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Kamal Bullatah [Boullata]. *Istihdar al-Makan, Dirasah fi al-Fann al-Tashkili al-Filastini al-Mu'asir (Conjuring Up Space: A Study of Contemporary Palestinian Art)*. Tunis : Al-Munzammah al-'Arabiyyah lil-Tarbiyyah wa al-Thaqafah, wa al-'Ulum, 2000. 273 pp., 324 color ill., 14 b/w. \$30.

Samia A. Halaby. *Liberation Art of Palestine : Palestinian Painting and Sculpture in the Second Half of the 20th Century*. New York : HTTP, 2001. 54 pp., 4.9 color ill., 13 b/w. \$55 paper.

Gannit Ankori. *Palestinian Art*. London : Reaktion Books, 2006. 255 pp., 135 color ill., 27 b/w. \$35 paper.

In September 2006, two British curators put together an exhibition of the works of European and American artists in the occupied Palestinian city of Bethlehem, bringing examples of contemporary Western art to Palestinians who are unable to go and see it in Western or local galleries. Admirable as this pioneering effort was, it did not shorten the distance between West Bank Palestinians and Western art. Israeli Occupation soldiers are still repressing the Palestinians' own artistic production, as well as their access to the international art scene. As forty Palestinians from Ramallah boarded a bus to go to see the exhibition a few miles away, they were stopped by the ubiquitous Israeli military checkpoints surrounding all Palestinian cities and towns, transformed by the Occupation into walled-in ghettos, if not virtual prisons. After the native Palestinians were harassed and their identification papers and travel permits checked for over an hour, the Israeli colonial soldiers allowed most of them to continue their trip. Two, however, were turned back to Ramallah: One was Sulayman Mansur, the well-known Palestinian artist who won the Nile Prize at the 1998 Cairo Biennale and who is the darling of the Israeli peace camp. According to the BBC, "his papers allow him into Bethlehem only from the Jerusalem checkpoint," but not from the Ramallah checkpoint. Mansur's good credentials with many Israelis on the "left" were not sufficient to intercede on his behalf. He remained behind. (1)

For Americans and Europeans, let alone Arabs, who follow the Palestinian tragedy, this is an all-too-familiar scene of Palestinian life under Israeli Occupation. The art angle, however, is not usually covered much in the flurry of news reports about Palestinian lives. Yet art has been an important part of the modern history of the Palestinians. Spanning the last century, modern Palestinian painting and sculpture register both continuity and rupture with premodern forms of Palestinian art, and tell familiar and unfamiliar stories differently. In doing so, they communicate visually what is beautiful and sublime in the Palestinian experience, even and especially when they have to tease it out of tragic scenery. As Edward Said has put it, artists, like poets and novelists, "embod[y] the historical experience of their people in aesthetic works." (2)

In this context, the publication in the last few years of a number of books in English and Arabic that aim to provide an account of Palestinian art is most welcome and timely. An increasing number of books on Palestinian architecture of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as the first half of the twentieth have been published, as have a few books on Palestinian photography from 1850 to the eve of the 1948 Catastrophe, or Nakba. (3) This is concomitant with the increasing number of books published on Palestinian cinema, mostly in Arabic, but also more recently in English. With the internationalization of Palestinian art, mostly through exhibitions held inside and outside Palestine, in Arab countries as well as in Europe and the United States, exhibition catalogues have contributed to the small but growing number of books on Palestinian art. (4) Added to this is the fame of the Palestinian artist Mona Hatoum, who has broken into the international art scene, and about whom a number of books and catalogues have been written. (5)

While many articles had been published in Arabic since the 1970s about contemporary Palestinian art, in newspapers, political and art journals, and magazines, not a single book on the subject was undertaken until the early 1980s, and those books were limited in geographic, historical, and demographic scope. (6) Most histories of Palestinian art fell to Palestinian artists themselves to write. This is the case with the first book that attempted a comprehensive study of Palestinian art, published in 1989 by the Palestinian painter Isma'il Shammout. (7) Indeed, it was at the initiative of the Arab League Education Culture and Science Organization (ALECSO) that Shammout undertook his project in 1985, though it was not published under ALECSO auspices for reasons he does not explain. Although pioneering, Shammout's book was worthy more for the illustrations that it included than for the modest historical narrative it provided. The author, one of the major Palestinian artists who emerged after 1948 (and who passed away in 2006) gave a summary overview of the history of Palestinian art and biographical information about a large number of Palestinian artists, including himself, and described his role in the contemporary art movement among Palestinians; the book also includes a synopsis in English. Shammout followed this in 2000 with a book coauthored with his wife, the Palestinian painter Tamam al-Akhal, on their separate but related murals. (8)

ALECSO's project proceeded with the publication of many books about the modern art history of Arab countries, including Palestine. This time, it was the Palestinian painter Kamal Boullata who was commissioned for the effort. (9) The result, *Conjuring Up Space: A Study of Contemporary Palestinian Art*, is the most comprehensive and impressive history in print of Palestinian art from the nineteenth century to the present, comprising historic Palestine and the Palestinian diaspora around the globe. Only available in Arabic, his trailblazing book is currently being translated to English--and none too soon, given the richness of its research and analysis. (10) The scope of Boullata's book is staggering, as is his theoretical elaboration on the development of the different movements in Palestinian art since the advent of modernity.

