



ithra
by aramco

Issue 010



Ithraeyat Magazine

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Welcome to **Ithraeyat**, a monthly cultural magazine produced by The King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture (Ithra). Created to **inspire minds** and **enrich hearts**, this Saudi inspired platform with an expansive international outlook will capture 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.

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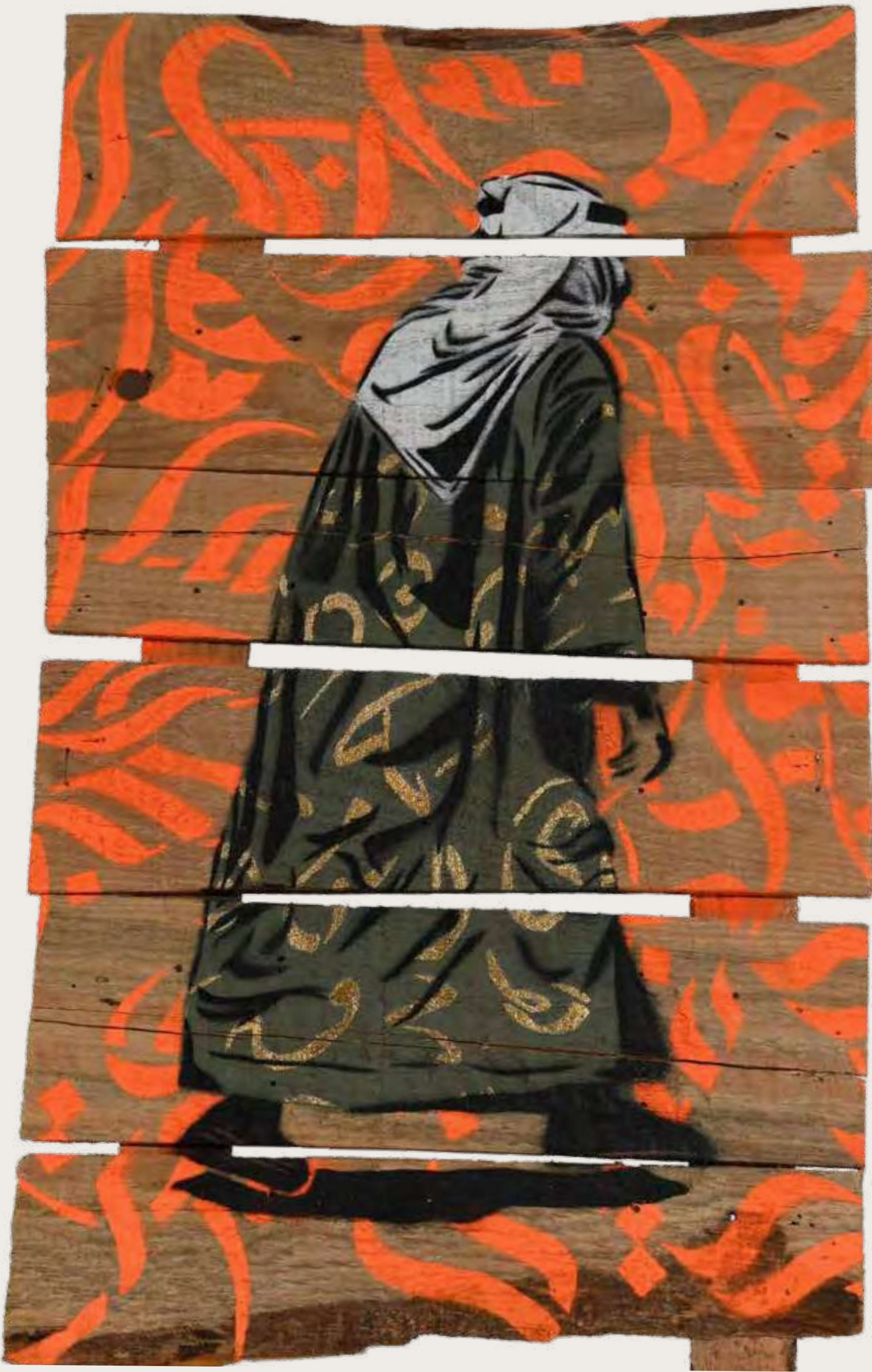


Photo of artwork taken by Ahmad AlThani.



