Dr. Mona Damluji
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Oil extraction entails massive and messy upheavals of land, people, and money. Yet, from above and in neat legible lines drawn in plan, petroleum infrastructures appear as efficient industrial webs of subterranean fields, transnational pipelines, pump stations, refineries, and extensive shipping routes that transport crude unidirectionally from well to tank. The extraordinary disjuncture between the image of oil infrastructure as a rational technology on one hand and a force of creative destruction on the other has produced numerous instances of cultural invention throughout the twentieth century. This presentation shows how the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (later BP), one of the world’s first major transnational oil corporations, transformed documentary film sponsorship into the primary means for telling the story of oil modernity, or a way of life made possible because of oil.

Dr. Mona Damluji is a liberal arts educator, cultural activist, and scholar with expertise in the Arab Middle East and broader Muslim World. Associate Dean and Director of The Markaz: Resource Center at Stanford University, Dr. Damluji received her BA from Tufts University and her MS and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. Prior to her appointment at Stanford University, Dr. Damluji held a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellowship in Asian & Islamic Visual Culture at Wheaton College in Massachusetts. Active as a curator and organizer of exhibits and programs, her major recent projects have included “Open Shutters Iraq” at UC Berkeley and “Arab Comics: 90 Years of Popular Visual Culture” at Brown University. Dr. Damluji’s published scholarship has appeared in journals including *Journal of Urban History, Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, and *Subterranean Estates: the Life Worlds of Oil and Gas*.