As a well-known painter, Boullata has always straddled the multiple worlds of painting and writing art history and art criticism. From his first essay on revolutionary art in the Palestinian experience, published in 1970 in Arabic and English, to *Conjuring Up Space* (sometimes translated as "The Recovery of Place"), nothing short of a magnum opus, Boullata's historical writings and art criticism in Arabic, English, and French have become the standard by which all other writings on Palestinian art are measured. (11) The book's argument is partly based on some of Boullata's earlier studies, especially his entry on Palestinian art for the *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, published in Arabic in 1989, and more recently in English in 2000, (12) and his contribution to the catalogue published by the Paris-based *Institut du Monde Arabe* on the occasion of an exhibition of contemporary Palestinian art at the institute's Museum of Modern Art in 1997. (13) *Conjuring Up Space* develops these earlier arguments, supplementing them with more field research, archival documents, and interviews.

Boullata traces the rise of modern painting in Palestine to the Arab Christian iconographers of the seventeenth century, who were influenced by Byzantine iconography but developed their own style. The Syrian Yusuf al-Halabi of Aleppo was the main seventeenth-century innovator; his style dominated eighteenth-century Greater Syria, including Ottoman Palestine. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, local Palestinian Arab Christian iconographers became known for their own style, soon to be dubbed the "Jerusalem Style," in contrast to the "Aleppo Style" that followed al-Halabi's pioneering icons. The Jerusalem Style is characterized by brighter colors and does away with the gold rims framing Byzantine icons, replacing them with a yellow strip or flower blossoms, like those used in local Islamic miniatures and embroidery. This is in addition to the Arabic calligraphy that adorns them. The new icons were also characterized by the smooth slope of the shoulders, the oval shape of the crown, and the stylized details of the painted faces: thin, crescent-shaped eyebrows, and eyes that look at the viewer not in the static fashion of Byzantine icons, but rather with childlike innocence and astonishment. By the second half of the nineteenth century, Palestinian icons adorned the houses of Palestinian Arab Christians as well as the Arab Orthodox churches dotting Palestine's landscape. They were sought after across the Arab East. Palestinian iconographers were engaged by churches as far as Damascus and Tripoli and signed their icons with the word "al-Qudsi," meaning "the Jerusalemite," following their first names. Thus, the eighteenth-century Palestinian iconographer Hanna al-Qudsi, who started the trend, was followed by 'Issa al-Qudsi, the brothers Ishaq and Andoni Ni'mah al-Qudsi, and, in the nineteenth century, Mikha'il Muhanna al-Qudsi, Yuhanna Saliba al-Qudsi, and others.

Boullata is attentive to the political conditions that informed the development of Palestinian iconography: resistance to the Ottoman-imposed Greek church patriarchs who took over Arab churches following the Ottoman conquest in the sixteenth century. The Arabization of icons was part of a local resistance to such encroachment and increased with the rise of national consciousness in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire. The demand to re-Arabize the Orthodox Arab church increased in the twentieth century with some victories, but resistance to Greek control, especially in Occupied Palestine and in Jordan, continues to this day unabated (48-49).

The nineteenth century brought massive transformation to Palestinian society, first with the advent of European missionary schools and churches, which affected the production of art, and later with the arrival of the first European Jewish colonial settlers in the 1880s and 1890s, which affected almost every other aspect of Palestinian life. The Jewish colonists founded the Bazalel School of Art and Crafts in Jerusalem ; in line with Zionist racialist ideology, it segregated the European Jewish colonists from Yemeni Jewish immigrants and exploited the local knowledge of the native Palestinians. The school employed Palestinian and other Arab craftspeople from Damascus and Cairo but dismissed them as soon as the European Jewish colonists mastered the crafts (75-77).

Around this time, the European churches, whether Catholic, Protestant, or Russian Orthodox, brought with them their own religious art and icons, to which Palestinian society was introduced for the first time. The Russians, being closer to Arab Orthodox Christianity, had the most impact on local iconographers. Nicola Sayigh (d. 1930) and his disciples Khalil Halabi (1880-1964), Dawud Zalatimu (1906-1996), and Zulfa al-Sa'di (1905-1988), among others, adopted Russian motifs as well as new materials and in the process inaugurated modern Palestinian art. Sayigh's studio, and after him those of Halabi and Jamal Badran (1909-1999), Zalatimu's role as a teacher of art education at Palestinian schools, and the new styles of al-Sa'di and others constituted the beginnings of a secular modern Palestinian painting. It was Sayigh who started this secularizing shift, which was most important for the emergence of modern painting in Palestine (55-57). The process of secularization occurred at a time of nationalist mobilization against Ottoman rule. This explains the interest of young painters such as al-Sa'di in painting nationalist portraits (67).

Zalatimu's and Halabi's apprentices continued some of their traditions in the post-Nakba period. Shammout was an elementary-school student at the Lydda school, where Zalatimu taught art education, in the early 1940s during the British Mandate, and Boullata was apprenticed at Halabi's studio in East Jerusalem in the 1950s. Zalatimu, Halabi, and al-Sa'di painted in oil as well as watercolor. Their subjects encompassed portraits of contemporary and historical personages and imagined scenes from the Arab-Islamic past. At the first National Arab Fair, held in Jerusalem on the premises of the Supreme Muslim Council in 1933, al-Sa'di's paintings and her traditional Palestinian embroidery were displayed side by side in the Palestine pavilion.

Al-Sa'di's paintings received critical acclaim, making her, at twenty-eight, the first established Palestinian woman modern painter. Although most pre-1948 Palestinian paintings and icons were looted by the advancing Jewish forces, many of al-Sa'di's works were saved. She was able to dismount and roll some of them into a tube that she carried with her when she fled Jerusalem as the Zionist assault on the Arab neighborhoods of the city intensified in the spring of 1948. Al-Sa'di became a refugee in Damascus , where she taught art classes to Palestinian refugee children for the rest of her life. She never painted again.