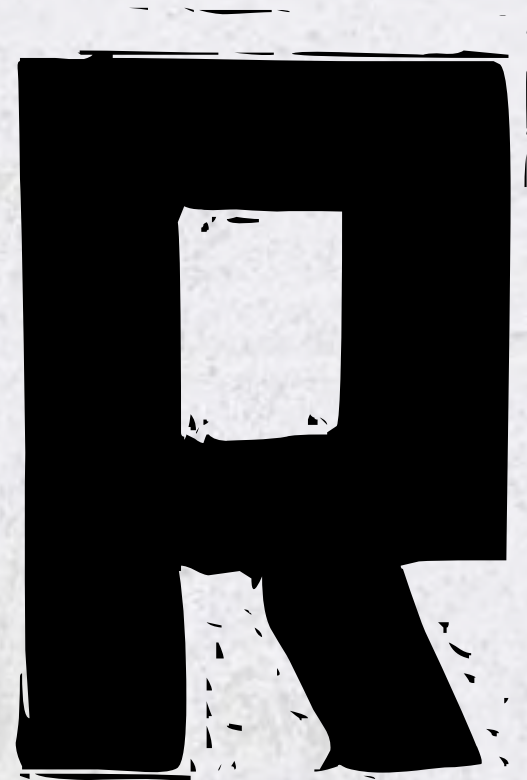
The Street

It is perhaps one of those things we tend to take for granted. The roads we drive along, the everyday streets we cross and the alleys we roam and get lost in. Often, we don't even know the name of the street we always use, nor the story behind its name. In homage to the life and art of the street, from the public art to the sounds and the scents experienced there, we dedicate this issue to **The Street** and all it encompasses. We encourage you to pause and look around, and see the

hidden art along its walls, and the stories along its windows. Pause and appreciate those courageous flowers that defied the pavement and grew out of its cracks, those scribbles left behind by someone, or that majestic graffiti painted by a determined creative. 'So and so was here,' is often one of the most commonly carved statements, found in the past and in the present, as we all want to be remembered in one way or another.

On the cover of this issue, we observe on recycled pieces of wood — that are often found discarded in the streets — a man in traditional wear on his way, as we all are, on any given street, with a touch of calligraphy and heritage to localize the piece and link it to its Saudi home. Is he rushing? Where is he going? Who is he? This wonderful piece is part of a collection by Saudi street artist **Zeinab Al-Mahoozi**, titled ‘Jadi wa Jadati’ (My Grandfather and My Grandmother), where she pays tribute to the before and the now, bringing colorful new life to any street, be it new or old.





Meet our ‘theme-special’ featured Saudi artist, **Zeinab Al-Mahoozi**, an adventurous street artist who explores themes of the past with touches of the present and the future.





One of Zeinab Al-Mahoozi's most recognizable street art in old Khobar.

Portrait: Zeinab Al-Mahoozi

“ The art of the past and now...”

“...Art has always saved me amid this life’s many struggles”

Always up for trying new routes, the adventurous Zeinab Al-Mahoozi is a Saudi artist of many talents. Almost two years ago, she became the first female Saudi coffee barista in her hometown of Qatif, a fact that at first surprised many of the customers. Now, it is a source of inspiration for others. “It is really fun,” said the 28 year old. “And coffee-making is an art in itself.” She learned how to become a barista from Saeed Bazroon. Perhaps there are no coincidences in life, for before she became a barista, her sister, Ayat, who is a photographer and calligrapher, bought Zeinab a book about how to become a barista. “Life is truly amazing! It surprises you

if you are open to its many challenges and chances,” she told Ithraeyat in an interview. “I truly feel alive when I do art. There is so much beauty to discover.” The award winning artist participated in numerous exhibitions and projects such as Design Week in Riyadh and Misk Exhibition in Bahrain, with commissioned art related to sports showcased at Al-Jawhara Stadium in King Abdullah Sport City. There is also one of her favorite and earliest art pieces from 2017 titled “The Street Cleaner” drawn along the Qatif Corniche Mural in honor of those who keep our streets clean. “It was the year of Nathafa [cleanliness].



