

Artist: Artificial Intelligence

IDENTITY

September | October 2022

Welcome to **Ithraeyat**, a bimonthly cultural magazine produced by The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra). Created to inspire hearts and enrich minds, this Saudi inspired platform with an expansive international outlook captures the art scene and the **culture of art** by bringing together a mosaic of stories collected from across the Kingdom, the region and beyond.

Behind the scenes:

Ithraeyat is the plural of Ithra (enrichment). Magazine has its origins in the Arabic word makhzan, a storehouse.

And therefore, Ithraeyat Magazine is a storehouse of unique, enriching stories.





TABLE OF
CONTENTS:





01

**Letter from
the Editor:**

'The Many Stories of Identity,'
by Rym Al-Ghazal.



02

Cover Art:

'The Artistic Identity-less Artificial Intelligence,'
by Rym Al-Ghazal.



03

**Special
Guest Artist:**

'When Identity Shapes Art,' an interview with
legendary Dia Alazzawi by Ghadeer Sadeq.



04

**Special
Guest Artist:**

'Immersive Intimate Art,' of renowned Anila
Quayyum Agha and her latest exhibition.



05

Special Guest Columnist:

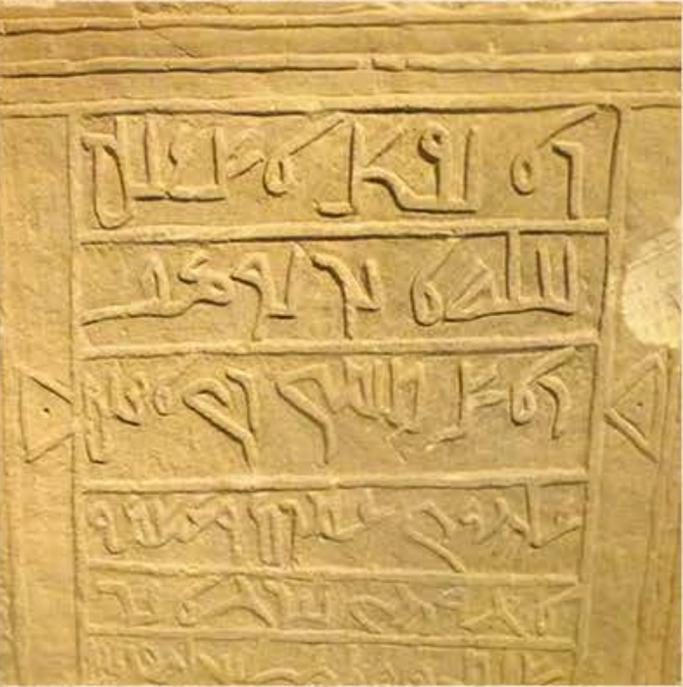
'The Art of Hospitality,' by Somaya Badr, CEO of The Art of Heritage.



06

Special Guest Columnist:

'Identity - The I and the Other,' by renowned writer Abdullah Thabet.



07

Special Feature:

'Language & Identity,' an interview with renowned historian Dr. Suleiman Al-Theeb by Ghada Al-Muhanna.



08

The Art of identity

Winning Submissions of postcards & art.



09

Special Guest Artist

'Identity through the lens,' an interview with Dhafer Al-Shehri by Manar Al-Mutairi.



10

Spotlight:

'Colourful Identities,' an interview with artist Hakim Al-Akel.



11

Spotlight:

'A Feminine Identity,' an interview with artist Alia Al-Farsi.



12

Spotlight:

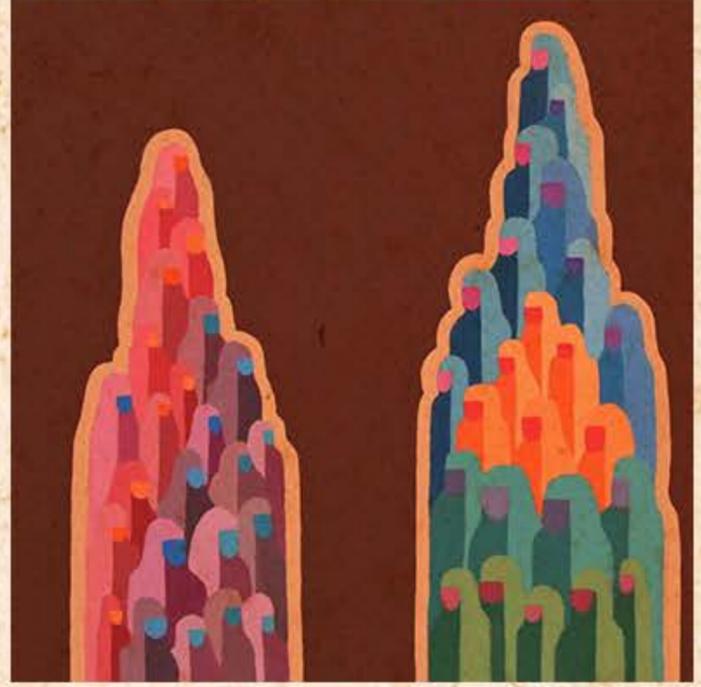
'Calligraphy as an Art of Identity,' an interview with artist Akil Ahmad.