Boullata's research on this period is pioneering; he is the first historian to extend the modern history of Palestinian art to the years before 1948; (14) all other writers, including himself in his earlier, pre-1989 scholarship, had located the beginning of the modern era in 1948. The shift in focus is crucial: before Boullata's 1989 Encyclopedia entry, the 1948 Catastrophe had been viewed by both Palestinian and other historians as the moment when modern Palestinian art emerges as a full-fledged endeavor. The subsequent corrective reveals how mistaken that assumption was and how much buried history it sidestepped. While Boullata had always addressed pre-1948 art in Palestine , mentioning the icon-makers, it was only in his 1989 encyclopedia article that he began to address pre-1948 art in detail. His monumental research in the 1990s uncovered further details of this unknown history, on which he has continued to elaborate in *Conjuring Up Space*. Indeed, more than a third of this book is dedicated to an excavation of this buried tradition. The rest explores Palestinian painting and sculpture in the fractured Palestinian communities: those who remain in Israel , those living in the West Bank and Gaza , refugees living in Arab countries, and communities of refugees living outside the Middle East more generally. For Boullata, 1948 does not mark the beginning of Palestinian modern art, but rather marks a partial rupture within it: "Those richly talented students who apprenticed in Lydda in the studio of the Jerusalemite Dawud Zalatimu began [after 1948] to plough their ways through to express that special experience of the Palestinian exodus" (111). As an artist, Boullata himself continued the tradition of his Jerusalem teacher Khalil Halabi.

The book is full of rarely seen illustrations of Palestinian art and the text has a dizzying wealth of details about the works, biographies of artists, and the political and artistic contexts of art production. One of Boullata's key observations about Palestinian art has to do with the division between figurative and abstract painting, which he relates to physical proximity to--and distance from--historic Palestine (221-22). He also links it to the differing kinds of physical and spiritual exile experienced by all Palestinians, whether the five million who still live in the country (in Israel and in the Israeli-Occupied West Bank and Gaza), stripped of their national patrimony by Zionist conquest, or the five million living outside it and prevented from returning to it by the Israeli state, whose laws only allow foreign Jews to "return" to the country. For Boullata, Palestinian art produced after 1948 in Palestine concerned itself mostly with content (form being malleable), while diasporic Palestinian art that adopted various

abstract styles concerned itself with posing central questions about the nature of form, of movement, and of the dimensions of visuality itself. This is characteristic of Boullata's own abstract paintings, which use Arabic calligraphy in elaborate geometric forms. Indeed, in the 1970s and 1980s, Boullata reused the grid he had learned to use at Halabi's studio to copy iconic images, reapplying it to draw angular letters in his calligraphic paintings. His most recent work, which continues to focus on geometric forms, is inspired by the Islamic architecture of Spain and by the urban structure of the old city of Jerusalem, where he was born. Boullata's explorations of the optical effects of intricate geometric forms are reminiscent of some Op Art works, especially those of Bridget Riley.

It is rare to encounter an artist not formally trained in academic research able to produce first-rate scholarship. Boullata's status as both artist and art historian gives this well-theorized work an unusual aesthetic sense. His book does not limit itself to painters and sculptors but also discusses ceramists and cartoonists, as well as installation artists; prominent among these is Mona Hatoum, who, although one of a long list of Palestinian women artists, is nevertheless the first to have acquired an international reputation. Boullata's feminist sympathies are everywhere in evidence, especially as he studies a field of production where Palestinian women are widely represented. Indeed, he had already devoted an article in English to Palestinian women painters. (15) Moreover, his book *Palestinian Art 1850-2005* (in English, with a preface by John Berger) is forthcoming in 2008 from Saqi books.

Another welcome addition to the growing body of works on Palestinian art is Samia A. Halaby's *Liberation Art of Palestine: Palestinian Painting and Sculpture in the Second Half of the 20th Century*. Published a year after Boullata's book, Halaby's is the first to appear on the subject in English. Less ambitious in length and historical scope, it offers a brief historical survey and reproduces illustrations of Palestinian paintings. Halaby is herself a Palestinian artist who lives in the American diaspora, where she has produced abstract paintings since the 1960s. Like Boullata's, her book is divided into separate albeit brief chapters dealing with Palestinian artists by geographic location in the different parts of Palestine and the diaspora. Unlike Boullata's, however, Halaby's narrative is encumbered by a heavy dose of 1960s political vocabulary not often encountered in contemporary writing.

ILLUSTRATION OMITTED]

Much of the history that Halaby narrates is similar to that presented by Boullata. But unlike his comprehensive presentation, her book focuses on a specific phase of Palestinian art, associated with the ascent of the Palestinian Liberation Organization to political authority among Palestinians in the late 1960s and the international solidarity this generated in the 1970s and beyond. Her book, based on research and numerous interviews with Palestinian artists, documents the struggle and efforts of Palestinian artists in Palestine and especially in Lebanon in the face of Israeli invasions and occupations.

Palestinian art exhibitions following the Nakba were first held in Cairo, and later in Egyptian-controlled Gaza (where the work of Shammout was featured). After the founding of the PLO, and its takeover later by the Palestinian resistance movement, Shammout set up and headed a PLO Art Section. Palestinian artists began to congregate around the PLO and hold meetings as early as 1969. Several art exhibitions were held in Jordan, where the PLO was based until 1970. In addition to the PLO's Art Section, an Arts and Heritage Section was established in Lebanon, led by Tamam al-Akhal, Shammout's wife. Shammout was elected the first president of the Union of Palestinian Artists (UPA) and the Union of Arab Artists. The two artists presented exhibitions of Palestinian art in the following years in Beirut, where the PLO was then based, and across the Arab world. The rival Plastic Arts Section, started by the PLO's Unified Information Department, was run by the Jordanian sculptor Muna Sa'udi, who organized international exhibitions not only in the Arab world, but also in European cities. These exhibitions soon attracted artists from around the world: artists from twenty-six countries participated in the International Art Exhibition for Palestine, organized in Beirut in 1978 by Sa'udi. Contributions included works by Joan Miro, Eduardo Chillida, Roberto Matta, and Antoni Tapies, among others. These were offered as gifts to the exhibition and formed the nucleus of the Museum of Solidarity with Palestine established by the PLO in Beirut. The museum, later renamed the Museum of Palestine, was bombed by the Israelis during their 1982 invasion of Lebanon (Halaby, 21). Fearing a repetition of the massive 1948 looting of Palestinian property, Sa'udi and other artists scrambled to save as many of the surviving works as possible from the shattered museum. Although many works were destroyed, Matta's and Miro's were saved.

