

Creativity in Numbers

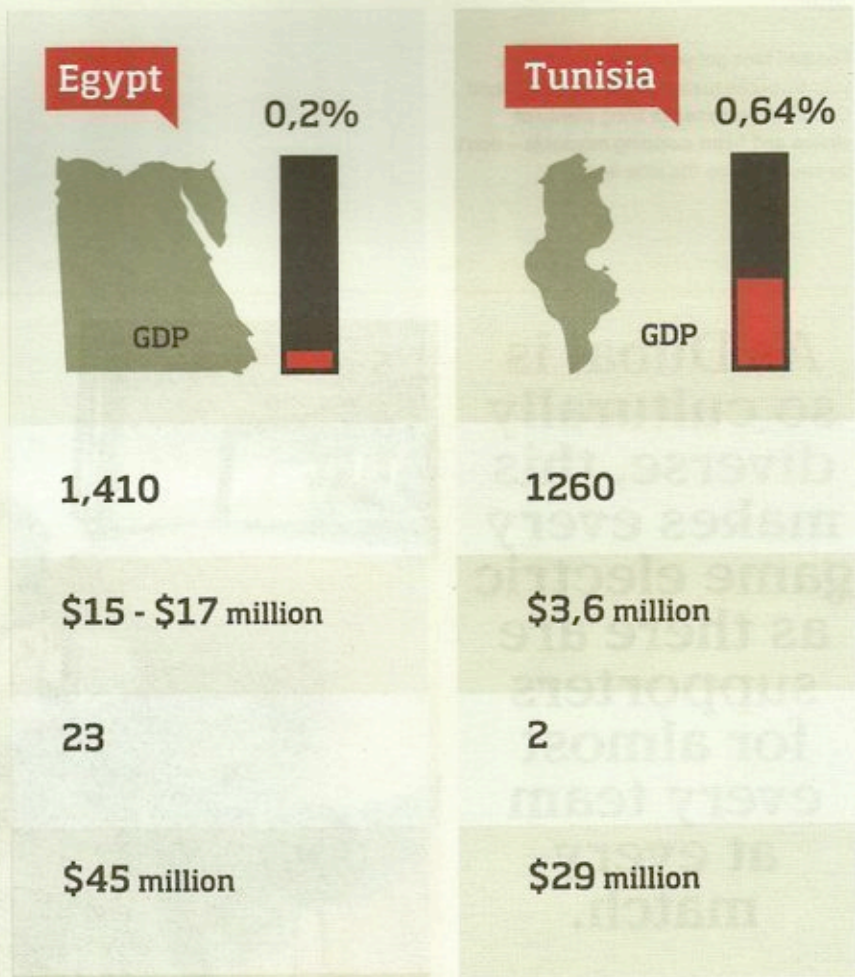
Can you quantify art and culture?
We've trawled through data to look at how the Middle East's creative industry shapes up



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THE ECONOMIC POTENTIAL OF CREATIVITY IS A DIFFICULT THING TO MEASURE, BUT THERE ARE INDICATORS THAT CAN SHED LIGHT ON THE WAY CREATIVE ENTERPRISE IS HARNESSSED ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA. IN AN ATTEMPT TO PUT THINGS INTO PERSPECTIVE, BROWNBOOK HAS COMPILED A SELECTION OF TELLING, RECENT STATISTICS.



Books
published in 1999/98



Music
annual production value



Films
produced in 2006



Software
development market value

CREATIVE GROWTH IN MENA

Publishing, broadcasting, films and advertising are expected to grow at around 25 per cent a year in the Middle East in terms of economic output over the next two years, outstripping the average of 6.6 per cent growth across the rest of the world.

Source: PWC Global Entertainment and Media Outlook report (2008-2012)

WHERE IS THE UAE?

