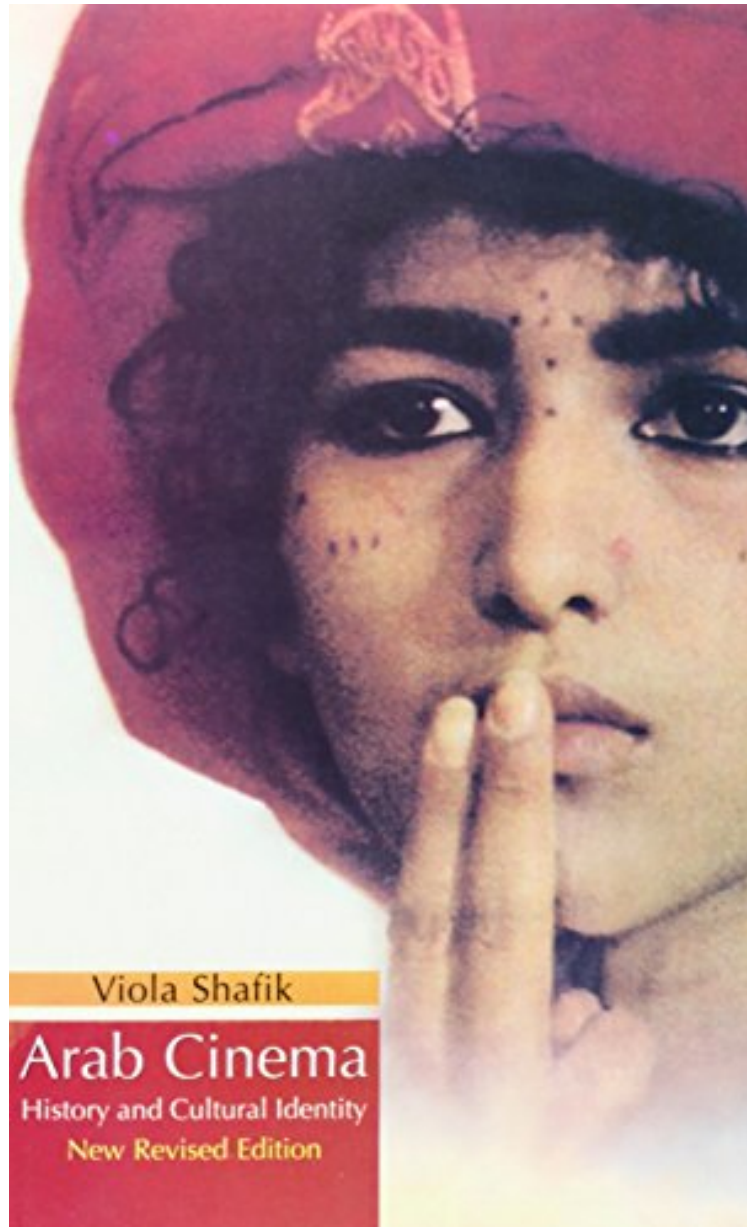


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Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity

Viola Shafik

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Since it was first published in 1998, Viola Shafik's Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity has become an indispensable work for scholars of film and the contemporary Middle East. Combining detailed narrative history economic, ideological, and aesthetic with thought-provoking analysis, Arab Cinema provides a comprehensive overview of cinema in the Arab world, tracing the industry's development from colonial times to the present. It analyzes the ambiguous relationship with commercial western cinema, and the effect of Egyptian market dominance in the region. Tracing the influence on the medium of local and regional art forms and modes of thought, both classical and popular, Shafik shows how indigenous and external factors combine in a dynamic process of cultural repackaging. Now updated to reflect cultural shifts in the last ten years of cinema, this revised edition contains a new afterword highlighting the latest developments in popular film and in cinema d'auteur (art house movies), with a special focus on Iraq, Lebanon, and Palestine. While exploring problematic issues such as European co-production for Arab art films, including their relation to cultural identity and their reception in the region and abroad, this new edition introduces readers to some of the most compelling cinematic works of the last decade.

"Shafik discusses the history, genres, and esthetics of Arab film. She is very good at analyzing its antecedents in Arab literary, theatrical, storytelling, and musical traditions. She gives broad coverage to typical genres and is particularly good on realism and the cinema d'auteur. Although Shafik focuses on Egyptian films, which comprise well more than half of all Arab films made, she discusses the films of the other Arab nations as well, delineating the differences and similarities among them. The author devotes the preponderance of the book to the films themselves, but she is also thorough in her analysis of the conditions political, religious, economic that determine what films are made, how they are made, and where they are seen. The book was first published in 1998; for this edition, Shafik updates the history, discussing in detail some of the seminal films of the last decade. Intelligent, perceptive, and elegantly written, this volume deserves a broad readership. SUMMING UP: Highly recommended. All readers, all levels." --CHOICE, Currents for Academic Libraries About the Author Viola Shafik is a freelance film scholar and filmmaker. She is the author of Popular Egyptian Cinema: Gender, Class, and Nation (AUC Press, 2007) and Arab Cinema: History and Cultural Identity (AUC Press, 1998; revised edition, 2007.)