The UPA also engaged in the 1970s in major debates on aesthetics and the nature of liberation art. An important symposium was organized for this purpose in 1979 in Lebanon and drew dozens of Palestinian artists from around the world. In 1980, the UPA established the Al-Karamah Gallery to exhibit the works of Palestinian artists, but that too was targeted for destruction by Israeli bombers in 1982. If some Palestinian art survived the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, the PLO archives did not. The Israeli invaders carted off the entire PLO political and cultural archives to Israel. It is important to stress that Zionist colonization and appropriation of Palestine and the Palestinians were

never limited to the land but always extended to culture, art, and even food. The importance of the cactus plant, sabra, in Palestinian culture, for example, was immediately appropriated by the Zionist colonists as the name they accorded their offspring born in colonized Palestine. The theft of Palestinian homes, their contents, including art objects and furniture, coupled with Israel's ongoing archaeological efforts to erase the Palestinian presence on the land and invent a Jewish one have always gone hand in hand with the confiscation of Palestinian land and the physical expulsion of the Palestinians from it.

Resistance to these Israeli colonizing efforts, however, has persisted: artists' unions, galleries, and museums were established by Palestinians not only in the diaspora, but also in the Occupied West Bank, where artists set up the League of Artists in 1972 (Halaby says it was 1973, 26). Though denied a license to operate by the Israeli military governor, they continued to meet until the Israelis relented in 1980 and granted them permission to convene. The League organized a number of exhibitions in the 1970s and 1980s, despite Israeli military censorship, which criminalized not only the Palestinian flag but also the use of its four colors (black, white, green, and red) in tandem in any painting, poster, or even in personal clothing. The Israelis often arrested artists, closed down galleries, and confiscated works of art. Arson was used to wreck galleries and destroy works. In the West Bank, art stored offsite survived the burning down of a gallery; in Gaza, where the fourth exhibition organized by the League was staged, the art was not so lucky. Although the works were stored at the Red Crescent Society (the Red Cross equivalent), arsonists, acting at the behest of the Israeli military, burned the entire collection (27). (16)

In 1979, a new gallery, Gallery 79, was established in Ramallah as the permanent home for the work of local Palestinian artists. It was closed by the Israeli military after only eight shows. Before closure, the Israelis harassed gallery artists. In September 1980, the Israeli military governor, accompanied by soldiers, entered the gallery and confiscated five paintings and a number of posters. Four hours after the opening of the first solo show of the Palestinian painter Sulayman Mansur, the Israelis confiscated all his works and closed the gallery. Halaby's account of these horrid events, though chilling, is presented as part and parcel of Palestinian life and art under Occupation (27-28). Her book, although not as comprehensive as Boullata's, provides valuable supplementary information, especially on the history of the PLO's involvement in promoting Palestinian art.

Gannit Ankori's *Palestinian Art* is the most recent book on the subject in English. An Israeli associate professor of art history and theory at Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Ankori not only presents an overview history of modern Palestinian art, but also attempts to theorize Palestinian artistic production along the axes of hybridity, continuity, and what she calls "dis-Orientalism." The book is divided into three history chapters, which treat an assortment of media, including embroidery, ceramics, and photography, and five chapters dedicated to major Palestinian artists (Mansur, Boullata, Hatoum, Khalil Rabah, and a number of Palestinian-Israeli artists). It straddles the general and the particular, providing the English reader with information about the variety of artistic genres and their history among Palestinian artists. Like Boullata's and Halaby's books, Ankori's also includes a large number of illustrations of works of art. To this extent, and in addition to Halaby's book, Ankori's book is modestly useful as an English introduction to a body of modern art and art history that remains all but invisible to English readers. Unfortunately, it also repeats and even embodies some of the very cultural appropriations it aims to analyze and critique.

Ankori posits two theoretical postulates to frame her book: the first summarized by her neologism "dis-Orientalism," in reference to Palestinian art's "dismantling of an exclusively Western perspective ... and the self-empowerment of oriental artists. The term ... also alludes to a literal (i.e., geographical) 'loss of the orient' ... and is linked to ... the displacements and uprootings that dominate post-Nakba Palestinian experience [which] are often translated by artists into visual images or spatial installations that convey a sharp and composite sense of disorientation" (22). Another aspect of "dis-Orientalism" relates to the "fluid" position occupied by Palestinian art and artists "between their oriental matrix and the dominant culture of the West" (22). Ankori's second theoretical point relates to the "hybridity" of Palestinian art and that its "mode of deconstructing the East-West dichotomy may be linked to other post-colonial cultural trends" (22).

Ankori's characterization of Palestinian art as postcolonial is an early signal of her perspective; Palestinians and the Palestinian setting continue to exist in times and spaces that are thoroughly colonial and colonized. It would be more accurate to describe the Palestinian situation as similar not to "post colonial" trends, but to anticolonial cultural trends. While many countries across Asia, Africa, and Latin America exist in a state of postcolonial repression and tyranny, the Palestinian experience is defined by a current settler-colonial regime, predicated on a national-racial-religious oppression of the Palestinians. In that, it is not unlike the South African experience under apartheid or that of Rhodesia under the UDI regime.

