

## Exploring the Social Lifestyle of Omani Women in Modernization through Painting

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### Abstract

This research explores the significant transformations in the social lifestyles of Omani women within the context of modernization. The study aims to analyze the impact of modernization on their personalities and lifestyles while highlighting the changes in their fashion and social activities. The primary reference artists for this project are Ranjit Sarkar, Richard Fosu, and Iman Maleki, whose artworks depict women's representation through various elements such as fashion, personality, lifestyle, culture, and tradition. The framework of Cultural Hybridization Theory was employed to contextualize the research project. The research project utilized studio practice research, incorporating critical self-reflection, studio experimentation, and contextual review approaches. The results of this investigation demonstrated that the transformations stemming from cultural and lifestyle evolution have profoundly affected the identities of Omani women. This research endeavor significantly influenced the understanding of modernity and the awareness of the developments and alterations that are pivotal in shaping the lifestyle and cultural identity of modern Omani women. This led to an innovative, comprehensive, and accurate perspective on the artistic representation of modern Omani women and their contributions within the contemporary milieu, which serves to enhance cultural and artistic dialogue and promote diversity in the progression of Omani society.

**Keywords:** Modernization, Transformation, Oman, Lifestyle, Fashion

### Introduction

This study explores the evolution of Omani women's lifestyles, personalities, and social activities within the framework of modernization. Specifically, it examines how they engage with contemporary fashion trends and navigate these changes in response to their evolving needs. As modernization progressed, societal structures encouraged Omani women to step out of their traditional roles, assert their rights, and actively contribute to Oman's development across various fields. This transformation also led to the migration of rural populations to urban areas in pursuit of better employment opportunities and improved living conditions (Al-Abri, 2018).

The Sultanate of Oman has been a strong advocate for women's rights, ensuring their participation in all aspects of life, including economic, educational, social, cultural, scientific, and political spheres. Modernization has provided Omani women with the opportunity to pursue careers, make independent life choices, and engage in various activities. Additionally, modernity has granted them access to quality education, opening doors to diverse job opportunities in fields such as teaching, healthcare, engineering, and other related professions (Liloia, 2022).

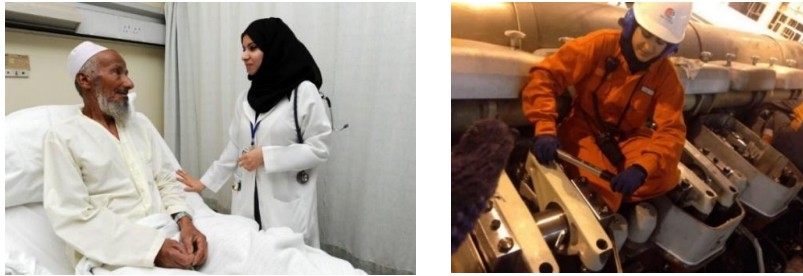


Figure 1. Omani women in different working fields.

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

Lifestyle changes have significantly influenced Omani women, requiring them to innovate and embrace modern fashion trends to suit their daily activities. These shifts have reshaped their worldview, encouraging them to adopt practical attitudes, stay informed about global developments, and adapt to contemporary life demands. As a result, their daily routines have greatly impacted the way they select their outfits (Roche et al., 2014).



Figure 2. Omani women doing regular sports activities

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

The economic development of the Sultanate of Oman has significantly altered societal structures, influencing both personal and family dynamics. The improvement in living standards, coupled with greater access to a wide range of products and services, has made consumption a key trend. As a result, consumption patterns have evolved beyond fulfilling basic needs, becoming an essential aspect of modern lifestyles and social culture (Omezzine, 2003).



Figure 3. Family gathering and entertainment facilities in shopping centers

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

Modern progress relies heavily on technology, enabling individuals to complete various tasks and activities efficiently within short timeframes. This includes financial and governmental transactions, education, research, healthcare, and staying informed about news and events (Progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals: Report of the Secretary-General, 2017).

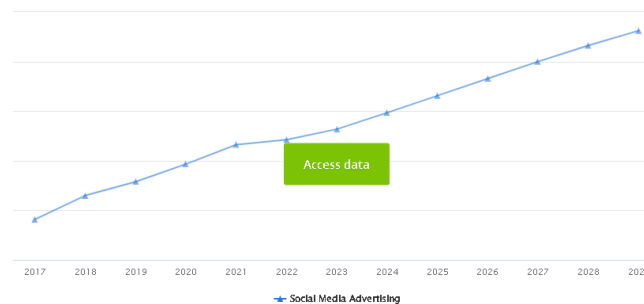


Figure 4. Social Media Ads in Oman (2017-2029)

Source: Statista: Media-Oman, 2025

Advancements in technology have also strengthened connections among individuals and communities by reducing geographical barriers, enabling the exchange of experiences and ideas, and making the world feel more interconnected—like a global village. This transformation enriches cultural identities, broadens perspectives, and keeps people informed about global events, eliminating barriers to engagement with diverse populations. As a result, it fosters a deeper understanding of different cultures, drives economic growth, and significantly impacts personal lifestyles. In this modern era, Omani women are increasingly participating in social activities, showcasing their talents, independence, and vital roles in society (Servaes, 2025).

### *Project Outline*

This research project is presented through a series of mixed media artworks that explore and illustrate the impact of modernization on Omani women's social lives and fashion. The paintings serve as symbolic representations of the transition of Omani society's traditions and culture toward modernity. This body of work introduces new social and cultural imagery, highlighting the significance of transformation, development, and societal change.

The paintings will be created in an expressionist style, chosen for its ability to convey emotions, feelings, and intellectual perspectives. Expressionism provides a broad creative space to interpret observations inspired by places, environments, and events. By closely

examining the dynamics of these elements from an artistic perspective, this approach brings originality, depth, and strength to the portrayal of the subject.

The paintings will incorporate figurative elements and Omani motifs, primarily composed of repeated triangles, squares, various line patterns, floral designs, dots, and traditional Islamic motifs inspired by Omani heritage. These elements will serve as key visual components in the artwork.

