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**REINTERPRETING THE SOCIAL LIFESTYLE OF
YOUNG OMANI WOMEN IN THE CONTEXT
OF MODERNIZATION THROUGH
PAINTING**



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ABED FARHAN OBED ALZIZI

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ABSTRACT

This research project investigated the significant transformations of young Omani women's social lifestyle within the context of modernization in the contemporary era. The research project aims to identify the influence and changes in the fashion practices of young Omani women and their evolving daily lifestyle in response to modernization. The key elements in the research project consist of culture, personality, and activities. The main artists in this research are Mahamoud Fahmi, Iman Maleki, Hush, Ronnie Mohamed, Anwar Sonia, Alia Al Farsi, Ranjit Sarkar, Richard Fosu and Jeremy Winborg. Reference works of art addressed women's image in several aspects, including fashion and lifestyle, culture and tradition, design and style, and fashion and femininity. In particular, the Theory of Multiple Modernity and Cultural Hybridization Theory were employed to contextualize the research project. Moreover, this research project utilized studio practice research through critical self-reflection, studio experimentation, and contextual reviews. This research revealed that changes due to the modernity of culture and lifestyle have greatly affected the personality of young Omani women. In addition, this research project greatly impacted modernity and understanding of the developments and transformations that have taken a substantial part in the lifestyle and culture of contemporary Omani women. Nevertheless, this led to a new and in-depth understanding of the artistic representation of modern Omani women and their role in the contemporary era, enriching cultural and artistic dialogue and promoting diversity in the development of Omani society.





MENAFSIRKAN SEMULA SOSIAL WANITA MUDA OMAN DALAM KONTEKS MODERNISASI MENERUSI KARYA SENI CATAN

ABSTRAK

Projek penyelidikan ini mengkaji perubahan signifikan gaya hidup sosial wanita muda Oman dalam konteks modenisasi pada era kontemporari. Projek penyelidikan ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti pengaruh dan perubahan dalam amalan fesyen serta gaya hidup harian wanita muda Oman yang berkembang sebagai tindak balas terhadap arus pemodenan. Elemen utama yang diberi tumpuan dalam projek penyelidikan ini merangkumi aspek budaya moden, personaliti dan aktiviti. Artis-artis dalam penyelidikan ini ialah Mahamoud Fahmi, Iman Maleki, Hush, Ronnie Mohamed, Anwar Sonia, Alia Al Farsi, Ranjit Sarkar, Richard Fosu dan Jeremy Winborg. Karya-karya rujukan ini membicarakan imej wanita daripada beberapa aspek, seperti fesyen dan gaya hidup, budaya dan tradisi, reka bentuk dan gaya, serta fesyen dan Ciri kewanitaan. Teori Kemodenan Pelbagai dan Teori Hibridisasi Budaya digunakan untuk mengkontekstualisasikan projek penyelidikan. Projek penyelidikan ini menggunakan kaedah penyelidikan praktik studio yang merangkumi refleksi sendiri secara kritis, eksperimentasi studio dan ulasan kontekstual. Hasil kajian ini mendedahkan perubahan Yang berlaku akibat kemodenan dari segi budaya dan gaya hidup telah memberi pengaruh Yang signifikan terhadap personaliti wanita muda Oman. Projek penyelidikan ini memberi impak besar terhadap isu kemodenan dan memahami perkembangan serta transformasi Yang telah memainkan peranan dalam gaya hidup dan budaya wanita kontemporari Oman. Perkara ini membawa kepada pemahaman baharu dan mendalam tentang representasi artistik wanita moden Oman serta peranan mereka dalam era kontemporari. Pemahaman ini turut menyumbang kepada memperkaya dialog budaya dan artistik, di samping mempromosikan kepelbagaian dalam pembangunan masyarakat Oman.



CONTENTS

	Page
DECLARATION OF ORIGINAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF DISSERTATION FORM	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
ABSTRACT	v
ABSTRAK	vi
CONTENTS	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF APPENDICES	xxi
CHAPTER 1 CENTRAL ARGUMENT	
1.1 Research Background	1
1.2 Young Omani Women and Modernity	11
1.3 Issue Statement	18
1.4 Research Objectives	20
1.5 Research Questions	21
1.6 Project Outline	21
1.7 Scope of the Study	22
1.8 Research Significant	24
1.9 Research Framework	26
1.10 Previous Work	30
1.11 Major Development within the Practical Research	38

CHAPTER 2 CONTEXT

2.1	Related Theoretical Ideas	44
2.1.1	Multiple Modernities Theory by Eisenstadt	44
2.1.2	Cultural Hybridization Theory by Nederveen Pieterse.	48
2.2	Related Art Practices	52
2.2.1	Mahamoud Fahmi	52
2.2.2	Iman Maleki	53
2.2.3	Hush	55
2.2.4	Ronnie Mohamed	56
2.2.5	Anwar Sonia	57
2.2.6	Alia Al Farsi	59
2.2.7	Winborg	60
2.2.8	Ranjit Sarkar	62
2.2.9	Richard Fosu	63

CHAPTER 3 THE STUDIO INVESTIGATION

3.1	Introduction	65
3.2	Methodology	65
3.2.1	Critical Self-Reflection	66
3.2.1.1	Feldman (1994) Method of Art Criticism	67
3.2.2	Studio Experimentation	68
3.2.3	Contextual Review (Critique Session)	72
3.3	The Studio Investigation and Analysis	74
3.3.1	Phase One: Culture	74
3.3.1.1	First Painting: Inspiration to Learn, 2021	76

3.3.1.2	Second Painting: The Magic of Working Environment, 2022	102
3.3.1.3	Third Painting: Deep Communication, 2022	119
3.3.2	Phase Two: Personality	137
3.3.2.1	First Painting: Two Faces of Glory, 2022	141
3.3.2.2	Second Painting: The Spirit of Integration, 2022	154
3.3.2.3	Third Painting: Beads and Jewelry, 2023	169
3.3.3	Phase Three: Activities	179
3.3.3.1	First Painting: The Practices and Activities, 2023	181
3.3.3.2	Second Painting: The Place, 2023	193
3.3.3.3	Third Painting: The Gathering Day, 2023	205

CHAPTER 4 CONCLUSION

4.1	Conclusion	220
-----	------------	-----

REFERENCES	225
-------------------	-----

APPENDICES	232
-------------------	-----

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure No.		Page
1.1	Young Omani Women in Different Working Fields	3
1.2	Family Gathering and Entertainment Facilities in Shopping Malls	5
1.3	Examples of Street Advertisements in Muscat	6
1.4	Social Media Ads in Oman (2017-2029)	7
1.5	Internet users and Population in the Sultanate of Oman (2019)	8
1.6	Example: Companies using social media to promote products	9
1.7	Young Omani Women Doing Regular Sports Activities	10
1.8	Printed Opera House on Modern Dress and Balochi Modern Design	14
1.9	Alfarasha and Double Clutch Abaya	15
1.10	Young Omani Women's Simple Fashion in a Working Environment	16
1.11	Young Omani Women's Shawl Style in an Official Environment	17
1.12	Young Omani Women's Fashion and Casual Shawl Style	17
1.13	Research Framework for Modernity and Young Omani Women's Social Lifestyle Through Studio Practice Method	30