In her book, Ankori conducts a kind of negotiation between revealing the impact of colonization and occupation on the Palestinian cultural experience and downplaying its full scope. For example, she addresses the monumental theft and looting of Palestinian works of art by the conquering Zionists during the 1948 war. Yet, while

acknowledging the "looting and other criminal actions committed by Jewish soldiers," from the outset she adopts the official Israeli government line that "looting and vandalism were not official Zionist policy, and that the leadership tried to prevent these crimes from being perpetrated" (26). She does add that "the numerous references to this phenomenon also indicate that looting was widespread and that ultimately it was not curbed" (27). She quotes David Ben-Gurion as issuing instructions that Jewish soldiers be prevented from vandalizing Christian and Muslim shrines in Jerusalem, but does not note that he remained silent on the looting of Palestinian private homes and institutions, which other Israeli historians have amply documented, and which apparently Ben-Gurion did not oppose. (17) Although she accepts the official Israeli position that the government opposed looting, she also notes that the government "did not advocate the return of Arab property to its rightful owners. Arab property that was not looted was placed in the hands of the Custodian of Abandoned Property, only to be sold or otherwise distributed to Israeli institutions and [Jewish] citizens" (28). She also quotes from Israeli government archival documents that list the nature of the property stolen by the Israeli state as including picture frames, art supplies, pianos, violins, Persian carpets, and "oil paintings" (29), and that advertisements were published in the Israeli newspaper Ha'Aretz as late as November 28, 1956, offering to sell Palestinian furnishings, including oil paintings, to "the highest bidder" (29). Ankori's understanding of the historical events surrounding the Nakba is deeply marred by and embedded in Israeli ideological and factual distortions, which often inform her analysis of Palestinian art.

Ankori's book has been mired in controversy since before its publication. She had consulted Boullata in the course of writing, interviewing him at his home in Menton, France, in July 2001 and February 2002 (231, n. 3). Boullata reviewed her page proofs and asked that she acknowledge her use of some of his ideas. In response, she added more references to Boullata in the text and the endnotes, which, however, did not redress the problem. Palestinian Art repeats Boullata's key assertion that modern Palestinian art does not begin in 1948, but Ankori claims that idea as her own contribution (24). The book purports to offer "a tentative revisionist view of Palestinian art history," in which the claim that the modern Palestinian art movement began in 1948 is replaced by the claim that 1948 marks a "hiatus in the development of a multivocal and vibrant art scene that had evolved in pre-Nakba Palestine" (21).

Soon after the book was published, the West Bank-based League of Artists in Palestine issued a statement accusing Ankori of plagiarizing the work of Boullata in the first three chapters of her book and of continuing an Israeli colonial tradition of "appropriating the intellectual production" of the colonized, just as "the Israeli authorities are continuing to steal the remaining lands of our homeland while suppressing historical facts." The statement rejected Ankori's dedication of her book to Palestinian artists. (18) This controversy has become a cause celebre in Palestinian and wider Arab art and journalistic circles.

The last decade or so has seen the interest in and publication of a number of books on Arab cultural and artistic production by European and American researchers whose knowledge of these subjects is a recent acquisition and whose training in the Arabic language, with few exceptions, ranges from the mediocre to the nonexistent. These include Western curators, art dealers, and conference organizers, as well as academics and lay historians. It is in this context of increasing Western interest in aesthetic and cultural activity in the Arab world that Ankori's book has appeared. Her apparent lack of Arabic--as evidenced in her research--places her squarely among this cohort of Western "experts" on Arab art and culture. (19)

The flap copy of Ankori's book calls it "unprecedented" and "groundbreaking" and Ankori herself asserts unequivocally: "I suggest that Palestinian art of the pre-Nakba period was not as scholars usually claim 'an embryonic art movement ... based on assimilated Western models, [that] was killed at birth' [here she footnotes Boullata's 1988 essay "Israeli and Palestinian Artists: Facing the Forest"], but rather a dynamic and richly textured artistic milieu--composed of distinct crafts, architecture and photography, as well as secular and religious painting" (24). Yet she draws heavily on the important findings and formulations of Boullata. In a footnote she asserts that her argument "differs from Boullata's assertion that the 'embryonic' art movement was never allowed to develop as it was 'aborted' in 1948" (223, n. 29). That quotation is from a 1988 essay. (20) Thus, in insisting that she is the first scholar to offer a "revisionist" view, she cites Boullata's 1988 writing and not his post-1989 work.

Indeed, Ankori contrasts herself with Boullata throughout Part I of her book, (21) arguing against Boullata's research of the 1970s and 1980s while appropriating his research of the late 1980s and after. (22) By selecting certain quotes from Boullata's earlier research and eliding his later elaborations and rethinking, Ankori opposes her account to his, when in fact the position she adopts is wholly based on Boullata's post-1989 scholarship. I should stress here that all of Boullata's ideas that are included in his Arabic publications are repeated in his English and French publications after 1989. His findings in his Arabic book have also been based in part on his 1997 French essay (23) and subsequently repeated by him in post-2000 (the date of the book's publication) English and French publications, which are based on his Arabic book. Indeed, many of Boullata's ideas were repeated in a 2004 essay published in a volume to which Ankori also contributed. This is no mere difference of

opinion or lack of familiarity with sources but rather a blurring and misrepresenting of existing sources of historical research.