The chosen mediums include acrylic paint, inks, and charcoal on canvas, applied using brushes, palette knives, and rollers. Techniques such as cutting, layering, and glazing will be utilized to enhance depth and texture. Printed materials and visual references will be sourced from publications by the National Museum, the Ministry of Culture and Heritage, the Omani Society of Fine Arts, magazines, as well as personal photographs captured through life observation and fieldwork. All images will undergo quality enhancement, composition refinement, and color and texture adjustments using digital software like Adobe Photoshop as needed.

### **Related Theoretical Idea**

Cultural Hybridization Theory is a complex concept that has gained prominence in discussions on globalization and modernization. It highlights the intricate ways in which diverse cultural elements, originating from various traditions, interact and merge to create entirely new and distinct hybrid cultural forms. This theoretical framework emerged in the 1990s, primarily shaped by scholars such as Jan Nederveen Pieterse and Homi K. Bhabha. Their work extensively examined the impact of globalization, as well as the movement of people, ideas, and technology, emphasizing cultural blending rather than the dominance of one culture over another.

According to Nederveen (2004), hybridization is a dynamic process in which different cultural elements—such as traditions, values, languages, and practices—interact and intertwine to create new cultural expressions marked by originality and individuality. This process allows multiple cultural identities to coexist, integrating global influences into local traditions and producing unique cultural forms. Hybridization challenges the traditional notion of cultural purity, instead recognizing that cultures are constantly evolving, interacting, and transforming under the influence of external factors.

Hybridization also emphasizes that cultures are dynamic and continuously evolving, adapting to changing circumstances and integrating new global influences. This results in a fluid cultural identity, where individuals and communities can embody multiple identities simultaneously, balancing their traditional heritage with external global influences. While local cultures retain aspects of their traditional practices, they are often reshaped in response to global trends, technological advancements, and new ways of thinking.

This process fosters cultural innovation and gives rise to hybrid cultures that blend local and global elements. These global-local hybrids are evident in various aspects of life, including cuisine, music, fashion, and language, where traditional practices are reinterpreted and transformed through the lens of globalization (Top 20 Cultural Hybridization Examples & Definition, 2024).



Modern fashion often blends indigenous attire with Western styles, exemplified by street fashion that incorporates local designs or African prints into contemporary Western trends, resulting in culturally fused fashion forms. Cultural Hybridization Theory highlights the adaptability and creativity of cultures as they interact and evolve in a globalized world. Rather than leading to cultural homogenization, hybridization suggests that globalization fosters unique cultural expressions by merging local traditions with global influences. This perspective emphasizes that culture is dynamic, constantly evolving, and receptive to innovation, demonstrating that cultural exchange promotes diversity and creativity rather than uniformity.

In contrast, cultural hybridity involves the recombination and restructuring of various cultural elements to create new cultural forms. For example, fashion designers integrate aspects of different cultures to craft garments that reflect this cultural diversity, while culinary traditions blend flavors from various backgrounds to develop new taste experiences (Giddens, 2002). Cultural hybridity is a crucial process as it explains how cultures interact and exchange influences in a way that drives their evolution. In today's world, where cultural interactions are inevitable, this fusion remains essential, overcoming challenges to foster cultural growth and innovation.

### Related Art Practices

Ranjit Sarkar



Figure 5. Dancing Lady, 90cm x 60cm, Acrylic on Canvas.

Source: <https://www.ranjitsarkar.com/product-page/celebration-of-desert-3>

Ranjit Sarkar, an Indian artist, draws inspiration from a variety of cultural influences, including Rabindranath Tagore, Guru Dutt, and his childhood experiences. His deep appreciation for portraying women reflects his desire to honor and remember the women who played a significant role in shaping his early years. As noted by Bharatiya Nrutya Culture:

*"...His creations reflect a profound concern for the intricate relationships between human passions and their surroundings often involving attempts to modify natural appearances to achieve an intense impression of realism."* Bharatiya Nrutya Culture (2022 p.1)

Sarkar paints with acrylics, seamlessly blending realism with his distinct artistic perspective to create intricate and expressive artworks. His pieces frequently highlight dance, with a particular emphasis on Kathputli, Kalbeliya, and Dandiya. He draws inspiration from the lively and joyous essence of the dancers, capturing their movement and spirit in his work.

Sarkar portrays dancers adorned in vibrant traditional costumes featuring elaborate embroidery and geometric patterns. These outfits, crafted from luxurious fabrics such as silk and cotton, are complemented by classic accessories like beaded jewelry and metal bracelets. Through these elements, he beautifully showcases India's rich cultural heritage, emphasizing the diversity and elegance of traditional attire. By deeply honoring Indian traditions, Sarkar contributes to the preservation and revival of cultural identity. His work underscores the importance of safeguarding these traditions, particularly as national identity and cultural heritage face challenges amid modern societal changes and increasing diversity in lifestyles.

*Richard Fosu*



Figure 6. We are Beautiful, 76cm x 114 cm, Acrylics and Fabrics on Canvas.  
Source: <https://trueafricanart.com/>

Richard Fosu, a renowned artist from Ghana, creates vibrant and expressive works that explore African identity and culture. His art highlights the richness and diversity of African traditions, often centering on women's faces and bodies to convey emotion, strength, and cultural pride. Through bold colors and intricate patterns, his pieces influence perceptions of African identity, unity, and self-respect. He frequently incorporates African symbols, textiles, and designs to narrate stories rooted in Ghanaian and broader African traditions (Fosu, 2024).

Fosu works with various materials, primarily acrylic paints, and often integrates African fabrics into his paintings. This technique results in textured, layered compositions that blend traditional and contemporary elements. Many of his works celebrate African women, emphasizing their power, grace, and deep cultural heritage. By merging traditional African aesthetics with modern artistic techniques, Fosu bridges the past and present, making his art resonate with audiences worldwide. Drawing inspiration from everyday life in Ghana, African textiles, and stories from his community, Fosu's work serves as both a tribute to African heritage and an invitation for global audiences to appreciate and embrace its cultural richness.