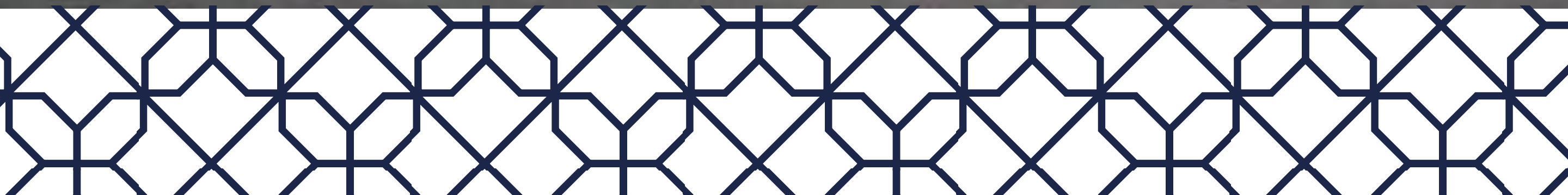
Street art in Qatif.



The mural was my ‘thank you’ to all those who are keeping our streets clean. They came over and were so happy to see the art and to have them be acknowledged. It really touched my heart,” said Zeinab. “The power of art is that it leaves a feeling, and inspires whoever sees it.” The artist has several art creations along the streets of Jeddah and Khobar, as well as Jumeirah in Dubai and is planning a new project soon that will be completely different from her other works. “I like to take tradition and modernize it, where the art is Saudi with a touch of contemporary, such as the work in the Subykha area in old Khobar, where it is a row, where it is a row of our grandparents and the current generation and how their lives revolve around technology,” she said. “Most of the themes in my pieces are now and then, and the differences.” Zeinab’s journey with art started in elementary school, when during the break from classes, she would stay in and draw Pokémon characters.



Street art in Dubai, UAE.



"I used to draw Pokémon in a specific notebook". "One time, my mother told me if I don't study, she will take away my drawing notebook". Well, I didn't study, "and next day my mother took my notebook and burned it," she laughed. "Well, that didn't stop me, I started to draw on other surfaces, like the wall." It seems like it was destiny for Zeinab to conquer street art. "I love street art. It is close to people and close to the heart. It is an art gallery open to all people. It is free to all classes and to all nationalities," she said. She likes to pick busy streets, "so that when cars are stuck in traffic, they can enjoy the view, and people rushing about can pause to reflect." The self-taught artist, who admires the

world-renowned street artist Banksy, experimented until she finally found her own artistic identity. "Street art in Saudi has evolved recently, from negative graffiti that just damaged property to it being a unique expressive form of art." Zeinab, who won first place in Modern Saudi Art in 2018, had exhibited across the Kingdom and outside the region, where in 2017 she participated in the Expo Art Workshops in Kazakhstan and in 2019 she participated in Saudi Cultural Days in Turkmenistan, and other locations. And on Zeinab's list of new adventures? Boxing.. "Open a door you never thought of opening, you never know, it can lead you to a new route, one that you never imagined."



Art by **Madawi Al-Baz**, owner of **Dawi Gallery**.

Guest Columnist:

An ancient art revived

"I wanted to take art to the people, turn the outside into an inspiring gallery."

For thousands of years, civilizations left their marks on rocks, walls and monuments. Those stories were left behind for future generations to see and learn from. Therefore in a way, graffiti art is an ancient art, an art of expressing an opinion, capturing a story in words scribbled or drawings carved along the walls. I have always

been inspired by graffiti art and its many messages, and made it my goal to transform and develop graffiti art in Saudi Arabia —that for the longest time was viewed as something negative and disruptive—to reach a positive stage so that the drawings are not scratched over and removed.



Old Khobar street art photos taken by Nora Al-Taha.

Special Feature:

The Art In, Around and Of Streets

People come and people go. People cross, pass and dash. Neighbors and strangers walk side by side, either the same way or onto different paths. Streets lead us to new adventures and connect us to each other. Streets are filled with dreamers. Every way you look, you can find a trail of hope lingering in corners and centers. Street performers sing, dance or act to entertain—some

hoping to make it big one day and others perform to share their talent and joy. Street photographers capture candid moments, photos that we can treasure as a window to the present, and the past. Street art covers walls and buildings, displaying exceptional artistic talent that live on and thrive along these structures. Streets are a place to find the extraordinary among the mundane.



