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Oakland University lecturer selected for prestigious Guggenheim Fellowship

Dunya Mikhail, an Oakland University special lecturer of Arabic in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, has earned a place on the 2018 John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation Fellowship list in the Poetry category. She is just one of nine winners in this category from across the country.

This year, the Guggenheim Foundation selected a total of 173 winners from a diverse applicant pool of more than 3,000 scholars, artists, and scientists. The great variety of backgrounds, fields of study, and accomplishments of Guggenheim Fellows is one of the unique characteristics of the program. Forty-nine scholarly disciplines and artistic fields, 69 different academic institutions, 31 states, and three Canadian provinces are represented in this year's class, who range in age from 29 to 80.

"When the news was announced, I woke up to a warm phone call from our university president, a celebratory email from our provost and another email of support and congratulations from my department chair," Mikhail said. "I am honored that the Guggenheim Foundation selected me as a Fellow and I can't be more grateful for being part of such a wonderful family at Oakland University."

"This is a milestone accomplishment and a most impressive career achievement," added Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Pro James P. Lentini, DMA. "A Guggenheim Fellowship is a major award and speaks to the world-class quality of Dunya's work. It brings high honor to both her and the university."

Mikhail was born in Baghdad, Iraq. She's renowned for her subversive, innovative, and satirical poetry. After graduation from the University of Baghdad, she worked as a journalist and translator for the Baghdad Observer. Facing censorship and interrogation, she left Iraq, traveling first to Jordan and then to America where she now resides in suburban Detroit.

Her first book in English *The War Works Hard* (translated by Elizabeth Winslow) was named one of "25 Books to Remember from 2005" by the New York Public Library. *Diary of A Wave Outside the Sea* won the Arab American Book Award. Her newest book *The Beekeeper: Rescuing the Stolen Women of Iraq* (co-translated with Max Weiss) was released last month and has been selected by Publishers Weekly as one of the top 10 in non-fiction for spring 2018. She also wrote *The Iraqi Nights* and edited *15 Iraqi Poets*.

Mikhail's other professional honors include the Knights Foundation grant, the Kresge Fellowship, and the United Nations Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing. She is also the co-founder of Michigan-community-based Mesopotamian Forum for Art and Culture.

Edward Hirsch, president of the Guggenheim Foundation, said in a press release, "These artists and writers, scholars and scientists, represent the best of the best. Each year since 1925, the Guggenheim Foundation has bet on the individual, and we're thrilled to continue to do so with this wonderfully talented and diverse group. It's an honor to be able to support these individuals to do the work they were meant to do."

The fellowship program was established by former United States Senator and Mrs. Simon Guggenheim, in memory of John Simon Guggenheim the elder of their two sons, who died in 1922. The Foundation has sought from its inception to "add to the educational, literary, artistic, and scientific power of this country, and also to provide for the cause of better international understanding." Since its establishment, the Guggenheim Foundation has granted more than \$360 million in fellowships to more than 18,000 individuals.

For more information on the Fellows and their projects, please visit the Foundation's website at <http://www.gf.org>.

To see a full list of 2018 Guggenheim Fellows, visit: <https://www.gf.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Nominations-By-Field-US2018.pdf>



Dunya Mikhail has been selected by the Guggenheim Foundation as a 2018 Fellow in the category of Poetry. Photo by Robert Akwari