

Ilit Azoulay

# Queendom

مَلِكُوت  
מַלְכוּת

Navigating Future  
Codes

20  
JAHRE  
Museum der Moderne  
Salzburg



Museum der Moderne  
Salzburg







# QUEENS FROM THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

Tina Teufel

Female (artistic) empowerment and narratives are at the core of the first exhibition in Austria of Ilit Azoulay, an Israeli artist of Moroccan origin based in Berlin. When we think of how women engage with each other, we do not primarily have empires, wars, and heroes in mind; instead, we might think of a tribe or circle of women interacting with each other, supporting each other, and bringing growth. For centuries, women have been fighting to break free from male dominance and demanding to make their voices heard. In many societies worldwide, however, history has not been and still is not written equally by women as it was and is by men. Azoulay's research-based artistic practice has led her to look into history and histories, into archives and writings as well as depictions thereof beyond a male, white, Western, nation-state, and authoritarian perspective. With *Queendom* she explores alternatives to the male-dominated and Eurocentric form of storytelling and knowledge transfer that forms the basis for history as it has been taught since the nineteenth century.

The extensive archive of a white European male art historian has served as Azoulay's source of images and technical research: the Austrian-British Jewish scholar David Storm Rice (1913 Vienna, AT–1962 London, UK). He was a specialist of Islamic art and archeology and of Medieval inlaid metal vessels of Islamic art in particular.<sup>1</sup> His peers also praised his artistic gift.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “The term ‘Islamic art’ generally refers to art produced in the vast areas of the Middle East, North Africa, Spain, Iran, and Central Asia from the 7th century onward. It is a cultural rather than religious attribution, which encompasses a variety of artistic genres produced by people of different religious and ethnic backgrounds.” *Ilit Azoulay: Queendom. The Israeli Pavilion at the 59th International Art Exhibition—la Biennale di Venezia*, ed. Shelley Harten, exh.-cat. (Berlin: DISTANZ Verlag, 2022), p. 355.5°. Furthermore, as the German scholar of Islamic sciences Thomas Bauer of the University of Münster has argued in his book *Warum es kein islamisches Mittelalter gab* (“Why there were no Islamic Middle Ages”), the term “mediaeval Islamic” is “imprecise, allows for false conclusions and disparagement, exoticizes”; see Andreas Vogl, “Mythos ‘islamisches Mittelalter,’” *disorient*, February 1, 2019, <https://www.disorient.de/magazin/mythos-islamisches-mittelalter> (accessed November 17, 2023).

With great dedication to Rice's work, Azoulay scanned a selection of macro-photographic images from his extensive archive.<sup>3</sup> She digitally selected details from the inlaid vessels and manipulated the material. Thanks to Rice's proficiency, his photographs reveal every detail with delicacy, which allowed her to likewise work with utmost precision as she mastered to digitize the metal surfaces and welding techniques. In the process, Azoulay specifically focused on details "that appeared to call for orientation [...] and that comprise an overlay of real and imagined geographies"<sup>4</sup> and transformed the mostly male protagonists into either female—queens—or non-binary figures. Her own archive, which developed as a result, enabled the artist to use multiple objects and details, appearing on its pages like pieces of a puzzle, to digitally create a total of ten panels, which relate stories around each queen. They are representatives of a feminist approach to narration: as a warrior, a healer, a guardian, and many more. Similar to collage techniques and forms of collective female crafting traditions, she accumulated elements of stories and rearranged them to form an alternative perspective, to let voices be heard that have been muted or overheard as a consequence of patriarchal dominance and power structures. Printing her panels onto paper, she rematerializes the digital photomontages as large, panoramic entities that—within the exhibition—are associated with two kinds of sound elements: poems by the artist and

<sup>2</sup> "It was this remarkable combination of the imagination and humanism of the artist with the meticulous accuracy of the scholar that distinguished Storm Rice among his colleagues." J.B. Segal, "Obituary: David Storm Rice," *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies* 25, no. 3 (October 1962), pp. 666–71, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/610989> (accessed December 22, 2023).

<sup>3</sup> The archive also includes lecture notes, travel photographs, and photocopies of contextual materials. Thanks to the artist's efforts, it is now an important treasure in the collection of the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem and is currently being analyzed and digitized in its entirety and will soon be made available online for further scholarly use.

<sup>4</sup> *Ilit Azoulay: Queendom*, p. 357<sup>o</sup>. For details on her coding system, see pp. 62–63.

so-called transmissions conceived in collaboration with the Palestinian light-worker Maisoun Karaman, which unfold into our present time and reality. In *Queendom*, the artist has thus conceived a non-hierarchical fluidity in her understanding of how storytelling should blossom that brings to mind the centuries-old history of quilting as a medium of female spiritual empowerment and narration.<sup>5</sup>

The Atlantic blue carpet in the exhibition adds yet another layer to *Queendom* as it refers to the ultramarine color that Azoulay associates with the queens' realms.<sup>6</sup> It was used in both European and Middle Eastern art and crafts as a symbol for the abyssal depth of the universe and the spiritual beyond worldly territories. It opens up the exhibition space to the subconscious and further layers of voices that unfold within the collective knowledge of the visitors, adding to the collaborative nature of the *Queendom* project. The rich visual impact of the *Queendom* panels, the recurring sounds, and the possibility to delve into the archives which nurtured them form a natural circle—both closing and reopening, comprising past, present, and future at once—embedding us in the universal language of the polyphonic realms of the *Queendom* that materializes within the museum.

<sup>5</sup> See Isis Davis-Marks, "How Quiltmaking's Deep Traditions Are Influencing Contemporary Art," *Arts.net*, October 22, 2020, <https://www.artsy.net/article/artsy-editorial-quiltmakings-deep-traditions-influencing-contemporary-art> (accessed December 29, 2023).

<sup>6</sup> "The word 'ultramarinus' literally means 'beyond the sea,' because the pigment was made of lapis lazuli, which was brought to Europe via Italian traders from mines in Afghanistan in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries." Shelley Harten, "The Queendom Is Reigned by Art," in *Ilit Azoulay: Queendom*, p. 135°.



