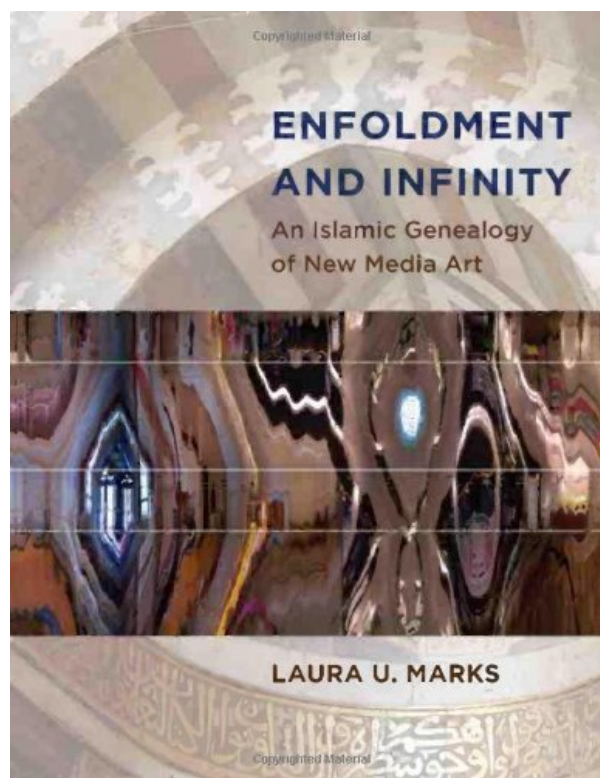
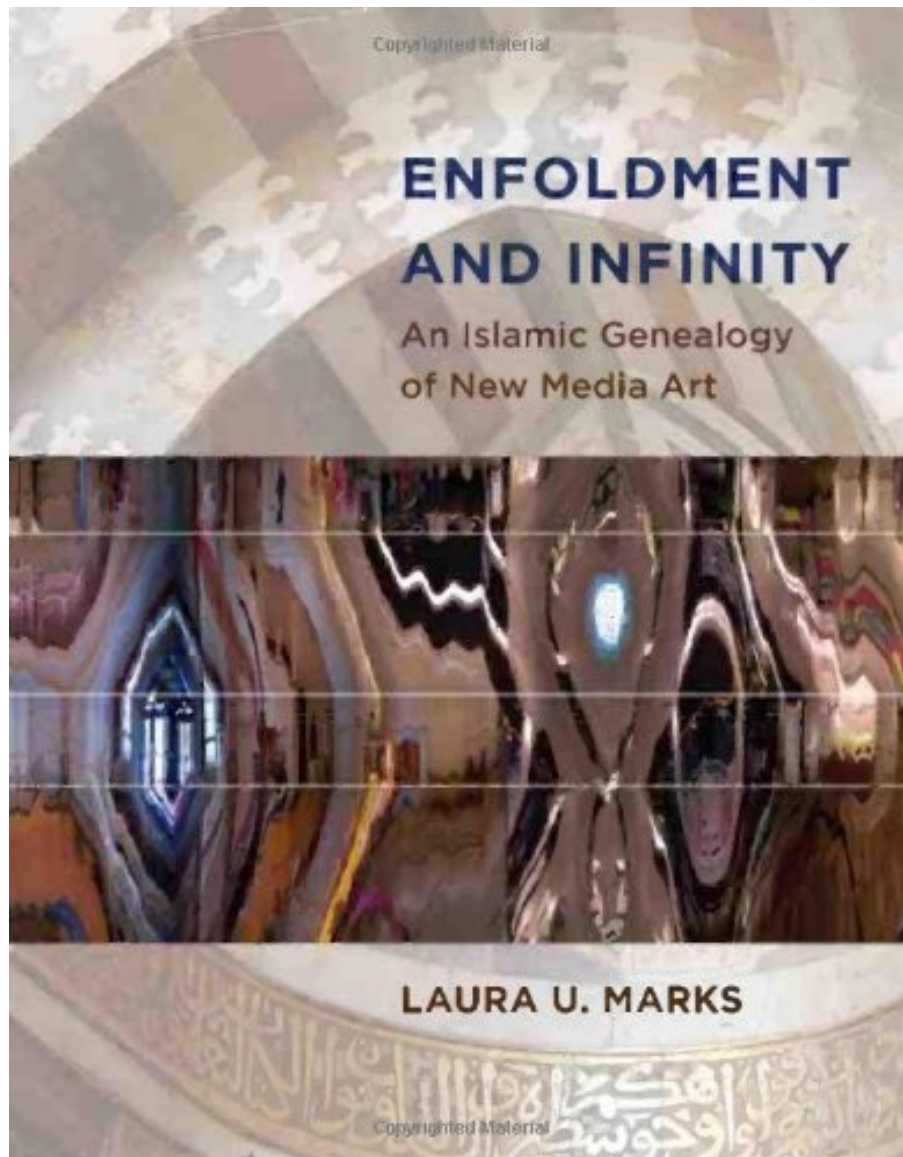


