

## **Women Auteurs Across Borders: Affective Resistance and the Decolonial Gaze in Dash and Al Ghanem's cinema**

**Chrysavi Papagianni**

### **Abstract**

This article offers a comparative analysis of Julie Dash's *Daughters of the Dust* and Nujoom Al Ghanem's *Hamama*, situating both films within postcolonial feminist frameworks. It argues that through affective storytelling—deploying visual aesthetics, embodiment, and memory—these filmmakers challenge and decolonize hegemonic cinematic gazes by privileging marginalized histories and lived experiences. Drawing on Affect Theory and Laura U. Marks's concept of haptic visuality, the paper examines how the films invite viewers to move beyond passive spectatorship towards a sensuous, embodied engagement that emphasizes relationality between women and their environments. By foregrounding creative agency and feminist revisionism, the article positions Dash and Al Ghanem as auteurs whose work transcends the East-West binary, contributing to a transnational and intersectional understanding of women's cinema. Methodologically, it explores the sensuous proximity between characters and their worlds, highlighting how memory, ritual, and storytelling operate as acts of resistance and renewal against colonial and patriarchal legacies. Ultimately, this study reveals a paradigm shift in cinematic practice that embraces affectivity and embodied experience as vital tools for decolonizing visual narratives.

**Keywords:** Decolonial gaze, women's cinema, feminism, affect, auteur theory