



## *Cosmopolitan Radicalism*

Exploring the intersections of visual culture, design and politics in Beirut from the late 1950s to the mid-1970s, this compelling interdisciplinary study critically examines a global conjuncture in Lebanon's history, marked by anticolonial struggle and complicated by a Cold War order. Against a celebratory reminiscence of the 'golden years', Beirut's long 1960s is conceived of as a liminal juncture, an anxious time and space when the city held out promises at once politically radical and radically cosmopolitan. Zeina Maasri examines the transnational circuits that animated Arab modernist pursuits, shedding light on key cultural transformations that saw Beirut develop as a Mediterranean site of tourism and leisure, a nexus between modern art and pan-Arab publishing and, through the rise of the Palestinian Resistance, a node in revolutionary anti-imperialism. Drawing on uncharted archives of printed media this book expands the scope of historical analysis of the postcolonial Arab East.

ZEINA MAASRI is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Brighton (UK) and a former faculty member at the American University of Beirut (Lebanon). Her work is concerned with the histories and politics of visual culture and design in the modern Middle East. She is the author of *Off the Wall: Political Posters of the Lebanese Civil War* (2009) and the curator of related exhibitions and online archival resources. She is also the co-editor of *Mapping Sitting: On Portraiture and Photography* (2002).

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# Cosmopolitan Radicalism

The Visual Politics of Beirut's Global Sixties

ZEINA MAASRI

University of Brighton



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*In memory of my father*

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## *Preface and Acknowledgements*

This project has long been in the making, travelling with me as I relocated my academic life from Beirut to Brighton; and I would like to thank a number of individuals and institutions whose collaboration, guidance and support have made it possible.

My biggest debt of gratitude is to Abboudi Bou Jawde. Much of the archival material used here is culled from his magnificent collection of printed matter from the modern Arab world. The sheer amount of stuff he has collected, assiduously cared for and saved from otherwise being thrown out, together with his generosity in sharing this material and his excitement over seeing it used, should make any institutional archive and librarian blush. I met Abboudi in 2005 while conducting research for my previous project on the political posters of Lebanon's civil war. As I folded the latter into an online archival resource ([signsofconflict.org](http://signsofconflict.org)), Abboudi and I embarked on a new project: to identify new material and to develop, digitize and catalogue new collections of Arabic posters and illustrated books, in the strong conviction that these should also be made available for future academic and public use. This is especially so – as any historian of the conflicted Arab East and modern Lebanon in particular would know – because public institutional archives are 'logistical labyrinths' (Scalenghe and Sbaiti 2003: 68) if and when they do exist. Without Abboudi's collections, our long discussions, treasure hunts, precious findings and his immense support, this book would not be what it is today.

I began my research on this project when I was a faculty member in the Architecture and Design Department at the American University of Beirut. While teaching courses on the history and theory of graphic design and visual culture, I came to realize the dearth of such scholarship as related to the Middle East. This gap had to be compensated for in my teaching; and so the archival collections I was building with Abboudi found their first audience in my classes. Students' enthusiasm further encouraged my project. I owe a lot to them and to my colleagues at AUB for having motivated me to embark on this research. I want to thank especially Howayda al-Harithy, Marwan Ghandour, Mona Harb and Mona Fawaz, for being the genuine and generous scholars I have been lucky to begin my



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## *Note on Transliteration and Translation*

Arabic words and names have been transliterated according to a simplified system. All diacritical marks have been omitted except for the *'ayn* and hamza. Names of individuals are spelled according to their preferred English or French transliteration when commonly adopted as such. The prefix 'al-' is used rather than 'el-' for names generally except when individuals concerned have adopted a preferred transliteration (e.g. el-Touni or Ellabbad).

All translations from Arabic and French sources in this book are mine, except when otherwise specified.