13

Spotlight:

'Harmony of Rhythm and Art,' an interview with artist Abdullah bin Saqr.



14

Spotlight:

'Engineering Geometric Identities,' an interview with Um Kalthoom Al-Alawi by Ghadeer Sadeq.



15

Spotlight:

'Digital Graffiti,' an interview with Faisal Al-Tayeb.



16

Special Guest Columnist:

'Arab Visual Identities,' by Ghada Al-Muhanna.



17 Special Feature:

'Our Many Faces, the World as a Stage,' by Rahma Thyab.



18 Our Cities, Our Stories:

'The Al Khobar Story,' by Widian Al-Dossary, featuring photos by Bayan Al-Sadiq.



19 Arabic Treasures:

'The Identity of Saudi Coffee,' an interview with coffee specialist Abdullah Kulayb.



20 Ithra Curiosities:

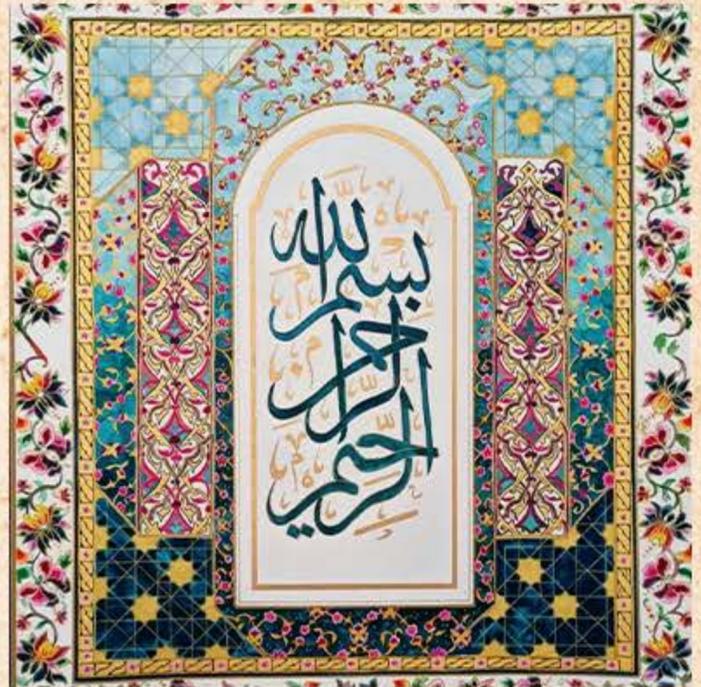
'Historical Identity,' by Rym Al-Ghazal.



21 Bridges

Cross-Cultural Conversations:

'159 Years of Connections,' an interview with H.E. Ms Janet Alberda, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.



22 Bridges

Cross-Cultural Conversations:

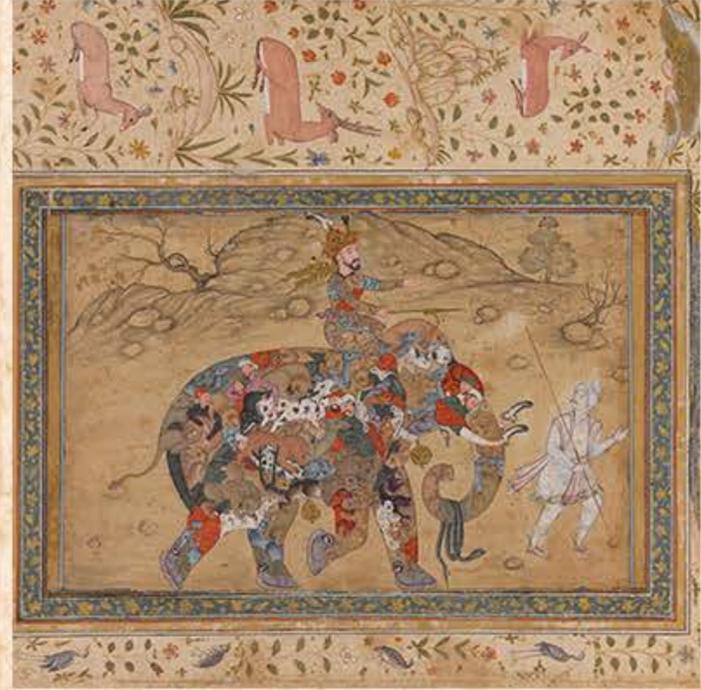
'The Art of Islamic Identity,' by Bayt Al Fann Editorial Team.