# FLOOR PLAN

Level 2



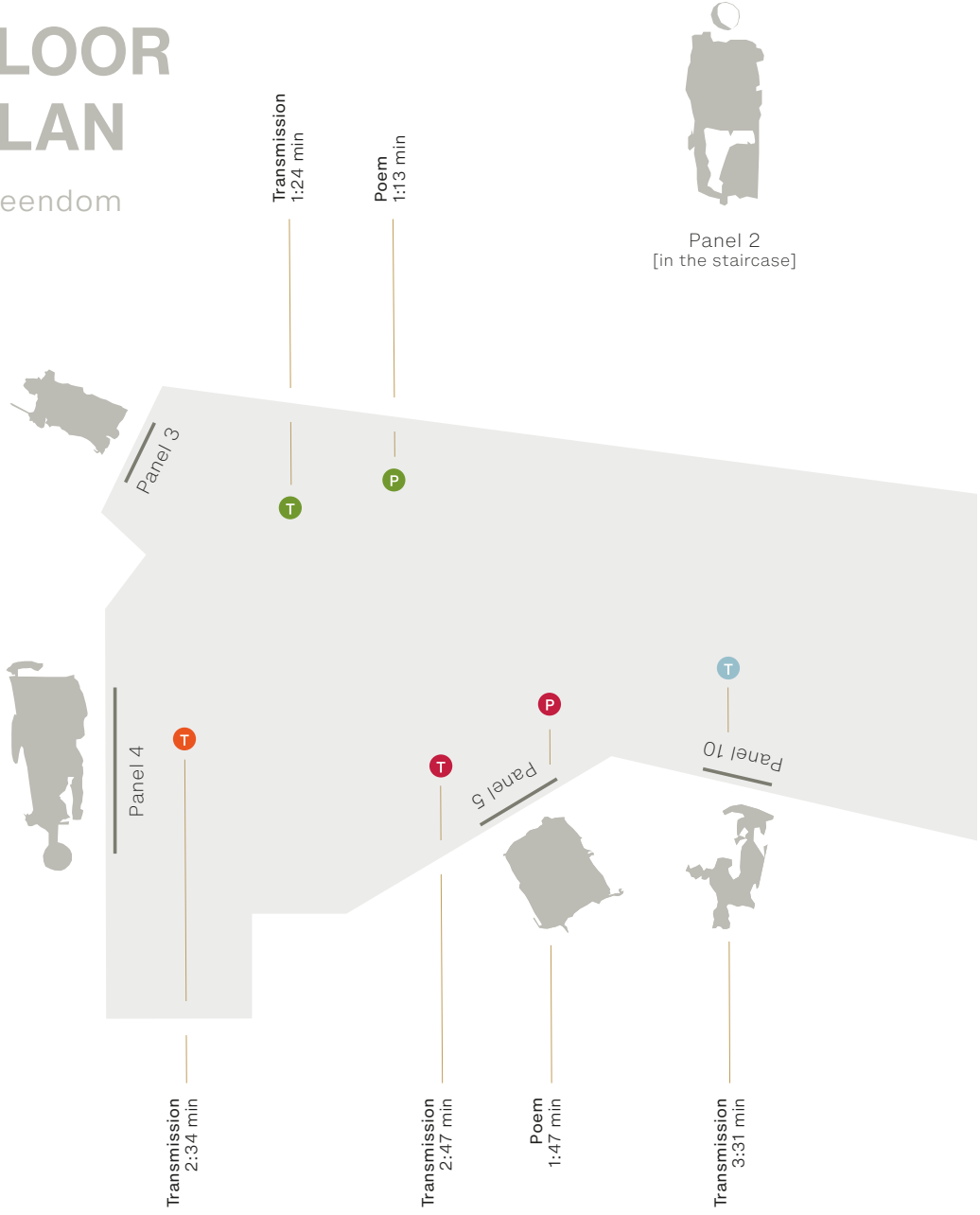
Queendom

Intro

Heart to  
Heart

# FLOOR PLAN

Queendom







# QUEENDOM

Panel 1 - 10



2

6

1

8

7

**Queendom  
Panel 2**  
395x150 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 6**  
160x182 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 1**  
160x395 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 8**  
130x115 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 7**  
150x204 cm



**Queendom  
Panel 9**  
165x129 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 10**  
135x96 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 3**  
215x135 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 5**  
199x157 cm

**Queendom  
Panel 4**  
140x355 cm









## QUEENDOM, PANEL 2

2022, inkjet print, 395x150 cm

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Plate**, Iran or Central Asia, 4th century, gilded silver, British Museum, London, UK

**Fouled Bucket**, signed by Muhammad ibn Nasir ibn Muhammad al-Harawi, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) or Rum (present-day Turkey), late 12th–mid-13th century, cast brass/bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Tray**, belonging to Badr al-Din Lu'lu', Atabeg of Mosul (reigned 1234–1259), Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), hammered brass with silver inlay, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Pen box**, Syria or Egypt, 704 AH / AD 1304–5, brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Ewer**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), first half of 12th century, hammered brass sheet with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Holmes Ewer**, western Iran, ca. 1220–30, brass with silver, gold, and copper inlay, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, US

**Ewer**, signed by Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), first half of 13th century, cast copper with silver and copper inlay, Louvre, Paris, FR

**D'Arenberg Basin**, made for the Ayyubid sultan al-Malik al-Salih Najm al-Din Ayyub, Syria, 1247–9, Freer Gallery of Art, Washington, DC, US

**Fano Cup**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, cast bronze and beaten copper with gold and silver inlay, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, FR

**Basin**, possibly northwestern Iran, 1384, copper or bronze, probably at Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Candlestick with Ducks**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) (?), second half of 12th century, copper alloy with silver and red-copper inlay, formerly Harari Collection, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Incense Burner with Christian Priests**, Syria, first half of 13th century, brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Tray with Nestorian Priests**, Syria, mid-13th century, brass/bronze with fine silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Homburg Ewer**, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, US

**Lock**, Iran, date, material, and technique unknown, probably at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Ewer**, signed by 'Iyas, apprentice of 'Abd al-Karim ibn al-Turabi, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 627 AH / AD 1229, cast brass with red-copper and silver inlay, Türk ve İslam Eserleri Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**Tray**, Syria, 1240s, sheet brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Florence Cup**, Iran (?), late 13th–early 14th century, engraved brass, probably at the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, IT

**Vaso Vescovali**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), ca. 1200, high-tin bronze with silver inlay, British Museum, London, UK

**Jug**, Iran, late 15th century, gilded bronze with silver inlay, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD, US



## QUEENDOM, PANEL 6

2022, inkjet print, 160x182 cm

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Pen Box**, Syria or Egypt, 704 AH / AD 1304–5, brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Oil Lamp**, Iran, 12th–13th century, bronze with traced design, probably at the Benaki Museum, Athens, GR

**Feline Incense Burner** (fragment), Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 12th–13th century, copper alloy, bronze, present whereabouts unknown

**Ewer**, Iran, 14th century, brass with silver inlay, formerly H. d'Allemagne Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Kettledrum**, Syria or Egypt, date, material, and technique unknown, probably at the Livrustkammaren, Stockholm, SE

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**Pen Box**, Syria or Egypt, mid-14th century, copper alloy with copper, silver, and gold inlay, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, EG

**Bowl**, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi, northwestern Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, bronze, probably at Museo Stibbert, Florence, IT

**Plaque**, Syria or Egypt, date unknown, probably at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, US

**Candlestick**, Iran, 14th century, brass with silver inlay, formerly Garrand Collection, probably at the Museo Nazionale del Bargello, Florence, IT

**Ewer** (body), Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 12th–13th century, brass with silver inlay (?), present whereabouts unknown

**Candlestick**, northeastern Iran or Armenia, 12th century, cast bronze with relief decoration, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Bowl**, signed by Zayn al-Din 'Umar, northwestern Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, brass with silver inlay, probably at Museo Correr, Venice, IT

**Plaque**, Egypt, date and material unknown, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Undecorated Ewer**, Iran, 12th century, material and technique unknown, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Bowl**, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi for 'Ali ibn Muhammad, northwestern Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, bronze, probably at the National Museum, Copenhagen, DK

**Armor**, no information available

**Unknown Vessel**, no information available







Voice of Nadira

You ask me to explain myself,  
But I am beyond words, logic and thoughts,  
No crudity, but the twists and turns of the  
intellect are my purpose of life.

I stand at the threshold of a new cycle,  
anticipating your arrival.  
In this very moment  
I am the fresh air  
Cleaning remnants away.



