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 The Contemporary Art Scene in Syria

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### ALEXZANDER BENTON

*Flash Flaherty* University Alabama Press

This book focuses on the expanding contemporary art scene in Syria, particularly Damascus, during the first decade of the twenty-first century. The decade was characterized by a high degree of experimentation as young artists began to work with artistic media that were new in Syria, such as video, installation and performance art. They were rethinking the role of artists in society and looking for ways to reach audiences in a more direct manner and address socio-cultural and socio-political issues. The Contemporary Art Scene in Syria will be of interest to scholars of global and Middle Eastern art studies, and also to scholars interested in the recent social and cultural history of Syria and the wider Middle East.

*Archiveology* Routledge

This book places long overdue focus on the Palestine solidarity films of two important Arab women directors whose cinematic works have never received due attention within the scholarly literature

or the cultural public sphere. Through an analysis that situates these largely overlooked films within the matrix of an anti-Zionist critique of cinematic ontology, this book offers a materialist feminist appreciation of their political aesthetics while critiquing the ideological enabling conditions of their academic absenting. The study of these daring films fosters a much-needed, sustained understanding of the meaning and significance of Palestine solidarity filmmaking for and within the Arab world.

*Why Muslim Women and Smartphones* Springer Nature

If films drawing on Middle East tropes often highlight white Westerners, figures such as Sinbad and the Thief of Bagdad embody a counter-tradition of protagonists, derived from Islamic folklore and history, who are portrayed as 'Other' to Western audiences. In *Muslim Heroes on Screen*, Daniel O'Brien explores the depiction of these characters in Euro-American cinema from the silent era to the present day. Far from being mere racial masquerade, these screen portrayals are more complex and nuanced than is generally allowed, not least in terms of the shifting concepts and assumptions that inform their Muslim identity. Using films ranging from Douglas Fairbanks' *The Thief of Bagdad*, *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*, *El Cid*, *Kingdom of Heaven* and *The Message* to *The*

*Wind and the Lion*, O'Brien considers how the representational strategies of Western filmmakers may transcend such Muslim stereotypes as fanatic antagonists or passive victims. These figures possess a cultural significance which cannot be fully appreciated by Euro-American audiences without reference to their distinction as Muslim heroes and the implications and resonances of an Islamicized protagonist.

*The Handbook of Media and Culture in the Middle East* University of California Press

An examination of experimental cinema and media art from the Arabic-speaking world that explores filmmakers' creative and philosophical inventiveness in trying times. In this book, Laura Marks examines one of the world's most impressive, and affecting, bodies of independent and experimental cinema from the last twenty-five years: film and video works from the Arabic-speaking world. Some of these works' creative strategies are shared by filmmakers around the world; others arise from the particular economic, social, political, and historical circumstances of Arab countries, whose urgency, Marks argues, seems to demand experiment and invention. Grounded in a study of infrastructures for independent and experimental media art in the Arab world and a broad knowledge of hundreds of films and videos, Hanan al-Cinema approaches these

works thematically. Topics include the nomadism of the highway, nostalgia for '70s radicalism, a romance with the archive, algorithmic and glitch media, haptic and networked space, and cinema of the body. Marks develops an aesthetic of enfolding and unfolding to elucidate the different ways that cinema can make events perceptible, seek connections among them, and unfold in the bodies and thoughts of audiences. The phrase Hanan al-cinema expresses the way movies sympathize with the world and the way audiences feel affection for, and are affected by, them. Marks's clear and expressive writing conveys these affections in works by such internationally recognized artists and filmmakers as Akram Zaatari, Elia Suleiman, Hassan Khan, Mounir Fatmi, and Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige, and others who should be better known.

*Peripheral Methodologies* Bloomsbury Publishing USA

In recent years, the Arab world and Iran have been afflicted by cataclysmic events, among them brutal state crackdowns of revolutions. Yet, filmmakers have persisted in their desire to tell their stories, against the odds, in creative acts that attest to their imagination, courage and resilience. In this book, Shohini Chaudhuri examines a broad range of films made during the tumultuous period since 2009, ranging from internationally award-winning festival favourites, such as *For Sama* (2019), *Capernaum* (2018) and *Taxi Tehran* (2015), to lesser-known films from the region. While freedom of expression is often understood through the lens of state censorship, she reveals the different types of obstacles that filmmakers face and their strategies for overcoming them so that those constraints are transformed into creative opportunities. Using her original interviews with filmmakers such as Waad al-Kateab, Yasmin Fedda, Larissa Sansour, Mani Haghighi and Ossama Mohammed, she identifies nine creative strategies for producing work under conditions of crisis. Chaudhuri argues that creativity is indelibly shaped by constraints, whether these are externally imposed by existing materials, funding and socio-political conditions, or self-imposed constraints, through choices of genre or acceptance of rules and responsibilities. She shows that the range of creative strategies emanating from the region is much wider than allegory and becoming ever more direct. She thus opens up new lines of inquiry into cinematic creativity in sites of conflict and crisis in the Middle East and beyond.