23 Bridges

Cross-Cultural Conversations:

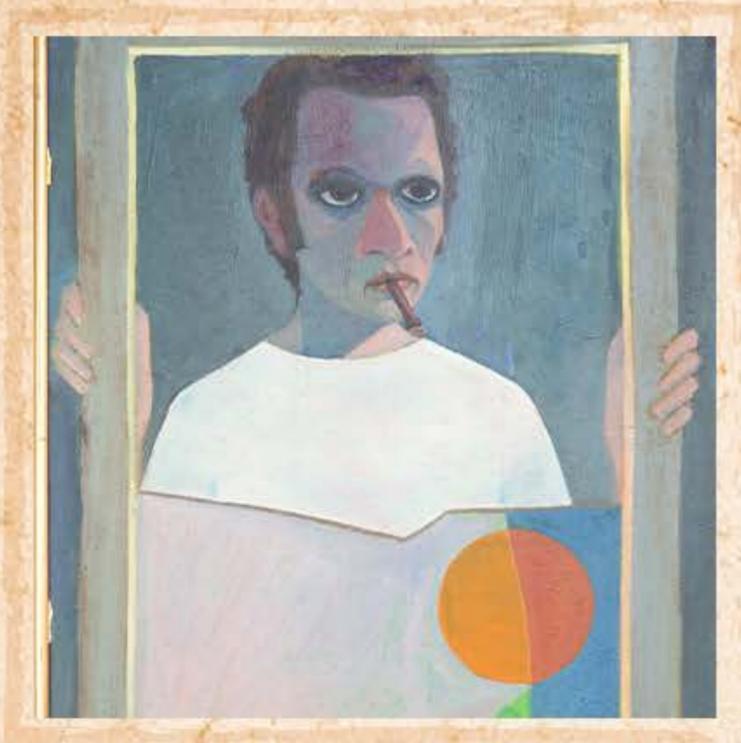
'The Red Dress,' an interview with Kirstie Macleod.



24 Bridges

Cross-Cultural Conversations:

'All That Shapes Us,' by Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum.



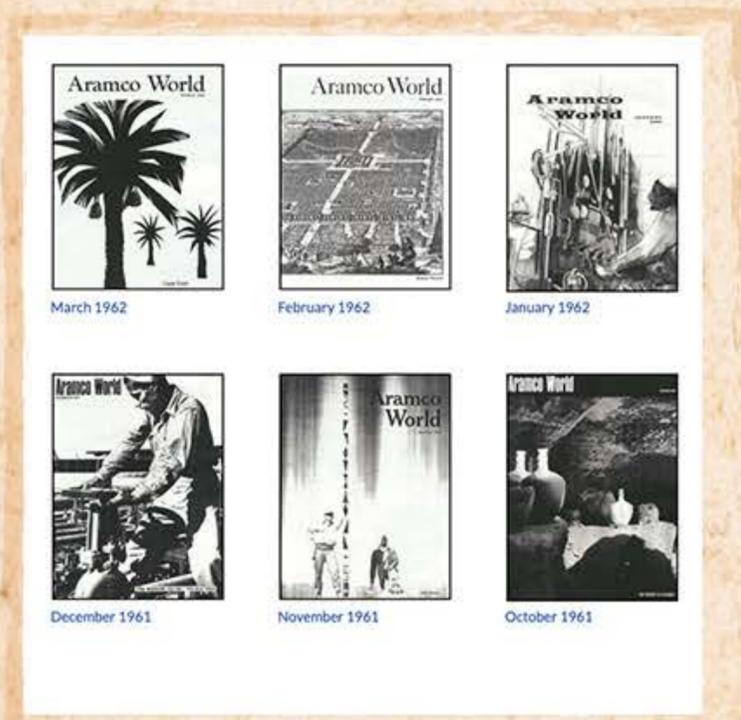
25 From the Vault:

'Reflections on Identities,' a collection from Barjeel Art Foundation by Rym Al-Ghazal.