1.14	Acrylic & Ink on Canvas, 120cm x 120cm	31
1.15	The Village Man (2018) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm	32
1.16	Hope (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm	33
1.17	Yesterday (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm	34
1.18	The Man with His Goat (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm	35
1.19	The Gathering (2000) Medium: Oil on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm	36
1.20	The Doll (2000) Medium: Oil on Canvas, 160cm x 130cm	37
2.1	Mahamoud Fahmi, Tea and Turquoise (2016), 132 ×158 cm, Oil on Canvas	52
2.2	Iman Maleki (2006), Oil on Canvas, 100 cm x 80 cm	54
2.3	Hush, Seductress (2017), 60 cm x 40 cm, Mixed Media on Canvas	55
2.4	Ronnie Mohamed (2019), Charcoal and Acrylic on Canvas, 130cm x 110cm	57
2.5	Anwar Sonia, Omani Women in the Market (2016), Acrylic on Canvas. 150 cm x 130 cm. The Omani Society of Fine Arts. Oman.	58
2.6	Alia Al Farsi, Omani Family Gathering (2018), Acrylic On Canvas. 160cmx320cm, Oman International Airport. Muscat	59
2.7	Jeremy Winborg, Sisterhood, 123 cm x 95 cm, Oil on Canvas	60
2.8	Ranjit Sarkar, Dancing Lady, 90cm x 60cm, Acrylic on Canvas.	62

2.9	Richard Fosu, We are Beautiful, 76cm x 114 cm, Acrylics and Fabrics on Canvas.	63
3.1	Omani Application	77
3.2	Finland International School in Muscat	78
3.3	Examples of Foreign Students and Staff in Omani Educational Institutions.	78
3.4	Omani Female Students Browse Social Media	80
3.5	Examples of Omani Student Settings with Foreign Students	82
3.6	Omani Female Student and the use of English and Arabic Books.	83
3.7	The Statement: Knowledge is Light, and Ignorance is Darkness	84
3.8	Experimental Sketches- Reconstruct and Combine the Letters of the Statement-Knowledge is Light and Ignorance is Darkness	85
3.9	The Selected Pictures Used In The First Composition	85
3.10	First Composition	86
3.11	Omani Students with Foreign Students	87
3.12	The Pictures Used in the Second Composition	87
3.13	Second Composition	88
3.14	Selected Picture of Two Omani Students Sitting With a Foreign Student at the Scientific College of Design	89
3.15	Example of Fashion Stores Displaying Omani Abaya with Sadu patterns	90

3.16	Omani Women Using Omani Sadu Patterns on their Abaya and Shawl	91
3.17	Sketches of the Omani Sadu Fabric and Manipulation Process	92
3.18	The Final Sketch of The Three Figures	93
3.19	The Combination of Three Figures and Arabic Calligraphy	94
3.20	The Word LEARN - Example of English Alphabet Manipulation	95
3.21	All the Elements used in the Final Composition	95
3.22	The Final Colored Sketch	96
3.23	Grid Technique Used to Transfer The Final Sketch on the Canvas	97
3.24	Layering Technique Using Charcoal and Ink	97
3.25	Early Stage Process – Under Paint Layering Technique	98
3.26	Advanced Stage of the Artwork Process	99
3.27	Inspiration to Learn, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2021.	99
3.28	Working Omani Women in Various Fields	103
3.29	Omani Working Women Wearing Different Attire	105
3.30	Young Omani Woman Working in Various Fields - Pictures are Collected from Different Working Environments.	106
3.31	Selected Pictures as Main Elements for the First Composition	108
3.32	Sketch of the First Composition	109

3.33	Omani Female Staff	109
3.34	Sketch of the Second Composition	110
3.35	Foreigner and Omani Staff at the Scientific College of Design	111
3.36	Office Shelves in Ifa Design Agency in Muscat	112
3.37	The Ministry of Labor Building in Muscat	113
3.38	The Selected Pictures as the Main Elements for the Final Composition	113
3.39	Sketch of the Third Final Composition	114
3.40	First Layer	114
3.41	Grid Technique to Transfer The Final Sketch on the Canvas	115
3.42	More Layers to Create Effects	116
3.43	Blocking Technique	116
3.44	The Magic of Working Environment, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2022.	117
3.45	Young Omani Women Using Social Media Using Mobile Phones	121
3.46	Examples of Young Omani Women's Tiktok, Snapchat, and Facebook Accounts	123
3.47	Examples of Young Omani Women's Instagram Accounts	124
3.48	Young Omani Women Browsing The Internet Using Mobile Phones.	126
3.49	The Selected Picture for the First Composition	127

3.50	Experiment With Manipulating Popular Social Media Icons	127
3.51	The Main Elements Used in the First Composition	128
3.52	The First Sketch for the Final Composition	129
3.53	Manipulation Process on the Selected Picture	129
3.54	The Selected Pictures for the Second Composition	130
3.55	Sketches of the Second Composition	131
3.56	Manipulation Process of the Selected Part from the Chosen Picture	132
3.57	Sketches of the Main Elements used in the Final Composition	132
3.58	Sketch of the Final composition	133
3.59	Transfer the Final Sketch on the Canvas Using the Grid Technique	134
3.60	Layering Process Using Charcoal and Ink	134
3.61	Under Paint and Layering Progress	135
3.62	Deep Communication, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2022.	135
3.63	Examples of Young Omani Women's Modern Attire	139
3.64	Young Omani Women Wearing Casual Attire in Public Place	140
3.65	Examples of modern Fashion Stores in Muscat City Center Mall	142
3.66	Examples of Fashion Stores in Avenue Mall – Muscat	143
3.67	Young Omani Women Wearing Different Fashion Styles	144

3.68	First Composition	144
3.69	Selected Picture of Omani Woman Wearing Traditional Fashion	145
3.70	Young Omani Women Wearing Modern Attire	146
3.71	Composition Sketch of Both Selected Pictures	146
3.72	Examples of International Fashion Brands' Stores in Oman	147
3.73	Examples of International Fashion Brand Products	147
3.74	Brand Finance Apparel Report on 2022	148
3.75	Example of the Manipulation with Top Fashion Brands	149
3.76	All the Selected Pictures to be Used for the Final Composition	149
3.77	Final Composition	150
3.78	Transfer the Final Sketch on the Canvas Using the Grid Technique	150
3.79	Layering Process	151
3.80	Under Paint Layering Process	151
3.81	Advanced Stage of the Painting	152
3.82	Two Faces of Glory, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2022.	152
3.83	Almurtasha Necklace	155
3.84	Al-Miriya Necklace	155
3.85	Examples of Traditional Omani Jewelry in Modern Design.	157



3.86	Latest Modern Accessories Design	158
3.87	Examples of Omani Women Wearing Modern Jewelry Design	158
3.88	Examples of Accessories Designs	159
3.89	Omani Woman Wearing Modern Jewelry Design Inspired by Traditional Jewelry	160
3.90	First Composition	161
3.91	Young Omani Woman Wearing Modern Head Jewelry	162
3.92	Examples of Modern Omani Jewelry Designs	162
3.93	Second Composition	163
3.94	Selected Modern Jewelry Designs	164
3.95	Combining All Elements in One Composition	164
3.96	Layering Process	165
3.97	Under Paint Technique	165
3.98	Advanced Stage of the Painting Shows Some of the Selected Modern Jewelry Distributed on the Figure`S Face	166
3.99	Part of the Selected Jewelry Picture Distribution on the Background	167
3.100	The Spirit of Integration, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 140cm x 110cm, 2022.	167
3.101	Example of Modern Accessories Price	170
3.102	Omani Women Wear Bangles	171



3.103	Omani Women Combining Jewelry and Accessories.	172
3.104	Young Omani Woman Wearing Modern Jewelry and Accessories	172
3.105	First Composition	173
3.106	Final Composition	174
3.107	Layers Process	175
3.108	Early Steps	175
3.109	Glazing Technique Using Acrylic Paint and Ink	176
3.110	Advanced Stage	177
3.111	Beads and Jewelry, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2023.	178
3.112	Examples of Omani Women's Outdoor Sports Activities	181
3.113	Omani Woman Practicing Bowling in a Sports Center	182
3.114	Examples of Young Omani Women's Social Activities	183
3.115	Example of Omani Women's Shopping Activities	184
3.116	Arranging the Selected Pictures to Create a Composition	185
3.117	Manipulate the Colors Using Gradient Editor Tools in Photoshop	185
3.118	Manipulation Color Scheme	186
3.119	Under Paint Layering Process	187
3.120	Transferred the Final Composition on the Canvas Using the Grid Technique	187

