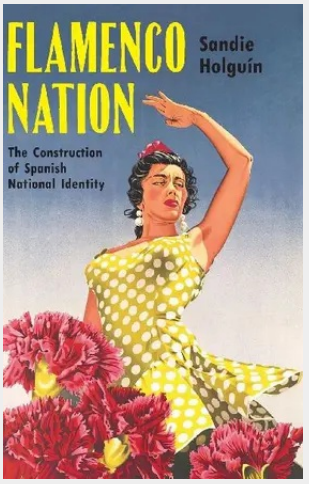
University of Wisconsin Press

Flamenco Nation

The Construction of Spanish National Identity

How did flamenco—a song and dance form associated with both a despised ethnic minority in Spain and a region frequently derided by Spaniards—become so inexorably tied to the country’s culture? Sandie Holguín focuses on the history of the form and how reactions to the performances transformed from disgust to reverance over the course of two centuries. Holguín brings forth an important interplay between regional nationalists and image makers actively involved in building a tourist industry. Soon they realized flamenco performances could be turned into a folkloric attraction that could stimulate the economy. Tourists and Spaniards alike began to cultivate flamenco as a representation of the country's national identity. This study reveals not only how Spain designed and promoted its own symbol but also how this cultural form took on a life of its own.

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44,00 €
44,00 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Nicht mehr lieferbar

Artikelnummer: 9780299321802
Medium: Buch
ISBN: 978-0-299-32180-2
Verlag: University of Wisconsin Press
Erscheinungstermin: 11.06.2019
Sprache(n): Englisch
Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2019
Produktform: Gebunden
Gewicht: 623 g
Seiten: 384
Format (B x H): 162 x 234 mm

Kundenservice Verlag Dr. Otto Schmidt KG
Neumannstraße 10, 40235 Düsseldorf | kundenservice@otto-schmidt.de | 0221-93738-997 (Inland)