

Kamal Boullata (1942–2019)

Palestinian artist, historian, and writer [Kamal Boullata](#), who drew from his interests in light and transparency, conditions of creation and exile, and Byzantine and Islamic aesthetic culture, literature, and history for his geometrically abstract paintings, has died. He was seventy-seven years old.

Boullata was born in Jerusalem, Palestine, and studied at the Academy of Rome and the Corcoran Museum School in Washington, DC, after being exiled from Jerusalem following the 1967 occupation. In 1993, he received a Fulbright fellowship to conduct field research on Islamic art in Morocco and Spain, and in 2001, he was awarded a Ford Foundation grant to research post-Byzantine painting in Palestine. He has authored four books on Palestinian art, including *Belonging and Globalisation* (2008) and *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (2009), and has edited books on modern poetry and contemporary culture. From 2012 to 2013, Boullata was a fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study in Berlin.

Writer and critic [John Berger](#) wrote in the preface to *Palestinian Art*: “Boullata takes the reader close to the struggle of those visionary, obstinate Palestinian artists who create so that their anonymous heroic land with its ancestral olive trees may survive.”

In an [interview](#), Boullata said: “Painting is an extension of writing, whether we like it or not, or whether we admit it or not. There is a connection between what the hand does and the mouth and language.”

His work is in the collections of the British Museum, London; Darat al-Funun: the Khalid Shoman Foundation, Amman; the Patronato de la Alhambra Islamic Museum, Granada; the Sharjah Art Museum; the Institut

du Monde Arabe, Paris; the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts, Amman; the New York Public Library; Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, Doha; and the Bibliothèque Louis Notari, Monaco.

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