3.121	Acrylic Paint Layer	188
3.122	Advanced Steps of Painting Execution	189
3.123	The Practices and Activities, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 210cm x 170cm, 2023.	190
3.124	Young Omani Women Spending Time in a Coffee Shop	194
3.125	Young Omani Women Gathering in Coffee Shops	195
3.126	Examples of Young Omani Women Sitting in Coffee Shops Wearing Modern Fashion.	196
3.127	Selected Pictures for the First Composition.	196
3.128	First Composition	197
3.129	Matrah City	198
3.130	Combining the Visual Elements in One Composition	199
3.131	Young Omani Woman in a Coffee Shop	200
3.132	Final Composition	200
3.133	Transferring the Final Sketch on the Canvas Using the Grid Technique	201
3.134	Layering Process	202
3.135	Parts of the Background Section	202
3.136	The Place, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 210cm x 170cm, 2023.	203
3.137	Omani Women Attending Omani Wedding Ceremony	206

3.138	Young Omani Women Wearing Different Modern Styles in Wedding Ceremony	208
3.139	Crop the Background using Photoshop	209
3.140	Crop the Picture using Photoshop	210
3.141	Combining Main Selected Pictures in One Composition	210
3.142	Sketches of the First Composition	211
3.143	The Main Element	211
3.144	Omani Woman Attending Omani Wedding Ceremony	212
3.145	Crop the Picture using Photoshop	213
3.146	Omani Village House	213
3.147	Final Composition	214
3.148	Applying Grid Technique	214
3.149	Layering Process	215
3.150	Acrylic under Paint Layering Process	215
3.151	Complete Under Paint	216
3.152	The Gathering Day, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 190cm 217x 140cm, 2023.	217



LIST OF APPENDICES

A List of Artworks

B Curriculum Vitae





CHAPTER 1

CENTRAL ARGUMENT

1.1 Research Background

This study aimed to investigate the culture and lifestyle changes of young Omani women and their daily practices with regard to modernization. This study focused on young Omani women's celebration of modern fashion . It also highlighted the way they dealt with this phenomenon according to the requirements of the newly developed life through the creation of paintings.

Modernization is an ordinary, historical, and evolutionary process that society must go through to improve its way of living and lifestyle. It emerges from the social reality and is based on the history of the place, the community's culture, and cumulative experience and development (Andreeva, Myslyakova, Glukhikh, & Ratner, 2017). In addition, Ibrahim (2018) believed that the economy is the main factor in changing and developing the society's lifestyle toward modernization. The social lifestyle of the Omani woman and her daily activities are minimal due to the Omani tradition and culture.





When the great changes of modernity took place, the social lifestyle required the Omani woman to leave her isolation, restore her rights, and become an essential partner in the development of the nation in all sectors. This phenomenon also encouraged rural communities to move to developed cities to get better job opportunities and improve their lifestyle (Rabab, 2020). As stated in the annual report of The Arab Women's Foundation (2018), the Sultanate of Oman ranked first in empowering women to practice their rights in various economic, educational, social, cultural, scientific, and political fields.

Young Omani women participated in high government positions. In fact, in 2003, the Sultanate was the first Gulf country to appoint a woman to a minister position. Remarkably, the number of Omani women who have held the position of minister to nine female ministers in 2020. In addition, Omani women also participated in other high political positions as cabinet members and ministerial Advisors and held the Arab ambassador position to the United States in 2005 (AlWahaibi, 2020). However, young Omani women work in good social conditions in terms of work, production, and investment opportunities.

Modernization has opened the way and provided opportunities for young Omani women to open up to the work environment, choose their way of lifestyle, and engage in various activities. Modernity also opened the opportunity for Omani women to receive an excellent education, and thus, job opportunities became available in various fields and disciplines. This includes education, medicine, and engineering, to name a few (AlWahaibi, 2020).



Figure 1.1

Young Omani Women in Different Working Fields



Source: <https://x.com/timesofoman/status/940095481559912449?mx=2>

This contributed to changing the lifestyle in general and the acceptance of young Omani women to create and wear modern fashion, and it has become a need and necessity to be compatible with daily activities. The changes that have occurred due to the modernity of the lifestyle have greatly affected the mindset of young Omani women, as they have become very practical, follow up on world development on a daily basis, and are aware of the requirements of modern life. This necessitates a major change in their choice of outfits due to the variety of daily activities they perform (Amal, 2015).

These magnificent changes are accompanied by social status development. They also participate in social activities funded by government and private organizations such as the Omani Women's Association (OWA). It was founded in 1971 and has 62 branches around the Sultanate, contributing remarkably to preparing and encouraging women for constructive positions in different cultural and economic fields.

The National Centre for Statistics and Information (2018) indicated that working Omani women achieved 41% in the government sector and 24% in the private sector. In addition, Ibrahim (2018) stated that the high cost of living, the high standard of spending, and the requirements to keep pace with the modern lifestyle impose Omani



women to work in order to improve the family's monthly income. This is according to the consumption requirements needed to achieve stability, as reported in the National Centre for Statistics and Information (2020), stating that the average monthly income of an Omani family was 3,880 USD.

The economic revolution that the Sultanate of Oman went through has changed the life patterns in society, whether at the individual or family level. As consumption has become a noticeable phenomenon as a result of improved living standards and the availability of various products and services in the markets, consumption is no longer just a need but a lifestyle and social culture (Omezzine, Al-Mazrooei, & Chomo, 2003).

Almamari (2014, p. 26) wrote, "...the monthly income is an important factor in determining the consumption volume." Meanwhile, Almansour (2013) indicated that people with limited income aim to consume what is necessary and indispensable. Meanwhile, people with middle income tend to consume what is necessary and useful according to their budget. In contrast, those with high incomes have high purchasing power, which exceeds the satisfaction of the necessary needs to keep up with others in their lifestyle and consumption as social and symbolic connotations.

However, Punt (2003, p. 2) mentioned that *"...consumer decisions are also affected by the geographical location factor of the consumer, as in the developed cities have shopping centers and variety of products and services more than in the rural areas..."*



Shopping centers in developed cities motivate consumers by the way they display the products, accessibility, convenience, and interior design of the center. It also provides services and entertainment facilities for the customers, making the shopping center not only a place for shopping but also a social culture and a place to do many activities that an individual and family require (Kamarulzaman & Lih, 2010).

Figure 1.2

Family Gathering and Entertainment Facilities in Shopping Malls



Source: <https://entreneurmirror.com/in-january-february-of-2024-3-67/>

Shopping malls have become a social culture where family members spend some of their time together and practice some of their daily activities. It has also become a meeting center for friends to spend quality time, whether in cafes, restaurants, or entertainment centers. They usually wear comfortable casual clothes and simple shawls that suit the liveliness environment of the shopping malls (Kamarulzaman & Lih, 2010).

Consumer decisions are also affected by various commercial advertisements published in magazines, newspapers, and on the streets. This depicts that the product can be obtained easily regardless of the price, and it is directed especially at women since they usually shop and buy household items (Dillavou, 2009).

Figure 1.3

Examples of Street Advertisements in Muscat



Source: <https://www.albayan.ae/five-senses/mirrors/2014-06-19-1.2147873>

According to Nasser (2001), the phenomenon of high consumption is associated with young women at a rate ranging between (80-92%), and the purchases were distributed in fashion and accessories, events, jewelry, cosmetics, and then house stuff.