Iman Maleki



Figure 7. The Three Sisters' Memories, (2006), Oil on Canvas, 100 cm x 80 cm

Source: <https://wooarts.com/iman-maleki-gallery/>

Iman Maleki, a Persian artist known for his mastery of realism, creates highly detailed paintings that evoke deep emotions. One of his most renowned works, *The Three Sisters' Memories*, exemplifies his realistic style, drawing viewers in with its intricate details and powerful sense of feeling. This artwork portrays three young women seated in the courtyard of a home, dressed in simple attire that reflects the everyday fashion, lifestyle, and traditional use of shawls among women at home. The serene setting offers a glimpse into the cultural and daily experiences of young Iranian women (Bihiku, 2024).

The painting's color palette is subdued, with the women's modern yet unadorned clothing blending harmoniously into the environment. Their surroundings, including an aged wall, modest plants, and a worn, uneven floor, contribute to the painting's quiet and contemplative atmosphere. Through these elements, Maleki captures the simplicity of Iranian family life and the way young women dress at home. The artwork radiates a sense of warmth and nostalgia as the women reflect on old family photographs, gently recalling moments from the past.

### The Studio Investigation

#### *The First Artwork: The Magic of Working Environment*

This artwork was inspired by an in-depth analysis of Omani women's work experiences and the key factors influencing their clothing choices in professional settings. Oman is widely regarded as one of the most progressive and inclusive countries in the Middle East, providing women with abundant opportunities to participate actively in both the workforce and social life. The strong presence of women in sectors such as business, education, healthcare, and security underscores their vital role in economic and social development. The rising number of women in the labor market reflects a significant shift in societal norms and a transformation in lifestyle patterns (Alsaidi, 2024).



Figure 8. Working Omani women in various fields

Source: <https://omannews.gov.om/topics/en/79/show/109218>

Omani women have consistently demonstrated their efficiency and capability across various fields, leading to a remarkable rise in employment rates in both the public and private sectors (Chatty, 2000). According to Aasim (2021), an impressive 42% of women are currently employed in the private sector, while 26.6% hold positions in government institutions. This significant progress highlights the growing presence of Omani women in the workforce, particularly in education, healthcare, finance, and communication—sectors essential to the country's development.

One of the most influential factors shaping the wardrobe choices of female Omani professionals is the multicultural nature of their working environments. With expatriates making up approximately 42% of Oman's population, Omani women often work in diverse, multi-ethnic workplaces where they engage with colleagues from various cultural backgrounds. As a result, the necessity of attending meetings and maintaining professionalism has contributed to the adoption of modern business attire. The presence of Western blouses, tailored pantsuits, and globally inspired fashion accessories in corporate settings reflects both the cultural diversity of these workplaces and the evolving landscape of professional fashion worldwide (The Arabian Stories 2024).



Figure 9. Omani women working in various fields with foreign staff

Source: <https://www.fos.edu.om/>

The work environment plays a crucial role in shaping perceptions of professionalism and creativity among employees, and workplace fashion is a significant factor in this process (Nelson, 2000). Many companies emphasize the importance of dressing appropriately to promote unity, respect, and confidence among staff. One key consideration is wearing attire that is both smart and comfortable for long working hours, allowing individuals to perform their tasks efficiently. As a result, many Omani women opt for simple, practical clothing, often featuring minimalistic patterns and a subdued color palette (Rahma, 2010).



The evolving fashion choices of Omani working women are influenced by their exposure to diverse cultures, workplace dress expectations, and the need for comfort and practicality in their daily attire. Their style transformation reflects a blend of Omani cultural heritage, professional norms, and functional requirements. This gradual shift in fashion not only enhances their presence in the labor market but also highlights the seamless fusion of tradition and modernity. By integrating traditional elements with contemporary trends, Omani women have developed a distinctive style that bridges their cultural roots with the demands of the modern workplace.

With this clear contextual understanding, I began observing Omani women in various professional settings, considering the fashion influences previously discussed. For the first artwork, I started gathering visual references—a crucial step in expanding creative possibilities. This process allowed me to explore different composition options, generate new ideas and concepts, and gain a deeper understanding of the subject. By examining photographs, sketches, and other visual resources, I was able to enhance my comprehension of the topic and refine the message I aimed to convey (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Omani women working in various fields with foreign staff  
Source: Personal Camera, Site visits

The image in *Figure 11-A* was chosen as the central element for the painting due to its strong relevance to the artwork's theme and concept. It effectively represents a key influence on Omani working women's fashion. The image depicts a foreign professional wearing a modern, colorful shirt without a headscarf, seated in front of a laptop, while an Omani woman dressed in contemporary Omani attire engages in a discussion with her, holding an iPad in a workplace setting. *Figure 11-B* showcases sketches based on the selected image.



(A)



(B)



Figure 11. Foreigner and Omani staff at the Scientific College of Design  
Source: Personal Camera, Scientific College of Design, Muscat, Oman

For the development of the idea, I proposed incorporating abstract elements to convey mood and emotion, enriching the artwork's meaning and concept. These elements are not necessarily tangible or concrete but rely on the viewer's interpretation and perception. To reinforce the workplace setting, I included commonly found office objects such as computers, laptops, files, and folders. Additionally, abstract representations of Omani buildings or houses were considered for the background to further support the central theme—illustrating the transformation of Omani women's fashion influenced by their professional environment.