26 From the Archives:

'Identity, a Sense of Belonging,' by Rym Al-Ghazal.



TO READ THE
FULL EDITION,
CLICK HERE.

27 From the Archives:

'The Birth of a Magazine,' by Rym Al-Ghazal.

ریم



AI generated art, with input from Rym Al-Ghazal.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

The Many 'Stories' of Identity
By Rym Al-Ghazal

“Who am I then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I’ll come up; if not, I’ll stay down here till I’m someone else....”

— English author & poet Lewis Carroll, best known for his children’s book *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* (1865) and its sequel *Through the Looking Glass* (1871).

There is a question that has always fascinated humanity, this question of self, the **‘who am I?’** question.

Answers vary in different degrees of everything from nationality, to race, to religion, to gender, to a current job or jobs once held, hobbies, sports participating in, languages spoken, passports held, being a parent or marital status, where one lives (town, city, village, on the sea, in the

mountains, etc.), horoscopes, and even lifestyle decisions like being vegan, and the kinds of pets one has. It is a deep sea of possible answers, and the waves may change based on the season and the winds of the day, bringing to surface different shells of answers.



In this special 18th edition of Ithraeyat, we artistically and philosophically explore this theme of '**identity**.' Starting with our cover, believed to be the first in Saudi Arabia, and perhaps the region, we feature an **Artificial Intelligence** (AI) generated art that embodies elements of identity.

Look closely and see if anything in the cover art piece resonates with your idea of identity.

Besides AI, we feature the great works of 'human' legendary figures like **Dia al-Azzawi**, the renowned artists **Anila Quayyum Agha, Hakim Al-Akel, Alia Al-Farsi** and many others.

We invite you to read the words of H.E. **Ambassador Janet Alberda** of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the

poetic reflections of the writer **Abdullah Thabet**, the insights of the renowned archeologist **Dr. Suleiman Al-Theeb** and heritage related stories by our regular contributors, the wonderful **Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum, and Somaya Badr, CEO of the Art of Heritage.**

There are various views, connections, and perhaps 'disconnections' to the theme of identity to reflect on in this edition. It is important from time to time, for one to sit with oneself and see which parts work, which don't anymore, and how the definitions we have of ourselves impacts our lifestyle, our decisions and our overall wellbeing. Can a single dress bring people together? I believe **The Red Dress** project did just that, and became a diverse display of various cultural identities. We also welcome our latest collaboration with **Bayt Al Fann**, and thank our partners **The Aga Khan Museum, Barjeel Art Foundation, Art of Heritage**, and **Aramco Archives** and **AramcoWorld** and all our great cultural writers for their continuous support.

However, perhaps the best gift to our readers this time, is the collection of winners of Ithraeyat's second **Postcard competition**. Every submission captures a unique story by our regional talents.



Finally, it is with great pleasure and honor that we mention Ithraeyat Magazine's recent recognition from the highly-acclaimed **Web Awards**. After launching only five months ago, our magazine received the honor for its excellence in quality, originality, design and content, and Ithraeyat is the first website from Saudi Arabia to be awarded this special award.

Thank you for making us part of your day. We honour you and all the artists as we also celebrate the 25th of October – **International Artist's Day** – paying homage to the ever elusive and creative identity of the artist and their timeless contributions. We hope you enjoy our latest 'Makhzan' (storehouse) of enriching stories.

Have a wonderful day.

CREATIVE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT THE ART OF IDENTITY WINNERS

By Ithraeyat Editorial team

First of all, the Ithraeyat editorial team wants to thank all those who submitted their creations. It was a great pleasure and an honor to meet each of you through your artworks for this competition.

The magazine will be celebrating its three years anniversary soon, and as part of its ongoing mission to be 'an ambassador' and vehicle for creativity and art, it launched its second successful competition entitled "The Art of Identity."

Some brilliant creatives have been discovered, each with their own unique answer to the question: "What does identity mean to you?"

Here are the winners, enjoy discovering them as we have.

WINNERS IN POSTCARDS CATEGORY:

THE DOOR OF MY DEAR
GRANDMOTHER'S HOUSE
Lina Al-Sikhan

Description of the Artwork:

I chose a design for the door of my dear grandmother (Aziza), because it is engraved in my memory from my childhood, the golden door in the back of her house, the door where I used to spend the afternoon gazing with amazement at the sun's rays permeating through it, reflecting the colors of the glass panels on the floor.

This door became a symbol of Khobar, specifically Khobar North, and it has remained in my memory to this day.