'Heart Catheterization,' by **Abdullah Al-Othman**. 2018. Materials: Aluminum foil (foil paper). Courtesy of the artist and **Hafez Gallery**.

Special **Feature:** Streets of Art

“There are streets to enjoy, there are streets to wander aimlessly, and also there are streets to contemplate!”

- Mehmet Murat Ildan (Turkish Poet and Playwright)

‘Let’s meet by the fountain with the jumping horses?’ ‘Remember to take a left at the Rainbow Roundabout.’ ‘When you see the mural depicting a child waving the flag, you will know that you are in the right place.’ Sewn into our cities’ urban fabric, we can find art that gives us joy, a connection with a place we call home, and the possibility to contemplate. These

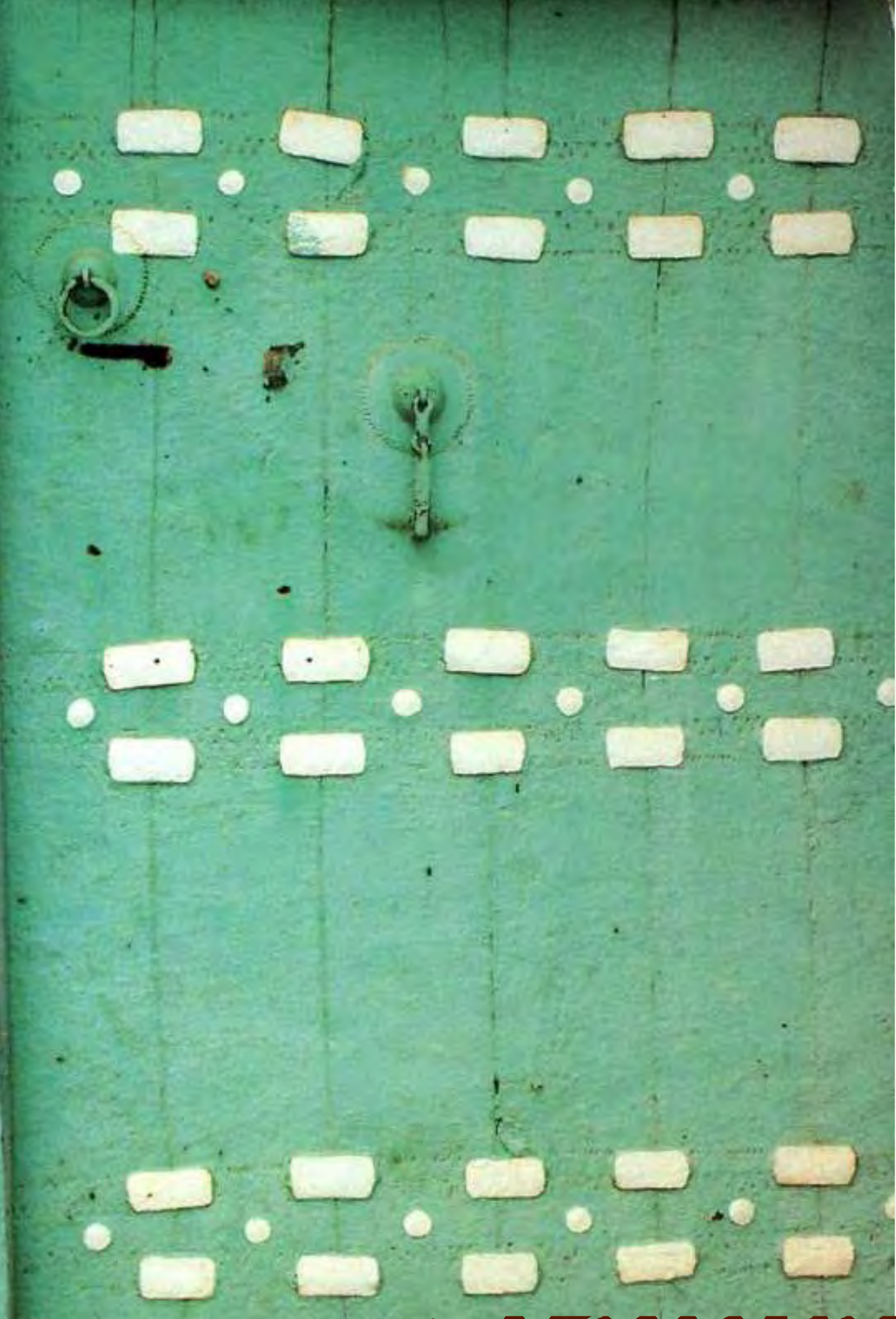
are all examples of ‘Public Art.’ It takes many forms, from the monumental to the ephemeral. To many, it is the backdrop for their latest selfie or the perfect spot to gather with colleagues for a lunchtime picnic. The artworks integrated into our city’s streets do not just orientate us physically, but also help us place ourselves within our culture and community.