For example, in his 1970 article, Boullata speaks of 1948 as the beginning of Palestinian art; Ankori cites this as characteristic of his current work. She deviates from this characterization of Boullata's work only once, when she cites his encyclopedia entry on Palestinian art, published in English in 2000 (and in Arabic in 1989), in which he divides modern Palestinian art into three historical periods, starting in 1885. However, she cites that text to reassert her claim that Boullata posited no continuity between Palestinian art before and after 1948: "More recently, and particularly, since 1997, Boullata has published several valuable essays and an illustrated book in Arabic that offer a broader view of Palestinian art. Although he continues to assert that 'Palestinians ... did not develop a visual art tradition before the second half of the twentieth century,' he does reconstruct what he calls an early phase of 'picture making' based on Christian icon painting, which he writes 'was aborted' in 1948" (18). But to be precise, Boullata said that Palestinians "did not develop a distinctive visual tradition before the second half of the twentieth century" [emphasis added]. (24) Ankori also cites as evidence the statement from his encyclopedia entry that "the possibility of an indigenous art was aborted as a result of the uprootedness of Palestinian society" (Ankori. 18), eliding his assertion in the same text that "by emulating their Russian mentors, [Palestinian artists from Jerusalem at the dawn of the twentieth century] crossed over from religious to secular painting. Their prevailing influence was decisive in the development of Palestinian art." (25) To strengthen her claim, Ankori limits his "unique and most significant" contribution to his discussion of the icon tradition, bypassing his important historicization of the secularization of Palestinian art by former icon makers (18).

Ankori's second theoretical claim, that Palestinian art is "hybrid" and that this hybridity is related to the experience of uprooting and displacement, are points previously made by Boullata. While Ankori discusses postcolonial theoretical works on hybridity which she wants to apply to her discussion to Palestinian art, she does not cite Boullata's references to hybridity in his own work: "Palestinian visual art," Boullata wrote in 2004, "which has been characterized by hybrid components, proceeded to grow in a fluid space in which border cross ings between different forms of expression has become an intrinsic characteristic." (26)

Ankori tells us that she began to work on Palestinian art history in the mid-1980s, and that there was then "scant" and "limited source material" (23). (27) While this may be true, in the interim two decades before her book was published, numerous books and articles by Palestinian art historians have appeared, including the new research by Boullata. Moreover, in her prior publications, Ankori never made any of the claims she now advances in her 2006 book.

The selective citation of Boullata by Ankori to weaken his role in the construction of a new Palestinian art history and strengthen hers is an illustration of the general Palestinian experience in the colonial encounter with Zionism. Whatever form of solidarity Ankori believes her book to be enacting with the Palestinian people, these misrepresentations have been registered by the Palestinian artists to whom she dedicated her book as congruent with other forms of Zionist colonial appropriation. Ignoring the most important findings of Boullata, elaborated meticulously in his 2000 book and in essays from the late 1980s through the 1990s, she claims as her own the conclusion that "pre-Nakba art exists as a vital cultural genealogical force and as a significant historical foundation for the Palestinian art of today" (24). Had it not been for her disingenuous claim of novelty and her serious misrepresentations and elisions of Boullata's work and arguments, Ankori's book would have served as a welcome synthesis in English of the already published work of Palestinian historians.

Palestinian art today continues to struggle against impossible odds. Its encounter with colonialism continues apace. The second intifada, which erupted in 2000 in response to the failure of the peace process, marks an important development in this recent history. Indeed, the attack on the Ramallah-based Sakakini Cultural Center (established in the mid-1990s by the Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Culture) in 2002 by the Israeli army during its reinvasion of the West Bank demonstrated that Israel 's war against the Palestinians continues to target all aspects of their physical, spiritual, and cultural lives. In the few years since it was established, the Sakakini Center had become a hub of cultural and artistic life in the Occupied Territories , until Israeli soldiers sacked it on April 13, 2002. The director of the Center, Adila Laidi, later sued the Israeli defense ministry for reparations for the vandalism and destruction of property at the Center. She was informed several months later that the culprits had been apprehended, but no reparations have been paid. (28) It is unfortunate that Ankori's synthetic book, through its failure to address adequately the allegations of misrepresentation and appropriation, participates in this ongoing cultural and political injustice.

Whether living in their colonized homeland or as refugees outside it, denied their right of return by colonial laws, Palestinians continue to refuse to surrender their aesthetic sensibilities and their ongoing efforts to document the history of their culture to the ugliness of their colonial encounter with Zionism. They and their art continue

undeterred by their persistent tragedy, whether Israel grants them permission to do so or not.

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The Boullata book, which is in Arabic, may be ordered from alecso-information@email.ati.tn.

The Halaby book may be ordered from HTTB Publications, PO Box 965 , New York . NY 10013. Information: halaby@verizon.net.

1. Richard Stafford, "Modern Art Comes to the West Bank ," BBC News, September 27, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/53843_24.stm.

2. Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual* (New York: Vintage, 1996), 44.

3. Books on Palestinian architecture have been mainly published by the Ramallah-based Palestinian Center for Architectural Conservation, or Riwaq. On eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Palestinian rural architecture, see Su'ad 'Amiry. *'Imarat Qura al-Karasi, min Tarikh al-Iqta' fi Rif Filastin fi al-Qarnayn al-Thamin 'Ashar wa al-Tasi' Ashar* (Throne Village Architecture: Palestinian Rural Mansions in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries) (Ramallah: Riwaq. Markaz al-Mi'mar al-Sha'bi, 2003). On Palestinian urban mansions, see Diala Khasawneh, *Memoirs Engraved in Stone: Palestinian Urban Mansions* (Ramallah: Riwaq. Center for Architectural Conservation and Institute for Jerusalem Studies, 2001). On photography, see Walid Khalidi, *Before Their Diaspora: A Photographic History of the Palestinians 1876-1948* (Washington, DC: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1984) and 'Isam Nassar. *Laqatat Mughayirah: Al-Taswir al-Mahalli al-Mubakkir fi Filastin, 1850-1948* (Differing Snapshots: Early Local Photography in Palestine, 1850-1948) (London : Mu'assasat 'Abd al-Muhsin Qattan, 2005). On cinema, the most recent such books are Qays al-Zubaydi, *Filastin fi al-Sinema* (Palestine in Cinema) (Beirut : Mu'assaasat al-Dirasat al-Filastiniyyah. 2006), and Hamid Dabashi, ed., *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema* (London : Verso, 2006).