AUTHENTICITY AND PRIDE

Yasmine Abdullah Al-Zahrani

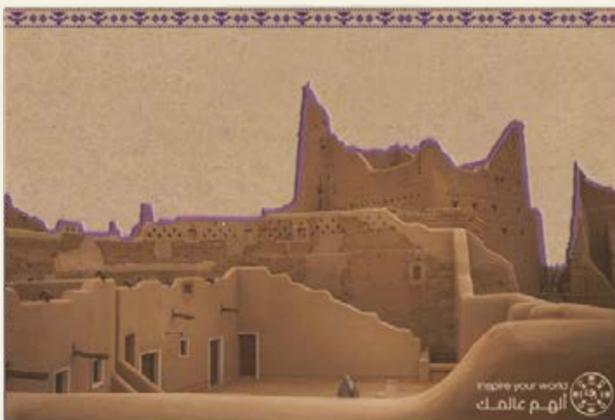
Description of the Artwork:

This artwork embodies the idea of the Saudi identity and its solidity despite the cultural progress achieved by the Kingdom, which is represented by the overlapping colors in the artwork. Despite the tremendous changes and developments, the Kingdom's identity is still authentic and solid. The shapes in the design represent the face of new developments and their blending with the Saudi identity with its stability, as well as benefiting from them as an aesthetic addition to the identity.



BETWEEN THE PAST AND THE PRESENT

Sara Qwaider



Description of the Artwork:

During my journey, I spent few years in four countries, so I noticed that the country's identity is the sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions and culture. In Saudi Arabia, I saw that each region has its own cultural identity. Each one has its own musical style and traditional clothes, architectural styles.

In my postcard design, I focused on showing the identity of the kingdom by representing the past and present, and this idea was inspired from Ithra. I noticed how they merged these periods of time in interesting ways.

On both sides of the card I used the color purple, since lavender is the most popular flower in the country and [it has become a national flower]. On one side of the card, I added the traditional Sadu prints and the Historic Diriyah and the kingdom foundation stamp with the statement (Inspire your world). On the other side of the card, I wrote the Saudi national anthem in Kufic line, and at the corner I merged two pictures in two different decades. Ithra structure illustrates the present, and people with camels depict the past.

PASSION IS EASTERN AND MY HEART LOVES (EASTERN/ SHARQIYA)

Taraf Al-Daham

Description of the Artwork:

I dedicate this Sketch to the Eastern Province, the dearest place to my heart.

This is the palm tree, the mother of all palm trees " Al Ahsa." Below that is an Aramco aircraft, dating back to the year 1955.

This aircraft is heading to Turaif Airport in the Northern Province.

Here, is the enrichment of knowledge and innovation (Ithra). Homage to the homes of the Eastern Province where you see one of the oldest homes of the Northern side of Khobar city, particularly, those on the fifth street. You could see an elegant design of Al Aqair port of Al Ahsa Province, one of the oldest ports on the gulf.



SAUDI NATIONAL DAY 92

Younes Al-Aboudi

Description of the Artwork:

A postage stamp expressing the Saudi National Day, with King Abdulaziz on the back of a camel.



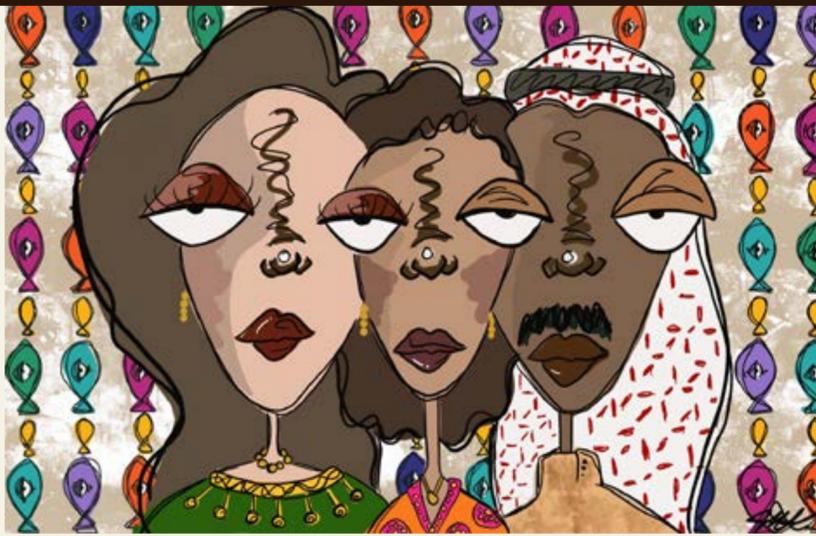
THE FUTURE OF THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

Moroj Bamhrez

Description of the Artwork:

An ambitious aesthetic look towards the future of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, inspired by the identity of the 92nd Saudi National Day.

