



WESTERN FEMINISM AND CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN ART FIND COMMON GROUND IN CULTURES OF CENSORSHIP

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE—What can we learn about the development of art over the centuries by examining the way censorship has underpinned artworks and artistic representation? In *The Artist, The Censor, and The Nude* (DoppelHouse Press, September 12, 2017), author Glenn Harcourt grapples with this question and others using several case studies brought to the fore by American painter Pamela Joseph in her recent “Censored” series. Joseph’s 2012–15 body of work was created in response to seeing books of canonical Western art that were pirated and either digitally- or hand-censored in Iran by anonymous government workers. Pages from the “found object” of the censored books in combination with Joseph’s paintings, along with artwork by contemporary Iranian artists, make the book visually intriguing, timely, and fascinating.

Joseph’s “Censored” series serves as the departure point for Harcourt’s rigorous, culturally measured discussion about the art and politics of “The Nude” in varying cultural contexts, including the United States, Europe, and Iran. Harcourt argues that Joseph’s appropriation of the found images serves as both feminist critique and a window toward larger questions in art. These include an examination of the evolution of abstraction; the role of women in western society, as seen through the history of painting the body; the effects of western art on cultures outside the west (sometimes referred to in Iran as “west-toxication”); and how artists in non-western countries, specifically those in Iran living under rules of censorship that specifically prohibit representation of the body, engage with the history of western art found in the censored books.

Harcourt’s discussion of Iranian contemporary artists focuses on censorship tropes in portraiture and includes works by Aydin Aghdashloo, Gohar Dashti, Shadi Ghadirian, Katayoun Karami, Daryoush Gharazad, Manijeh Sehhi, and others. Issues of privacy and security prevent some Iranian artist insiders from being named, but studio images as well as recipes for removal of the censored marks along with testimony from artists who are now living in exile provide reference for many English-speaking readers who don’t otherwise have knowledge of the country’s strict policies.

It is no secret that censorship occurs worldwide for various reasons. In the United States, for example, the stringent rules of the FCC strongly highlight the language and representation allowable culturally, which is different from many places in Europe. In North Korea, China and Russia, varying degrees of censorship are present and politically motivated; in many Middle Eastern countries censorship is often based on religious mores. Harcourt’s book asks us to consider the many issues around censorship in both artworks and the larger body politic, confronting the political and social meanings that are embedded in thorny questions about the visualization and representation of the body.

