



ISIS was responsible for the destruction of the Temple of Bel, located in Palmyra, Syria in August 2015.

Faculty draws attention to destruction of architectural monuments in Middle East

LARISA KARR
News Editor
lakarr@unca.edu

Amidst the tragedies of hundreds of thousands of deaths in the Middle East comes another sad reality: that of many historical monuments and architectural landmarks being destroyed.

Last fall, a team of faculty and students, led by Art History Lecturer Eva Bares and History Professor Samer Traboulsi, helped to curate a week of exhibitions and lectures showcasing how the history of the Islamic world is currently under attack.

Entitled "Islamic Art: Between Preservation and Destruction," the week featured lectures from Traboulsi, Bares and the curator of the Islamic art department at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Navina Najat Haidar, in addition to a photography exhibition showing the destruction of sacred cultural monuments.

Traboulsi speaks out avidly about ISIS, Al Qaeda and other groups terrorizing different sites in Syria, Iraq and Mali, where death is constant and destruction is inevitable.

"It is a vicious group with a vicious ideology that basically aims at controlling at least the Muslim world in any means possible. This is their ultimate goal," Traboulsi said. "However, it is important to point out that, first of all,

the major target and the victims of ISIS are Muslims themselves. The media focuses on attacks in Western countries, but most of the attacks are on Muslims."

The focus of the photography exhibition being buildings, however, was because showing the effects of war on human beings is too painful for the human mind to comprehend.

**“WE CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE PAST IF WE ASSUME THE PRESENT TO BE THE PAST STATE.”
-EVA BARES**

"Different people have different things that they respond to and so I do think that it's easier for us to look at objects than at people and so I'm glad we're doing an object-based project rather than people," Bares said. "It's the image of the boy in Aleppo that was dug up from the rubble and it went around the world, causing an outcry that shows for the most part we've been so cold or so immune to any of these cries for help."

The Temple of Bel in Syria was one of the 16 monuments featured in the exhibition, which depicted minarets,

mosques and other cultural sites that have either been obliterated or severely damaged.

For Bares, reaching out to students is an important way to raise awareness of how important it is to preserve the past.

"An individual lifetime sometimes is so short that you feel like you can't really do anything but when you get involved with art, you realize that there's thousands of years behind this and this would probably have hundreds of years to go and if we don't do something, that part is gone," Bares said. "Those hundreds of years still to come are gone."

Sayannah Adams-Clark, a senior art history student, was part of the class that helped organize the exhibition.

"I chose one at random because I have done research on some of these pieces and it kind of blew my mind and I found out that some of the pieces were no longer standing and it really hit me in that moment," Adams-Clark said.

The sect of ISIS perpetrating the attacks are known as Salafis and believe only what the prophet Muhammad did was true Islam, Traboulsi emphasized in his lecture "A Cultural Genocide: ISIS and the Destruction of Cultural Heritage in the Middle East."

They primarily destroy monuments they believe are in the image of someone and worshipping someone other than Muhammad. Traboulsi is quick to

SGA MINUTES:

Campus renovations, uniformity and the importance of engaging with the campus community

MAGGIE HADDOCK
News Staff Writer
mhaddock@unca.edu

Charlie White, president of the Student Government Association kicked off the 48th session by discussing renovations to Highsmith Student Union and taking steps to improve their relationship with the student body.

The meeting continued with an announcement about SGA's temporary office space from Christina Jaeger, associate director of the Highsmith Student Union renovations. SGA will clean out their current office spaces, discarding or repurposing unused materials.

"Before the end of the semester you need to know what you want to get rid of," Jaeger said.

The SGA office will temporarily move to Alumni Hall starting Feb. 27 to account for the renovations taking place in Highsmith. SGA will only be allowed to take two desks, two computers and select pieces of furniture, according to Jaeger.

"This is a good time to purge anything you don't need," Jaeger said.

The SGA discussed in length its current involvement with the campus community. Sophomore Senator Lauren Bulla voiced concerns with how the campus community views SGA.

"A lot of people either don't know what we are or think we're just in one big clique," Bulla said. "For all the effort we put in for the community, we should work to wash off that label."

Bulla mentioned how several people, both members of SGA and students outside of SGA, commented on the unwelcoming structure of the student organization.

"I think if we all are aware of it, we can consciously undo that negative perception," Bulla said. "We're SGA and we are here for the students and not just here for ourselves."

President Charlie White agreed with Bulla's suggestion, stating the importance of engaging with other student organizations and being present when passing by those tabling for their organi-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18