Bloomsbury Publishing

An invaluable resource for those seeking to understand the past, present and future of media and cultural resources in the Middle East. The *Handbook of Media and Culture in the Middle East* is designed to help readers navigate the important questions of the region and better understand the global cultural and media transformations that shape the debates and challenges of the twenty-first century. Bringing together contributions by a trans-regional panel of established experts and new voices, this interdisciplinary volume offers a fresh perspective on the cultures of the Middle East and their media production, distribution, and consumption. Rather than viewing the Middle East as a monolithic culture operating within a limited media framework, the book examines the multi-local characteristics of knowledge production, media, and culture in the region. Particular emphasis is placed on the necessity for moving away from universalism in favor of theoretically- and historically-grounded integrated analysis. Throughout the text, the authors address the central questions of media and culture in the Middle East while contextualizing the region's competing histories, geopolitical and socio-economic issues, and ongoing cultural and media debates. Describes the intellectual landscape of the field, including its historic emergence and evolution, key theoretical approaches and empirical research, and possible future directions Presents rich analyses anchored in contemporary research and broad historical and geopolitical contexts Focuses on the symbiotic and dynamic relationship between old and emerging media Offers case studies in cultural production and mainstream and alternative media. Discusses the role of empire and its consequences for communication, culture and politics Engages with culture as a dynamic site of struggle and contestation Part of the acclaimed Blackwell Global Handbooks in Media and Communication Research series, *The Handbook of Media and Culture in the Middle East* is essential reading for academics and researchers in the field and an excellent textbook for students of global studies, media and communication, journalism, anthropology, sociology, economics, political science, and history.

*Film and Television Production in the Age of Climate Crisis* Duke University Press

This volume brings together a range of voices from across the global environmental media community to build a comparative international set of perspectives on 'green' film and television production. Through this, it provides a necessary intervention in environmental media studies that actively foregrounds media infrastructure, production, policy, and labour – that is, the management and practice of media production cultures. Due to its immense sociocultural

influence and economic resources, the global screen media industry is at the forefront of raising awareness for the political and social issues resulting from accelerated environmental instability. However, the 21st century relationship between screen media and the environment has another face that demands urgent scrutiny. The advent of the digital age and the vast electrical and Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) infrastructures required to support digital production, distribution, and archiving has resulted in the rapid expansion and diversification of the industry's resource use, infrastructure construction, energy dependency, and consequent waste and emissions production. Addressing these structures is essential to alleviating their environmental and social impact and ensuring that the industry's rhetoric on environmental responsibility is reflected in its practice. As a mitigating counterbalance to the above trends, there has been a heightened push for sustainability measures along various lines of industry management, policy, and practice. These initiatives—including the cultural values they reflect, the political economies that form their logic, the managerial and marketing tactics that orchestrate them, and the environmental realities of their implementation—form the central object of inquiry for this collection.

*Arab Modernism as World Cinema* Routledge

*Women in African Cinema: Beyond the Body Politic* showcases the very prolific but often marginalised presence of women in African cinema, both on the screen and behind the camera. This book provides the first in-depth and sustained examination of women in African cinema. Films by women from different geographical regions are discussed in case studies that are framed by feminist theoretical and historical themes, and seen through an anti-colonial, philosophical, political and socio-cultural cinematic lens. A historical and theoretical introduction provides the context for thematic chapters exploring topics ranging from female identities, female friendships, women in revolutionary cinema, motherhood and daughterhood, women's bodies, sexuality, and spirituality. Each chapter serves up a theoretical-historical discussion of the chosen theme, followed by two in-depth case studies that provide contextual and transnational readings of the films as well as outlining production, distribution and exhibition contexts. This book contributes to the feminist anti-racist revision of the canon by placing African women filmmakers squarely at the centre of African film culture. Demonstrating the depth and diversity of the feminine or female aesthetic in African cinema, this book will be of great interest to students and scholars of African cinema, media studies and African studies.

