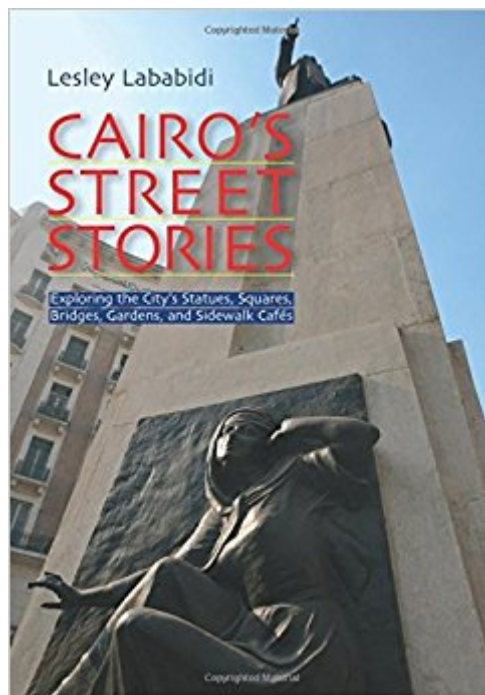




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Cairo's Street Stories: Exploring The City's Statues, Squares, Bridges, Garden, And Sidewalk Cafes



Synopsis

In 1872, Ismail Pasha, the khedive of Egypt, was the first to adopt the European custom of positioning heroic statues on public display as a symbolic message of the continuing authority of the ruling Muhammad Ali dynasty to which he belonged, but it was not until the early twentieth century and the determination of sculptor Mahmoud Mukhtar that such public art gained general acceptance, and today statues stand, ride, or sit in the streets, squares, and gardens of Cairo. Each sculpture adds a piece to the jigsaw of history spanning personalities and events that shaped the city and wider Egypt from 1805 to 1970, and here Cairo-based author Lesley Lababidi provides a unique perspective on Egyptian history through looking at more than thirty statues and monumental sculptures and the stories behind them. Between statues, she explores Cairo's growth and its multidimensional identity, as manifested in the development and changing use of city space over the centuries, and examines the relationship of Cairo's modern denizens with the landscapes, districts, palaces, archaeological sites, cafÃ©s, bridges, and gardens of their great and maddening city, the Mother of the World. Illustrated throughout with color photographs and archival pictures, Cairo's Street Stories presents a unique and lively view of the history that fashioned the city's streets and open spaces, and of the many and often unexpected uses to which its inventive inhabitants put them.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

LESLEY LABABIDI, who raised three children in Cairo, is the author of *Cairo: The Family Guide* (AUC Press, new revised edition 2006) and *Silent No More: Special Needs People in Egypt* (AUC

Press, 2002). She also updated and edited the latest edition of *Cairo: The Practical Guide* (AUC Press, 2006).

For most residents and visitors to Cairo, its streets are a thing to be endured rather than enjoyed. Forgotten amidst the traffic, noise, pollution, and bustle are the statues, streets, and stories that are the focus of Lababidi's unique book. It's well-illustrated, and well-organized, with chapters following the chronology of the city's history, and biographies of the political and cultural figures that are the subjects of the statues. The format of the book is not quite right -- too small for a coffee-table book, too large for a guidebook. The few maps are also inadequate. This is an essential book for anyone interested in the "real" Cairo and modern Egypt, which should fit into the growing body of works on Cairo's cultural and historical geography, between works by Max Rodenbeck, Samir Raafat, Diane Singerman, and others.

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