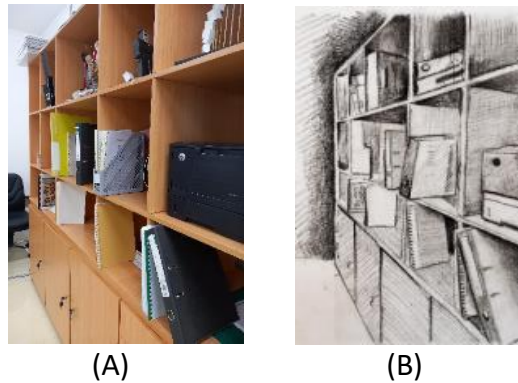


Figure 12. Office shelves in Ifa Design agency in Muscat

The image in *Figure 12-A* features an element commonly found in offices and workplaces, making it a meaningful addition to the painting. *Figure 12-B* presents a pencil sketch of the shelves, where I applied the cross-hatching technique to study their positioning and perspective.

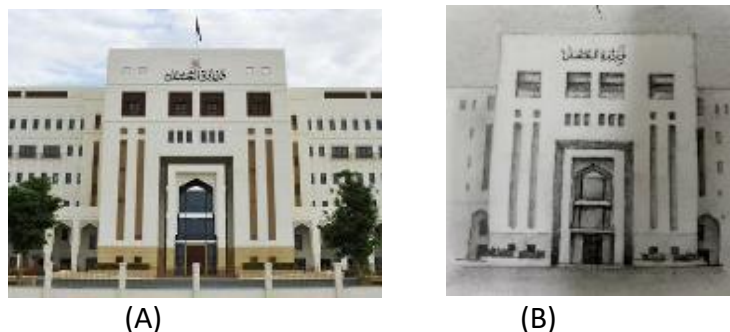


Figure 13. The Ministry of Labor building in Muscat

The image in *Figure 13-A* captures the Ministry of Labor building in Muscat, taken with my personal camera, while *Figure 13-B* presents a sketch of the structure. Established in 2020, the Ministry of Labor plays a key role in implementing legislative and regulatory frameworks to foster an attractive work environment and support a sustainable economy.



Figure 14. The selected pictures as the main elements for the final composition



Figure 15. Sketch of the third final composition

The images in *Figure 14* represent the elements incorporated into the final composition, which I combined in *Figure 15* to effectively convey the concept of the painting. To begin, I used the grid technique to transfer the final sketch onto the canvas. During this process, minor adjustments were made to the positioning of the figures and the distribution of background elements (*Figure 16-A*). Subsequently, I applied additional layers using charcoal and ink to enhance depth and create effects that would amplify the brightness of the colors in later stages (*Figure 16-B*).

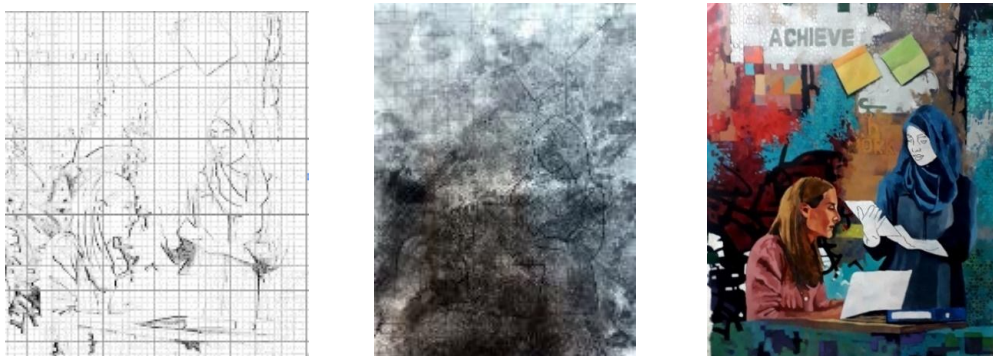


Figure 16. Grid technique to transfer the final sketch on the canvas and layering technique

I began painting directly on the canvas using the blocking technique. In this initial stage, the primary focus was on arranging the elements and establishing the overall color distribution before refining form, value, colors, and details (*Figure 16*). The final step involved adding intricate details to all elements and applying the glazing technique to create harmony, unifying the values and colors throughout the composition.

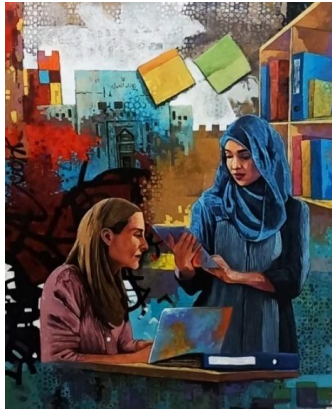


Figure 18. The Magic of Working Environment, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2022.

The final painting measures 150 cm in height and 120 cm in width, created using acrylic paint, ink, and charcoal on canvas. This artwork reflects a key factor influencing social cohesion among Omani women—the presence of female foreign professionals in the workplace. Foreign female staff bring diverse cultural backgrounds, traditions, and styles of dress into professional environments, engaging in daily interactions that shape the fashion choices of Omani working women. However, embracing a modern lifestyle and participating in various activities does not equate to abandoning one's cultural identity. Instead, the fusion of local and contemporary elements results in a unique cultural composition that preserves heritage while embracing modernity.

In the painting, a foreign woman with blonde hair, wearing a modern pink blouse and no head covering, is seated at her desk, working on her laptop. Opposite her, an Omani female employee, dressed in a casual shirt and a simple shawl, stands comfortably engaged in conversation about work matters. The setting is an office environment, with an abstract representation of the Ministry of Labor building in Muscat in the background.

The artwork invites reflection on the influence of environment and culture on identity and personal dress. It highlights the key factors shaping the fashion choices of Omani women in the workplace. The Omani woman appears modestly dressed in a simple yet contemporary outfit that embodies modern Omani identity, while the foreign employee, representing a different cultural background, wears modern, Western-style attire. The contrast between their fashion choices symbolizes the broader differences between traditional Omani culture and contemporary global influences, showcasing how workplace interactions impact personal style.

Additionally, the painting illustrates how professional settings influence both fashion and individual identity. The Omani woman is depicted looking toward her foreign colleague, symbolizing a process of adaptation and orientation. The artwork also conveys the challenges and cultural differences encountered in a multicultural workplace. Ultimately, it promotes mutual understanding, respect for diverse cultures, and an appreciation of cultural openness and diversity in professional environments.