In addition, technology is one of the most crucial aspects of modernization, and it facilitates the individual daily life as many works and activities can be accomplished very quickly in a short time. This includes financial and government dealings, education, research, health, and follow-up of news and events (*Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General, 2015*).

Meanwhile, technology brings people and societies closer together. It also shortens the distances between them, allowing them to share experiences and thoughts and make the world like a small village. Hence, people get to know each other without the need to travel. This develops the culture of individuals, expanding their perceptions and enabling them to follow all the world's events without any excuses that prevent them from other societies. Accordingly, this greatly contributed to learning about the culture of other societies and economic development and greatly impacted individual lifestyles (Norman, 2016).

Technology, specifically digital commercial advertisements and social media, have played a significant role in changing consumer behaviour due to the ease of communication between the producer and the consumer. This is because most local and international companies in the Sultanate of Oman practice their advertising activities and services on a large scale through social media platforms. This makes it easier for the consumer to explore the latest products as it provides customers with better opportunities to compare products of different companies and even order products according to their own specifications (Anyanwu & Chiana, 2015).

Figure 1.4

Social Media Ads in Oman (2017-2029)



Source: Statista Market Insights

According to AbuMuna (2023) wrote that,

"...technology and social media have become an important and effective reality in all aspects of life, and therefore it has greatly contributed to the social lifestyle of the individual, especially for young people, and added remarkable changes in the economic and cultural aspects."

AbuMuba (2023, p.3)

Furthermore, the Oman National Center for Statistics and Information (2019) has published that the number of internet and social media users in the Sultanate of Oman is approximately 3.78 million, while the population of the Sultanate does not exceed 4.92 million.

Figure 1.5

Internet users and Population in the Sultanate of Oman (2019)



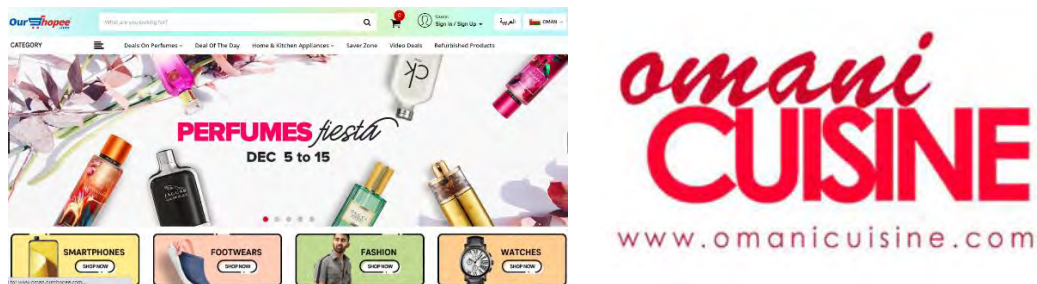
Source: National Center for Statistics & Information

Notably, 94% of young Omani women own a social media account. 40% use social media for commercial purposes, searching or purchasing products and services. This reflects a high confidence in the price and quality of products purchased through social media (The National Centre of Statistics and Information Report, 2019).

Online shopping is intent on enriching customer shopping lists wisely. This is attributed to a variety of products and 24/7 customer services and delivery to enhance seamless shopping. The abundance and variety of products and the possibility of comparing product quality and prices are the elements that characterize online shopping.

Figure 1.6

Example: Companies using social media to promote products



Source: Instagram shopping store

The modern lifestyle encourages young Omani women to participate in the sports sector, highlighting their capabilities in various fields. This has directly contributed to the development of the sports sector in the Sultanate and their great participation and achievements in international events. This is done with the efforts of the Omani Women's Sports Committee to support women's sports activities at the local and international levels.

Sports activities are not limited to sports clubs but rather a general culture. It is considered one of the essential daily activities in young Omani women's lifestyles due to the cultural and health awareness obtained. They may spend a decent amount of time in gymnasiums, jogging or walking routinely, and practicing horse riding while wearing appropriate women's sportswear. This includes a long-sleeved sports shirt, long sports pants, and sports shoes with a simple head cover. Sometimes, young Omani women wear modest sports dresses in public places such as parks and public gardens (Al-Habsi & Kilani, 2015).

Suppose their activities require more movement, especially on weekends, such as spending time on the beach or going on a family trip to the mountains or valleys. In

that case, they would wear pants and shirts and wear the shawl in a controlled manner (Thuwayba & Tayfour, 2004).

Figure 1.7

Young Omani Women Doing Regular Sports Activities



Source: <https://www.omandaily.om/article/57628>

Young Omani women do physical activity and sport on a regular basis for good mental and physical health, maintaining good weight and fitness, and reducing the risk of many diseases. Sports activities help manage time and schedule in a cheerful and healthy lifestyle and offer the individual a personal space and private time to think and organize the mindset.

With the modernization phenomenon, young Omani women have become confident and independent in choosing their lifestyle and making decisions about things that can affect their personal lives. They are also able to change their position from a consumer who depends on others to an independent provider and provide themselves with spending power and access to the material world. Internet, mobile phones, shopping malls, and excessive mobility have contributed to the transformation from a traditional to a modern social lifestyle (Thuwayba & Tayfour, 2004).



1.2 Young Omani Women and Modernity

There are many types of women's costumes according to the states of the Omani governorates. However, they generally consist of three basic pieces. The first one is the headscarf, and women are adept at decorating it with inscriptions by means of sequins and colored beads, which may be added to it at the ends, with colored strings in three or four colors called *krakish*. The second piece is the dress, *dishdasha*, or *kandora*, in addition to beads and sequins in different assortments. As for the area in the middle of the chest, use ready-made inscriptions, usually in red and purple.

As for the *Dhofari* dress (*Abu Tail*), which is worn by women in the *Dhofar* Governorate, it is long from the back and is embroidered with stones and shiny lobes. The third piece is the trousers, which are wide or narrow from the feet and have a variety of engraving and embroidery, according to the states of the governorates of the Sultanate (Jumaa, 2018).

The traditional Omani costume changed in various aspects. This includes the style, design, number of pieces, material, and accessories since modern fashion is characterized by simplicity in terms of colors, patterns, and way of wearing to help ease of movement. Furthermore, the diversity of fabrics used with simple accessories does not necessarily reflect the Omani heritage compared to the traditional fashion, which usually uses *Prism* fabric with many abundances of patterns and embroidery. In addition, the brightness of colors and decorations, along with many traditional accessories and jewelry, symbolize the Omani heritage and culture. *Thuwayba* and *Tayfour* (2004) wrote,



"...Oman has often been described as a nation that is proud of its Arab Islamic heritage. The government of the Sultanate has painstakingly and consistently taken measures to ensure that Omani people retain their identity, of which they are very proud. Balancing modernity and tradition has always been a goal that Oman sought to achieve..."

Thuwayba and Tayfour (2004, p.6)

The young Omani woman still holds on to the amazing ancient culture that still exists in all aspects of the Omani people's lives, even in modern fashion. Oman's traditional women's costume is renowned for its spectacular designs, stylish ornaments, and beautiful colors. Despite that, wearing decent and appropriate clothing is perhaps very important in Oman. Women should wear loose clothes and cover their shoulders and arms. If wearing a skirt, it should reach beneath the knee; however, wearing loose trousers is probably better. Moreover, carrying a shawl to cover the hair in conservative

Most Omani female fashion designers, including Alaa al Siyabi, Nawal al Hooti, Ahsmaq al Shaqsi, Anisa al Zadjali, Noora Karim, and Amal al Raisi, who created their marks in the fashion industry have succeeded in modifying the sense of Omani fashion with a passionate commitment to the Omani traditional costume that revels in rich colors and ornamentation (Sarnga, 2019).

