

Scheid

Partisans of the Nude

An Arab Art Genre in an Era of Contest, 1920-1960

Partisans of the Nude is a survey of genre art of the nude made by artists in areas that were formerly Ottoman but not yet Arab. Though spoken of as taboo and practically absent from Arab art production, the nude genre was important for early twentieth-century artists who sought to define their societies as post-Ottoman and cosmopolitan. Although recognized as foundational to Western art since Ancient Greece, the role the nude played in carving out an Arab art has been ignored by both nationalist histories and Orientalist narratives. By contrast, this book shows that art movements outside the West created their own, connected and commandeering modernity through the genre. It recontextualizes "postwar" and "Arab Spring" art by rooting it in the decolonizing and civic reinvention efforts of artists and activists who fiercely upheld aesthetic development and battled for new forms of political being.

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Kundenservice Fachmedien Otto Schmidt

Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@fachmedien.de | 0800 000-1637 (Inland)

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