We tried. But after phone calls, emails and being put on hold a lot, we couldn't track down any data about the UAE's creative output. We spoke to Professor Najib Harabi of the University of Applied Sciences in Switzerland, whose research-forms the chart below. He told us: 'As far as I know, there is no quantitative data on the UAE's creative industry and its effect on the country's GDP at a macro level.'

WORLDWIDE CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

In 2005, the world market in creative goods was worth \$424.4 billion, around 40 per cent of which originated in developing countries.

Source: UNCTAD (2008)

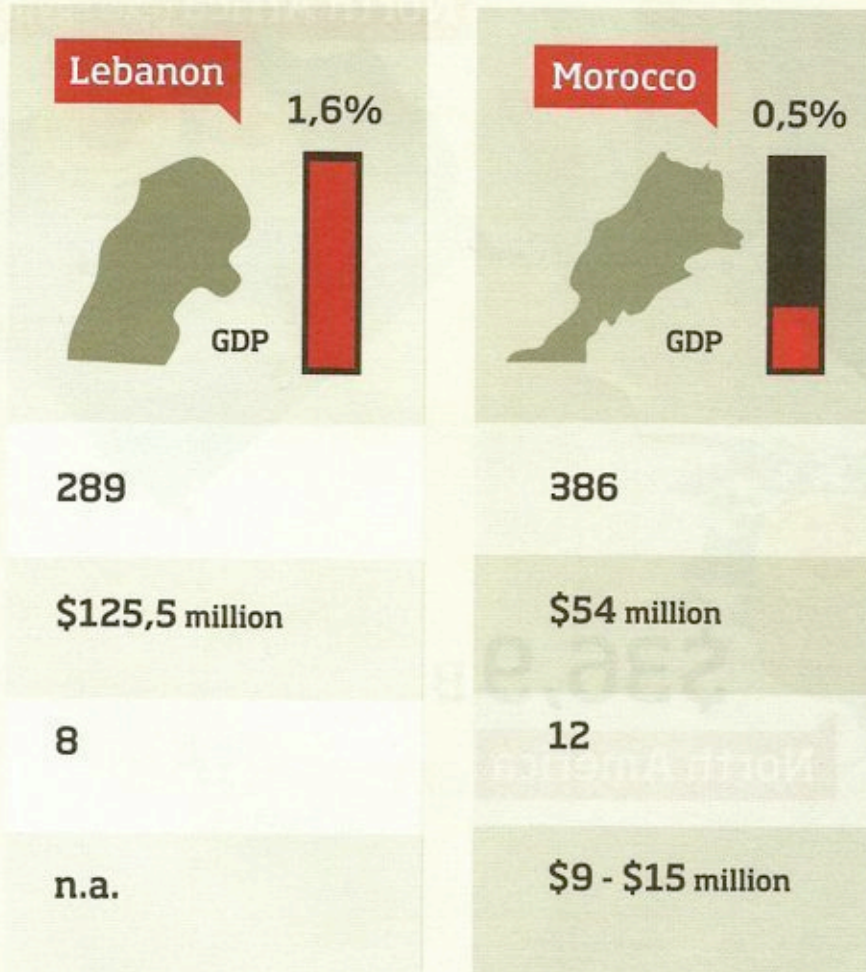
The creative industries account for 3.4 per cent of total world trade.

Source: World Bank (2009)

CREATIVE GROWTH IN MENA

By 2013, revenues from media and entertainment in the MENA region are expected to nearly double to \$2.7 billion, compared to revenues in 2009.

