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Sommario/riassunto	Lavishly illustrated with exotic images ranging from Renoir's forgotten Algerian oeuvre to the abstract vision of Matisse's Morocco and beyond, this book is the first history of Orientalist art during the period of high modernism. Roger Benjamin, drawing on a decade of research in untapped archives, introduces many unfamiliar paintings, posters, miniatures, and panoramas and discovers an art movement closely bound to French colonial expansion. Orientalist Aesthetics approaches the visual culture of exoticism by ranging across the decorative arts,

colonial museums, traveling scholarships, and art criticism in the Salons of Paris and Algiers. Benjamin's rediscovery of the important Society of French Orientalist Painters provides a critical context for understanding a lush body of work, including that of indigenous Algerian artists never before discussed in English. The painter-critic Eugène Fromentin tackled the unfamiliar atmospheric conditions of the desert, Etienne Dinet sought a more truthful mode of ethnographic painting by converting to Islam, and Mohammed Racim melded the Persian miniature with Western perspective. Benjamin considers armchair Orientalists concocting dreams from studio bric-à-brac, naturalists who spent years living in the oases of the Sahara, and Fauve and Cubist travelers who transposed the discoveries of the Parisian Salons to create decors of indigenous figures and tropical plants. The network that linked these artists with writers and museum curators was influenced by a complex web of tourism, rapid travel across the Mediterranean, and the march of modernity into a colonized culture. Orientalist Aesthetics shows how colonial policy affected aesthetics, how Europeans visualized cultural difference, and how indigenous artists in turn manipulated Western visual languages.

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