*The Second Artwork: Two Faces of Glory*

The personalities and lifestyles of Omani women have undergone significant transformation due to social, economic, and technological advancements. Their clothing choices now reflect their status and daily activities, moving beyond traditional notions of femininity. With greater awareness, education, and exposure to media, Omani women have redefined gender roles and embraced fashion as a form of self-expression (Roche, Roche, & Al-Saidi, 2014).

As they gain more independence, Omani women increasingly dress according to personal preferences rather than societal expectations. This shift emphasizes individuality and the diverse roles they fulfill. Economic, technological, and cultural progress has played a crucial role in these evolving fashion trends, enabling them to express their identities through modern styles. A key factor in this transformation is the influence of Western fashion, particularly among younger generations who seamlessly blend contemporary styles with their cultural heritage, preserving both tradition and innovation (Tripathi & Al Shahri, 2016).



Figure 18. Examples of Omani women's modern attire

Source: Personal Camera, Scientific College of Design

With increasing education and awareness, Omani women view international fashion as an integral part of their evolving identity. Their openness to global trends reflects a desire to remain contemporary while maintaining cultural pride. Various influences have empowered them to use fashion as a form of self-expression, shaping both their individuality and their role in society (Roche, Roche, & Al-Saidi, 2014).



Figure 19. Omani women wearing casual attire in public place

Source: Personal Camera, Scientific College of Design

Omani women's fashion and jewelry have undergone gradual transformations over time, largely influenced by the depth of Omani culture and the strong sense of originality within society. Several factors have contributed to these changes, particularly Oman's historical role as a major center of maritime trade. Its long-standing trade relationships and cultural exchanges with neighboring regions, especially India and East Africa, have influenced elements of women's fashion designs (Albusaidi, 2010).

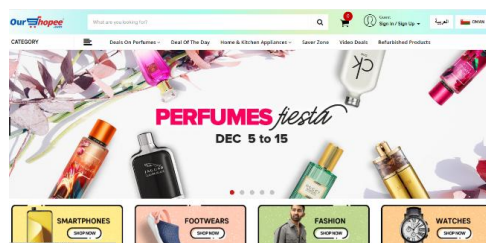
Additionally, economic developments in Oman, advancements in communication, and the expansion of trade and commercial materials have played significant roles in shaping fashion trends. As a result, Omani women began seeking clothing that was more practical, affordable, and suited to their daily lives. Today, contemporary cultural influences have empowered women with greater independence in their lifestyle and fashion choices. No longer confined or marginalized, they have gained financial independence, allowing them to take on social responsibilities and emerge as influential figures within society (Omezzine et al., 2003)



Figure 20. Examples of modern fashion stores in Muscat City Center Mall

Source: <https://www.omanavenuesmall.om/shop/cosmetics-perfumes-oud>

The advancement of technology and the industrial revolution have significantly influenced the fashion choices of Omani women today. These developments have introduced greater diversity in fashion and fabrics while providing the convenience of purchasing and selling clothing from around the world through e-commerce. This digital accessibility has brought modern clothing closer to global markets, offering an effective platform to showcase products in an appealing way to consumers. As a result, fashion has become more intricate, with evolving designs and refined tastes. Additionally, consumers have gained greater awareness and cultural insight, allowing them to select clothing that aligns with their age, personality, activities, and social or cultural background (Anyanwu & Chiana, 2015).



**omani  
CUISINE**  
[www.omanicuisine.com](http://www.omanicuisine.com)

Figure 21. Example: Companies using social media to promote products

Source: Instagram shopping store

The expansion of fashion stores highlights the social and economic impact of modern fashion choices, catering to consumers' evolving tastes while boosting the commercial sector

and enriching cultural and social life in Oman. Omani women account for approximately 80-92% of consumer purchases, with a significant portion spent on fashion, accessories, events, jewelry, and cosmetics (Nasser, 2001).

With this understanding, I began gathering visual elements to create a composition that reflects the transformation of Omani women's personalities and fashion under the influence of various e-commerce platforms. The image in (Figure 22-A) was sourced from the Omani Women Society's official website and was chosen as the primary visual reference to represent traditional Omani fashion in the painting. This particular image was selected for its striking traditional attire, graceful pose, and dynamic movement, which were further analyzed in (Figure 22-B).



Figure 22. Selected picture of Omani woman wearing traditional fashion



Figure 23. Omani women wearing modern attire

The image in Figure 23, captured with my personal camera, was chosen as the final reference to represent the modern attire of an Omani woman. The woman on the right was specifically selected for her simple yet contemporary style, poised stance, and positive expression, symbolizing her embrace of modern, comfortable fashion. These two key elements were then combined into a single composition to further refine and develop the concept of the painting (Figure 24).



Figure 24. Composition sketch of both selected pictures

Recognizing the significance of international brands, which hold great appeal among Omani women, I decided to incorporate this element as an essential part of the painting's context and concept. I proposed using a collage-like technique featuring popular fashion brand names, strategically placed in the background. This approach aims to evoke the aesthetic of digital fashion advertisements, reinforcing the theme of the painting—the evolution of Omani women's fashion and lifestyle (*Figure 25*).

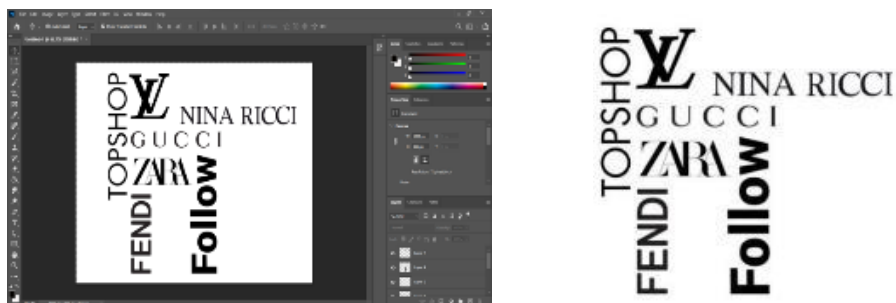


Figure 25. Example of the manipulation with top fashion brands



Figure 26. All the selected pictures to be used for the final composition

The images in *Figure 26* were selected for inclusion in the final composition, with certain modifications and adjustments to be made during the painting process. All elements were combined to form the final composition (*Figure 27*). The color study will be guided by the primary elements, with additional enhancements incorporated during the painting's development.