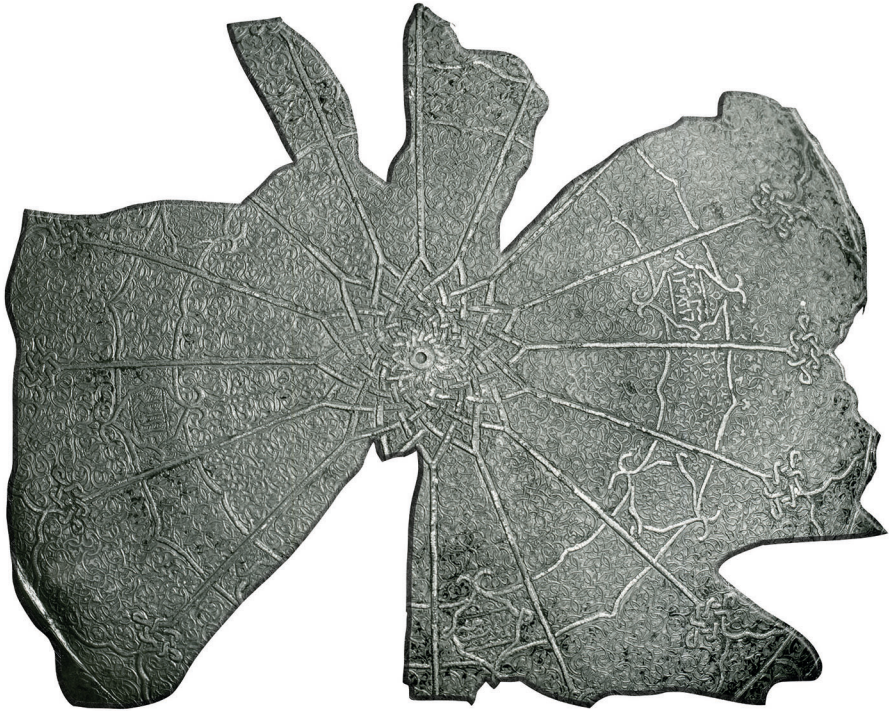
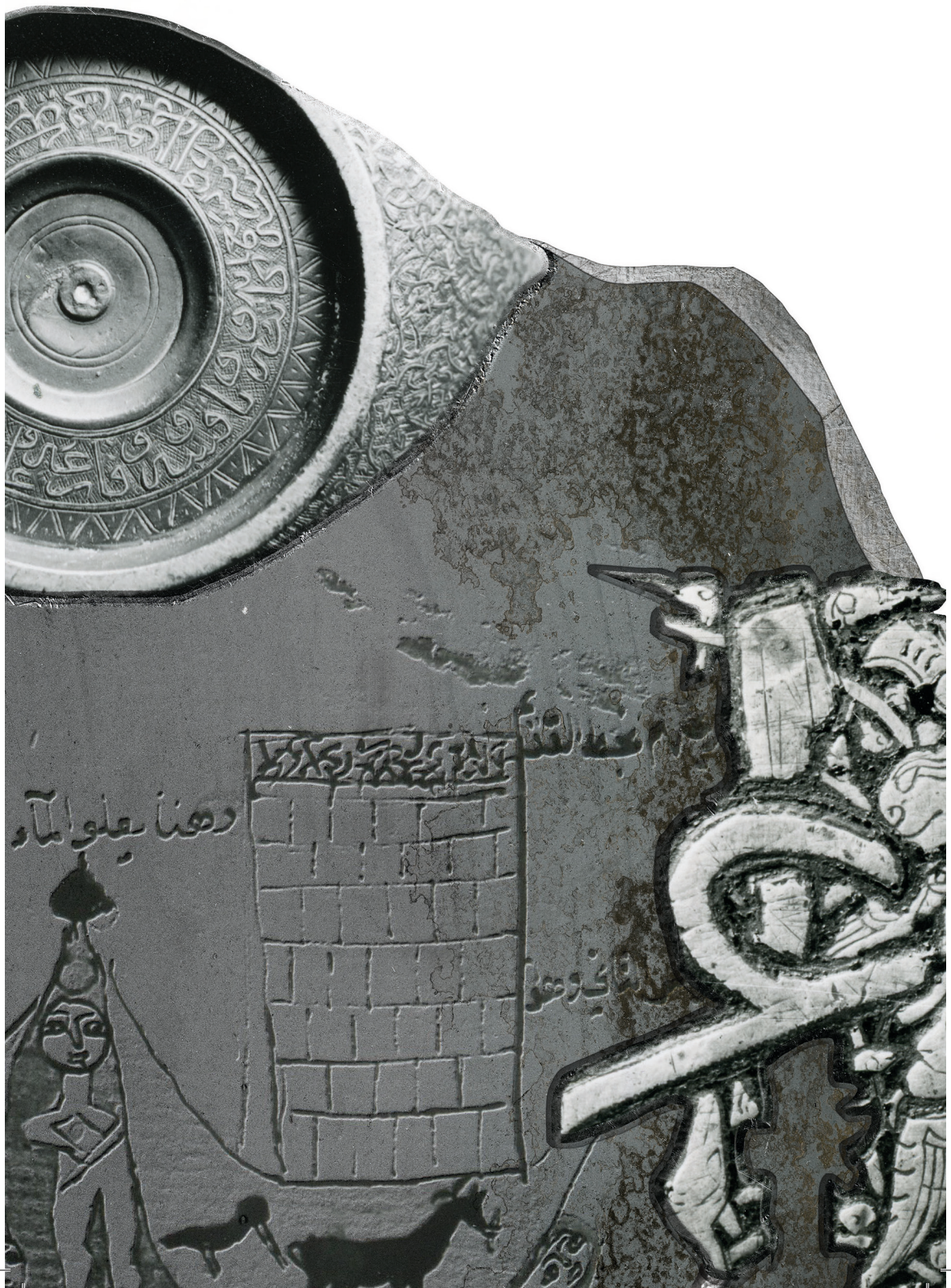


Fig. 1  
Bowl, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi for  
'Ali ibn Muhammad, northwestern  
Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or  
Syria (?), late 15th-early 16th century  
(fragment)









1

## FROM A VESSEL TO A QUEEN

Example 1 for a knowledge transfer and transformation



Holmes Ewer, western Iran, ca. 1220-30, brass with silver, gold, and copper inlay, photographs by David Strom Rice

Photograph cropped by Ilit Azoulay





Digital fragment,  
newly welded,  
from  
Ilit Azoulay's studio  
archive



Montage of the digital fragment  
in Panel 1

1

## FROM THE COFFER TO THE KNIGHTESS

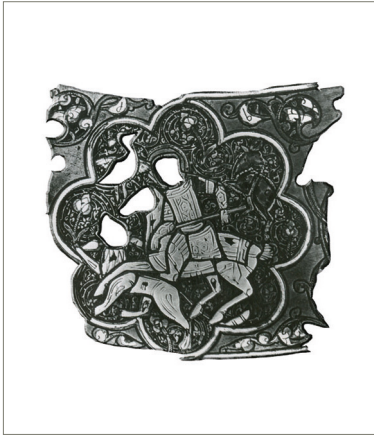
Example 2 for knowledge transfer and transformation



Coffer, no detailed information available, photograph by David Strom Rice



Digital fragment, newly welded, from Ilit Azoulay's studio archive



Barberini Vase, 1239-1260,  
Aleppo or Damascus, Syria,  
digital fragment, newly welded  
digitally, from Ilit Azoulay's  
studio archive (fragment)



Montage of both digital fragments in Panel 1

The Wak-Wak Tree: Voice of Soraya

I am in this position because I wish to be.

It is I who cut off the branches.

Liberating my hands from the craving to  
seize, win, and cling.

Without abandoning the world,

I have withdrawn from it.

To detach myself, I have cut all bonds save  
the one joining me to consciousness.

I own nothing.

I grasp nothing.

I know nothing.

I want nothing.

I can do nothing.

I owe nothing.

However, the entire universe leaks through  
me.

rice-174-033a



Fig. 2  
Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria,  
first half of 14th century  
(fragment)

## QUEENDOM, PANEL 1

2022, inkjet print, 160x395 cm

**Holmes Ewer**, western Iran, ca. 1220–30, brass with silver, gold, and copper inlay, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, US

**Tray**, Syria, 1240s, sheet brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Fano Cup**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, cast bronze and beaten copper with gold and silver inlay, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Cabinet des Médailles, Paris, FR

**Salver**, belonging to the Seljuq sultan Alp Arslan (reigned 1063–1072), Iran, 459 AH / AD 1066–7, hammered and chased silver, possibly modern forgery, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, US

**Incense Burner with Christian Priests**, Syria, first half of 13th century, brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, Ohio, US

**Barberini Vase**, Aleppo or Damascus, Syria, 1239–60, hammered copper alloy with silver inlay, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Casket**, Middle East or Iran, 13th–14th century (recut 16th century), cast brass with partial silver inlay and black compound, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Henderson Box (with Christian scenes)**, Syria, mid-13th century, bronze and brass with silver and copper inlay, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Plate**, Iran or Central Asia, 4th century, gilded silver, British Museum, London, UK

**Candlestick**, made by Hajj Isma'il and inlaid by Muhammad ibn Fattuh, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), mid-13th century, copper alloy with silver inlay, formerly Harari Collection, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, EG