*Crisis Cinema in the Middle East* Oxford University Press

"Demonstrates how Agamben's ideas can enrich and extend our understanding of film as a medium and the cinema as an apparatus, constantly being remade"--

*Historical Dictionary of Middle Eastern Cinema* Bloomsbury Publishing

Hanan al-Cinema MIT Press

*Engaging with Historical Traumas* McGill-Queen's Press - MQUP

This book proposes, following Antonin Artaud, an investigation exploring the virtual body, neurology and the brain as fields of contestation, seeking a clearer understanding of Artaud's transformations that ultimately leads into examining the relevance Artaud may have for an adequate theory of the current media environment. *New Media and the Artaud Effect* is the only current full-length study of the relation of Artaud's work to dilemmas of digital art, media and society today. It is also singular in that it combines a far-reaching discussion of the theoretical implications and ramifications of the 'late' or 'final' Artaud, with a treatment of individual media works, sometimes directly inspired from Artaud's travails. Artaud has long been justly regarded as one of the seminal influences in mid- and late-20th century performance and theater: it is argued here that Artaud's insights are if anything more applicable to digital/post-digital society and the plethora of works that are made possible by it.

*Documentary Filmmaking in the Middle East and North Africa* Routledge

Using an assemblage approach to study how Muslim women in Norrebro, Denmark use their phones, Karen Walorp examines how social media complicates the divide between public and private in relation to a group of people who find this distinction of utmost significance. Building on years of ethnographic fieldwork, Walorp's ethnography reflects the trust and creativity of her relationships with these women which in turn open up nuanced discussions about both the subject at hand and best practice in conducting anthropological research. Combining rich ethnography with theoretical contextualization, Walorp's book alternates between ethnography and analysis to illuminate a thoroughly modern community, and reveals the capacity of image-making technology to function as an infrastructure for seeing, thinking and engaging in fieldwork as an

anthropologists. Walorp identifies a series of important issues around anthropological approaches to new media, contributing to new debates around the anthropology of automation, data and self-tracking.

*Making Worlds* Routledge

*Arabic Glitch* explores an alternative origin story of twenty-first century technological innovation in digital politics—one centered on the Middle East and the 2011 Arab uprisings. Developed from an archive of social media data collected over the decades following the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq, this book interrogates how the logic of programming technology influences and shapes social movements. Engaging revolutionary politics, Arab media, and digital practice in form, method, and content, Laila Shereen Sakr formulates a media theory that advances the concept of the glitch as a disruptive media affordance. She employs data analytics to analyze tweets, posts, and blogs to describe the political culture of social media, and performs the results under the guise of the Arabic-speaking cyborg VJ Um Amel. Playing with multiple voices that span across the virtual and the real, Sakr argues that there is no longer a divide between the virtual and embodied: both bodies and data are physically, socially, and energetically actual. Are we cyborgs or citizens—or both? This book teaches us how a region under transformation became a vanguard for new thinking about digital systems: the records they keep, the lives they impact, and how to create change from within.

*Revolutions Aesthetic* Stanford University Press

*The Routledge Companion to World Cinema* explores and examines a global range of films and filmmakers, their movements and audiences, comparing their cultural, technological and political dynamics, identifying the impulses that constantly reshape the form and function of the cinemas of the world. Each of the forty chapters provides a survey of a topic, explaining why the issue or area is important, and critically discussing the leading views in the area. Designed as a dynamic forum for forty-three world-leading scholars, this companion contains significant expertise and insight and is dedicated to challenging complacent views of hegemonic film cultures and replacing outmoded ideas about production, distribution and reception. It offers both a survey and an investigation into the condition and activity of contemporary filmmaking worldwide, often challenging long-standing categories and weighted—often politically motivated—value judgements, thereby grounding and aligning the reader in an activity of remapping which is designed to prompt rethinking.

*Arabic Glitch* MIT Press

*Sensuous Cinema: The Body in Contemporary Maghrebi Film* examines a cluster of recent films that feature Maghrebi(-French) people and position corporeality as a site through which subjectivity and self-other relations are constituted and experienced. These films are set in and between the countries of the Maghreb, France and, to a lesser degree, Switzerland, and often adopt a sensual aesthetic that prioritizes embodied knowledge, the interrelation of the senses and the material realities of emotional experience. However, despite the importance of the body in these films, no study to date has taken corporeality as its primary point of concern. This new addition to the *Thinking Cinema* series interweaves corporeal phenomenology with theological and feminist scholarship on the body from the Maghreb and the Middle East to examine how Maghrebi(-French) people of different genders, ethnicities, sexualities, ages and classes have been represented corporeally in contemporary Maghrebi and French cinemas. Via detailed textual and phenomenological analyses of films such as *Red Satin* (Amari 2002), *Exiles* (Gatlif 2004), *Couscous* (Kechiche 2007) and *Salvation Army* (Taïa 2014), Kaya Hayon Davies conveys the pivotal role that corporeality plays in articulating identity and the emotions in these films.

*Negotiating Dissidence* Hanan al-Cinema

This volume engages new films and modes of scholarly research in Arab cinema, and older, often neglected films and critical topics, while theorizing their structural relationship to contemporary developments in the Arab world. The volume considers the relationship of Arab cinema to transnational film production, distribution, and exhibition, in turn recontextualizing the works of acknowledged as well as new directorial figures, and country-specific phenomena. New documentary and experimental practices are referenced and critiqued, while commercial cinema is covered both as an industrial product and as one of several instances of contestation. The volume thus showcases the breadth and depth of Arab film culture and its multilayered connections to local conditions, regional affiliations, and the tendencies and aesthetics of global cinema.

*Cinema of the Arab World* Springer Nature

This edited volume addresses memory practices among youth, families, cultural workers, activists,

and engaged citizens in Lebanon and Morocco. In making a claim for 'the social life of memory,' the introduction discusses a particular research field of memory studies, elaborating an approach to memory in terms of social production and engagement. The Arab Spring is evoked to draw attention to new rifts within and between history and remembrance in the regions of North Africa and the Middle East. As authoritarian forms of governance are challenged, official panoramic narratives are confronted with a multiplicity of memories of violent pasts. The eight chapters trace personal and public inventories of violence, trauma, and testimony, addressing memory in cinema, in newspapers and periodicals, as an experience of public environments, through transnational and diasporic mediums, and amongst younger generations.

*Muslim Heroes on Screen* Edinburgh University Press

The Anthem Handbook of Screen Theory offers a unique and progressive survey of screen theory and how it can be applied to a range of moving-image texts and sociocultural contexts. Focusing on the "handbook" angle, the book includes only original essays from established authors in the field and new scholars on the cutting edge of helping screen theory evolve for the twenty-first-century vistas of new media, social shifts and geopolitical change. This method guarantees a strong foundation and clarity for the canon of film theory, while also situating it as part of a larger

genealogy of art theories and critical thought, and reveals the relevance and utility of film theories and concepts to a wide array of expressive practices and specified arguments. The Anthem Handbook of Screen Theory is at once inclusive, applicable and a chance for writers to innovate and really play with where they think the field is, can and should be heading.

*Films of Arab Loutfi and Heiny Srour* Duke University Press

How does peripherality challenge methodology and theory-making? This book examines how the peripheral can be incorporated into ethnographic research, and reflects on what it means to be on the periphery – ontologically and epistemologically. Starting from the premise that clarity and fixity as ideals of modernity prevent us from approaching that which cannot be easily captured and framed into scientific boundaries, the book argues for remaining on the boundary between the known and the unknown in order to surpass this ethnographic limit. Peripheral Methodologies shows that peripherality is not only to be seen as a marginal condition, but rather as a form of theory-making and practice that incorporates reflexivity and experimentation. Instead of domesticating the peripheral, the authors engage in (and insist on) practicing expertise in reverse, unlearning their tools in order to integrate the empirical and analytical otherwise.

*Palestinian Culture and the Nakba* Indiana University Press

The Nakba not only resulted in the loss of the homeland, but also caused the dispersal and ruin of

entire Palestinian communities. Even though the term Nakba refers to a singular historic event, the consequence of 1948 has symptomatically become part of Palestinian identity, and the element that demarcates who the Palestinian is. Palestinian exile and loss have evolved into cultural symbols that at once help define the person and allow the person to remember the loss. Although accounts of the Palestinians' experience of the expulsion from the land are similar, the emblems that provoke these particular memories differ. Certain mementos, memories or objects help in commemorating the homeland. This book looks at the icons, narratives and symbols that have become synonymous with Palestinian identity and culture and which have, in the absence of a homeland, become a source of memory. It discusses how these icons have come into being and how they have evolved into sites of power which help to keep the story and identity of the Palestinians alive. The book looks at examples from Palestinian caricature, film, literature, poetry and painting, to see how these works ignite memories of the homeland and help to reinforce the diasporic identity. It also argues that the creators of these narratives or emblems have themselves become cultural icons within the collective Palestinian recollection. By introducing the Nakba as a lived experience, this book will appeal to students and scholars of Middle East Studies, Cultural Studies, Literature and Media Studies.

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