Figure 27. Final composition

I transferred the final sketch outline onto the canvas using the grid technique to ensure the precise placement of elements (*Figure 28-A*). In the initial stages, I applied charcoal and black ink as a foundation to prepare the canvas, while also establishing depth and an atmospheric dimension for the artistic elements (*Figure 28-B*).

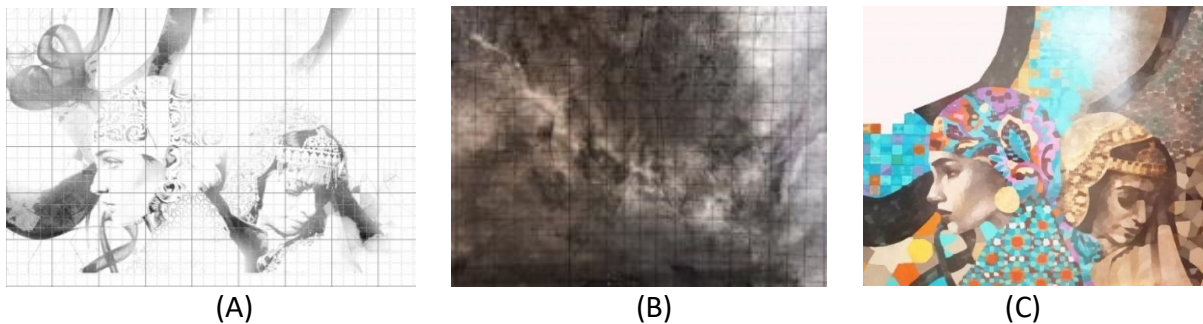


Figure 28. Transfer the final sketch on the canvas using the grid technique and under-paint layering process

As shown in *Figure 28-C*, I applied an additional underpainting layer using acrylic paint to refine the composition, enhance the distribution of elements, and build upon the previous stage's drawing. This step helped emphasize colors, establish harmony among different parts of the painting, and enhance the overall details.



Figure 29. Two Faces of Glory, Acrylic, Ink and Charcoal on Canvas, 150cm x 120cm, 2022.

The final painting, depicted in *Figure 29*, has a landscape orientation and measures 120 cm in height and 150 cm in width. It explores the impact of modernity on Omani women's personalities and fashion while conveying a deeper message about the integration of traditional and contemporary styles, reflecting the cultural convergence seen in Oman's evolving society.

At the core of the composition, an Omani woman in traditional attire is positioned on the right side, rendered in monochrome tones, emphasizing heritage and deep-rooted cultural identity. In contrast, on the left, a young Omani woman is portrayed in contemporary fashion, characterized by simplicity, modernity, and vibrant, multi-colored patterns, set against a bright and dynamic background. The juxtaposition of these two figures, each representing a different era, highlights the transition between past and present, showcasing the freedom, diversity, and evolving styles embraced by Omani women today. The background is designed in a collage style, incorporating the names and symbols of prominent contemporary fashion brands, symbolizing the influence of global fashion trends and Omani women's desire to express their individuality while staying connected to international styles.

This painting serves as a powerful artistic representation of cultural transformation, illustrating the significant social and economic shifts occurring in Oman. It underscores the essential role of women as key contributors to cultural change, blending tradition with modernity in a way that defines the nation's contemporary identity.

#### *The Third Artwork: The Practices and Activities*

Life in Oman is characterized by diversity and cultural richness, where traditional Omani heritage seamlessly blends with modern elements, creating a unique and vibrant atmosphere. Social events in Oman, ranging from family gatherings and sports activities to religious, cultural, and national celebrations, serve as expressions of Omani identity. These events not only highlight the peaceful coexistence of tradition and modernity but also reflect Oman's adaptability and continuous evolution. They function as narratives that showcase the country's social wealth and cultural transformation (Corina, 2022).

Omani women are experiencing significant social and cultural changes, actively participating in various fields and reinforcing their roles in society. At the same time, their fashion, style, and accessories remain deeply influenced by tradition while embracing elements from diverse cultures that complement their contemporary lifestyles. This evolving status encourages Omani women to engage in various social activities, balancing modern responsibilities with a deep awareness of time management and personal and societal growth (Talei, 2023).

One of the most notable aspects of modern Omani women's lifestyles is their increasing involvement in sports. Many women incorporate activities such as walking, jogging, horse riding, and gym workouts into their daily routines. With access to modern sporting facilities and professional training programs, women are more empowered to engage in physical fitness. Additionally, media representation and community encouragement play a vital role in motivating women to stay active. The choice of sportswear is another key factor, as Omani women select attire that allows them to participate in sports while adhering to culturally appropriate standards (Corina, 2022).



Figure 30. Omani women are active in various type of sports

Source: <https://www.muscatdaily.com/2021/02/07/women-in-oman-sports-set-to-get-a-boost/>

In addition to sports, traveling has become an increasingly popular activity among Omani women. Many enjoy driving across the country for leisure, visiting family, or running errands with friends or relatives. Their growing independence in travel and mobility has become an integral part of their daily lives. Depending on the nature of the trip and planned activities, Omani women prioritize wearing comfortable and practical clothing suited for travel.

Family remains a central aspect of an Omani woman's daily routine. Balancing responsibilities, they dedicate time to staying connected with family members, managing household tasks, and participating in family-related activities. Whether through in-person visits or regular phone calls, Omani women actively maintain and strengthen family bonds, ensuring the well-being of their loved ones (Figure 31-B).

