern Art (San Francisco, CA)
- 2008 The Public Intellectual REMixed by VJ Um Amel. Cornell University (Ithaca, NY)
- 2008 Post-Colonial Ninja Front. Porter Faculty Gallery (Santa Cruz, CA)
- 2006 The Why Project, Green Festival (Washington, DC)
- 2000 Awakening, Bossa (Washington DC)

Digital Media (Visualizations, Apps, & Media Systems)

- 2017 R-Shief 5.0 software apps and cloud computing architecture
- 2015 Collaborated with Alex Juhasz in bulding the online portals and interfaces for Ev-ent-angle-ment. The ev-ent-angement digitally entangles fragments from this event with those of four previous events experienced over the past year in Utrecht, Delhi, Dublin, and Montreal where I also collected participants' fragments and stitched and re-stitched them together as I moved forward and back—from Utrecht to Dehli, Dublin, Montreal, LA—and also always online
- 2014 #Gaza Audio-Visual Narrative by a Cyborg: Images by Hashtag, an online interactive mosaic of images tweeted on the bombing of Gaza
- 2013- 2015 R-Shief 3.0 and 4.0, an archival and visualizing media system up to 26 billion social media posts (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and sites) in more than seventy languages. Software applications:
- Kal3a is an open source application stack that collects, stores, and indexes the social media content that supports R-Shief's research.
 - Hashtag Visualizer displays trending words over time with frequency counts.The graphs can by exported, and are fully interactive.
 - The Hashtag Trends Widget measures trending words in real-time.This widget can be embedded anywhere as an iframe.
 - The Arabic Smart Engine is an open source tool that feeds two APIs. The Arabic Text Analysis API is a text analyzer of Arabic content that uses Wikipedia as its knowledge base to show various occurrences.
 - The Arabic Sentiment API will accept short Arabic Text, basically a tweet. It then will identify the related sentiment by analyzing the text taking into consideration several Arabic language rules.
- 2010 Twitterminer software application that data mines Twitter by hashtag
- 2010-2012 Under the name VJ Um Amel, produced over one hundred works of cultural analytics as video remix and data visualizations published across platforms including Jadaliyya.com, The Levantine Center, Mrzine, SMEX, 7iber, Henry Jenkins Blog.
- 2009 Commissioned for art direction and lead design for The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Islamic Studies's Islamopedia project at Harvard University
- 2007 Designed user interface using Drupal theming for Merip.org
- 2006 Designed website for Arabs and Terrorism film and research project using Cold Fusion, Access db. Built using ActionScript 2.0 and Flash 8.

- 2004 Designed and developed website for Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University using Cold Fusion and Access db. Built custom video players and web intro using ActionScript 2.0 and Flash 8.

Live Cinema Performances

- 2017 Wireframe Beta Launch: A Guerrilla Open Mic. Wireframe Studio, UCSB
- 2016 Resurgency. Nomadico Festival (Lignum, Virginia)
- 2015 Ev-ent-angement, the final iteration of a performance spanning Utrecht, Delhi, Dublin, and Montreal, PAM performance gallery (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2015 From Gaza to Cairo, International Symposium on Electronic Arts (ISEA), curated by Laura Marks (Vancouver, CANADA)
- 2015 Body of Work of VJ Um Amel. *Scents of Places*, Flaherty Film Seminar, (New York, NY)
- 2013 From Gaza to Cairo: Mobilizing Body Politic. *Collective Alchemy performance*, the Hemispheric Institute of Performance and Politics Convergence (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2013 ImMobility: A Performed Score with Micha Cardenes and Leyya Tawil, *iMAPPENING* (Los Angeles)
- 2013 VJ Um Amel @100Copies Music Space with Music Squad (Cairo, EGYPT)
- 2013 #OpenEgypt Ali Shaath, Arab Digital Expression Foundation (Cairo, EGYPT)
- 2012 Wizard Science Presents: GRIMBLEE, The 418 Project (Santa Cruz, CA)
- 2012 The Spirit of Tahrir: Honoring the 25th Egyptian Revolution. The Egyptian American Organization (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2011 Music, Freedom, and a Bit of Egyptian Cinema, Hosted by Makkan Art Gallery sponsored by National Gallery of Art (Amman, JORDAN)
- 2011 Live Visuals with Spoken Word Poet Remi Kanazi and Hip-Hop Artist The Philistines (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2011 Bass Synthesis (Los Angeles, CA)
- 2011 Brethren GRIMED: Full Moon Festival (Santa Cruz, CA)
- 2010 Middle East Studies Association Dance Party with DJ Bassam (San Diego, CA)
- 2010 When Worlds Collide (Los Angeles, CA)