**Homberg Ewer**, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, US

**Candlestick**, Egypt or Syria, 14th century, brass with silver inlay, formerly McMullan Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Bobrinsky Bucket**, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 559 AH / AD 1163, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Bowl**, Egypt or Syria, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Vaso Vescovali**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), ca. 1200, high-tin bronze with silver inlay, British Museum, London, UK

**Mace**, origin unknown, 16th–17th century, material and technique unknown, possibly at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Tray**, belonging to Badr al-Din Lu'lu', Atabeg of Mosul (reigned 1234–1259), Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), hammered brass with silver inlay, Museum Fünf Kontinente, Munich, DE

**Pen Box**, Syria or Egypt, mid-14th century, copper alloy with copper, silver, and gold inlay, Museum of Islamic Art, Cairo, EG

**Vasselot Bowl**, signed by Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Jug**, signed by 'Ala' al-Din al-Birjandi, Afghanistan or Iran, 910 AH / AD 1505, Staatliche Museen—Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, DE



## QUEENDOM, PANEL 8

2022, inkjet print, 130x115 cm

**Ewer**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), first half of 12th century, hammered brass sheet with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Seven Arms and Armors**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Jug**, Iran, late 15th century, gilded bronze with silver inlay, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD, US

**Perfume Flask**, Egypt or Syria, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Ewer with Cock-Shaped Spout**, Egypt, Syria, or Iraq, 8th–9th century, bronze (?), present whereabouts unknown

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**Bottle**, Middle East or Iran, 13th–14th century (recut 16th century), cast brass with partial silver inlay and black compound, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Perfume Flask**, Egypt or Syria, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Mace**, origin unknown, 16th–17th century, material and technique unknown, possibly at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Key**, Kufic inscription and other decorations, Iran, 13th century, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Lampstand**, no information available

**Suit of Armor**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Ewer**, material and technique unknown, Syria or Iraq, 8th–9th century, bronze (?), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK















Lullaby: Voice of Kaliya

Hush now, weary men, close your heavy eyes,  
In my soothing chant, let your troubles fly.  
The battles that raged, the power you sought,  
In the quiet of the night, let them all be  
fought.

Cease now, weary ones, let your spirits soar,  
In the hush of our chant, forevermore.

As morning dawns, with it queens' lore.

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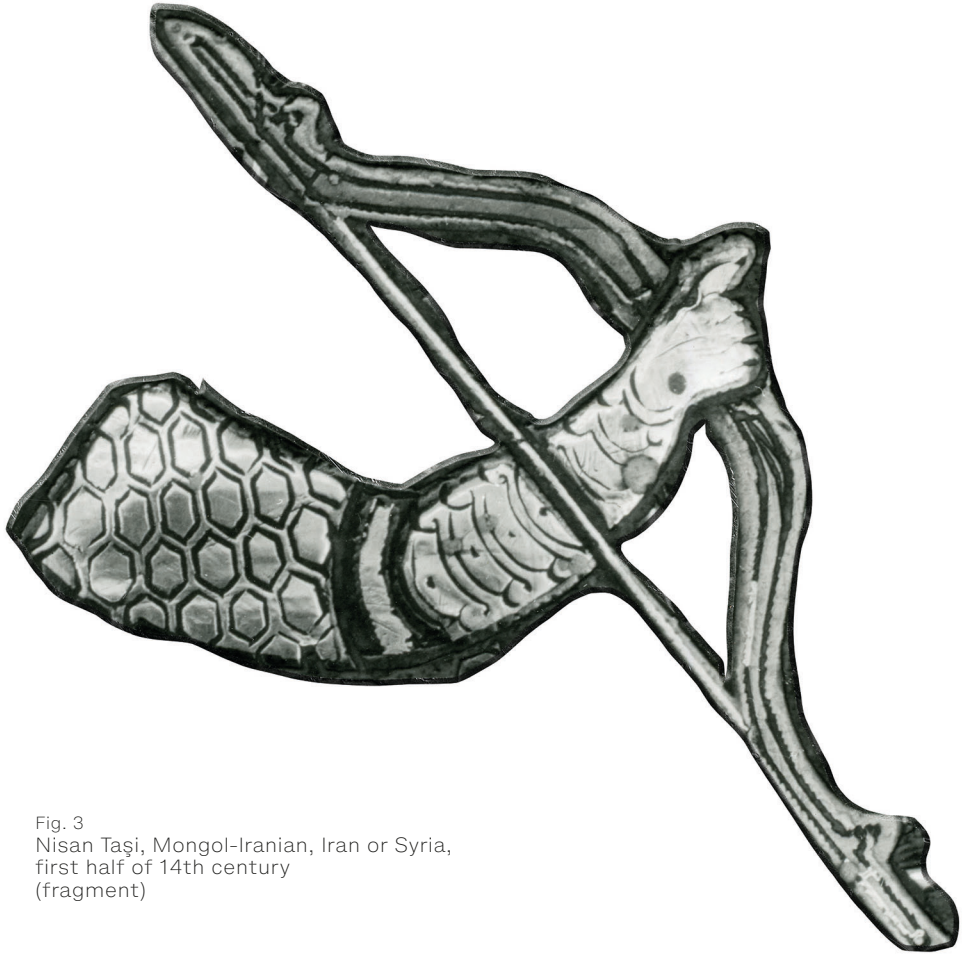


Fig. 3  
Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria,  
first half of 14th century  
(fragment)



## QUEENDOM, PANEL 7

2022, inkjet print, 150x204 cm

**Candlestick**, Syria or Egypt, 14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Incense-Burner Finial**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 12th century, bronze, formerly Rabenau Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Bowl**, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi, north-western Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, brass with silver inlay and black compound, probably at Museo Stibbert, Florence, IT

**Jug**, signed by Mu'allim Qasim, Iran, late 15th century, gilded bronze with silver inlay, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, MD, US

**Magic Bowl with Talismanic Images**, no information available

**Large Basin** (interior), signed by 'Ali ibn 'Abd Allah al-'Alawwi, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), late 13th century, brass with gold and silver inlay, Staatliche Museen—Museum für Islamische Kunst, Berlin, DE

**Candlestick**, Syria or Egypt, 14th century, brass with silver inlay, formerly McMullan Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Perfume Burner**, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi, northwestern Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, brass with silver inlay and black compound, Museo Civico Medievale, Bologna, IT

**Mace**, origin unknown, 16th–17th century, unknown metal, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

## QUEENDOM, PANEL 9

2023, inkjet print, 165x129 cm

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Suit of Armor**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Tray**, belonging to Badr al-Din Lu'lu', Atabeg of Mosul (reigned 1234-1259), hammered brass with silver inlay, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Incense Burner**, Syria, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, US

**Bowl**, signed by Mahmud al-Kurdi, north-western Iran, southeastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late 15th–early 16th century, brass with silver inlay and black compound, probably at the British Museum, London, UK