In one way or another, modern fashion still obtains some elements of the traditional costume but with a modern touch. This includes changing the colors, and exaggerating or simplifying the size of the motifs in order to preserve the identity. Some designers might use fabrics other than the ones used in traditional costumes, and sometimes, they combine different motifs related to different states in one design.



According to Amal (2015), one of the most famous designers in Oman and among the first designers who modernized Omani women's fashion, mentioned that modernization has occurred in Omani women's fashion in various aspects while adhering to and preserving the Omani cultural identity and its heritage value. This adds elegance and aesthetics to modern women's clothing related to tradition and authenticity. Among these aspects is the development and improvement of the quality of the prism fabric used in the traditional dress and the enhancement and re-arranging of the colors to make it more suitable for modern women today.

The patterns of inscriptions and embroidery that adorn the traditional Omani women's dress have mostly remained the same, reflecting the Omani individual's interest in Omani culture and ancient identity. This is with the addition of printing the inscription in some cases instead of hand embroidery, such as printing some pictures of traditional Omani jewelry.

Sometimes, some iconic items are printed on dresses or paintings, which are done by Omani artists. In general, some of the motifs in the Omani women's traditional costumes are inspired by the Islamic geometric and plant motifs in their various forms and origins. A large part of these motifs are related to the Omani environment and heritage, such as mountains, valleys, forts, and different types of flowers and plants. Meanwhile, some motifs are inspired by motifs in Omani jewelry, such as necklaces, rings, and anklets (Amal, 2015).



Figure 1.8

Printed Opera House on Modern Dress and Balochi Modern Design



Source: <https://www.myguideoman.com/fr/experiences/muscat-visite-privee-de-la-ville-2025-vie-locale>

Amal added that modern fashion dresses combine traditional embroidery and inscriptions from different Oman governorates with the addition of some traditional gold or silver jewelry in the design of modern dresses. This includes combining Balochi, Salala, or Sur embroidery in modern cut and design dresses.

Amal highlighted that these types of modern dresses are usually suitable for specific occasions such as big family gatherings and wedding ceremonies. This is due to the luxury of these modern designs while preserving the authenticity and cultural sense of Omani heritage. Moreover, it has become natural for the modern young Omani woman to wear modern and simple fashion that does not symbolize anything from the Omani culture or the traditional Omani costume.

This change is considered a reflection of the modernization that occurred in Omani women's individual lifestyle. Therefore, Albusaidi (2010) indicated that young

Omani women wear modern and simple attire in working places or wear an Abaya for simple occasions such as meeting friends, hanging around in shopping malls, or small family gatherings and ceremonies with trousers or a skirt underneath the Abaya.

According to Laila (2023), Abaya has many different styles, materials, and colors. The most desirable Abaya fabric among all is Crepe and Nada fabric. As for the cutting and the design, there are two famous styles, Alfarasha and double clutch Abaya, and both can be in different colors. As posited by Rahma (2010),

"...due to the nature of the working culture, the young Omani woman wears a simple and comfortable attire that suits the social environment. As for the number of pieces in modern women's fashion, it may be noted that it has become simpler and less in colors and patterns than before to facilitate movement and keeping pace and appropriate with social activities..."

Figure 1.9

Alfarasha and Double Clutch Abaya



Source: <https://islamicshop.in/vestempcp/quickview/view/id/8744>

In the work environment, the young Omani women wear modest clothes such as a skirt or wide trousers and a long shirt. Sometimes, they wear a simple Abaya in different colors devoid of embroidery or simple inscriptions with fabric trousers underneath and a simple scarf as a head cover (Amal, 2015).

Figure 1.10

Young Omani Women's Simple Fashion in a Working Environment



Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/494059021619278302/>

As for the head cover in the official environment, young Omani women wear the shawl to facilitate free movement while covering the whole head and shoulders, and it usually matches the Abaya or the shirt they wear.

Figure 1.11

Young Omani Women's Shawl Style in an Official Environment



Source: <https://mahally.com/products/20176726/1912788819/>

After long working hours, normally, young Omani women spend time with friends in shopping malls for window shopping, having a meal in a restaurant or watching a movie in the cinema, wearing an Abaya and trousers underneath or a loose-fitting skirt, modest shirt, and a casual or sport shoes and the wearing the scarf in a

casual style to cover the whole head.

Figure 1.12

Young Omani Women's Fashion and Casual Shawl Style



Source: <https://www.dhgate.com/goods/932291084.html>



Some young Omani women wear simple scarves or shawls devoid of decoration in a comfortable way and style to cover part of their heads. This shawl style or way of wearing it refers to some states such as Muscat (Amal, 2020).

1.3 Issue Statement

Economy, education, and technology are the main factors of the modernization phenomenon, significantly impacting the culture, traditional, and social lifestyle of the society in different aspects. This includes education, working, health awareness, culture, and daily activities as a consequence of these changes and the necessity to keep pace with modernity and coexist with it.



Young Omani women have become receptive and interested in modern fashion



for its simplicity, ease of movement, variety of choices in design and colors, constant renewal, and suitability for various daily activities and availability with satisfactory prices.

Young Omani women have become more social and have the freedom to choose the clothes they wear according to their activities. It has become exceptional for young Omani women to wear the traditional dress only in some villages during a few specific annual occasions such as Eid al-Fitr or some wedding ceremonies, and this usually happens in some villages and not in modern cities.

The issue of modernization's impact on social lifestyle is often used as a form of study, whether it is for a certain number of theorists, either cultural or social science





experts, who perceive this phenomenon as a study to obtain information about social, cultural, or lifestyle aspects. It becomes a study to seek information on how people's lifestyles connect and interact with their environment. The emergence of modernization in the Sultanate of Oman poses interesting issues characterized by massive changes in all aspects of life. This is especially true in young Omani women's social lifestyle and fashion, which contains the possibilities of modern cultural images that attracted many researchers to investigate this phenomenon.

Visual artists also do not escape from the issues and concerns about their surrounding environment. The issues of modernization in the eye of an artist can be traced in the form of artworks done by either national or international artists. There are also a number of other artists who have chosen the objects related to the traditional fashion and lifestyle. However, previous artworks primarily portrayed Omani women within the context of traditional culture, fashion, lifestyle, and activities.

In examining the artworks of great contemporary artists, such as Anwar Sonia, in his artwork title "The Omani Woman" and "Omani Wedding", he depicts Arab women wearing traditional costumes, in the house or the village, while practicing their daily activities. As well as Alia Al Farsi who depicts the same scenes of the Omani woman, wearing traditional costumes and practices traditional activities, and this appears in all of her artworks, such as "Omani Family Gathering" and "String and Love" in a semi abstract style. Additionally, the American artist Winborg depicts native American women in their traditional costumes as they carry out their daily tasks of cooking and taking care of the house and children as shown in his artwork "Mother Helper" in a realistic style. Furthermore, the artist Iman Maleki, who illustrates women





in their simple traditional dress, confined to spending the time in the house and family, as in his artwork "The Message". Overall, the artists are more focused on representing women with images of traditional clothes that represent traditional cultural issues compared to modern lifestyle issues with contemporary design clothes and fashions.

However, this portrayal does not accurately represent the current Omani women's diverse and sophisticated lifestyle. Today, Omani women are seen in contemporary fashion, engaging in various social activities that contribute significantly to societal progress and development.

The research project provides a collection of new representation images that reflect the changes and transformation of young Omani women's fashion and lifestyle due to the modernization phenomenon.