- 2010 Call 2 Presence, The Fridge DC Art Gallery (Washington, DC)
- 2007 Hip Hop Theater Festival (Washington, DC)
- 2006 Weekly Hip-Hop Performance with Thievery Corporation at Eighteenth Street Lounge (Washington, DC)
- 2006 DC Coalition for Housing and Justice: Community Forum (Washington, DC)
- 2006 Greenspace Festival (Washington, DC)
- 2005 Operation Ceasefire Concert, opening act for Joan Baez, Sweet Honey & the Rock (Washington, DC)
- 2005 Counter-Inaugural Event (Washington, DC)
- 2002 Capital Heartbreak & Sweetness: DC POETS, by S. Ekanayak (Washington, DC)

TEACHING

Courses Designed and Taught

2016-2017, University of California, Santa Barbara, Film and Media Studies Department

Glitch Art and Cinematic Production (production course), Spring 2017

FemTech Lab (hybrid course), Spring 2017

Algorithms and Culture (graduate seminar), Winter 2017

Digital Activism in the Middle East (undergraduate seminar), Winter 2017

Motion Graphics (production course), Winter 2017

2015-2016, University of California, Santa Barbara, Film and Media Studies Department

Glitch Art and Cinematic Production (production course), Spring 2016

Digital Activism in the Middle East (seminar), Winter 2016

Data Visualization as Media Praxis (graduate hybrid course), Winter 2016

Graduate Student Committees

PhD Oral Exam Committee (Ali Rahman), Comparative Literature Department

LECTURES

Keynote

- July 2016 Orient-Institut in Beirut (OIB) international conference entitled “Rethinking Social Movements in the Digital Age: Activism, Dissent and Rebellion in the Post-Arab Spring” (Beirut, LEBANON)

Invited

- May 2017 “Arab Future Tripping and Algorithmic Vision” guest lecture series at Institute for Advanced Studies at University of Minnesota (Minneapolis)
- Apr 2017 “The Myth of the Muslim Nation” on “Imaginarities about Muslims: Before and After Trump” panel at the UCSB Multicultural Center (Santa Barbara)
- Feb 2017 “Muslim American/ American Muslim Community Engagements: Opportunities and Challenges in the Aftermath of the 2016 Elections” in Community Matter Series hosted by the UCSB Interdisciplinary Humanities Center (Santa Barbara)
- Mar 2017 “Algorithmic Culture and Its Impact on a Post-Uprisings Middle East” in New Scholar series, UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies (Los Angeles)
- Jan 2017 “Launching new Cloud Computing Infrastructure” at UCSB’s Interdisciplinary Research Collaboratory’s panel on “Reproducible Data Research: It's Complicated” (Santa Barbara)
- Dec 2016 Transregional Summit on “Freedom of Assembly in Civic Spaces,” (Rio de Janeiro, BRAZIL)
- Nov 2016 “Digital Activism in the Arab World” invited guest lecture in UCSB Professor Dwight Reynolds’ Modern Arab Culture Class (Santa Barbara)
- Sep 2016 Arab Social Media at Nordic Society for Middle Eastern Studies biannual conference at Lund University (Copenhagen, DENMARK)
- Jun 2016 “On Designing Tweet World” at Games for Change Europe on “Immigration, Integration, and Self-Esteem: The Power of Videogames” (Paris, FRANCE)
- Jun 2016 “Rethinking from Concept to Gallery: A Performance of #Gaza Visual Narrative by a Cyborg” at “Unflattening and Enacting Visualization: a Critical Visualization Event” at The Graduate School, CUNY College (New York, NY)
- Jan 2016 “Unveiling R-Shief 4.0: A Social Media Archive and Analytics System” (co-presented) in lecture series by UCSB Center for Information Technology and Society (Santa Barbara)
- Nov 2015 “The R-Shief Media System” in guest lecture series at UC Berkeley Center for Middle Eastern Studies (Berkeley, CA)
- Oct 2015 Guest lecture in UCSB Professor Harold Marcuse’s “Digital History” graduate seminar in the History Department (Santa Barbara)