WINNERS IN ARTWORKS/ESSAY CATEGORY



'THROUGH MY PARENTS'

Mariam Al-Salem

Description of the Artwork:

Identity to me is memories. It is core experiences that shape you into who you are. When I think about my identity I think about my parents.

My identity is my mother brushing my hair before school. It is my father teaching me before my big test. My identity is my mother cutting up fruits for me before bed. It is my father rushing me to the hospital when I am sick. My identity is my parents taking me to the fish market on a Friday. My father showing me the different types of fish. My mother telling me to look at the different colored scales. I am who I am because of my parents.

ARAB COUNTRIES

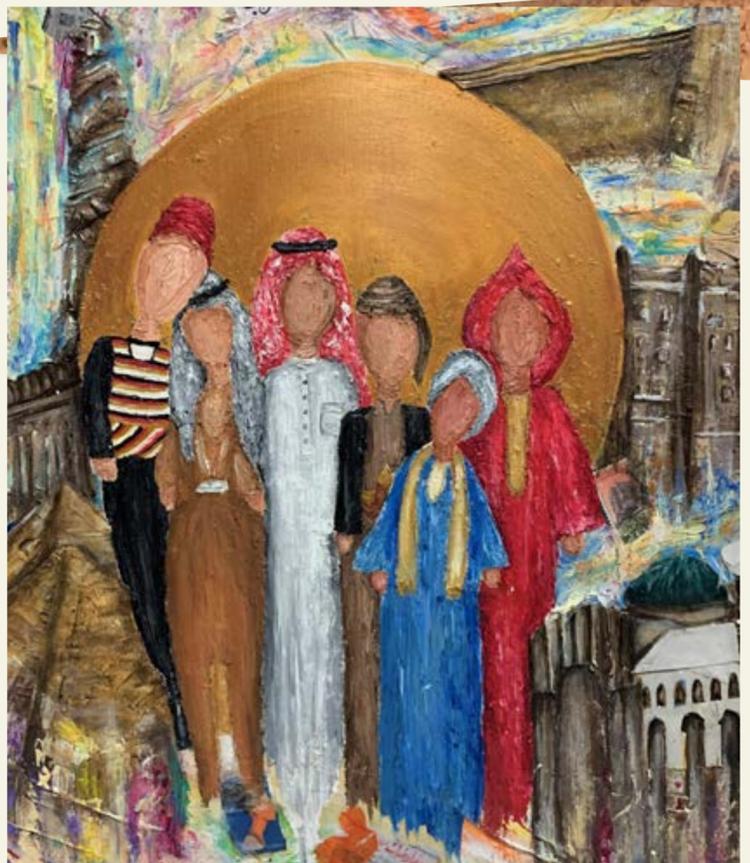
Artist Jumana Abdul Fattah

Description of the Artwork:

My inspiration was a patriotic poem by the poet Fakhr Al-Baroudi in which he said:

**The Arab nation is my homeland
from the Levant to Baghdad
From Najd to Yemen
to Egypt reaching Tatouan
No borders can keep us apart
and no religion can separate us**

I wanted to translate these beautiful words, and to soar like the poet's imagination, moving from one Arab country to another, without borders or differences, and without racism or bias towards a country or nationality. This poem touches my heart very much, as I have always dreamed of a united Arab world full of love and cooperation. That is why I chose to personify each Arab country with a person wearing the traditional dress of the state, and behind them a large golden halo indicating the greatness of Arabism. I also added famous landmarks from the mentioned countries that remind you of them once you see them. I filled the background with happy and cheerful colors using acrylic colors, which seem to me more bright and strong in their gradations, as they contain a lot of colors derived from the cultures of these countries and have a positive impact on those who see them. My choice of old and wrinkled papers of colored paper and newspaper is because



they are materials that have existed in the past and still exist and are important in our lives as the people of the Arabic language and the culture associated with it, with the placement of postage stamps that were of great importance in the past, and they are the stamps of some Arab countries. My relationship with the painting is similar to that of the blind with imagination, how he imagines the world he lives in and the life around him. He may imagine the situation too perfect and more beautiful than reality, but he sticks to this image in his mind, and rejects what people say about life and its troubles. Exactly like my case, I wanted to imagine the Arab world as stated in the poet's poem, and as he wished, as if we were one family, close and loving, our cultures merging with their colors and expressions into one culture in all peace and harmony.