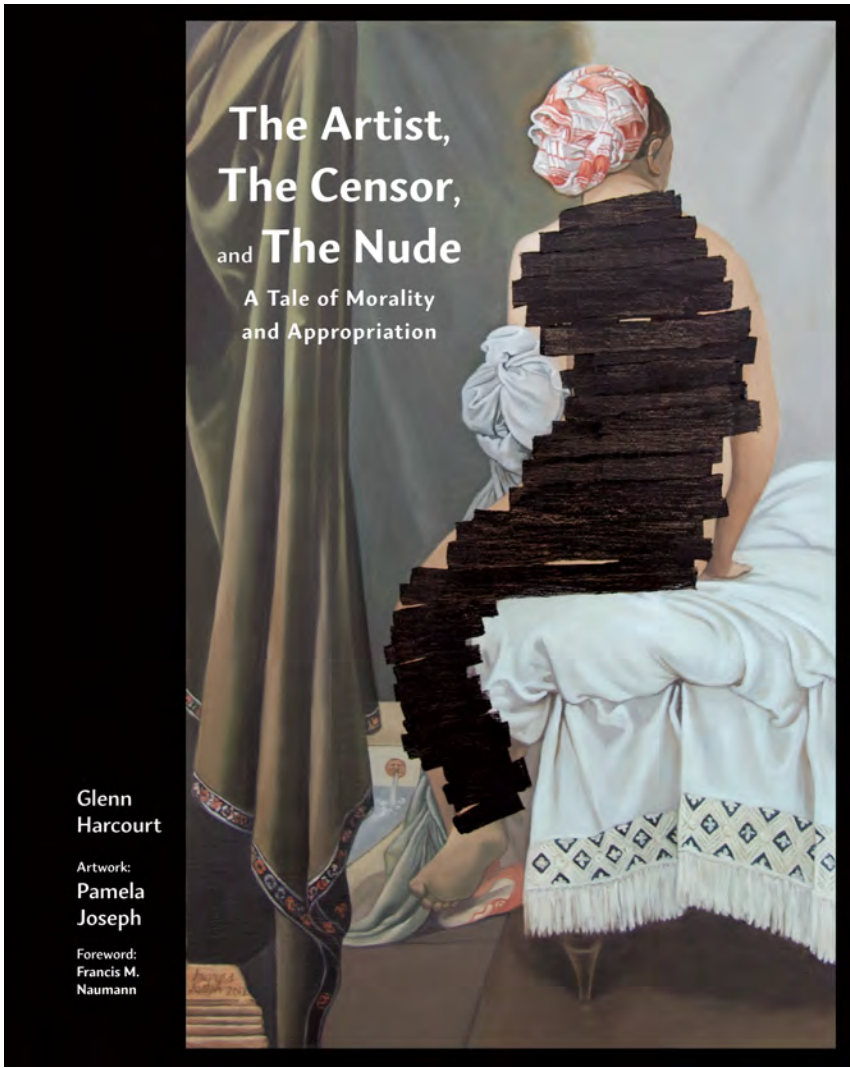
The Artist, The Censor, and The Nude will be published by DoppelHouse Press on September 12, 2017: Hardcover, \$34.95, 9780997003420, distributed to the trade by Consortium. DoppelHouse Press is an independent publishing company founded in 2011. Our mission is to connect twentieth century cultural, art and social movements with the little-known stories of émigrés, refugees, internally displaced persons, and exiles.

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DK Eyewitness Companion to Art, hand censored in Iran



Pamela Joseph, *Censored Small Fountain by Duchamp (Black)*, 2014. Oil on linen, 19 x 21 inches

Pamela Joseph understands the power of image. By manipulating such icons as Magritte, Rousseau, Courbet, Dali, and Duchamp, the new adaptations are not only outrageous and humorous, but laced with absurdist dark humor. —BOMB

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This hybrid book examines the art and politics of "The Nude" in various cultural contexts, featuring books of canonical western art censored in Iran. Glenn Harcourt's rigorous, culturally-measured and art historical approach complements artist Pamela Joseph's appropriation of these images as feminist critique. Harcourt's discussion of Iranian contemporary artists focuses on censorship tropes in portraiture, including works by Aydin Aghdashloo, Gohar Dashti, Shadi Ghadirian, Katayoun Karami, Daryoush Gharazad, Manijeh Sehi, and others.

From the Introduction by Glenn Harcourt:

"Of all the topographies that exist in the world, that of the human body is perhaps the most relentlessly contested—both the actual body comprising flesh and blood, and the virtual body as it is written and visualized in representation. This is true of the body both male and female, and of the body both clothed and unclothed. Issues of personal and cultural identity; of sexual and theological politics; of religious and political ideology are all articulated in terms of the body and its represented image. The body as it is lived and pictured serves both to instantiate and to adjudicate cultural norms as well as to facilitate their transgression. It motivates desire, fashion, and pornography. Its representation serves as a measure of artistic skill, of fealty to pictorial tradition, or of commitment to innovation and revolution."



Pamela Joseph, *Censored Olympia by Manet*, 2014. Oil on linen, 14 x 32 inches

BIOGRAPHIES

Glenn Harcourt is a widely published critic based in Southern California who writes about the history of art and visual culture.

Pamela Joseph is a multi-media artist based in Aspen, Colorado. Her work has been shown internationally and in numerous US museums. She was also the subject of an award-winning short documentary, which focused on her long running art carnival, The Sideshow of the Absurd.

Francis M. Naumann is a scholar, curator, and art dealer in New York, specializing in the art of the Dada movement and the Surrealist periods.

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