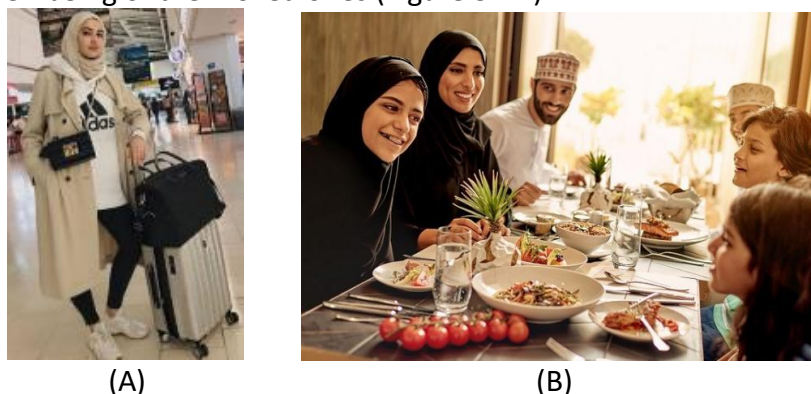


Figure 31. Examples of Omani women's social activities

Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/caassanoovaa/airport-fit/>

Shopping is another significant aspect of many Omani women's daily lives. Beyond being a necessity, it also serves as a social activity. Whether purchasing groceries, clothing, accessories, or cosmetics, women frequently visit malls and traditional bazaars. Modern shopping centers, featuring international brands, reflect Oman's economic growth and the globalization of the retail industry. As a result, shopping is not merely about acquiring goods but also an opportunity to socialize with friends and family (Omezzine et al., 2003). Today's Omani woman successfully balances health-conscious activities, mobility, family responsibilities, and social engagements. These elements define her role in a society that embraces modernity while staying true to cultural traditions and strong family values (Al-Barwani, 2007).

To visually represent these daily activities, I gathered various images that capture the routines of Omani women. I carefully selected and combined some of these pictures into a single composition using Photoshop, adjusting sizes and color tones to enhance the overall visual impact.

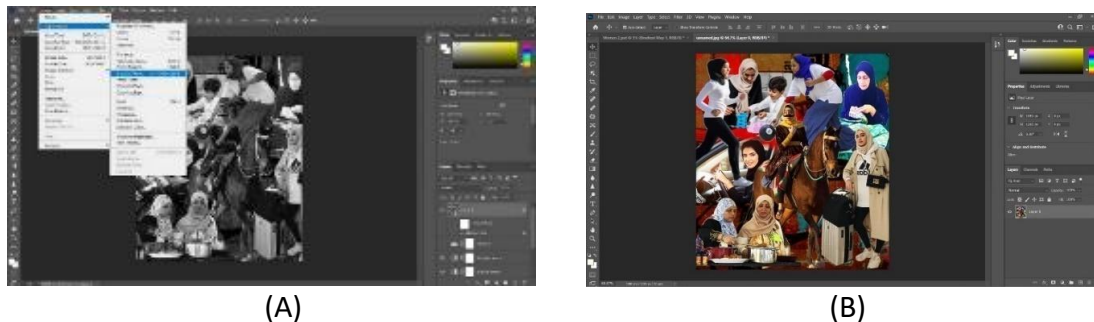


Figure 32. Arranging the selected pictures to create a composition

The figures above depict the process of merging the selected images into a single composition. This involved cropping the images and selecting the necessary areas while considering the proportions of the figures and the type of activity depicted (Figure 32-A). Subsequently, I adjusted the light and shadow exposure in the collected images to achieve a balanced and harmonious overall value for all elements within the composition (Figure 32-B).

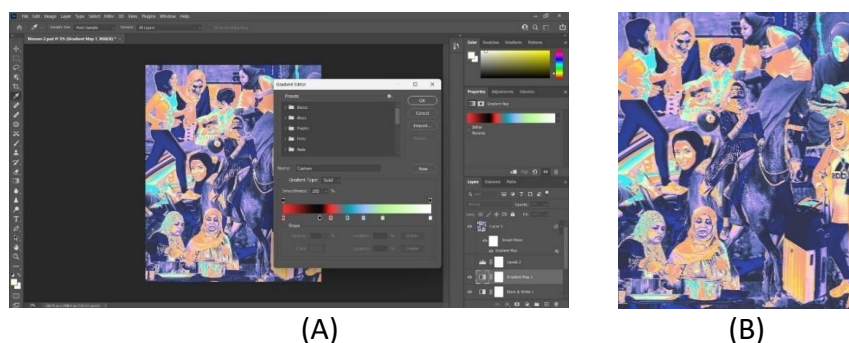


Figure 33. Manipulate the colors using gradient editor tools in Photoshop

The image in (Figure 33-A) illustrates the steps involved in creating the composition using Photoshop. As shown in the initial composition (Figure 33-B), the dominant color tones are shades of purple and orange in varying intensities. This color scheme is evenly distributed across the painting and its elements to establish unity and harmony within the composition.

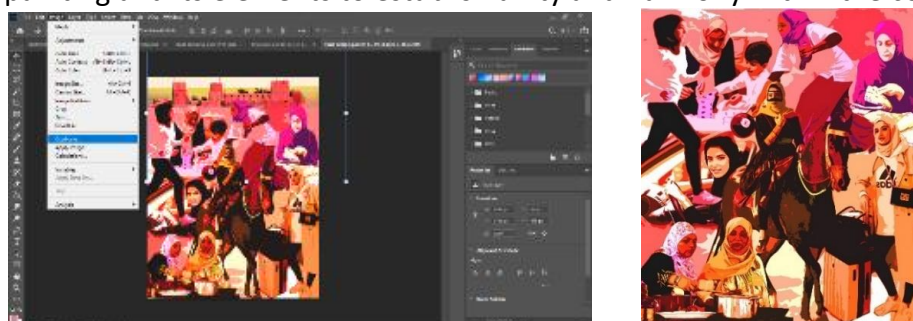


Figure 34. Final manipulation color scheme



I proposed enhancing the overall atmosphere with colors to introduce movement, interaction, and vitality, effectively conveying the theme of social activities. Consequently, I adjusted the color scheme and incorporated vibrant hues to create a more dramatic and dynamic environment. This transformation reflects the essence of the painting, which captures the daily activities of Omani women that involve movement and energy, as illustrated in the final composition (Figure 34).