1.4 Research Objectives

This research project was designed with the objective of creating a series of mixed-media paintings. The critical point of these artworks was to visually portray the significant transformations of young Omani women's social lifestyle within the context of modernization in the contemporary era through its representation as follows:

- i. To identify the influence of modernization on young Omani women's fashion and social lifestyle.
- ii. To explore the transition of fashion manifestation from traditional to modern lifestyle.



- iii. To represent the fashion of young Omani women towards modern lifestyle.

1.5 Research Questions

- i. How does modernization influence the fashion and social lifestyle of young Omani women?
- ii. How does fashion manifestation transitioned from traditional to modern lifestyle?
- iii. How does the fashion of young Omani women towards a modern lifestyle?

1.6 Project Outline

This research project will be conducted and constructed through a series of mixed media paintings that explore and interpret the modernization phenomenon influences on young Omani women's social lifestyle and fashion. The artworks will reflect the transformation and changes of the tradition and culture in Omani society towards modernity. This research project will be a collective of new cultural and social representations that express the significance of transformation, development, and interaction in society.

Expressionism will be the style used in the paintings. Choosing the expressive style in the paintings is due to the large space in which it expresses feelings, emotions, and intellectual states through observations raised by places, environments, and events by looking deeply into the dynamics of the elements from an artist's point of view. This adds uniqueness, depth, and strength in presenting the issue.



The figurative and Omani motifs are basically a repetition of squares and triangles in one form, different types of lines, dots, flowers, and some of the common Islamic motifs that have influenced the Omani culture will be the dominant elements within the artworks.

The mediums used in the painting are acrylic paint, inks, and charcoal on canvas using brushes, color knives, and rollers with different techniques such as cutting, layering, and glazing. The printed material and the visual references will be collected from the National Museum publication, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, and the Omani Society of Fine Arts, in addition to the magazines and personal photographs from fieldwork and life observation. All the photographs will be subject to quality and resolution improvement and reformulation of composition, color, and texture adjustment as needed through the use of digital software such as Adobe Photoshop.

The research is structured into three phases: the first phase examines the impact of modernization on culture, the second explores Omani women's personalities and their responses to this phenomenon, and the third highlights the activities in which Omani women engage.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research project is based on the concept of the way that young Omani women's lifestyles have changed and been affected by modernization. The study focused on how young Omani women engage with contemporary fashion. It concentrated on how they





deal with this phenomenon in light of the demands of the contemporary lifestyle and requirements.

The study reveals a clearer picture of the modernization processes that shaped young Omani women's culture, personalities, and activities and how these factors are represented in their modern lifestyles. The study also looks into how young Omani women maintain their cultural identity while incorporating modern elements into their lives. Furthermore, it portrays this vision as a manifestation of the interplay between tradition and contemporary life, and how this harmony is mirrored in their way of life and culture.

The study adopts a deeper viewpoint when examining modernity and culture.

This study highlights the significance of visual arts in recording and examining these changes in culture and society. It also offers a new viewpoint on the changes that contemporary Omani society has experienced.

It is not the focus of this research project to examine modernization from an ethnic or religious standpoint, nor is it to investigate civilization in general and determine the causes of its emergence. Rather than making broad generalizations about civilization as a whole, the research focuses on how modernization specifically affected the lifestyle and culture of young Omani women. This method improves the study's accuracy and findings.

As a result, the research project can offer an objective and comprehensive picture of the changes Omani society is undergoing, particularly with regard to women,





far from the impact of ethnic or religious considerations that could produce subjective conclusions. The project can offer more comprehensive and detailed insights into the ways in which modernization has impacted Omani women by concentrating on particular social and cultural facets. It facilitates a comprehension of the opportunities and challenges of this social and cultural transformation.

1.8 Research Significant

The research project was based on its significance in producing a visual investigation focusing on three major elements of modernity that contributed to the transformation in young Middle Eastern women's culture, fashion, and social lifestyle.



understanding the developments and transformations that have taken a large part in the lifestyle and culture of contemporary Middle Eastern women. However, through this research investigation, the process of gathering, manipulating, and integrating visual references produced by projects concentrated more on reflecting the cultural features of young Omani women who were influenced by the main modernization elements.

The research project establishes the relationship between the elements of education, economy, and technology as the main pillar of modernization that drives changes in the social lifestyle of Middle Eastern women. These three elements relate to and transform each other in a modern globalized cultural system.





Education provides opportunities for women toward their aspirations and abilities that change their societal role. At the same time, the transformation in the economy and profession creates the manifestation of their modern personality and status. Furthermore, technology is the main element that transforms aspects of education and the economy, enabling access to multiple sources of information and knowledge that change their social awareness.

The significance of the research project depends on introducing a new representational image that reflects the current culture, personality, and fashion of Middle Eastern women as a new and modern subject matter that relates to the cultural impacts of modernity elements.

The new subject matter representation fills an essential gap in the cultural and artistic understanding of Middle Eastern women in the context of modernity. It also contributes to updating stereotypes about Middle Eastern women, reflecting the changes witnessed by Middle Eastern society through a new representation of images and stories that express the diversity and change in Middle Eastern women's culture, fashion, and lifestyle.

Traditionally, Middle Eastern women have been portrayed in artwork primarily through their limited traditional activities, fashion, and lifestyle. It is not a complete representation of modern Middle Eastern women, who lead varied and sophisticated lives, dress in contemporary styles, and participate in a range of social activities that advance and shape society.





The new figurative subject matter was represented through the new layering technique and mixed media process, which combined acrylic, charcoal, and ink. The significance of combining these materials relies on applying several charcoal layers. At the same time, the scrambling technique involves moving the charcoal in a circular motion to create lighter, more diffuse, and various illusive textural effects. Within the application of charcoal layers, the ink is introduced in a water-based technique to improve the quality of the texture and also to create illusionary and antiquing effects to depict a time-worn appearance. Meanwhile, the glazing technique is applied using acrylic colors to create a misty effect and unify the composition.

This research project has enabled this exploration to understand the materials combination and the technique, creating exciting multi-dimensional effects that significantly contribute to the field of Fine Arts, especially in the technical context of handling materials and processes.

Additionally, the research project has great potential to enrich the artistic scene and enhance the dialogue between art and society. The research project provided a new and in-depth vision of the artistic representation of modern Middle Eastern women and their role as a new and modern subject matter that contributes to enriching cultural and artistic dialogue and promoting diversity and development in Middle Eastern society.

1.9 Research Framework

The Research framework is developed based on two main aspects: research context, methodology, and analysis. The contextual aspects of the research refer to the





transformation of culture, personality, and activities of young Omani women due to the modernization phenomenon.

The study narrows its scope to include culture, personality and activities to provide a deep and comprehensive understanding that reflects the most important dimensions of how modernization has affected the lifestyles of Omani women, their fashion and their way of thinking.

The importance of culture lies in the fact that it is the basis of lifestyle and reflects the adaptation of individuals and society to the changes in values and traditions and personality reflects individual identity, choices and self-expression, which is an important element in understanding the noticeable transformations that have occurred in the lifestyle of Omani women. Modernity has helped to reshape the role and identity of Omani women, as is evident in their personal decisions and fashion choices. Additionally, Activities are a visible and practical manifestation of changes in social lifestyles at the individual or community level; the study examines how modernization can introduce new activities into the lives of young Omani women. These aspects are also interrelated and provide a comprehensive understanding of the transition from traditional to modern lifestyles in a way that is directly observable and measurable through fashion and social practices.

The Multiple Modernities Theory and Cultural Hybridization Theory used in this research share an understanding of cultural change under modernity but from different perspectives. However, both theories challenge the traditional idea that modernity is a unified Western model that is universally emulated. Instead, they





emphasize that modernity takes multiple forms based on different cultural and historical contexts, against the idea of one culture spreading at the expense of another, and emphasize that cultures blend and are shaped in new ways rather than being copied from a single model.