- Oct 2015 Guest lecture in UCSB Professor Lisa Parks' "Social Media" seminar in the Film and Media Department (Santa Barbara)
- Oct 2015 Guest lecture in Professors Omar Dahi and Viveca Greene's "Media and the Middle East" class at Hampshire College (Amherst, MA)
- Jun 2015 Led seminar on "Social Media and Digital Activism" at Digital Humanities Summer Institute at Claremont Colleges (Claremont, CA)
- Nov 2014 Guest lecture in Professor Sarah Gualtieri's class on "Popular Culture in the Middle East" in the American Studies Department at the University of Southern California (Los Angeles)
- Oct 2014 Guest lecture in Professor Soraya Murray's graduate seminar, "Toward an Ethics of New Media" in UCSC Film and Digital Media Department (Santa Cruz)
- Oct 2014 "#OpenEgypt: Egypt's Twenty-first Century Open Source Tech Movement" in "Spotlight on Egypt: Troubled Transition" panel hosted by USC's Middle East Studies Program (Los Angeles)
- Jun 2014 Guest Lecture on "Data Mining & Analytics" guest lecture in USC Annenberg Graduate Summer Course (Los Angeles)
- Apr 2014 "Sentiment Analysis Fail" at USC's Information Sciences Institute Artificial Intelligence Series (Los Angeles)
- Feb 2014 "Critical Intersections: A Digital Media Arts Framework" at Pratt Institute's Graduate Program in Media Studies (Brooklyn, NY)
- Feb 2013 "The Digital Humanities: Between Technology and Revolution" at the Middle East Studies Center at The American University (Cairo, EGYPT)
- May 2012 Guest lecturer in UCSD Professor Liz Losh's class on digital journalism (San Diego)
- Mar 2012 "The Arab Uprisings" at "The Emergence of Islamic Groups, Security, and Regional/International Dynamics" at Munk School of Global Affairs at University of Toronto (Toronto, CANADA)
- Feb 2012 "By the Demand of the People: Archiving digitally born information in Arabic" at UCSC Department of Film and Digital Media (Santa Cruz)
- Nov 2011 "Applications of Social Media Proliferation: New Approaches towards 'Objective' Study" at U.S. Department of State Bureau of Arms Control, Verification and Compliance "Arms Control in the Information Age" conference (Washington, DC)

- Nov 2011 “#NoMilTrials Remixed “#NoMilTrials Remixed” at Munk School of Global Affairs at University of Toronto “Arab Uprising: Causes of Change” (Toronto, CANADA)
- Sep 2011 “Turning Information in to Insight Panel” at Tech@State: Data Visualization conference (Washington, DC)
- Sep 2011 “Social Media Proliferation: Mapping and Analyzing Online Content” in lecture series on “Transformations of Human Identity in the 21st Century” (Ferrum, VA)
- Sep 2011 “New Perspectives on Islam and the Middle East“ in Fellows Forum series at University of Southern California (Los Angeles)
- Jul 2011 Arab Techies 2011 Workshop (Cairo, EGYPT)
- Jul 2011 “Documenting and Analyzing Arab Opinion on the Internet: Semantic Twitter Feed Analysis” at U.S. Department of State (Washington, DC)
- Jun 2011 “Democratizing Knowledge: A2K4D’s Second Annual Conference” at American University in Cairo (Cairo, EGYPT)
- May 2011 “The Role of Art and Humanities in Regime Change” at TEDx organized by Stanford’s Peace Innovation (Palo Alto, CA)
- May 2011 “Visual Nesting: Facebook’s Design for Building Community” at Facebook Headquarter’s (Palo Alto, CA)
- Apr 2011 “The Social Web Meets the Semantic Web” at Annenberg Innovation Lab’s Inaugural Conference at USC (Los Angeles)
- Feb 2011 “Blogs and Bullets: Social Media and the Struggle for Political Change” by US Institute for Peace, The George Washington University, and Stanford University (Palo Alto, CA)
- May 2010 Arab Techies Women’s Workshop (Beirut, LEBANON)
- Mar 2010 “Cultural Expression” at Bay Area’s Arab Women’s Conference (San Francisco)
- May 2008 Guest lecture in UCSC Professor Warren Sack’s class on Social Information Spaces (Santa Cruz)
- Aug 2006 Led poetry workshop: Young Women’s Drumming Empowerment (Washington, DC)