**Banner Poles**, origin unknown, 13th–14th century, unknown metal, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

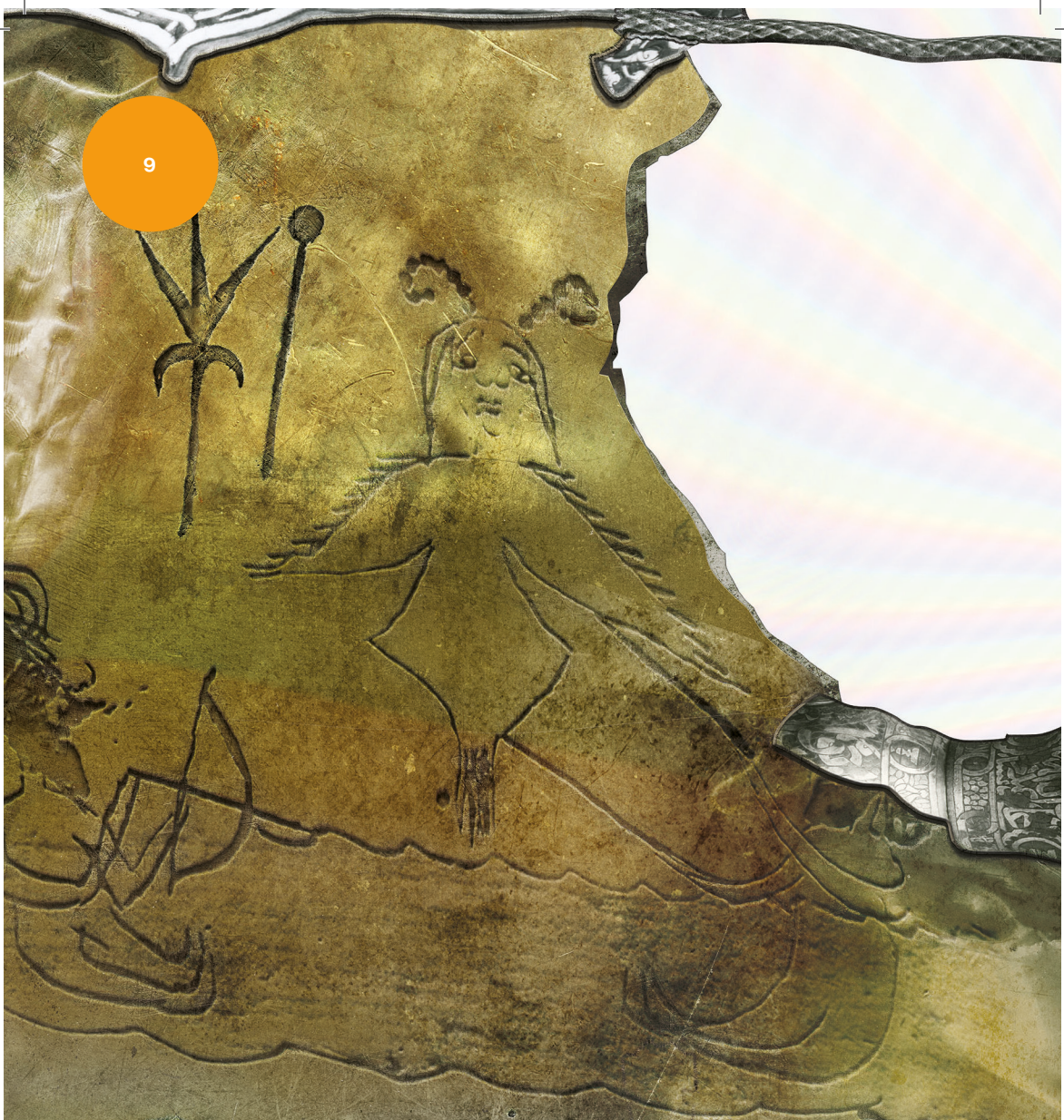
**Vasselot Bowl**, signed by Muhammad ibn al-Zayn, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, FR

**Mirror**, origin and date unknown, cast bronze, probably at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Incense Burner**, signed by Abu'l Munif ibn Mas'ūd, Iran, early 13th century, cast bronze with silver and gold inlay, present whereabouts unknown

**Mosque Lamp**, origin and date unknown, no information available, Louvre, Paris, FR



السهري وهذا السهري يقولون برعمهم انه خرج من الجنة وقبيلهم وكان كثير  
 من اهلها في هذا العصر السهري على ما كان في قرون طارئة وكان ابن السهري متوجها  
 اناس خربوه وبها لم يدعوا بالسوف  
 في هذه اشارة نجا جان وقد تب  
 حتى غاب عن عين ايديهم وهذا هو





The Visit: Voice of Roshara

I emerged from the tranquil river before  
the inhabitants' very curious eyes.  
My form, unlike anything they had ever  
witnessed —  
my bare body, the sensuous horns adorning  
my head,  
my ears that whisper secrets and my  
mesmerizing fishtail.

Armed with swords and tools, they appro-  
ached, eager to understand my existence  
Their curiosity grew into a burning desire  
but my body flickered and wavered like a  
wisp of smoke,  
slipping through fingers that seek to grasp.

Oh, their faces amuse me!  
I vanished back into the river,  
leaving the nervous crowd both confused  
and humbled.

The most profound wonders aren't held in  
hands,  
but in the souls that open to life's boundless  
mysteries.

rice-174-113



Fig. 4  
Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or  
Syria, first half of 14th century  
(fragment)









## QUEENDOM, PANEL 10

2023, inkjet print, 135x96 cm

**Bowl with Horsemen**, Shiraz (?), Fars, Iran, 1347, brass with silver and gold inlay, Musée des Beaux Arts, Lyon, FR

**Bowl**, Iraq, 9th–11th century, copper or bronze, formerly Collection R. Ettinghausen, US, present whereabouts unknown

**Candlestick**, northeastern Iran or Armenia, 12th century, cast bronze with relief decoration, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

**Daggers**, origin unknown, 16th–17th century, material and technique unknown, possibly at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Lamp**, Iran, 12th century, brass with silver and gold inlay, formerly Harari Collection, present whereabouts unknown

## QUEENDOM, PANEL 3

2022, inkjet print, 215x135 cm

**Homberg Ewer**, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, US

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Bowl**, Iraq, 9th–11th century, copper or bronze, formerly Collection R. Ettinghausen, US, present whereabouts unknown

**Ewer**, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), late 12th century, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Galleria Estense, Modena, IT

**Ewer**, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), first half of 12th century, hammered brass sheet with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

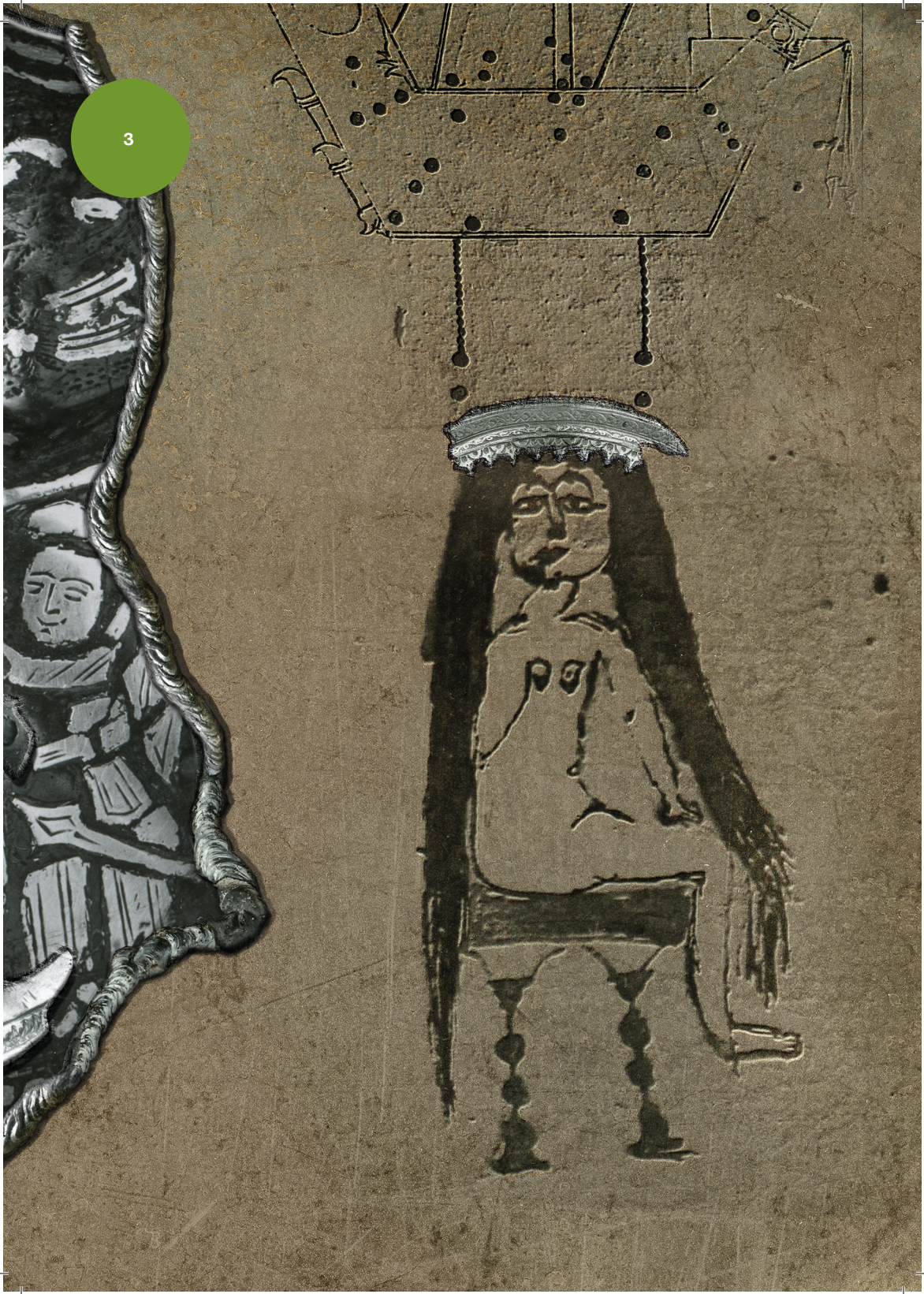
**Bobrinsky Bucket**, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 559 AH / AD 1163, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Mirror**, Iran or Rum (present-day Turkey), 12th–13th century, bronze, Max von Oppenheim Foundation, Cologne, DE

