

## Society of Architectural Historians Announces Winner of the 2019 H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship

CHICAGO (January 23, 2020) — The Society of Architectural Historians is pleased to name Iraqi-born and Los Angeles-based architect Sundus Al-Bayati the winner of the 2019 H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship, a \$55,000 award that allows a recent graduate or emerging scholar to study by travel for one year. During the fellowship year, Al-Bayati will focus on cities that have experienced war or urban conflict in their recent history and observe the ways in which they have reconstructed and recovered from these traumatic events relative to their culture and history, with visits to buildings and neighborhoods in Berlin, Warsaw, Sarajevo, Beirut, Hiroshima and Seoul, among others. She plans to study how reconstruction efforts have improved or exacerbated the spatial and social effects of war on a city and to explore the agency of architects and architecture in enacting social transformation.

Al-Bayati was born in Baghdad and lived there throughout the Iraq War. She began studying architecture at Baghdad University but in 2009 was forced to leave the city for a safer place. Prior to the Syrian war of 2011, she lived in Damascus and attended The Iraqi Student Project, a yearlong program that prepares Iraqi students to study in American universities. Al-Bayati moved to the United States in 2010. She earned a B.A. in architecture and Italian studies from Wellesley College in 2014 and an M.Arch degree from the University of Minnesota in 2017. Since 2017 she has worked as an architectural designer in the office of Frank Gehry.

Living in the multi-layered city of Baghdad and experiencing the destruction of cultural heritage exposed Al-Bayati to the importance of the past in preserving cultural ties and a sense of identity and influenced her preoccupation with architectural history. Her exposure to the architectural and archaeological richness of Syria further reinforced her belief in the crucial role history plays in the process of rebuilding destroyed sites and shaping new spaces. Her professional and personal aspiration is to work in the field of post-war reconstruction.

“War is a catalyst of change. The process of building in areas that have experienced chaos and disruption presents complex design problems that are not usually encountered in new sites.” said Al-Bayati. “The



fellowship gives me the unique and meaningful opportunity to pursue a personal interest and to investigate, in the context of post-war reconstruction, how architecture has been used to promote different narratives in the process of design and building.”

Established in 2013, the H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship was created by a 2010 bequest from noted scholar and architectural historian H. Allen Brooks. As a person who benefited greatly by taking a grand tour of Europe after he was awarded his PhD in 1957, Brooks decided to create fellowships at several institutions to afford others the same opportunity to learn through travel. In addition to the H. Allen Brooks Travelling Fellowship offered by SAH, there are now fellowships named in his honor at two of his alma maters—Yale University and Dartmouth University—and at Dalhousie University in Halifax, Nova Scotia. The fellowship is not intended for research for a publication or advanced degree but rather for study by travel and contemplation while observing, reading, writing, or sketching. The goal of the fellowship is to provide an opportunity for a recent graduate or emerging scholar to see and experience architecture and landscapes firsthand, think about their profession deeply and acquire knowledge useful for the recipient’s future work, contribution to their profession, and contribution to society. For more information, visit [sah.org/Brooks](http://sah.org/Brooks).

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### **About the Society of Architectural Historians**

Founded in 1940, the Society of Architectural Historians is an international nonprofit membership organization that promotes the study, interpretation and conservation of architecture, design, landscapes and urbanism worldwide. SAH serves a network of local, national and international institutions and individuals who, by profession or interest, focus on the built environment and its role in shaping contemporary life. SAH promotes meaningful public engagement with the history of the built environment through advocacy efforts, print and online publications, and local, national and international programs.

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