Conferences

- Jan 2018 “Activism in the Humanities: Digital Projects for Public Engagement” at Modern Language Association Conference (New York, NY)
- Nov 2017 Organized roundtable on “Social Media, Feminist Praxis, and State Power;” and presenting “Media Sousveillance on its Back” in panel on “Art and Mediation: Affective and Socio-political Practices of Revolutionary Challenges” at Middle East Studies Conference (Washington, DC)
- Mar 2017 “Always Already Computational: Library Collections as Data” National Forum on Digital Collections at UCSB Library (Santa Barbara)
- Apr 2016 “A Job (Un)like Any Other: Graduate School as Academic Labor” at Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS) conference (Atlanta, GA)
- Nov 2015 “Media Praxis: A Hybrid Approach to Studying the Arabic Open Source Movement” in panel on Arab New Media Theory: At the Intersection of Art, Technology, and Scholarship at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference (Denver, CO)
- Mar 2015 “Data-Driven Literary Practices” at &Now 2015: Blast radius conference at California Institute of the Arts (Valencia, CA)
- Nov 2014 “On Developing a Teaching Module on Arab Social Media” and “The Archive: Collections and Counter-Collections” at the Middle East Studies Association conference (Washington, DC)
- Oct 2013 “Will the Revolution Be Tweeted? Mapping Complex Data Patterns from Sites of Protest“ at the Internet Researchers 14.0: Resistance + Appropriation conference (Denver, CO)
- Oct 2013 “The Digital Humanities Meets Modern Egypt: Between Technology and Revolution“ in panel on Digital Humanities in Middle East Studies II: Digital Communication at the Middle East Studies Association (MESA) conference (New Orleans, LA)
- Apr 2013 “Narrating the Non-Narrative: A reading of experimental Arab art” at DIWAN with Mike Khoury, Leyya Tawil, and Nadim Damluji at DIWAN sponsored by the Arab American National Museum (Detroit, MI)
- Sep 2012 “The Place of Difference in the Digital Humanities” at the International Symposium of Electronic Art (Albuquerque, NM)
- Jun 2012 “Science of the Oppressed as Artivism,” Allied Media Conference (Detroit, MI)

- Jun 2012 “The Cultural Logic of YouTube Videos from the Egyptian Revolution” at London School of Economics Symposium, “Cosmopolitanism, New Media and Protests“ (London, UK)
- Apr 2012 “The Insight of Insider/Outsider Approaches to Scholarship roundtable” at USC Annenberg Research and Creative Project Symposium (Los Angeles)
- Mar 2012 “Arab Spring: Convening the ICTD research community” organized by Harvard University Berkman Center for Internet & Society” (Atlanta, GA)
- Dec 2011 Social Media Practice: Revolution, Youth, and the Digital World roundtable discussion, Middle East Studies Association (Washington, DC)
- Jun 2011 “Al-Sha’ab Yureed (The People Demand): Transmitting the Revolution” at Allied Media Conference (Detroit, MI)
- Apr 2011 “Media Methods: Youth, Revolution, and the Arab States” at Annenberg Fellowship Creative Symposium at USC (Los Angeles, CA)
- Jan 2010 “The Digital Revolution: Arab Media in Digital Form” at Middle East Studies Association conference (San Diego, CA)
- Jul 2010 “The Digital Form: Rethinking R-Shief” at World Council on Middle East Studies (Barcelona, SPAIN)
- Feb 2010 “On Implementing the Digital Form: an Arabic-English Web-based Archive,” Yale University’s Digital Humanities Conference (New Haven)
- Oct 2006 Defining & Negotiating Public Space in the City at Urban Culture Conference (Washington, DC)
- Dec 2005 “Disrupting Spaces at American Studies Association (Washington, DC)
- Jun 2004 “Is Everything Political?” at Radius of Arab-American Writers (NYC)
- Feb 2004 “Arab Voices of Protest” at National Conference of Organized Resistance (Washington DC)

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Co-organized four-day workshop, conference and film fest at UCSB in January 2016, “After Tahrir: Egyptian Revolutionary Experiences and Future Visions” with over twenty-five international guests, eighteen film shorts, and over twenty sponsors. Subsequently awarded Open Society Grant to continue the project in Rio de Janeiro. With this grant we invited Black Lives Matter activists and Egyptian activists to meet in Niteroi, Rio de Janeiro at the Fluminense Federal University for a four-day summit in December 2016.

Regular writer for *Jadaliyya* online publication

- “Studying Social Streams: Cultural Analytics in Arabic,” *Jadaliyya* 10/31/2012.
- “Egypt’s Presidential Election and Twitter Talk,” *Jadaliyya* 05/26/2012.
- “The Materiality of Virtuality: Internet Reporting Arab Revolutions,” 12/19/2011.
- “Collateral Damage: #Oslo Attacks and Proliferating Islamophobia,” 08/09/2011.

Spearheaded first international OccupyData Hackathons I & II in December 2011, and March 2012, along with MIT Media Lab, R-Shief, The New School, Utrecht University, and activists in Washington, DC, Oakland, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, Zaragoza, Spain.

Built MA+P PhD program official website, imap.usc.edu, using open source tools. It is powered by Word Press, Bootstrap, coded up with Sublime Text, and launched in 2012. Designed poster and brochure for iMapping, USC, 2012.

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

Arab Techies

Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR)

College Art Association (CAA)

FemTechNet

Middle East Studies Association (MESA)

Modern Language Association (MLA)

Radius of Arab-American Writers (RAWI)

Society for Cinema and Media Studies (SCMS)

LANGUAGES

Fluent in French, English, and Arabic