

# Visual Syntax of Race

## Arab-Jews in Zionist Visual Culture

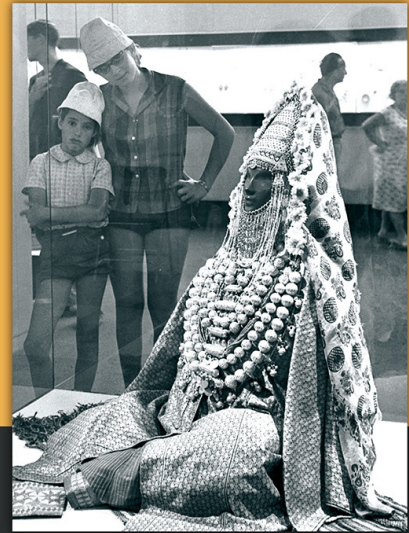
Analyzing the visual syntax and display rhetoric applied in newspaper photos, national historical albums, and museum exhibitions, Noa Hazan shows that although racial thought was and still is verbally suppressed in Israel, it is vividly present in its nonverbal official and public visual sphere. The racist perspective of newspaper editors, book publishers, photographers, and museum curators were morally justified in its time by such patronizing ideals as realistic news coverage or the salvation of Jewish heritage assets. Although their perspectives played a dominant role in establishing a visual syntax of race in Israel, they were not seen as racially discriminating at the time. The racist motifs and actions are revealed here by colligating multiple cases into a coherent narrative in retrospect.

This book points to a direct influence of the anti-Semitic discourse in Europe on the discourse towards Mizrahim in Israel, highlighting the shared visual stereotypes used in both Europe and the fledgling state of Israel. Indeed, the same abominable qualities attributed to the Jewish Other by their European Christian counterparts- such as abnormal breeding process, feminization (due to the law of circumcision) dual loyalty, the tendency for illness or the allegedly low mental level- were replicated in popular discourse by the heads of the Zionist establishment about Mizrahim. While in Europe, the abnormal behavior of Ashkenazi Jews was understood as the outcome of their ancient Jewish religion. In the Israeli case, the abnormal behavior and manners of Mizrahim were understood as an outcome of the primitive Arab cultures they grow up in before being brought into the light of modern Israeli society. Engraved in their body, these cultural traits were depicted and understood as racial-biological qualities and were visually manipulated to silo Ashkenazim and Mizrahim in Israel as distinct racial types.

**Noa Hazan** is Assistant Professor of Classical, Middle Eastern, and Asian Languages and Cultures at Queens College of the City University of New York.

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Noa Hazan

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