**Nisan Taşi**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**Plate**, Iran or Central Asia, 4th century, gilded silver, British Museum, London, UK

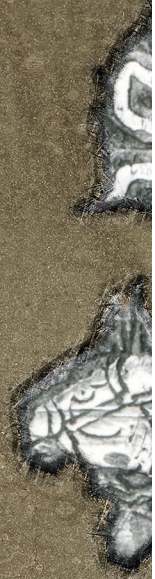








لا يزال وهو مستقر





In the Mirror: Voice of Jalisar

I am full of strength because I am many.  
We do not budge from our place,  
We do not crawl upon the ground.  
We travel with time without ever leaving  
the moment,  
Everything here is nowhere else.

We are the source of all courage.  
If we arrow, we cleave our hearts,  
and these deep wounds transform us.  
We cross the night of doubt over the abyss  
of ourselves.  
We free feelings from reason,  
We go beyond the agony of being.

No mirror scares us.  
Even if all suns may die, we continue to  
shine.

rice-HR-182-1-008b



Fig. 5  
Ewer, Herat, Khorasan  
(present-day Afghanistan),  
late 12th century  
(fragment)

Battle Echoes: Voice of Liorit

They fought and fought, my children,  
from sunrise to sunset.

Two men engaged in an endless and  
pointless battle, exchanging thunderous  
blows,

their bodies locked in relentless combat.

A crowd, as numerous as the grains of sand  
on the shore, gathered to witness.

From morning till evening, these two  
fighters continued, neither achieving victory.

Infected by the cheers and debates of  
the spectators, they felt the desire to fight  
even without asking themselves why.

As the hours slipped by, their throats  
became dry with dust, and weariness  
muddled their minds and hearts.

Their instincts, once sharp, now seemed  
distant. But still, they continued, driven by  
the excitement of the fight and the eyes  
upon them.

As the day closed and the sky dimmed,  
the noise of their conflict lingered,  
fading slowly with the light.



rice-181-006



Fig. 6  
Holmes Ewer,  
western Iran,  
ca. 1220 -30  
(fragment)











## QUEENDOM, PANEL 5

2022, inkjet print, 199x157 cm

**Bowl with Handles**, Shiraz (?), Fars, Iran, 14th century, brass with silver inlay, Art Institute, Chicago, IL, US

**Sword with Signature**, probably Iran, date, material, and technique unknown, probably at the City of Manchester Art Galleries, Manchester, UK

**Turkish Helmet with Traced Decoration**, Naskhi inscription, Turkey, 16th century, material and technique unknown, Museo Stibbert, Florence, IT

**Incense Burner with Christian Priests**, Syria, first half of 13th century, brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US

**Curved Sword (Saber)**, Naskhi inscription, origin and date unknown, Städtische Sammlungen Freiburg, DE

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**Knife with Inscription**, origin and date unknown, carved and richly decorated, probably at the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam, NL

**Mirror**, origin and date unknown, cast bronze, probably at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK

**Homberg Ewer**, Mosul, Jazira (present-day northern Iraq), 640 AH / AD 1242, brass with silver inlay, Keir Collection of Islamic Art on loan to the Dallas Museum of Art, Dallas, TX, US

**Two Helmets with Inscription**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Suit of Armor**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Four Swords with Handles**, details unknown, probably at the Royal Ontario Museum, Department of Archaeology, Toronto, CA

**Bowl with Horsemen**, Shiraz (?), Fars, Iran, 1347, brass with silver and gold inlay, Musée des Beaux Arts, Lyon, FR

**Seven Arms and Armors**, details unknown, probably at Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi, Istanbul, TR

## QUEENDOM, PANEL 4

2022, inkjet print, 140x354 cm

**Ewer**, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), late 12th–early 13th century, brass with silver inlay and black compound, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY, US

**Bobrinsky Bucket**, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan), 559 AH / AD 1163, bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Turkish Sword with Inscription**, Turkey, date, material, and technique unknown, probably at the City Museum and Art Gallery, Birmingham, UK

**Baptistère de Saint Louis**, Syria or Egypt, 13th–14th century, hammered brass with silver and gold inlay and niello, Louvre, Paris, FR

**Nisan Taşı**, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first half of 14th century, cast brass with silver and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR

**European Sword with Traced Arabic Inscription**, no additional information available

**Fould Bucket**, signed by Muhammad ibn Nasir ibn Muhammad al-Harawi, Khorasan (present-day Afghanistan) or Rum (present-day Turkey), late 12th–mid-13th century, cast brass/bronze with copper and silver inlay, Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, RU

**Tray**, Syria, 1240s, sheet brass with silver inlay, Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH, US











# CODES FROM THE FUTURE

June Drevet

Ilit Azoulay, an Israeli artist of Moroccan origin, puts her collaboration with the Palestinian healer Maisoun Karaman, who lives in northern Israel's Haifa District, at the center of the presentation of *Queendom* at the Museum der Moderne Salzburg. As she was working on *Queendom* for the 59th Biennale di Venezia in 2022, Azoulay already teamed up with Karaman to explore writings, images, and research materials from the archive of David Storm Rice. Back then, Karaman received messages “channeled” during sessions that were recorded by an audio technician. Those messages reached her in an encoded language composed of *tedarim* (Hebrew for “frequencies”) emitted by extra-human beings or group consciousness. A *teder* is transposed into gestures, sounds, or works of art that, Karaman believes, can influence, shift, or modify the nature of our holographic reality. Karaman, who has an academic background in gender studies, moderates Israeli-Palestinian women’s groups and teenage women’s peace initiatives and works as a spiritual coach, energy healer, and light-language practitioner.

For her sessions, the healer puts herself in a trance-like state in order to open herself to the messages (from the future) and render them—not unlike a medium—by letting them resonate in her body. Haunting sounds result, a symphony of healing codes that enter the listeners in encrypted form and “sow a seed of transformation and healing” (Azoulay).

Letting go of control and repression is central to Karaman’s work. The messages are attempts to heal past traumas and to disintegrate a stratum that obscures the innermost core of the human being. Her practice is guided by the conviction that every soul passes through the material world with a “fenced-in” knowledge that waits for a rift to open in this fence to reveal itself. Only by virtue of “lessons of life” that arrive at certain junctures and other processes can this knowledge suddenly become clearly visible. Transmissions, Karaman argues, can help melt down these barriers and so function as fascinating catalysts.