Spotlight: The Art of Doors.



When one walks along the street, and in particular along alleys in old neighborhoods, often the very first thing one notices are the doors and their very unique styles. Even though there is a lot of information and research available on the various art forms of wood work around the world, there is still not enough information about Saudi traditional doors. Doors in Saudi culture are symbolic of an entrance to heaven, whereby it is like entering a private paradise of peace and

harmony inside a home. There is a lot of diversity of doors around the Kingdom, from their different craftsmanship to their various engravings and calligraphic designs, where each door style is linked to the region of its origin. Doors, windows and locks. Throughout Arabia, traditional doors and window shutters and their locks, are uniquely decorated. The doors and window shutters are normally made of thin, narrow strips of wood nailed to a semicircular wooden fastened structure.



The flat face (and sometimes both faces) of the planks is incised with geometric patterns, and painted in bright colors such as green, yellow, red and blue. An alternative method of decoration is to scorch designs into the surfaces with a hot iron. The older wooden door locks had sets of vertical pegs which, when slotted into holes in varying combinations, locked the door. These locks were also incised with patterns and colors, or scorched with a hot iron. Every part of the door and window was carefully crafted and designed. In the central region, doors are painted with strong colors, and decorated with geometrical motifs and have a floral central panel that reflect the Islamic and pre-Islamic art. Water drop designs were

symbolic signs of life. While in the western region, the wood carvings are artistic with geometrical designs or calligraphy. Whatever the designs or colors, the doors are ambassadors of the people living inside the house. In the past, doors were always open, welcoming family, friends, neighbors and even strangers, who happen to be traveling and in need of a place to stay. Doors resemble our character, our culture and our soul. I leave you with a question: What about today's doors, do they have the same essence and function as our traditional doors?

Written by Special Contributor Somaya Badr, CEO of **Art of Heritage** and Art of Heritage Cultural Trust.





"Quartier Populaire," by **Zeinab Abdel Hamid**. 1956. Oil on canvas, 116 x 81 cm. Image courtesy of **Barjeel Art Foundation**, Sharjah.