THE METROPOLITAN COUPLE Artist Khireddine Khaldoun

Description of the Artwork:

This painting is a painting of a traditional metropolitan couple, in the Casbah of Algiers, in traditional dress, on their wedding night in an atmosphere of joy. I was inspired by the traditions of the inhabitants of the capital Casbah (the oldest architectural heritage and the most important part of the capital of Algeria). The painting reinforces the importance of preserving the Algerian metropolitan identity. I just point out that this dress is still worn today by many Algerian grooms. With this painting, I try to preserve my identity by preserving the traditional metropolitan dress.



BEYOND MY IDENTITY IS ME. Artist Wafaa Salah

Description of the Artwork:

Identity is what differentiates you from others. When I hear the word identity, a question comes to my mind: Who am I? As a visual artist, practicing art is a kind of exclusivity and freedom to express oneself without restrictions. My artistic identity lies in expressing my feelings, experiences and events that I share in the form of a work of art. In art, there is a message that transcends languages, cultures, beliefs and even time. It is natural for every artist to express himself and his identity in his own way and his own view, and identity in itself is an art, as it differs from one person to another even if there is a similarity in some things, there is always something special and different that distinguishes one individual from the other.



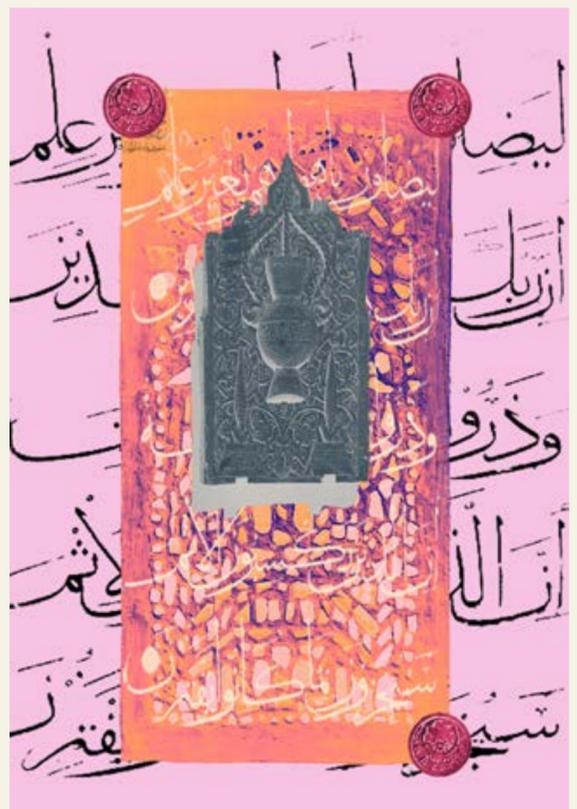
Acrylic color on paper 14.8 x21 cm.

IDENTITY VOCABULARY Eng. Abdullah Al-Anzi

Description of the Artwork:

Vocabulary is abstract elements and parts, which together form a clear picture of identity. Our identity as Muslims and Saudis has many vocabulary: colors, shapes and composition that make a person- regardless of his field- many details that support any work he does.

My painting is identity vocabulary, each part of which contains a vocabulary that contains a deep meaning of our identity as Muslims and Saudis.



