

BACHELOR PROGRAM OF CONTEMPORARY VISUAL ART

COVA1300

HISTORY AND CULTURE OF BODY

ORIENTALISM

Definition

In its original medieval usage, the "Orient" referred to the "East," but whose "East" did this Orient represent? East of where?

It reflects a Western European view of the "East"

The label of the "Orient" hardly captures the wide swath of territory to which it originally referred: the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia.

EDWARD SAID DEFINITION OF ORIENTALISM

Said uses "orientalism" to explain the academic and artistic tradition which promoted a deprecatory and hostile view of the East by the West, which he believed were shaped by European imperialism in the 1700's and 1800's.

He argued that a dominant European political ideology created the notion of the Orient in order to subjugate and control it.

ORIENTALIST PAINTINGS

- Orientalist paintings and other forms of material culture operate on two registers. First, they depict an **exotic** and therefore racialized, feminized, and often sexualized culture from a distant land. Second, they simultaneously claim to be a **document**, an authentic glimpse of a location and its inhabitants
- The invention of photography did little to contribute to a greater authenticity of painterly and photographic representations of the "Orient" by artists, Western military officials, technocrats, and travelers.

GLOBAL IMPERIALISM AND CONSUMERISM

- Trends of cultural appropriation included a consumerist “taste” for materials and objects, like porcelain, textiles, fashion, and carpets, from the Middle East and Asia. The ability of Europeans to purchase and own these materials, to some extent confirmed imperial influence in those areas.
- The phenomenon of World’s Fairs and cultural-national pavilions (beginning with the Crystal Palace in London in 1851 and continuing into the twentieth century) also supported the goals of colonial expansion. (The fairs objectified the otherness of non-Western peoples, cultures, and practices.)



WHO WERE THE FIRST ORIENTALISTS AND WHAT DID THEY DEPICT?

- The start of Orientalism coincided with the Romantic age, and its biggest star was [Eugène Delacroix](#). Other artists include: [Jean-Léon Gérôme](#), [John Frederick Lewis](#), [Gustav Bauernfeind](#) and [Ludwig Deutsch](#)
- Genre scenes became the norm, reflecting everyday life in these faraway lands. Subjects — usually looking relaxed and content — included rug merchants, men at prayer, hookah smokers, chess players and traders in a bustling market.
- Many of these paintings use a vibrant color palette and are imbued with eroticism, while others are a more subdued type of propaganda.

REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME

The French artist Jean-Léon Gérôme's depicts a naked youth holding a serpent as an older man plays the flute— charming both the snake and their audience.

A naturalistic style to suggest that he himself observed the scene. In doing so, he suggests such nudity was a regular and public occurrence in the "East." He constructs a layer of exotic "truth" by including Arabic tilework

Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Snake Charmer*
c. 1879



REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: JEAN-LÉON GÉRÔME



Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Cafe House, Cairo* (1884)

REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: HENRIETTE BROWNE

He provides a counter narrative to Gerome

Represents women fully clothed
Harem scenes

Not passive

Henriette Browne, *A Visit: A Harem Interior*,
c. 1860



OSMAN HAMDI



Osman Hamdi
Bey, *A Young Emir
Studying*, 1878

REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: EUGÈNE DELACROIX

Delacroix was fascinated by the Orient, which includes present-day Turkey, Greece, and North Africa, visiting Morocco in 1832. Yet, instead of highlighting the seductive quality of his exotic subjects, Delacroix took an avid interest in the violence and cruelty in Oriental subjects.



Eugène Delacroix, *Convulsionists of Tangier*, 1837-1838

REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: ANTOINE-JEAN GROS

Orientalist characteristics, including the architectural elements, dress and figures. A type of propaganda, Napoleon in the Plague House at Jaffa was commissioned by Napoleon himself, who wanted Gros to depict a scene when Napoleon went to [Jaffa](#) to visit French soldiers who were sick with the plague.

