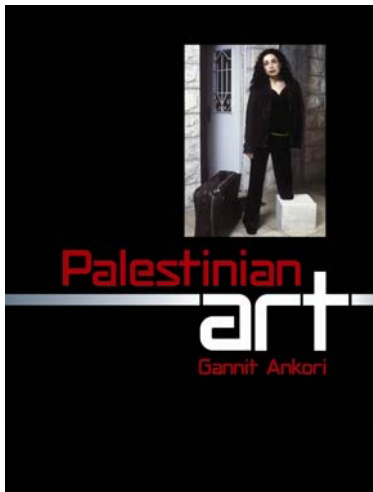


Palestinian Art / Gannit Ankori.—London: Reaktion Books Ltd., distributed by University of Chicago Press, 2006.—248 p.—ISBN 1-86189-259-4 (pa., alk. paper): \$35.00.



Gannit Ankori provides a scholarly yet personal window into the subject of Palestinian art. This engaging study is the first substantial English-language publication to cover the topic, from its beginnings in folk art and Christian and Islamic painting, through the 1948 *Nakba* or invasion, through artists working today in Palestinian territories, in Israel, and in exile. Ankori provides a brief chronological overview of the pioneering texts (almost none in English) that cover Palestinian art, but her book grew from almost two decades of her own extensive research, studio visits, and interviews.

Ankori is forthcoming about her own perspective and prejudices as an Israeli-born art historian. However, her intention in the book is to present a broad spectrum of work and give a strong sense of contemporary Palestinian art. She does not try to compile a comprehensive survey but instead features a limited number of artists

from diverse religious, cultural, and geographical settings. Some are well known, such as Mona Hatoum and Kamal Boullata, while others are more obscure but equally fascinating. The first three chapters of the book provide a firm foundation in the history, politics, geography, and early influences of Palestinian art. The remaining chapters cover the work of select artists in depth. Her insightful interpretations and analyses of individual works are enriched by numerous high quality color photographs (143 of the 162 illustrations in the book are in color). Ankori does an excellent job of balancing an interpretation of the work of individual artists with placing them in the context of the historical, political, cultural, and symbolic meanings inherent in Palestinian art. She formulates a definition of Palestinian art that extends well beyond the overtly political themes.

Ankori, associate professor of art history at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and currently a research associate and visiting associate professor at Harvard Divinity School, writes in a style that is authoritative yet accessible. Her other research interests in hybridity, gender, exile, and displacement manifest themselves in her text as well. Ankori's scholarship is exemplary with extensive endnotes for each chapter. This book holds a unique place in the literature and is highly recommended for collections that are strong in contemporary art as well as for large art collections with a particular interest in this subject.

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