Source: Booz & Company 2010



SOURCE: World Bank, Professor Najib Harabi (2009)

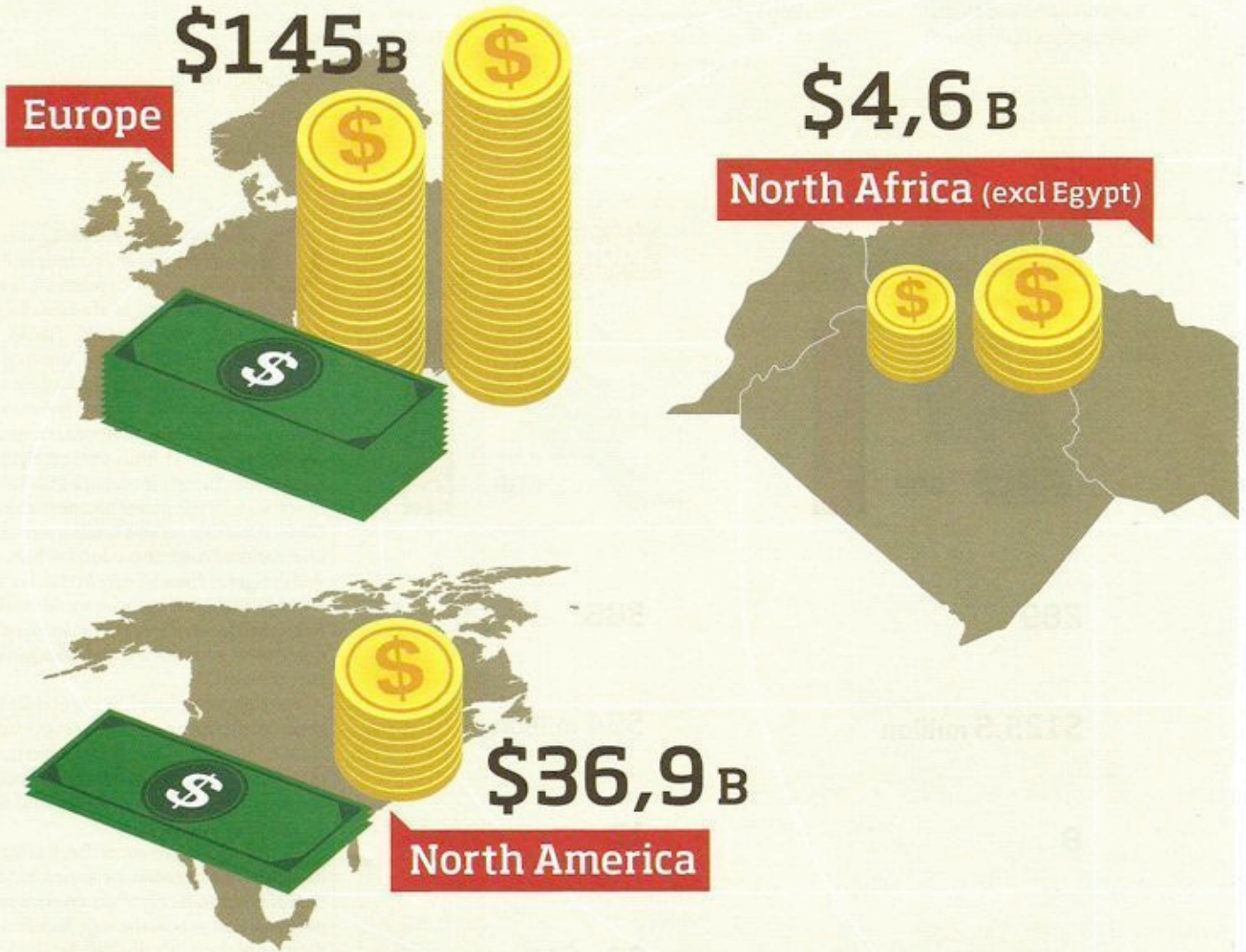
Only a handful of Middle Eastern governments are currently willing or able to foster creative enterprise, a key step towards the development of a knowledge-based economy and a high standard of living. The Gulf states, along with Turkey and Morocco stand out as countries that have realised the creative economy's potential: Istanbul is European Cultural Capital 2010, Morocco is now putting out an average of 12 films per year (only Egypt does more), Tunisia is seeing a growth spurt in software development business and Abu Dhabi is putting serious funds into building an international content-production hub. Artists and designers from all over MENA are making waves in highly competitive world markets. Nevertheless, creative economies remain notoriously undervalued and disorganised all over the world.