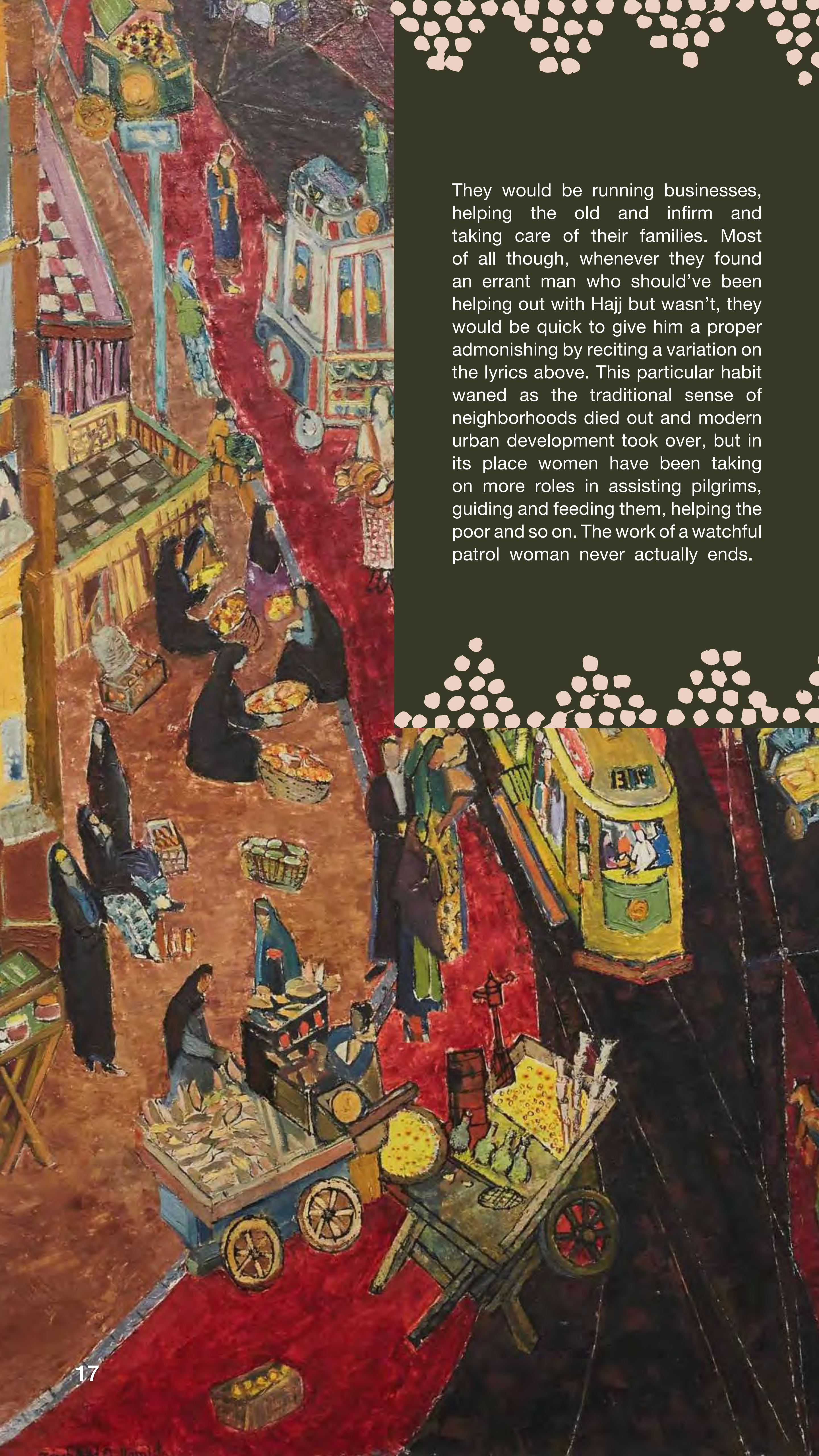
Arabic Treasures:

