

Elliott Colla

Quotes

*Writing, Thinking, People, Book, Program, Fiction, Art, Iraq, Reading, Wish,
Moving, Style, Believe, Reality, Different, World, Broken, Two, Humanity,
Culture*

Arabs don't do crime fiction. I read crime fiction and I read Arabic literature, and I wish this was a novel I could have read in Arabic.

~Elliott Colla

I think if I'd gone to an MFA program and learned that, it would have been money well spent. But translation has been that for me.

~Elliott Colla

The corruption in Iraq has nothing to do with ideas - it has to do with the regime and institutional structures and power.

~Elliott Colla

There's actually a lot of information on a lot of people and that is a major achievement of a police state.

~Elliott Colla

Why is thinking about crime or imagining crime so goddamn central to pop culture? It doesn't matter whether it's American TV or British TV. And there's entire sections of bookstores devoted to crime.

~Elliott Colla

We like to look out on the world and see ourselves, so we have many, many novels, memoirs, and short stories in Iraq that are largely about Americans in Iraq, doing what Americans do.

~Elliott Colla

Translated books rarely get reviewed in the press. Books or poems or works of art that don't seem to have a corresponding style or figure or theme, obviously they're hard to digest.

~Elliott Colla

Noir is where the clarity of moral divisions break down, the black and whites turn into grays.

~Elliott Colla

Academic writing you have to get right. Fiction you have to get plausible. And there's a world of difference.

~Elliott Colla

It does not take much to imagine the humanity of people you don't know.

~Elliott Colla

English is a forgiving language. It's not like Classical Arabic and it's not like French. You can speak broken English and be expressive and no one will hold it against you.

~Elliott Colla

Michel Aflaq - is bad poetry wrapped in the guise of utopian politics, or great poetry wrapped in the guise of horrible politics.

~Elliott Colla

The truly astounding thing is the Baathist regime supports poetry like nobody else, probably in the world.

~Elliott Colla

It does not take much to imagine the humanity of people you don't know. An American author does not need to know a word of Arabic to write a book like the one I wrote.

~Elliott Colla

Culture is invited to the table usually only as raw material that needs no analysis.

~Elliott Colla

When you're writing your own fiction, you don't have to ride two horses.

~Elliott Colla

If I have learned how to write fiction it's by working with great writers

and getting them to explain their craft to me so that I can do it in English.

~Elliott Colla

Once you have the first draft it's living, and you can coax it to grow and trim it and reshape it and so on. But get that first draft.

~Elliott Colla

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