Developing regions like the Middle East are confronted with an extended set of challenges, of course. After all, in the face of poverty, political instability, censorship and stricter social norms, the development of a healthy cultural scene can be a difficult case to argue.

However, in many countries, it is not humanitarian or economic issues, but a complete lack of understanding of the creative sector's potential that gets in the way. Jack Persekian, director of the UAE's Sharjah Art Foundation, explains the rationale behind investing in the creative sector: 'If you want to attract the best professionals – even scientists, managers, people like that – you absolutely need to give them food for thought.'

Export of Creative Goods

THIS IS A GLOBAL REPRESENTATION OF THE REVENUE GENERATED BY CREATIVE INDUSTRIES IN EUROPE, AMERICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST/NORTH AFRICA



ENTREPRENEURIAL SPIRIT

Roughly 4 in 10 or more youth in Tunisia (38 per cent), Iraq (38 per cent) and Sudan (46 per cent) say they are planning to start their own business in the next 12 months. In the United States, only 4 per cent of Americans aged 15 to 29 have such plans.

Source: Silatech Index 2009

\$5,08 B

Turkey



Jordan

\$264 M



\$26 M

Bahrain



\$6,8 B

Middle East



SOURCE: UNCTAD (2008)

SHARE OF GDP GENERATED BY CREATIVE ENTERPRISE

MENA

Egypt 0.1%
Tunisia 0.64%
Morocco 0.5%
Jordan 0.7%
Lebanon: 1.6%

WORLD

US 5.24%
UK 5%
Australia 3.3%
Brazil 6.7%

Source: World Bank (2009)

BRAIN DRAIN

Nearly a third of young employed Arabs surveyed would like to go abroad permanently, while just 17 per cent of the unemployed are thinking of an international move.

Source: Silatech Index 2009

What it takes to start a business

Country	Bureaucratic procedures	Hours	Cost (% of GDP per capita 1999)
Tunisia	9	41	0,17
Lebanon	9	63	1,57
Turkey	13	44	0,19
Jordan	14	64	0,54
Canada	2	2	0,015
United Kingdom	5	4	0,01



MITRA KHOUBROU
PINK TANK

Mitra Khoubrou, co-founder of Pink Tank and Al Manakh, discusses creative economies in MENA

Is there enough being done in the GCC to help creative industries develop?

I think there is a regulation side of things that needs to be tackled. Creative people operate a lot in grey areas – for example, can you play music outside? It's not completely clear, so action needs to be taken to establish clear rules, because that can help creative people to know what they can and can't do and so adapt. There's a need for more transparency to know what's possible. Also there should be more support for young entrepreneurs in the creative field. You have initiatives like the Emirates Foundation that are good, but you need more like that. The

third element is definitely education, I think it's not to the level where parents would be proud to have children pursuing creative education or careers. There's still that taboo.

What's being done right?

One thing the region has done very well is the role of the private sector, you have great examples of private companies that have nothing to do with creative industries but which come and support them. Look at the Abraaj Capital Art Prize, I think that's a very good step that private companies have taken.

Is that unique?

No, I mean HSBC started with Art Basel, but it's something that the region has done well. Even though there's been a crisis, Abraaj continues to do things. I think my main concern is that you need more of an institutionalisation of creative industries: through education, regulation and through direct support from the government for grants.

Turkey and Lebanon appear to be amongst the strongest centres for creative industries in MENA. Can you comment on this?