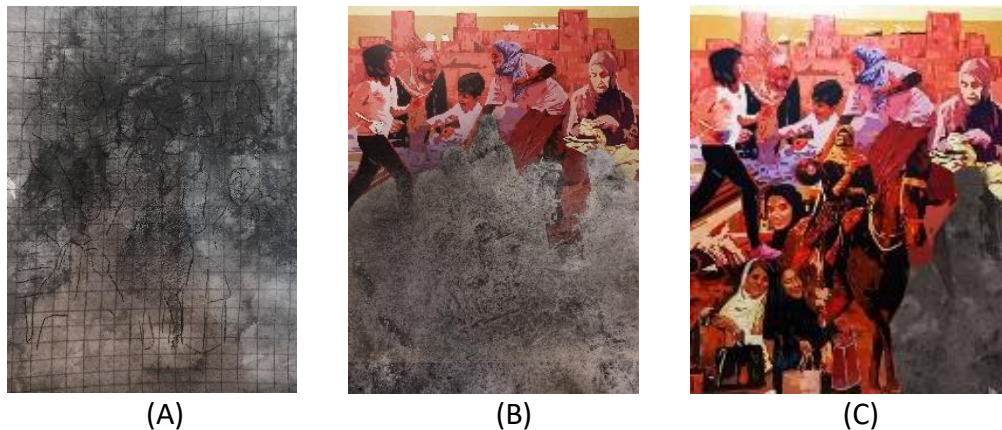


Figure 35. Transferred the final composition on the canvas using the grid technique and acrylic paint layer

I began transferring the final composition onto the canvas using the grid technique to ensure accuracy in detail before applying colors according to the final sketch (Figure 35-A). I then started applying colors from the top of the painting, following the perspective suggested in the final sketch to establish depth in the background (Figure 35-B). The images in Figure 35-C illustrate the various stages of the painting process, focusing on achieving balance in the composition through careful color distribution. The process began with dark tones, followed by lighter shades, before refining the details. Special attention was given to color blending between adjacent elements to create a sense of integration, harmony, and unity within the painting.



Figure 36. The Practices and Activities, Acrylic, Ink & Charcoal on Canvas, 210cm x 170cm, 2023.

The final painting, measuring 210 cm in height and 170 cm in width, symbolizes the diverse daily activities of contemporary Omani women. As modernization progresses, Omani women are empowered to shape their lifestyles, clothing choices, and social engagements in

a way that aligns with a society embracing change while preserving its cultural identity. The painting reflects their evolving roles, highlighting the dynamic nature of their personal and professional lives.

Omani women skilfully balance various responsibilities, efficiently managing their time between sports, social gatherings, shopping, and family commitments. This ability to integrate personal interests with professional duties demonstrates their adaptability in modern life. Fashion plays a crucial role in this balance, as Omani women carefully select outfits suited for different occasions while maintaining both elegance and cultural respect. For special occasions, they opt for sophisticated yet modest attire, while comfortable homewear is preferred for social visits. Sports activities call for practical clothing such as athletic pants, T-shirts, and sneakers to allow ease of movement. During travel and outdoor excursions, casual yet stylish outfits like jeans, T-shirts, and summer tops provide both comfort and elegance.

The wide range of activities Omani women engage in reflects their growing cultural and social influence. Participation in sports, travel, shopping, and social interactions showcases their desire to explore new experiences and assert their independence. These activities contribute to both personal growth and financial autonomy, fostering a sense of self-identity and empowerment. Fashion serves as both an expression of individuality and a practical tool for navigating different social settings. Women effortlessly adapt their clothing to suit various functions, moving with confidence and grace. Sportswear prioritizes comfort and functionality, while shopping and leisure outings call for stylish and expressive attire. For social gatherings with friends and family, outfit choices reflect personal style while harmonizing with the occasion's atmosphere.

The third painting portrays Omani women as versatile and dynamic individuals who embrace modern fashion as a reflection of their identities and roles in society. They have successfully found a balance between tradition and modernity, demonstrating their ability to adapt to an ever-evolving world while preserving their cultural essence.

## **Conclusion**

This research underscores the profound influence of modernization on the lifestyle and fashion of Omani women. It highlights how modernization has encouraged their active participation in various fields, including education, employment, and cultural development, shaping their identities and contemporary social roles. The study reveals that exposure to new technologies, economic progress, and global cultural interactions have significantly impacted their life choices, particularly in adopting modern fashion while maintaining elements of tradition.

The findings demonstrate that modernization has played a transformative role in shaping Omani women's lifestyles, personalities, daily activities, and fashion preferences. Integrating modern concepts and practices into everyday routines has become essential. The research further clarifies how factors such as technological advancements, exposure to diverse cultures through the internet and social media, and economic growth—leading to increased job and educational opportunities—have contributed to the evolving lifestyles of young Omani women and their embrace of modernization.

This study highlights the importance of presenting a contemporary visual representation of Omani women that accurately reflects their modern realities rather than relying on traditional imagery. By depicting their evolving social lifestyle, the research challenges stereotypes and fosters a more authentic understanding of their role in today's society.

Additionally, this research enriches theoretical discourse by applying Cultural Hybridization Theory to the evolving identities of Omani women. It offers a unique visual narrative that blends tradition with modernity through studio-based art practices. Contextually, it documents the sociocultural shifts shaping women's roles in a modernizing Oman. Ultimately, it challenges stereotypes, promotes cultural dialogue, and redefines the artistic portrayal of contemporary Omani women.

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