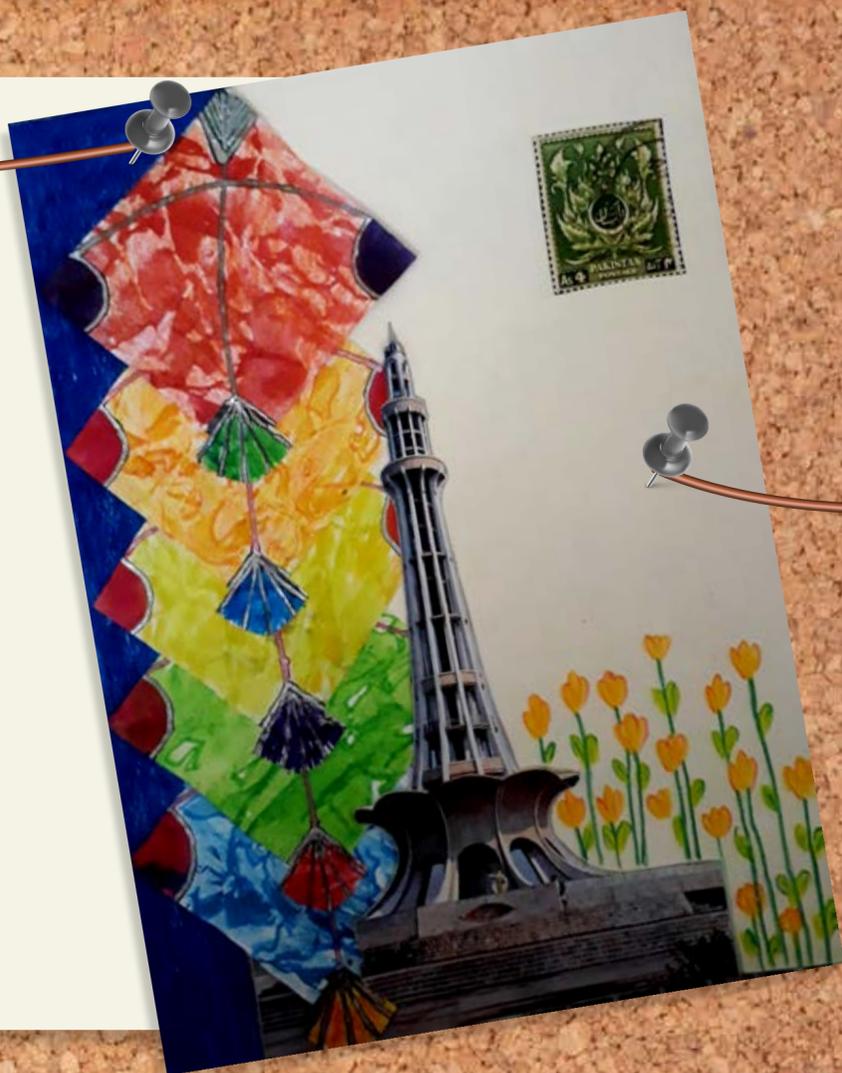
“BASANT”

Artist Sania Yousaf

Description of the Artwork:

The postcard shows the colours of spring. “Basant” is a kite festival in Lahore (Pakistan) celebrated at the start of spring season where a huge crowd would participate in kite flying competitions.

Unfortunately, this festival is banned in Lahore now; but I still remember my young days during the Basant festival. The sky used to be full of colours. Many artists of Pakistan remember their “Basant” memories through art. Therefore, I got the chance to make a “Basant” themed postcard.



HONORABLE MENTIONS



Noura Al Ashuli –
Welcome dear guests



Haya Bin Makhshen –
Identity



Reem Maghram –
Our green land



Amani Qashqari –
Mecca gate



Ishaq Madan –
Burning Identities



EDITORIAL TEAM

Communication and Marketing Division Head:

Yousef Al-Mutairi

Head of Communications & PR:

Hadeel Al-Eisa

Editor in Chief & Creative Director:

Rym Al-Ghazal

Edition Graphic Designer:

MADAR Studio: Fatma Magdy, Ibrahim Magdy

Senior Editors:

Mona Hassan & Ahmad Dialdin

Contributing Writers:

Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum, Somaya Badr, CEO of Art of Heritage, Abdullah Thabet, Dr. Suleiman Al Theeb, Bayt Al Fann editorial team, Ghada Al-Muhanna, Ghadeer Sadeq, Abdullah Kulayb, curators of Hijrah exhibition Dr. Idries Trevathan & Dr. Kumail Muhammed Almusaly, Manar Al-Mutairi and Widian Al-Dossary.

Special mentions:

Photographer Bayan Al-Sadiq
and Head of Ithra Content Eeman Al-Juhani.

Arabic Edition:

Dar Al-Sabah for Editing & Translating.

**Special thanks for contributing
artists & art:**



بارجيل
مؤسسة للفنون
BARJEEL
ART FOUNDATION



AGA KHAN MUSEUM



متحف الفن الخليجي
KHALEEJI ART MUSEUM

ABOUT ITHRA

The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra) is one of Saudi Arabia's most influential cultural destinations, a destination for the curious, creatives, seekers of knowledge, and more.

Through a compelling series of programs, performances, exhibitions, events and initiatives, Ithra creates world-class experiences across its interactive public spaces that bring together culture, innovation and knowledge that are designed to appeal to everyone. Connecting creatives, challenging perspectives and transforming ideas, Ithra is graduating its own leaders in the cultural field.

Ithra is Saudi Aramco's flagship CSR initiative and the largest cultural contribution to the Kingdom. Ithra's components include the Idea Lab, Library, Cinema, Theater, Museum, Energy Exhibit, Great Hall, Children's Museum and Knowledge Tower. For more information, please visit:

www.ithra.com

Follow Ithra on social media:

