

The book is comprised of seven chapters and three appendices. The first chapter outlines the coauthors' interest in the Mediterranean Hotel and solving the mystery of the second hotel's location. Chapter 2 lays out the historical development of each of the hotels covered in the book, charting name changes, locations, and owners. The coauthors include many historical and contemporary photos to contrast the hotel buildings through time. Some illustrate textual findings, but their sheer number makes it somewhat like a coffee-table book in addition to a research study. A careful reading requires scouring the voluminous expository endnotes, many of which would have been a welcome addition to the narrative proper. The revelation of the location of the second Mediterranean Hotel is told only in chapter 4 through the work of excavator Charles Warren. The stories of the hotels, and the Mediterranean in particular, are keenly wrapped up in the interesting, at times unusual, lives of those who visited them. Better known stories include the development of Cook tours for mass tourism and the visit of Mark Twain to the Holy Land. Less known is the story of Rolla Floyd, a guide and dragoman for Mark Twain; both, however, were Freemasons. Floyd came to work as a "Chief Eastern Dragoman and Manager" (p. 190) for Thomas Cook & Son, based in Palestine. Floyd got on well with the company for a number of years before having a falling out with the Cooks in the summer of 1881, ultimately moving on to build his own rival business (p. 192). The book concludes only with suggestions for future research.

As often happens in nineteenth-century histories about the Holy Land, the local Arab population is absent from the narrative. While relating much about the city's hotels and its tourism, the European sources relied upon in this book speak little of the local population. Traveling Arab Muslims likely stayed at *khanaqas* (hospices) or Sufi lodges or with Muslim families, and did not need the services of European-style hotels. Nevertheless, some of the many photos that appear in the book include images of local Arabs on horses, buying and selling goods in the Jerusalem markets, wearing "eastern" and "western" garb. Some "bedouin" women, more likely villagers, appear in the photos selling their produce, perhaps to the kitchens of the hotels. They also appear as hired help involved in the setup of Cook's tents or tours. A picture may indeed be worth a thousand words.

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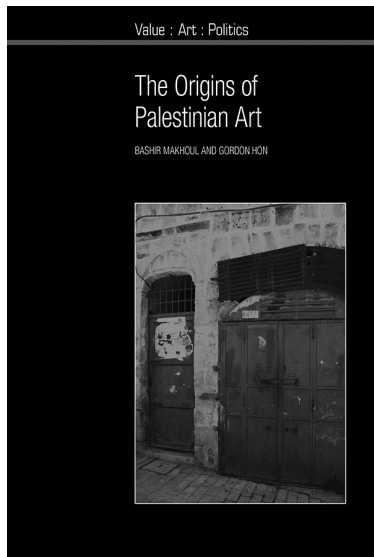
The Origins of Palestinian Art, by Bashir Makhoul and Gordon Hon. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2013. 269 pages, 97 color. Bibliography to p. 256. Index to p. 269. \$99.95 cloth, \$35.95 paper.

REVIEWED BY KIVEN STROHM

Following in the steps of Kamal Boullata's *Palestinian Art: From 1850 to the Present* (Saqi, 2009), Bashir Makhoul and Gordon Hon's volume is a welcome addition to the growing English-language literature on the history of Palestinian art. Makhoul, a Palestinian artist originally from Galilee and presently rector of Winchester Campus and head of the Winchester School of Art at the University

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of Southampton, and Hon, lecturer in contemporary studies also at the Winchester School of Art, have separately and together edited a series of books, articles, and catalogs on Palestinian art. *The Origins of Palestinian Art* is their first coauthored book and full-length study. Following the



introduction are two chapters concerned with the question of origins and beginnings, followed by chapters on Jerusalem and the Palestinians in Israel, a chapter on *al-shatat* (the diaspora), and finally the conclusion.

Makhoul and Hon's study opens with the problem of "origin" in the context of the construction of a national narrative and its relationship to art. The idea of origin, following Edward Said, is problematic insofar as it invites a static and fixed center, "more likely to mark an ending—a closing down, rather than an opening up" (p. 3). In response, they turn to Said's study of "beginning" as a model for appreciating the nonlinear Palestinian cultural development, which is significant to the extent that it permits a consideration of Palestinian cultural production across a divided and fragmented Palestinian community. Nonetheless, as they bring the Nakba into their discussion, Makhoul and Hon urge that it is perhaps not yet time to let

go of the idea of origin. As a "continuing disaster for Palestinians," the Nakba "serves as a constant threat to the ancient origins of Israel" (p. 70). Given the obvious tension that emerges between origins and beginnings, they subsequently ask what is arguably the key question of the book:

Is it possible to imagine a convergence of these origins and beginnings—for the Nakba as a continuing disaster to come to an end and for it to become the beginning of a modern state for the Palestinians, not as a remnant on the edges of Israel but in the same place? Is it possible to imagine one state for Israelis and Palestinians and the will to create a modern, genuine democracy in which there would be no necessity for ancient mythical origins—a state capable of containing "a multi-leveled coherence of dispersion" in terms of national and religious minorities? And, furthermore, do contemporary Palestinian artists have a part to play in imagining what this future might look like? (p. 70)

As becomes clear throughout the book, Makhoul and Hon very much do think that contemporary Palestinian artists have a part to play in imagining this future, and their discussion of these artists and their artworks is an attempt to explore this role. Mobilizing Said's notion of "coherence of dispersal" and the notion of *al-shatat* as models for understanding nonlinear cultural development across the divided and fragmented Palestinian nation (that is, Palestinians in Israel, the occupied territories, and exiles and refugees), the authors seek to underline the productive role of art within the Palestinian nation by underlining how "art is involved in the production of the term *Palestinian*" (p. 33). Building on this insight, they argue that Palestinian contemporary art is at the forefront of thinking about Israel/Palestine as a pluralistic postnational community no longer framed according to mutually exclusive and competing national narratives.

More specifically, it is within contemporary Palestinian artistic practices that the conditions of a single binational, secular democratic state are being articulated, an argument most explicitly developed in chapter 5 by discussion of the cultural life of Palestinians in Israel as providing “a picture of the possibilities and problems for an imagined bi-national community” (p. 138).

Where Makhoul and Hon could have gone further, in my view, is through a more in-depth consideration of the artworks as political agents, that is, how these “things” do political work. An example of this is their reading of Jumana Abboud’s *al awda (the return)*, a video installation that shows Abboud leaving a trail of bread crumbs à la Hansel and Gretel. Makhoul and Hon note how Abboud is demonstrating the temporal impossibility of return, how “the same river can never be stepped into twice” (p. 213). Yet, Abboud does step into the same river twice. Unremarked by the authors, the video depicts five scenes (of roughly equal duration) of her leaving bread crumbs in which the first two paths, separated by a middle section, are repeated: A–B–C–B–A. Each sequence begins with Abboud already in the frame, and ends with her still visible (even if barely). Here there is no origin, but only a series of beginnings, repeated, a point underscored by the video being looped. Through a repetition that refrains from disclosing its origin, how might *al awda* be asking viewers to fill that emptied space with their own narratives? Rather than marking an end or closure, how might *al awda* be an opening for other beginnings?

The aim of Makhoul and Hon to examine how Palestinian art and artists are part of the making of Palestinian identity and, more, a postnational community as the ground for a binational, secular democratic state is an enticing and welcome project. Moreover, the book is an excellent survey of contemporary Palestinian art, bringing together a wide range of artists and mediums along with descriptions of these art works and their interpretation within the context of Palestinian culture and history.

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