Thus, both theories do not view modernization as simply an imposition of the Western model, but rather that societies respond in their own ways, leading to multiple models of modernity. They view modernization as a dynamic process that leads to cultural interaction and the creation of new practices that arise from the blending of elements from different cultures.

In terms of methodology and analysis, it refers to a form of the process built on the aspects contained in the studio art practice research. Through this studio practice, the research will be discussed and analyzed based on three key aspects or elements. The first is critical self-reflection, which uses the approach of Feldman's Model of Art Criticism (1994).

The second aspect is the studio experimentation which will describe the context of this study by conducting a series of studio experiments based on the issues. The third aspect involves regular and continuous critique sessions as a way to hear critical responses and views on artwork production from lecturers and postgraduate students. Finally, the combination of these three major aspects, in turn, will lead to the construction and suggestion of a social lifestyle, culture, and fashion built throughout the modernization phenomenon.





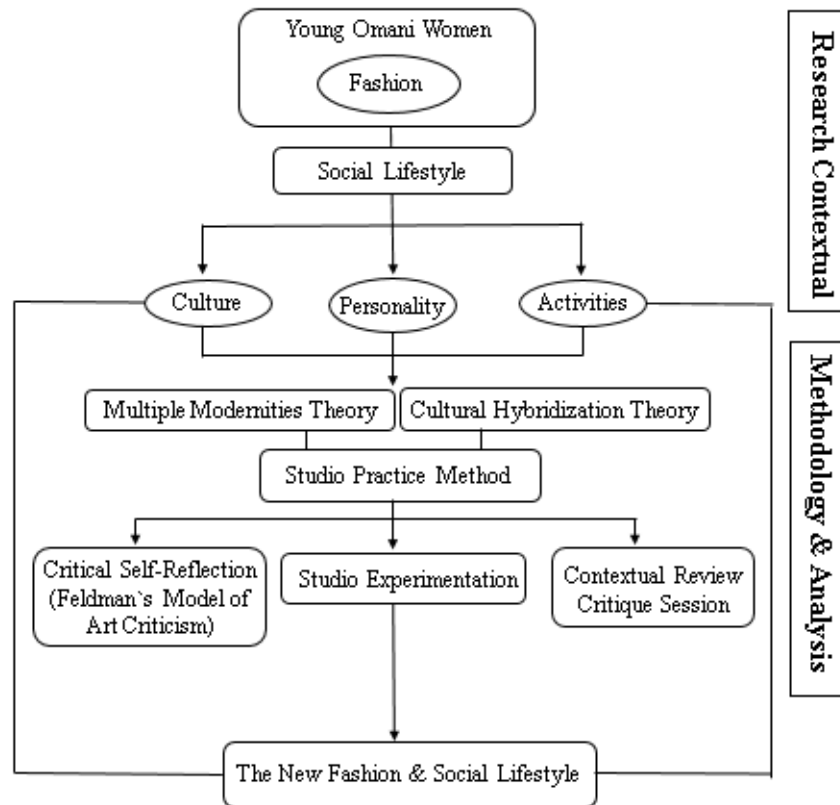
Modernization in Oman has significantly influenced the lives of young Omani women, encouraging them to participate in various social, cultural, educational, and political fields, contributing to the country's overall development. This shift has also impacted their aspirations and fashion choices, blending traditional and contemporary styles. The research reveals how modernization driven by factors such as education, economic development, and technological advancements, has introduced young Omani women to global fashion trends.

This has led to the adoption of new fashion elements, including the use of bright colors, modern fabrics like lace and satin, and innovative designs such as Boho-style dresses and updated Abayas with luxurious fabrics and modern cuts. The study emphasizes the importance of presenting a contemporary image of Omani women, highlighting their evolving role in society and enhancing national identity through fashion, while also fostering cultural and artistic dialogue.



Figure 1.13

Research Framework for Modernity and Young Omani Women's Social Lifestyle Through Studio Practice Method



1.10 Previous Work

From 2015 to 2020, I have been exploring various styles and experimenting with different techniques and mediums, such as acrylic and oil paint, charcoal, gesso, joint compound, and ink. The dominant styles in my artwork are realist and expressionist, using different techniques. Since the main subject matter usually used in my painting is human figures and animals, technique plays an important role in capturing emotions and expressions. Sometimes, I use an abstract style to express the situation in which focus is required, considering the study and the use of visual art elements.

Figure 1.14

Acrylic & Ink on Canvas, 120cm x 120cm



The figure illustrates a realistic, expressive artwork of a scene of two village men sitting and talking to each other as part of the villager's lifestyle and culture. It is worth noting in this artwork that the traditional Omani dress (dishdasha) and the turban in different colors and way of wearing style, the use of a stick while they are sitting on the ground without using any carpet as part of the nature of life in the desert or countryside.

As a common thing, friends and relatives meet in several places in the village, either in someone's home, farms, fields, valleys, or livestock markets and agricultural products, to exchange talks about their daily activities and news while wearing simple traditional clothes. This artwork sheds light on the lifestyle, daily activities, and traditional dress of the villagers. Color harmony reflects the village environment surrounding the two men, such as the dust and heat, through layering and glazing techniques using acrylic paint and ink on the canvas.

Figure 1.15

The Village Man (2018) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm



A detailed, realistic artwork depicts an aspect of the culture and lifestyle of the simple farmer man who spends most of his time in the fields and valleys to practice his daily activities and responsibilities towards his farm animals. This is reflected in the traditional man's clothes, such as the dress Wizar, the simple turban, and the donkey, which he depends on for most of his activities and transport from one place to another, where the roads in the villages are small. I used black and white colors gradients to harmonize the feel of the elements and the surrounding environment. I used acrylic colors, inks, and charcoal.

Figure 1.16

Hope (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm



As part of the culture and tradition, many village men in Southeast Asia do not wear T-shirts while at home or in their immediate surroundings due to the simplicity of life and the humid weather. It also facilitates movement and practice activities that require great effort and movement, such as climbing large and tall trees and fishing. This includes agriculture while wearing a piece of cloth wrapped over the head as a sign of hard work and determination.

The village man playing with the red balloon, which is the only colored element that differs from the rest of the painting elements, offers some focus and emphasis as it is the core element in the painting, reflecting the theme of the painting. The details of the anatomy of the simple man's body are as if he simulates the balloon that symbolizes his hopes. I used acrylic, charcoal and ink on canvas.

Figure 1.17

Yesterday (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm



It is customary among the people of the villages to take a rest while working hard on farms or fields as a routine and part of daily life. It is evident in this painting that the elderly man wears the traditional Omani dress and a head turban known as Almesar while lying down on the floor, and under his head is a stone to depict the simplicity of lifestyle in the village.

A young man always thinks about the future since he has no past, but an elderly always thinks about the past since he has no future. This is the idea of the artwork. An old man is asleep, and all his dreams are embodied in front of him in the form of a yellow plastic duck as a symbol of childhood dolls. The body of the man on the right side of the painting is almost eroded as if returning to the memories of the past. The artwork is expressive and realistic, rendered in acrylic, ink, and charcoal on canvas.

Figure 1.18

The Man with His Goat (2019) Acrylic, Charcoal & ink on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm



People in all villages and rural areas still graze farm animals as an essential part of their environment and daily activities, and they consider it a symbol of generosity, pride, wealth, and social and cultural status in their social milieu. In many villages, some farmers own hundreds of sheep, cows, camels, and horses.

This painting depicts the life nature of rural man and the familiarity with animals. Also, it reflects the Omani traditional dress, characterized by its simplicity, such as the white dress (Thoub) and the turban (Almesar) wrapped around the head. The mediums used in this artwork are charcoal, acrylic, and inks on canvas, and this is to add a bit of originality and antiquity to the artwork that originally reflects the Omani heritage.