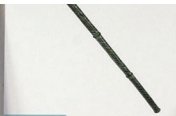


The exhibition bids farewell to visitors with *Heart to Heart*, a recent transmission that the collaborators understand to be a form of healing: resting on an upholstered platform set in an open oval architecture at the end of the series of rooms, they can listen to a recording that runs for about forty minutes. Karaman received it in early November 2023. In a subsequent conversation, the healer describes how the transmission at that moment opened up a multiplicity of new channels for future codes and information for her (and the world) to “download.” She also felt unusually receptive as the events unfolded, underscoring the presence and permeability of the frequency’s flow.

Ilit Azoulay’s work with Maisoun Karaman complements her efforts to alter the signifiers from past, present, and future and their linear sequence in favor of a non-hierarchical fluidity. In this sense, the exhibition *QUEENDOM. Navigating Future Codes* transmits tomorrow’s blueprints by offering a vivid sensual experience of the reception of codes from the future. The soundscape, that is to say, creates a room for a universal language of healing and transformation so that wounds can close.



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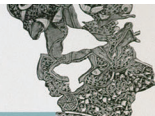




Silver coin  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



Silver coin  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



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R-243-668-002



R-243-668-004



R-453-5-003

Silver  
Iraq  
Museum of Art  
Cairo



R-243-668-002



R-243-668-005



R-243-668-004



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R-243-668-003



R-243-668-004



R-243-668-002

Silver  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-202-092-004

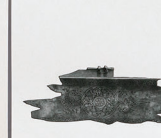


R-202-091-001



R-431-39-001

Silver  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-431-39-002

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Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-431-39-004

Silver  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-431-39-002

Silver  
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Museum of Art



R-202-092-002



R-252-094-001



R-431-39-001

Silver  
Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-431-39-003

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Museum of Art



R-431-39-002

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R-431-39-004

Silver  
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R-202-091-004



R-202-021-003

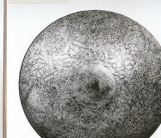


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R-431-39-004

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Iraq  
Museum of Art



R-202-091-004



R-202-091-002



R-202-091-001

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R-431-39-004

Silver  
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# ILIT AZOULAY'S STUDIO ARCHIVE

In the course of her work on the *Queendom* project from 2020 to 2022, Ilit Azoulay created an archive of more than 2,000 pages, which are shown in the exhibition for the very first time. Following a very specific principle of re-coding and re-structuring, they represent milestones in the construction of *Queendom*. These archive pages include fragments from the macrophotographs from David Storm Rice's archive, which, today, is part of the collection of the L.A. Mayer Museum for Islamic Art in Jerusalem. They served as raw materials and source of inspiration for the artist's digital handcraft process, for which she developed classification methods and codes that have no concern for formal accuracy. This preceding step of the archival creation facilitated the multitude of details in each *Queendom* panel—and, at the same time, allows the queens to spin their many stories, which overlap with the original ones told on the vessels.

The pages include several codes, which have been added by Azoulay handwritten, each representing a different archive category. They facilitate recreating the very long journey of the stories on the metal vessels from workshops in the Middle East through the mostly Western collections they belong to today and its way through Rice's lens to the careful and creative reconsideration by Azoulay.

The final photomontages carry the names "Panels" and are successively numbered 1 through 10. These numbers are indicated in different colors. On the upper part of the page, sometimes on the left, sometimes on the right according to the shapes of the fragments, a dot in a matching color indicates, which panel the fragment was assigned to. In the top left corner of the page the number the photograph of the metal vessel has in Rice's archive appears (e.g. "R-201-047"). The item's original function (e.g. vase), finding place (e.g. Iraq), and current location (e.g. British Museum) are noted on a light-blue index card on the lower left corner.





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203 Jahre von  
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Keller Collection

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8-008

R-191-1-001

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R-161-8-011

R-191-1-015

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R-191-1-015

R-191-1-015

R-196-1-005

Basel  
Basin  
Basin of Art

R-191-1-022

Paris  
Basin  
Louve

R-191-1-003

Basel  
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R-192-001

F-1



Amsterdam  
Veil support  
Rijksmuseum



R-174-1-014b

01462

F-1



Konya

Nisan Tasi

Mausoleum of  
Jalal al-Din Rumi

# THE ELEPHANT IN THE WOMB: A REFLECTION ON THE VESSEL OF THE QUEEN

Naomi Alderman

Let us discuss what it is to have a womb—a womb that grows fat in the middle of every month and sheds itself two weeks later. Of course, not every woman has a womb. For women who have wombs, it does not perform its magic moonlike trick for the first decade or so of life, nor—depending on various factors and how long that life is—for the final twenty or thirty or forty or fifty years. Of course, not everyone who has a womb is a woman. Not every womb grows fat and lean. And yet, there is a large proportion of the human race—around half of us—who experience the monthly swelling, the monthly disintegration, for many years, perhaps the most active and powerful years of our lives. So, we may as well discuss what it is to have a womb like this. A lot of us live our lives around the rhythm of the womb. All our lives, in fact, have depended on wombs doing this. Ursula K. Le Guin points out in her essay “The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction” that when we discuss what “civilization” is, we are wont to overlook the importance of vessels—wombs—and prefer to talk about thrusting weapons. Le Guin references *2001: A Space Odyssey*’s “wonderful big, long, hard thing, a bone ... having achieved the first proper murder, flung up into the sky, and whirling there it became a spaceship.”<sup>1</sup> She reminds us that the first human tool was probably not a club or a spear. It was probably a bag. A large leaf, gathered. A net woven from hair. Something to put the berries in when you’d picked them, or the potatoes when you’d dug them. The relentless forward march of what we used to call “progress,” and which has now led to the precarious Anthropocene era, began with a vessel. A womb.

<sup>1</sup> Ursula K. Le Guin, *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*, <https://notionparallax.co.uk/2019/carrier-bag> (accessed Feb. 20, 2022).



So we may as well discuss wombs. There is a distinct difference between the functioning of a womb and a penis, so obvious that we might never think to mention it. A healthy, well-functioning penis is fertile every day of the month. Healthy, perfectly-functioning womb and ovaries have a few brief days—perhaps as many as five, or as few as one—every month when the moment is right, when sex can result in conception. A womb is not an always-on service. A womb is not a rolling 24-hour news cycle. A womb has days of frenetic, miraculous activity and days of stillness, perhaps pain, aching, soreness, exhaustion, bloating. In the fertile years, a womb bleeds for about five days a month, and that is not always a good time—in a world filled with predators, human or otherwise—to go out into dangerous territory.

Now, the astonishing thing really is that for much of human history we have managed to regard one of these modes as “correct” and the other as “wrong.” The always-on mode is “correct”: every Thursday should be the same as every other Thursday. Working weeks are five days long. Your body ought to be reliably the same every morning. Every day should be the perfect day to adventure, explore, go into new territory, hunt the buffalo or the new venture and bring it home for dinner. Every teenager should be able to take an exam on the same day, because all their bodies are performing identically every day.

If bodies are always supposed to function at the same level, in the same way, every day, then of course bodies with wombs are, in general, wrong. Leading to the general presumption that women are, very simply and clearly, not as good as men. Not all women are tired or in pain when their womb is shedding its lining, but many are. Perhaps this means that many women are simply not as good as men, not as reliable or uniform, not as perfectly identical every day. Well, if we accept the presumption that uniformity is good, then we accept that. But perhaps we could try not accepting that presumption, and see what comes of it. It is difficult to think our way round this corner. Difficult but important. What would it be like if we started from the presumption that wombs are at least as correct as penises? First, we would need to think that it is correct not to be constantly at the same level of mental and physical functioning every day. That each day of the month is a little different—and that recognizing this is correct. This is already difficult. I don’t just mean that it’s a kind thing to recognize that different people’s bodies have different abilities. I mean that it’s *right* to be at different energy levels on different days of the month. Not *more* right than being the same every day, but as right.