Antoine-Jean Gros, Napoleon in the Plague House at Jaffa, 1804



REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: HORACE VERNET



Horace Vernet, *The Arab Tale Teller* (1833)

John Frederick Lewis - *Study for 'The Courtyard of the Coptic Patriarch's House in Cairo'* c.1864



REPRESENTING THE ORIENT: INGRES



Ingres, The Turkish Bath, 1862,

PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION

Photographs were frequently staged and embellished to appeal to the Western imagination. The invention of photography in 1839 did little to contribute to a greater authenticity of photographic representations of the "Orient". Instead, photographs were frequently staged and embellished to appeal to the Western imagination.

Bonfils family, *Young Woman from Lebanon in Party Dress*



PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION

From about 1870 on, the photographs were normally taken outside the studio walls.



Sakkah (water carrier), Egypt, about 1872, Otto Schoefft

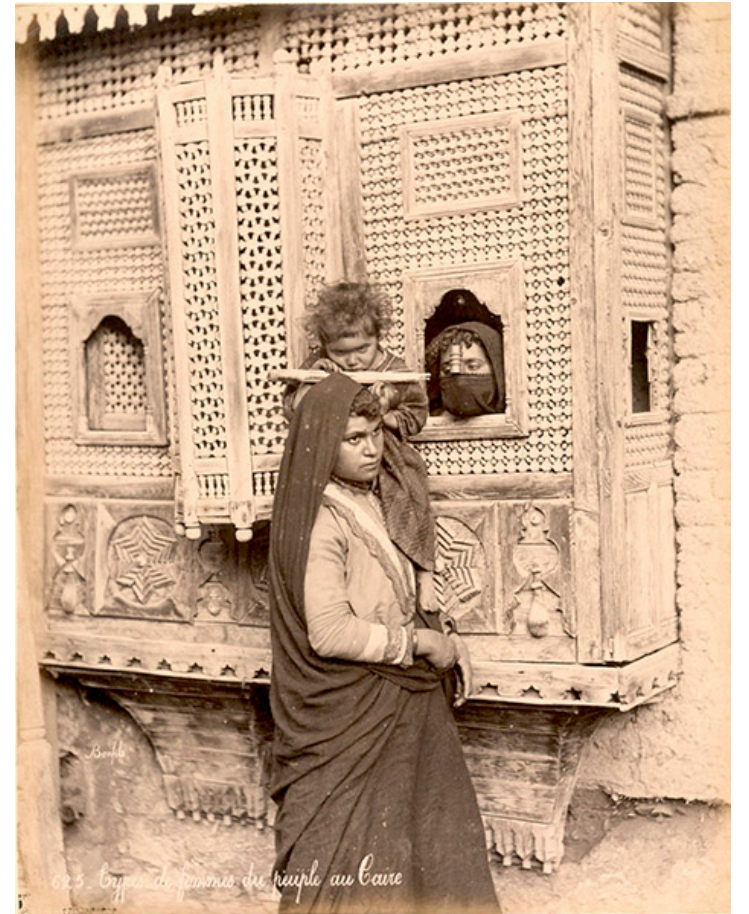
PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION

One object is surprisingly often represented: a latticed wooden screen the Egyptians call *mashrabiyyah*.

The function of the *mashrabiyyah* can be compared with that of a one-way mirror in our culture. It permits you to see out without being seen.

They claim to depict everyday life, but in reality they are staged.

Types de femmes du peuple au Caire (Types of women from the people of Cairo), about 1880



PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION

These images tried, in accordance with European values, to establish a kind of communication between the visible street life and the private life of the Egyptian people, although the latter remained to a large extent hidden, not only to foreigners but even to fellow Egyptians.

Femmes arabes sur Baudet (Arabic women on donkeys), about 1875
Zangaki Brothers



PHOTOGRAPHY AND REPRESENTATION



Group portrait, "the party of the Bacchante,"
datable to march 22, 1882,

WHAT IS THE PROBLEM WITH THIS FIM?

- <https://ceejourownvoice.wordpress.com/2018/10/26/a-whole-new-world-orientalism-in-disney-movies/>

VIDEOS

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfeAxw502Hs>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0Pf3SL6GKs&t=65s>

ART ACTIVITY

**THINK AND THEN WRITE ABOUT A STEREOTYPES YOU ARE
AWARE OF AND HOW THE STEREOTYPE IS PROMOTED.
(10MIN)**