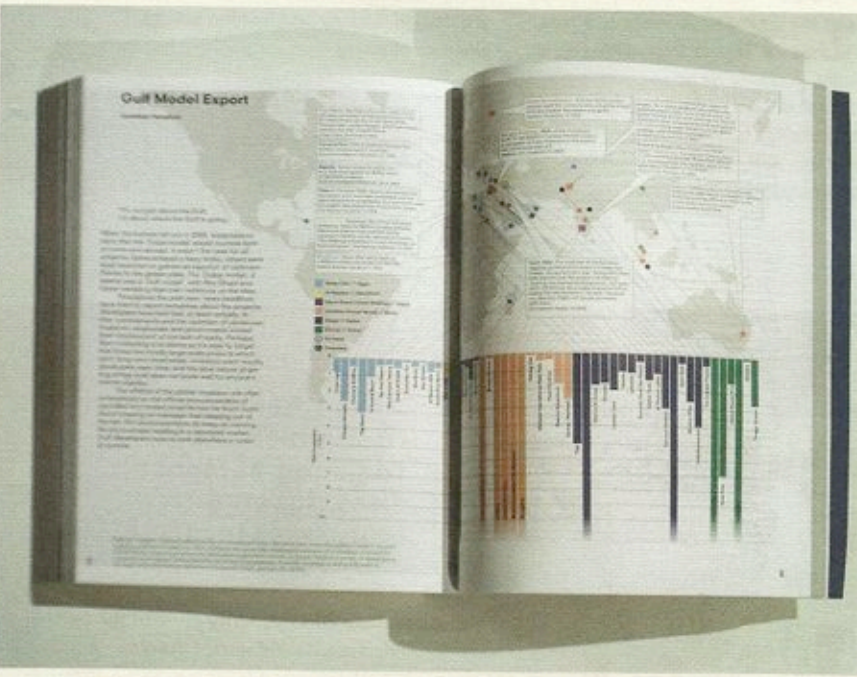
In Turkey and Lebanon there is a culture of developing and promoting creative industries. No matter what happens – if there's a war in the case of Lebanon or a slowdown in the case of Turkey – that commitment to creative industries stays. In the Gulf, it's a different scenario with the countries being young and institutional support so new. Five years ago, you didn't have ADACH and TDIC in Abu Dhabi; all that came at a later stage. Since the financial crisis, though, one could wonder if that commitment to culture and creative industries remains. I guess there's been a slowdown but the mix between the young countries and the historical creative hubs is extremely interesting.

How do these two sides operate together?

I think what makes the debate interesting in the region is that you have poles of the Gulf and then the other poles like Tehran, Beirut and Istanbul. Those places become like resources, in terms of talent arising from there. But at the same time, an artist in Iran will tell you they can't make money in Tehran so they go to Dubai. Even though there's been a slowdown, Dubai and Abu Dhabi continue to act as a pool and as attraction poles for creative people.

Why is it important to have a creative economy?

There is talent in the region, and unless you prove that creative output has an impact on the GDP of a country, then people will not push it forward. The private sector will not support it and the government will not support it. The minute they realise that it will impact their GDP, they will promote it more. In order to get there, you need to show them that the GDP can change by, say, two points if you support it over the years. It's showing them how much having Al Quoz in Dubai helps, how much creating Saadiyat will help. A lot of them are convinced that PR-wise it's nice to have the Louvre and the Guggenheim, but they're still unsure that it will help the economy to go forward. The Design Council in the UK are the ones who have really understood the impact that creative industries have on the economy. I think every year they give a report to the government which looks at the impact that these industries have on the economy. That's a good model to look at.



Al Manakh 2 is now out. This hefty tome, edited by Dutch architect Rem Koolhaas, looks at the post-Crisis reality in the Gulf. Focusing on the UAE, Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait and Saudi Arabi, Al Manakh 2 examines the 'stress test' of the credit crunch on these emerging urban landscapes and explores the different development models looking to an uncertain, post-oil future. Head to almanakh.org for more info and how to order.

What is Pink Tank?

Pink Tank was created in 2008, cooked up by Mitra Khoubrou and Daniel Camara, who sought to initiate a platform that would connect those interested in documenting the growth of the Middle East. The other arm of Pink Tank is as an advisory service; assisting private companies and authorities with the research and documentation of projects.