What follows from this? It follows that we could stop pretending that the same person can do the same activity at the same level every day. It follows that we are the best judges of what we can do each day. It follows that there would be no shame in admitting this, nor any particular pride to be taken in being the same every day. It follows that we would stop thinking that all sorts of roles are best done by only one person. If it's OK, and even good, not to be the same every day, then it surely follows that things that need to be done every day should be done by—at least—a few different people.

What it suggests is that a Queendom might be different from a Kingdom. It might be that in a Queendom, there are no single rulers. It might even be that there are no jobs, no static roles, very little that is fixed at all about systems of power.

In David Graeber and David Wengrow's book *The Dawn of Everything* they suggest that until fairly recently it was normal for human beings to change "social identity with the changing seasons"; power used to be distributed in "flexible, shifting arrangements."<sup>2</sup> So for example a so-called "chief" was only really chief at the times of war or as a figurehead to perform sacred duties, while the best elk-hunters might take charge during an elk-hunt, the older women were the decision makers in the dark of winter, the best singers and poets led the group at the time of ritual music-making and so on. When we were hunter-gatherers moving often from place to place—which we were for most of the time there have been people—it made no sense for there to be such a thing as a "leader" who was the same in every place we hunted or gathered. Why put the expert on mulberry picking in charge of the salmon season? Why put the best caribou hunter in charge of sorting out tribal disputes in the cold dark? It doesn't make sense.

What makes sense, is something less constant and more fractured. What makes sense, is seasonal fluctuation. What makes sense, is being open to change. In this, the *Queendom* has discovered something we all used to know. The womb makes sense. Things ebb and flow. Seasons change and the tides rise and fall. What makes sense is many rulers—and many open spaces without ruler—depending on what is needed in the moment.

It is true that you can go more quickly if you have a singular ruler, if everyone falls into lockstep, if the commands are obeyed without question. But in the current moment with the seas turning to acid and the skies boiling with fury,

<sup>2</sup> David Graeber, David Wengrow, "Free People, the Origin of Cultures, and the Advent of Private Property," in *The Dawn of Everything: A New History of Humanity*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2021, pp. 130–70.

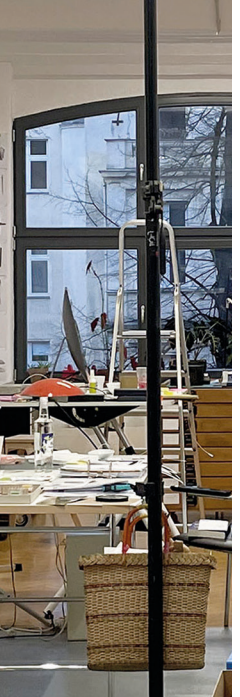
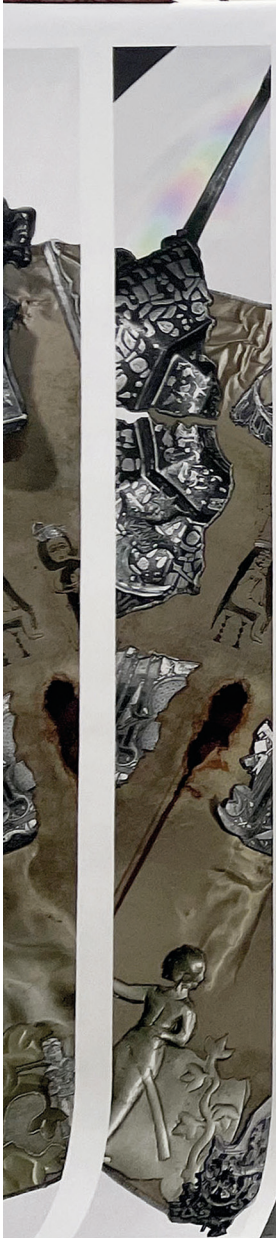


we may want to ask ourselves whether going quickly is such a tremendous virtue. Perhaps there is a virtue in allowing things to crack open. Maybe we need to always stay alert for whatever we are missing.

When the Queens broke apart the objects of the Kingdoms and placed them in a new fragmented order, they were showing us the way. This combination and recombination is the model. It is the answer. All of the problems of a singular ruler go away if you stop thinking that one person ought to be in charge every day. The womb is not an error. The changing of the seasons is not a mistake, it is a clue.



The Lost Archive







## ILIT AZOULAY

### BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

**Ilit Azoulay** (b. Tel Aviv-Jaffa, IL, 1972) lives and works in Berlin, Germany. In her interdisciplinary artistic practice, she breaks with the traditional single-lens perspective of the camera and recomposes images based on extensive research. She poses questions about the mechanisms of historiography, cultural appropriation, and practices of empathy.

Azoulay's work has been featured in numerous museum and private collections worldwide, including the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, LACMA and the Hammer Museum in Los Angeles, the Art Institute of Chicago, Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris, the National Gallery of Australia in Canberra, Haus der Kunst and Pinakothek für Moderne Kunst, both in Munich, and the Julia Stoschek Collection in Berlin. Additionally, her works can be found at the Israel Museum in Jerusalem and the Tel Aviv Museum of Art.

Ilit Azoulay has published several books titled *Queendom* (2022); *No Thing Dies* (2019); *Finally Without End* (2014); and *Shifting Degrees of Certainty* (2014).



## CREDITS

© Ilit Azoulay

### **Ilit Azoulay**

QUEENDOM, Panels 1–10, 2022/2023  
Poems, 2023 (inspired by Alejandro  
Jodorowsky, 2004)  
Queendom Archive Pages, 2022,  
fig. pp. 58–59, 61–63  
Studio view, fig. pp. 68–69  
Cover image: detail of Panel 6

### **Transmissions & Heart to Heart Session**

In collaboration with Maisoun Karaman  
Queendom-Transmissions, 2022/23  
Heart to Heart Session: November 2023

### **David Storm Rice Archive**

Image references, detail images of objects:

Bowl, made by Mahmud al-Kurdi for 'Ali  
ibn Muhammad, northwestern Iran, south-  
eastern Anatolia, Egypt, or Syria (?), late  
15th-early 16th century bronze, probably at  
Museo Stibbert, Florence, IT  
Inv.no. rice-202-029-003-002: fig. 1, p. 17

Ewer, Herat, Khorasan (present-day Afgha-  
nistan), late 12th century, bronze with  
copper and silver inlay, Galleria Estense,  
Modena, IT  
Inv.no. rice-HR-182-1-012 2: figs. pp. 20–21  
Inv.no. rice-HR-182-1-008b: fig. 5, p. 47

Coffer, no information available, Scottish  
Museum, Edinburgh, UK  
Inv.no. R-201-41-003: fig. p. 22

Barberini Vase, Aleppo or Damascus, Syria,  
1239-60, hammered copper alloy with silver  
inlay, Louvre, Paris, FR  
Inv.no. R-181-15-HR-001: fig. p. 23

Nisan Taşı, Mongol-Iranian, Iran or Syria, first  
half of 14th century, cast brass with silver  
and gold inlay, Mevlana Museum, Konya, TR  
Inv.no. rice-174-033a: fig. 2, p. 25  
Inv.no. rice-174-011.1: fig. 3, p. 33  
Inv.no. rice-174-113: fig. 4, p. 39

Holmes Ewer, western Iran, ca. 1220-30  
brass with silver, gold, and copper inlay,  
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, US  
Inv.no. rice-181-006: fig. 6, p. 49

## COLOPHON

Published in conjunction with the exhibition

## Ilit Azoulay QUEENDOM. Navigating Future Codes

January 26–June 16, 2024  
Museum der Moderne Salzburg

### Exhibition

#### Museum der Moderne Salzburg:

Director: Harald Krejci  
Curator: Tina Teufel  
Registrar: Susanne Greimel  
Exhibition Manager: Lisa Überbacher  
Conservation: Maria Emberger  
Exhibition Installation: hs art service austria  
Technology, Facilities, and Exhibitions:  
Oliver Wacht (Head), Patrick Peter Gänser,  
Christian Hauer, Thomas Mey, Alija  
Salihovic, Roland Walchhofer  
AV Technology: Michael Krupica  
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