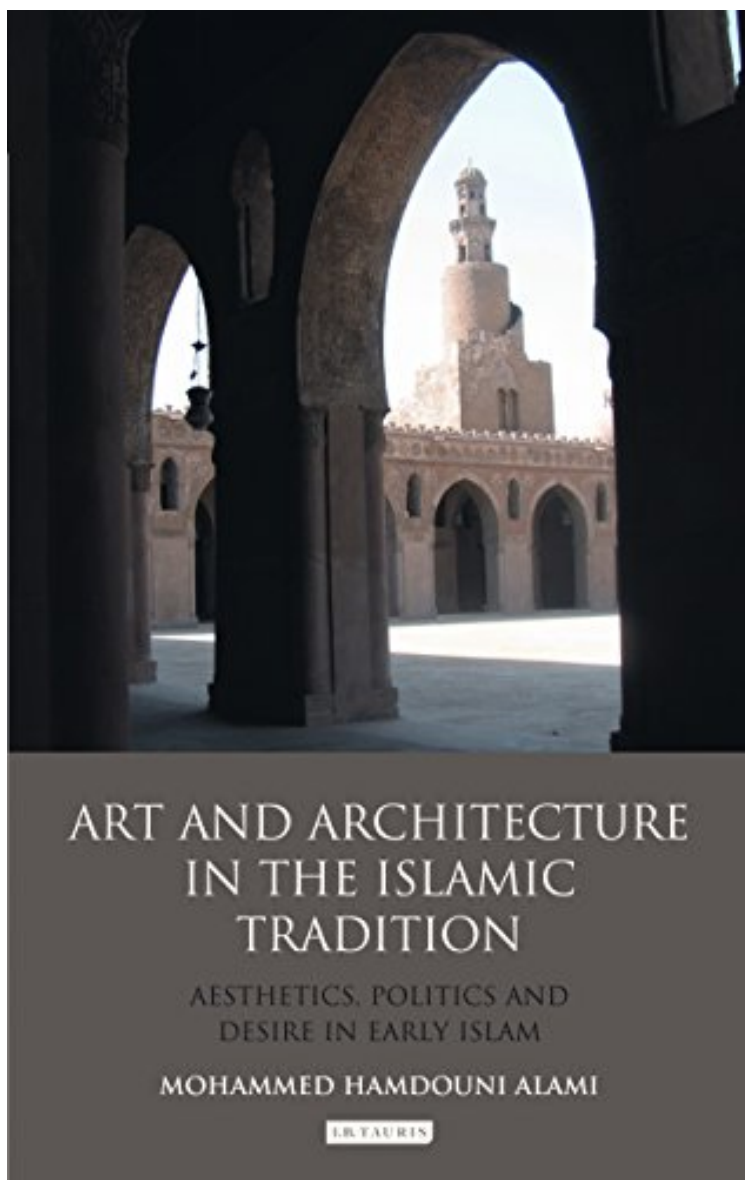


(Free pdf) Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in Early Islam

Art and Architecture in the Islamic Tradition: Aesthetics, Politics and Desire in Early Islam

Mohammed Hamdouni Alami

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What is 'art' in the sense of the Islamic tradition? Mohammed Hamdouni Alami argues that Islamic art has historically been excluded from Western notions of art; that the Western aesthetic tradition's preoccupation with the human body has meant that Islamic and Western art being perceived as inherently at odds. However, the move away from this 'anthropomorphic aesthetic' in Western art movements, such as modern abstract and constructivist painting, have presented the opportunity for new ways of viewing and evaluating Islamic art and architecture. Drawing upon classical Arabic literature, philosophy, poetry, medicine and theology, along with contemporary Western art theory, the author uncovers a specific Islamic theoretical vision of art and architecture based on poetic practice, politics, desire and the 'gaze'. In so doing, he addresses the lack of recognition given to early Islamic thought and aesthetics in comparison with other historical periods and traditions. This is an important step toward a critical analysis of the contemporary debate around the revival of Islamic architectural identity- debate intricately embedded within opposing Islamic political and social projects throughout the world.

'This is an original, provocative and stimulating work...in its insistence on the need to locate the production and reception of early Islamic architecture within a broader aesthetic context, and its use of literary sources to this end, it breaks new ground. It will undoubtedly forge a number of new and lively conversations on the history of Islamic architecture, but will also have a wide appeal to those working in the fields of art, history and literature of the Middle East.' Professor Finbarr Barry Flood, Institute of Fine Arts and Department of Art History, New York University
'There are many adjectives that could sum up this timely book: insightful, well-crafted, engaging... Alami's book needs to be ruminated and digested in order to be fully appreciated- not only by art historians but also by anyone who is interested in Arabo-Muslim culture.' Dr. Cleo Cantone, author of *Making and Remaking Mosques in Senegal* (2012)
About the Author Mohammed Hamdouni Alami is Associate Researcher at the University of California, Berkeley. He holds a PhD from the Department of Near Eastern Studies from UC Berkeley. He has also worked as a practicing architect.