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## Review

Admirably researched, beautifully documented, and written with dedicated passion, *Enfoldment and Infinity* convincingly demonstrates the deep continuities between ancient Islamic art and new media art. With this book, Laura Marks makes an original and important contribution to understanding the aesthetics of contemporary media culture and its hidden Islamic genealogies.

(Patricia Pisters, University of Amsterdam)

After reading Laura Marks's lucid *Enfoldment and Infinity*, which leads us through the deep time layers of Arabic-Islamic arts and sciences, we have to give up our established concepts of media history. There remains no substantial reason to declare our culture and technologies of communication the most advanced in the world. Chapter by chapter, it becomes more evident that some of the most important paradigms like algorithms, pixels, morphs, or even virtual reality and artificial life have not been originally generated by the Occident, but through L'Age d'Or of the Orient, especially Mesopotamia with Baghdad in its center.

(Siegfried Zielinski, Academy of Arts Berlin)

*Enfoldment and Infinity* is the most inventive synthesis of European and Islamic thought since Reza Negarestani's *Cyclonopedia*. This is a book full of imagination and theory, restlessly refusing to remain in the usual continental, philosophic, or chronological borders, continuously reimagining contemporary abstraction as a profoundly Muslim visual discourse.

(James Elkins, School of the Art Institute of Chicago)

## About the Author

Laura U. Marks is Dena Wosk University Professor in Art and Culture Studies in the School for the Contemporary Arts at Simon Fraser University. She is the author of *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* and *Touch: Sensuous Theory and Multisensory Media*.

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In both classical Islamic art and contemporary new media art, one point can unfold to reveal an entire universe. A fourteenth-century dome decorated with geometric complexity and a new media work that shapes a dome from programmed beams of light: both can inspire feelings of immersion and transcendence. In *Enfoldment and Infinity*, Laura Marks traces the strong similarities, visual and philosophical, between these two kinds of art. Her argument is more than metaphorical; she shows that the "Islamic" quality of modern and new media art is a latent, deeply enfolded, historical inheritance from Islamic art and thought. Marks proposes an aesthetics of unfolding and enfolded in which image, information, and the infinite interact: image is an interface to information, and information (such as computer code or the words of the Qur'an) is an interface to the infinite. After demonstrating historically how Islamic aesthetics traveled into Western art, Marks draws explicit parallels between works of classical Islamic art and new media art, describing texts that burst into image, lines that multiply to form fractal spaces, "nonorganic life" in carpets and algorithms, and other shared concepts and images. Islamic philosophy, she suggests, can offer fruitful ways of understanding contemporary art.

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An intellectual, but illuminating, read.

By TV

I have just finished reading Laura Mark's new book--*Enfoldment and Infinity*--comparing Islamic art and contemporary media art. Laura is fascinated with the fractal geometry and the way that art (and life) unfolds as one examines on overall picture at closer and closer levels, unfolding the art to reveal hidden mysteries and connections to life forces and the divine. The book is lyrical and a delight to read, drawing parallels between Islamic art and new media art that are poetic and illuminating. Not having any background with philosophy, theology, art history, Islamic culture or new media art forms, beyond having a modicum of familiarity with current cultural icons such as "The Matrix" movie trilogy, the video games "Spore," genetic algorithms, and having bludgeoned my way through the first half of the Quran--it is NOT a light read. Laura assumes considerable knowledge of art history, philosophy and Islamic arts. However, in spite of being drenched in ignorance, I found the book fascinating and I will never look at Islamic or new media art in the same way again. Anyone with an interest in art theory, fractal geometries, algorithmic art forms, Islamic culture, and/or philosophy and who is willing to keep THINKING throughout the chapters will enjoy this work.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful.

An illuminating study!

By Daniel C. Johnson

Exceptionally informative with copious notes and a real thorough discussion which is right on regarding my own current art creations using digital media and moorish designs. Take a look:

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