4. See for example the catalogue for the 100 Martyrs--100 Lives exhibition, which opened in Ramallah at the Sakakini Cultural Center in February 2001, a few months after the second intifada had started. The exhibition was dedicated to the first 100 Palestinian civilians killed by Israeli Occupation troops. It toured abroad afterward and had a big opening at the Palestinian-owned Darat al-Funun Gallery in Amman , Jordan . See *Ma'at Shahid-Ma'at Hayah* (Ramallah: Markaz Khalil al-Sakakini al-Thaqafi, 2001). See also *Made in Palestine* , the catalogue to the exhibition held at Station Museum , Houston . Texas (Houston : Ineri. 2004). The exhibition toured a number of US cities in 2003.

5. See Michael Archer, Guy Brett, and Catherine de Zegher, eds., *Mona Hatoum* (Phaidon: New York, 1997); Laura Steward Heon. ed., *Mona Hatoum: Domestic Disturbance*, exh. cat. for MASS MoCA, 2000-1, and Santa Fe , New Mexico (Pownal , VT : Storey Publishing, 2001); and *Mona Hatoum: The Entire World as a Foreign Land* , exh. cat. for Tate Britain , London , 2000 (London : Tate Gallery Publishing, 2000).

6. See for example 'Isam Badr and Nabil 'Anani, *Al-Fann al-Tashkili al-Filastini fi al-Ard al-Muhtallah* (Palestinian Art in the Occupied Territories) (Ramallah: Gallery 79, 1984).

7. Isma'il Shammout, *Al-Fann Al-Tashkili fi Filastin* (Art in Palestine) (Kuwait: Matabi' al-Qabas, 1989).

8. Isma'il Shammout and Tamam al-Akhal, *Jidariyyat Filastiniyyah, al-Sirah wa al-Masirah* (Palestinian Murals, Biography and Journey) (Amman : Al-Iqbal Lil-Tiba'ah, 2000).

9. Boullata is how the painter spells his name in English and French and how I will refer to him throughout this text, except when citing his Arabic publications, where I will transliterate his name in accordance with standard academic transliteration of Arabic into English. This also applies to other names, such as Shammout, whose correct transliteration is Shammut.

10. *Conjuring Up Space* has been translated by Pauline Homsy Vinson and is now being reviewed by Boullata; publication is forthcoming.

11. See Kamal Boullata, "Towards a Revolutionary Arab Art," in Naseer Aruri, ed., *The Palestinian Resistance to Israeli Occupation*, Arab-American University Graduates Series No. 2 (Wilmette, IL: Medina University Press International, 1970), 92-106; and Kamal Bullatah, "Nahwa Fann 'Arabi Thawri" (Towards a Revolutionary Arab Art),

Mawaqif 9 (May-June 1970): 26-44.

12. Kamal Bullatah [Boullata], "Al-Fann al-Tashkili al-Filastini khilal Nisf Qarn, 1935-1985" (Palestinian Art in Half a Century, 1935-1985), *Al-Mawsu'ah al-Filastiniyyah*, vol. IV (Damascus-Beirut, 1989), 869-917, and Kamal Boullata, entry on "Art," in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, rev. ed., ed. Philip Mattar (2000; New York: Facts on File, 2005), 81-91.

13. Kamal Boullata, "Recouvrer la distance: Une etude sur l'art palestinien: 1847-1997," in *Artistes palestiniens contemporains*, exh. cat., March 27-May 25. 1997 (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), 11-41.

14. Kamal Bullatah, "Al-Fann al-Tashkili al-Filastini khilal Nisf Qarn, 1935-1985" (Palestinian Art in Half a Century, 1935-1985), and Boullata, "Recouvrer la distance ..."

15. Kamal Boullata, "The World, the Self, and the Body: Pioneering Women in Palestinian Art," in *Self-Portrait: Palestinian Women's Art*, ed. Tal Ben Azvi and Yael Lehrer (Tel Aviv: Andalus, 2001), 167-78.

16. For this and similar events, see also 'Isam Badr and Nabil 'Anani, 30-33.

17. In this regard, see especially Tom Segev, *The Seventh Million: The Israelis and the Holocaust*, trans. Haim Watzman (New York: Hill and Wang, 1993), 161-62.

18. Bayan Sadir 'an Rabitat al-Fannanin al-Tashkiliyyin fi Filastin (Statement issued by the League of Palestinian Artists), July 2006, 1-2 (posted online on September 8, 2006, at <http://umkahlil.blogspot.com/2006/09/league-of-palestinian-artists-rejects.html>). The League was established in 1972 and represents Palestinian artists living in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. It is a branch of the Union of Palestinian Artists, established in 1969, which represents Palestinian artists living in the diaspora. To evaluate Ankori's books, the League appointed a reading committee which included non-Palestinians, among them the Lebanese novelist and literary editor Elias Khoury, the Jordanian sculptor Muna Sa'udi, and the Omani poet and cultural critic 'Abdullah H. al-Ma'ani.