Figure 1.19

The Gathering (2000) Medium: Oil on Canvas, 120cm X 100cm



The Gathering (Al-Walima). I was Inspired by Orientalism art, which clearly focuses on the oriental costumes of men and women, their clothing designs and engravings, and even the different types of fabrics, oriental lifestyle, place, and environment. Al-Walima's painting is about a group of men sitting in the yard of the house eating food and showing luxurious and beautiful costumes with their colors and subtle details.

Old houses are usually large and have halls of various sizes and designs to accommodate guests and travellers who want to take a rest for a few days, which is an important aspect of Arab culture and tradition. This is evident in the painting, the way and style of the men sitting around the table, the type of food, the design of utensils, and the different colors and styles of the traditional Arab costume.

Figure 1.20

The Doll (2000) Medium: Oil on Canvas, 160cm x130cm



The figure above displays a realistic painting of oil on canvas, reflecting the oriental lifestyle. Lots of people watch the clowns playing and dancing for entertainment as a part of the community lifestyle, environment, activities, and fashion.

In the Arab villages, especially in the old markets, used items, animals, clothes, and many simple and necessary items are sold. People from distant regions and villages come to buy and sell and meet with friends and relatives as part of their daily business and social activities. One of the most famous of these types of popular markets in old Arab history is the Okaz Market in Mecca. Some of the social activities that take place in this market are competitions in Arabic poetry, as it was a commercial and cultural center.

As depicted in the painting, many people gather in an environment as if it were a public market, wearing different styles, designs, and colors. It reflects the familiarity



and diversity of taste, customs, traditions, and even cultural backgrounds, as the public market brings together all classes of society with all its sects and colors.

1.11 Major Development within the Practical Research

The research was divided into three major phases through the production of nine artworks divided into three groups: culture, personality, and activities. This research project was created and built entirely through a series of mixed media paintings in an expressionist style to interpret the modernization factors that contributed to the influence of young Omani women`s culture and how these influences are reflected in their modern lifestyle.



A series of sketches were made in pencil, charcoal, ink, and acrylic paint using



a collection of images that are appropriate and necessary for the research concept using manual techniques in the distribution and manipulation of the elements, such as cutting, layering, and glazing to achieve the final composition. Additionally, Photoshop programs are used for digital sketches, especially during the composition development process.

The research depicts the main factors of modernization and the impacts of transformation on young Omani women's lifestyle, fashion, and culture. It also demonstrates the interaction of young Omani women with this phenomenon in the context of the new and modern lifestyle requirements.





The first phase of studio practice explores three sub-issues that influenced young Omani women's culture: education, working environment, and communication through the production of three paintings. This includes "Inspiration to Learn," "The Magic of Working Environment," and "Deep Communication." These artworks explain the research context in more detail through three different visions.

The first artwork, "Inspiration to Learn," focused on education as an essential component in developing the culture of young Omani women. The artwork studied the educational environment, which significantly impacts the culture, fashion, and lifestyle of Omani students. Socialization with foreign students as a positive education environment can expose Omani students to diverse perspectives, cultures, and lifestyles. The expressionism style and mixed media techniques provided the recipient with a clear depiction of the link between modernization and the education environment.

The artwork "The Magic of Working Environment" highlights the factors that influence Omani women's culture in the working environment. The multiplicity of cultures and nationalities in the work environment in Oman encourages Omani working women to adopt a modern lifestyle and incorporate international fashion trends into their workwear. This is in addition to financial independence, which leads to complete freedom in choosing their fashion and lifestyle.

The painting "Deep Communication" was dedicated to highlighting the influence of communication on the young Omani woman's culture, social lifestyle, and modern fashion. Furthermore, this painting sheds light on the role of modern





communication technology and social media in the development and growth of Oman society and its contribution to young Omani women's culture. This painting also studies the young Omani women's acceptance and interaction with this phenomenon through expressionism style and a combination of different mediums and techniques.

The second phase focused on how modernity influenced the personality of young Omani women towards fashion and lifestyle and explained the transformation of traditional Omani fashion and jewelry into contemporary designs. This phase will be conveyed through a group of three paintings, which are "Two Faces of Glory," "The Spirit of Integration," and "Beads and Jewelry." This phase illustrates the shift in the impression of young Omani women toward modern fashion and jewelry design. The paintings examine the factors that contributed to this shift and reveal the young Omani women's response to modern fashions in a way that suits their modern lifestyle and various activities.

The production of the painting "Two Faces of Glory" takes into account the main factors that contributed to the change of young Omani women's personalities: the economy and modern communication technology factors. This painting focuses on the transformation of the young Omani women's vision of modern fashion and accessories. It changes their style to modern fashion in a way that suits their modern personality and daily activities.

The painting "The Spirit of Integration" represents a young Omani woman celebrating the evolution and transformation of Omani jewelry, highlighting its importance as a major part of Omani fashion in general. The painting reflects how





Omani women interact with modern and contemporary jewelry and accessories designs and how they accept and adopt these designs to suit their daily activities and social status. The painting displays the significant development of blending traditional and modern elements in line with fashion, and Omani women take great pride in wearing jewelry with modern designs.

The artwork "Beads and Jewelry" is based on the financial aspect that contributed to the manner in which Omani jewelry is transformed and the desire of young Omani women to wear modernly designed accessories. The way that modern accessories and Omani jewelry are combined and blended reflects modernity in individual preferences and tastes that is prevalent in many societies worldwide. The painting captures the passion that young Omani women have for accessorizing. It demonstrates the beauty and uniqueness of Omani women by combining traditional jewelry with modern accessories, which add confidence and elegance to her personality.

On the other hand, the last phase portrays the social activities of the young Omani women. The artwork production is represented in three paintings: "The Practices and Activities," "The Place," and "The Gathering Day." These paintings focus on the diversity and richness of the cultural context of lifestyles in Oman. This phase asserts the changes in social activities, lifestyle, and fashion of Omani women due to social, technological, and economic transformation. These paintings highlight the modern social status of young Omani women and their participation in various social activities that suit their social lifestyle.





The painting "The Practices and Activities" was designed to examine the important activities that Omani women perform on a daily basis, such as sports of all kinds, travelling, and family and friends gatherings. Hence, these social activities reflect the modernization of the Omani women's culture and lifestyle. These activities take into account the appropriate clothing, usually casual and comfortable clothing, due to the needs of the activities. This painting depicts the Omani women's achievement in obtaining the freedom of lifestyle choice, clothing, and activities.

Meanwhile, the painting "The Place," with its panoramic composition, was a realistic representation of one of the important and most common activities in Omani society for young Omani women, which is gathering and spending time with friends in public places such as indoor or outdoor coffee shops. This painting illustrates the diversity of Omani women's fashions while spending time with friends in a public place. The painting also reflects Omani society's acceptance of this phenomenon.

As for the painting "The Gathering Day," the last work was devoted to studying the impact of the changes resulting from modernization on Omani women's lifestyle and fashion. The painting focuses, in particular, on the modern transformation that has occurred in the fashion of modern Omani women in wedding ceremonies. Omani marriage ceremony blends cultural and social aspects, reflecting the social cohesion and deep traditions that characterize modern culture. A horizontal panoramic composition was used to illustrate the warmth of the gathering. The diversity of fashion styles in the Omani wedding ceremony is a common phenomenon since it is considered an exceptional ceremony to demonstrate the social level and contemporary personality.





In conclusion, the production of artworks in expressionism style in mixed media technique is a visual study to describe closely the modernization factors that contributed to the transformation of young Omani women's culture and lifestyle. It also explains the aspects of society, culture, and fashion influenced by modernization and the interaction of Omani women with this phenomenon.

