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## Art and Design Education in the Middle East and North Africa: A Brief Historical Overview

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The countries that make up the Middle East and North Africa have many elements in common, and in many ways this is reflected in how art and design education developed in those of their prominent institutions that are dedicated to the teaching of art and design. Beyond the obvious matters of a shared language and religion, a shared history, and, some would say, shared hopes for the future, these countries also share a philosophy of art and design education that, in its diverse roots, finds common ground with both an Eastern cultural tradition, mostly sustained by an Islamic view of the arts, and a Western pedagogical tradition that has impacted on both the teaching and the making of art. As a result, art and design pedagogy in the Middle East and North Africa has been greatly affected by both Western and Eastern influences, even when, as Shaban (2007: 165) reminds us, “Islamic Art was the most important source of artistic vision and visual expression.”

To understand the complexity of this vast region, it is necessary to understand the historical background of Islam’s cultural influences on art, which in turn leads to an understanding of the roots of the current situation in art and design education in the Middle East and North Africa (see “Islamic and Other Influences on Art and Design Education in the Middle East and North Africa”). The present chapter will focus more on the history of art and design education in this region, particularly Western influences on the stages of development in the teaching of art and design education.

As Egypt is regarded as a leading Arab country where art education has flourished, its influence over the Arab world cannot be ignored. There has been a direct influence of