19. For example, she cites Boullata's 2000 Arabic book in a general fashion in several footnotes without quoting from it or providing page numbers. See chapter I, n. 15 (223), chapter 2, nn. 34. 35 (226), and chapter 3, n. 12 (228). The only time she cites the book without quoting from it, but providing page numbers, is in chapter I, n. 17 (223), in reference to a discussion of the Palestinian artist Jamal Badran, when she refers to pages "4-5." The book's pagination, however, starts at page 13 and the actual discussion of Badran in *Conjuring Up Space* is on pages 68-71. Ankori does cite an English translation of one chapter of the book (which in fact, I had undertaken), but she cites it for Boullata's discussion of icon painting, when the translated and unpublished chapter discusses post-1948 Palestinian artists in Israel. See Ankori, 37 n. 34 and the text of her note 34 on 226.

20. Kamal Boullata, "Israeli and Palestinian Artists: Facing the Forest," in *It's Possible: 24 Israeli and Palestinian Artists Unite for Peace*, the catalogue for an exhibition of works on paper organized by the New York Ad Hoc Committee of Artists and Writers for Israeli-Palestinian Peace, and curated by Boullata and Yona Fisher of the Israel Museum, October 12-November 20, 1988. The exhibition was held at the Great Hall Gallery, Cooper Union, New York. In fact, Ankori takes the statement out of context. The full passage reads: "Palestinian pioneers picked up paint and brush in an attempt to capture the images of their ancestral landscape. No sooner did artists such as Khalil Halaby (1889-1964), originally an icon painter from Jerusalem, and Jamal Badran (b. 1905), a traditional craftsman of Islamic art from Haifa, begin to explore the medium, than the 1948 war rendered each of them an unwelcome refugee.... Thus an embryonic art movement under native skies, based on the assimilation of Western models, was killed right at birth" (3). The essay appeared in *Third Text* 7 (Summer 1989): 77-95. A Hebrew translation of it appeared in *Kav Art Quarterly* 10 (July 1990): 170-75.

21. See her discussion of Boullata's historical writings on pp. 16-18. For example, on p. 18, she states, "My views on some of these issues diverge from Boullata." For more explicit contrasts, see also pp. 24 and 223, n. 29.

22. In addition to the book under review here and articles cited above in notes 10, 12, and 13, Boullata's other post-1990 writings include, inter alia, "Artists Remember Palestine in Beirut," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 32, no. 4 (Summer 2003): 22-38; "Asim Abu Shaqra: The Artist's Eye and the Cactus Tree," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30, no. 4 (Summer 2001): 68-82; "Border Crossing and the Makings of Palestinian Art," in *What Remains to Be Seen: Art and Political Conflict: Views from Britain, Israel, Palestine, and Northern Ireland*, ed. Gordon Hon (London: Multi Exposure, 2004), 22-27.

23. Kamal Boullata, "Recouvrer la distance ..."

24. Kamal Boullata, entry on "Art," in *Encyclopedia of the Palestinians*, 81.

25. *Ibid.*, 82.

26. Kamal Boullata, "Border Crossing and the Makings of Palestinian Art," 27. Other references abound. On uprooting and displacement as central to Palestinian art and aesthetics, he wrote in 1997: "To trace the development of Palestinian art means to delve into the chaos of an unconventional trajectory whose broken and discontinued forms reflect the essential nature of displacement and perpetual instability of the Palestinian experience." Boullata, "Recouvrer la distance ..." II. Indeed, the experience of displacement deeply informs Boullata's distinction between Palestinian figurative and abstract art.

27. Ankori published relatively little on this subject before about 2003. Her articles from the 1990s include "The Other Jerusalem: Images of the Holy City in Contemporary Palestinian Painting," *Jewish Art* 14(1988): 74-92, on West Bank artists who take Jerusalem as a subject for their paintings; "Beyond the Wall: On Some Tangential Points between Palestinian Art and Pre-State Israeli Painting," *Kav Art Quarterly* 10 (July 1990): 163-69 [in Hebrew]; "Behind the Walls: The Real and Ideal Jerusalem in Contemporary Palestinian Art," *Jewish Art* (1997-98): 575-85; "Israelische und palastinensische Kunst: Punkte der Berührung, Punkte des Gegensatzes," in *Wohin? Israelisch-Palastinensische Kunstausstellung*, exh. cat., ed. Gabriele Heins (Hamburg, 1995), 10-24; and two short biographies of artists: "Transfigurer le banal en métaphore: l'art de Khalil Rabah" and "Voies choisies: l'art de Souleiman Mansour," in *Artistes palestiniens contemporains*, exh. cat., March 27-May 25, 1997 (Paris: Institut du Monde Arabe, 1997), 70-71 and 76-77, repr. in English and Arabic by Al-Mamam Art Center, East Jerusalem, 1999. More recently she has published "'Dis-Orientalisms': Displaced Bodies/Embodied Displacements in Contemporary Palestinian Art," chap. 3 in *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, ed. Sara Ahmed, Claudia Castaneda, Anne-Marie Fortier, and Mimi Shellers (Oxford: Berg Press, 2003), 59-90; "Re-Visioning Faith: Christian and Muslim Allusions in Contemporary Palestinian Art," *Third Text* 20, no. 3/4 (May/July 2006): 379-90; "The 'Dis-Orientalist' Art of Raeda Saadeh," in 2006 Biennale of Sydney: *Zones of Contact*, exh. cat., ed. Charles Merewether (Sydney: Biennale of Sydney, 2006), 240.

28. For a thorough account of the establishment and work of the Khalil Sakakini Cultural Center, including its vandalism, see the account of its director Adila Laidi-Hanieh, "Arts, Identity, and Survival: Building Cultural Practices in Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 28-43.

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