The Watchful Women of Makkah Streets

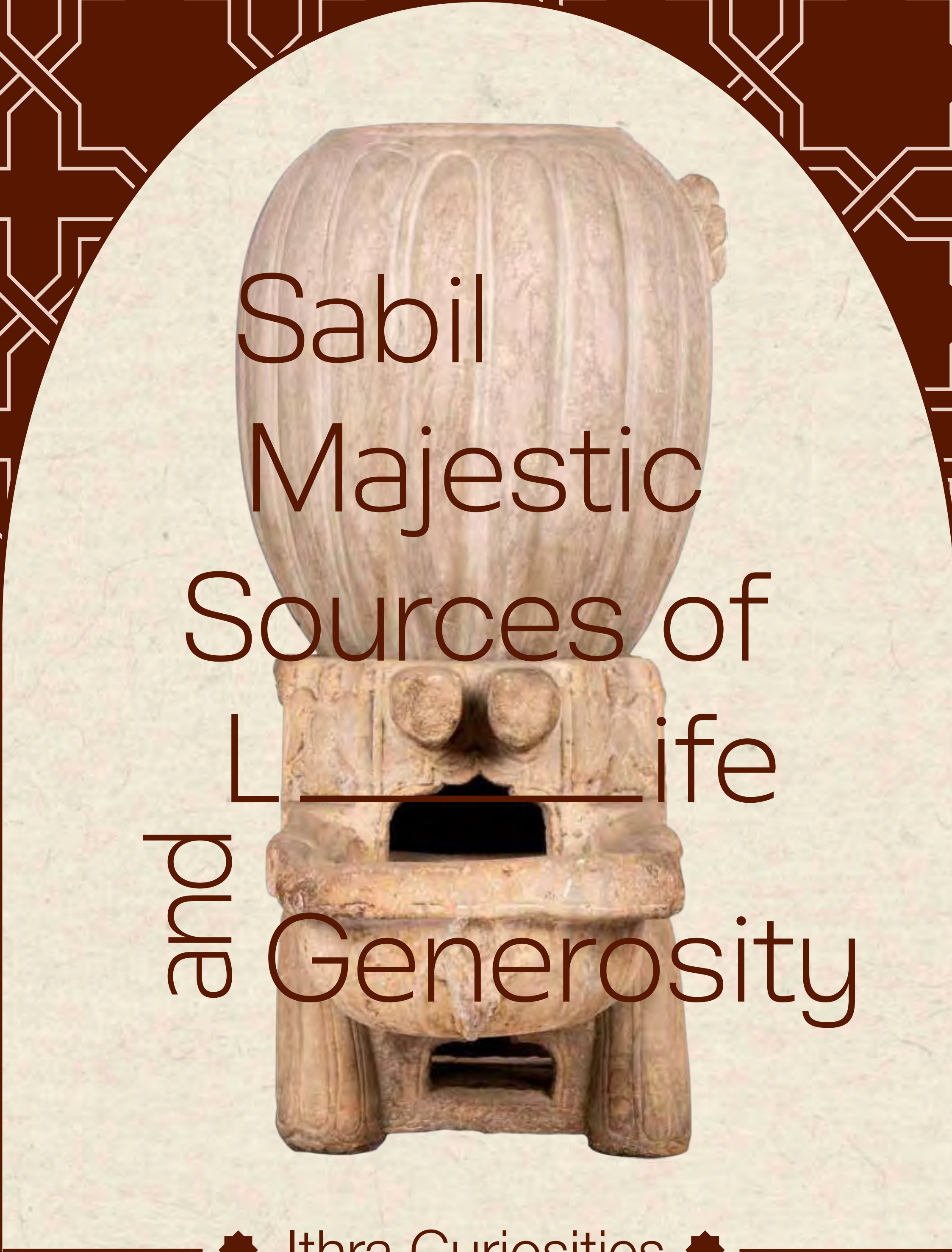
***“Qaisana ya qais
The men went to Hajj and you
stayed Why? Get back to your home,
slaughter a goat and bake some
bread.”*** — Old Makkah song Al-Qais is
a generations-old tradition unique to the
women of the Makkah area, including
Taif and surrounding neighborhoods.

For decades upon decades it had always
been a sacred privilege and duty of those
living in Makkah to help in any way they
can with Hajj. If they are not performing
it themselves, then they find themselves
drawn to be in service to those going for
this annual ritual, by greeting, hosting,

aiding, walking with and guiding them
through all the processions. Still, some
men (aside from the elderly or ill that
couldn't physically go) would elect to
skip out on their duties. That's where
the women came in. With the majority
of the men out of the area, the women
filled the power vacuum to take over the
running of the area. Some would wear
men's clothing and all would be out
and about taking on a range of duties.
They would patrol the alleys and streets,
carrying a “shouba,” which is a long,
thick wooden stick or baton, keeping the
peace and deterring anyone from trying
to commit any crimes.



They would be running businesses, helping the old and infirm and taking care of their families. Most of all though, whenever they found an errant man who should've been helping out with Hajj but wasn't, they would be quick to give him a proper admonishing by reciting a variation on the lyrics above. This particular habit waned as the traditional sense of neighborhoods died out and modern urban development took over, but in its place women have been taking on more roles in assisting pilgrims, guiding and feeding them, helping the poor and so on. The work of a watchful patrol woman never actually ends.



Sabil Majestic Sources of Life and Generosity

◆ Ithra Curiosities ◆

‘A water attendant is to be appointed to raise water from the cistern to its storage at the sabil, and to offer it daily to passers-by.’

Waqf Deed, Al-Ghuri Mosque complex,
Cairo, 1516 CE

The provision of water, truly a source of life, is a religious obligation and an essential function of the mosque. Throughout history, Muslim societies have worked on maintaining regular and sufficient water supply outside

mosques for refreshment. This basic availability of water necessitated the manufacture of fountains known as sabils — meaning “road” or “path” — and appropriate containers and systems for distribution. For example, this water dispenser shown here, comprising of a stone water jar (kilga) and stand was probably situated on the street outside of a mosque to generously provide precious drinking water for travelers and to assist in the ritual purification (ablutions) before prayers.



Add to your **bucket list:**

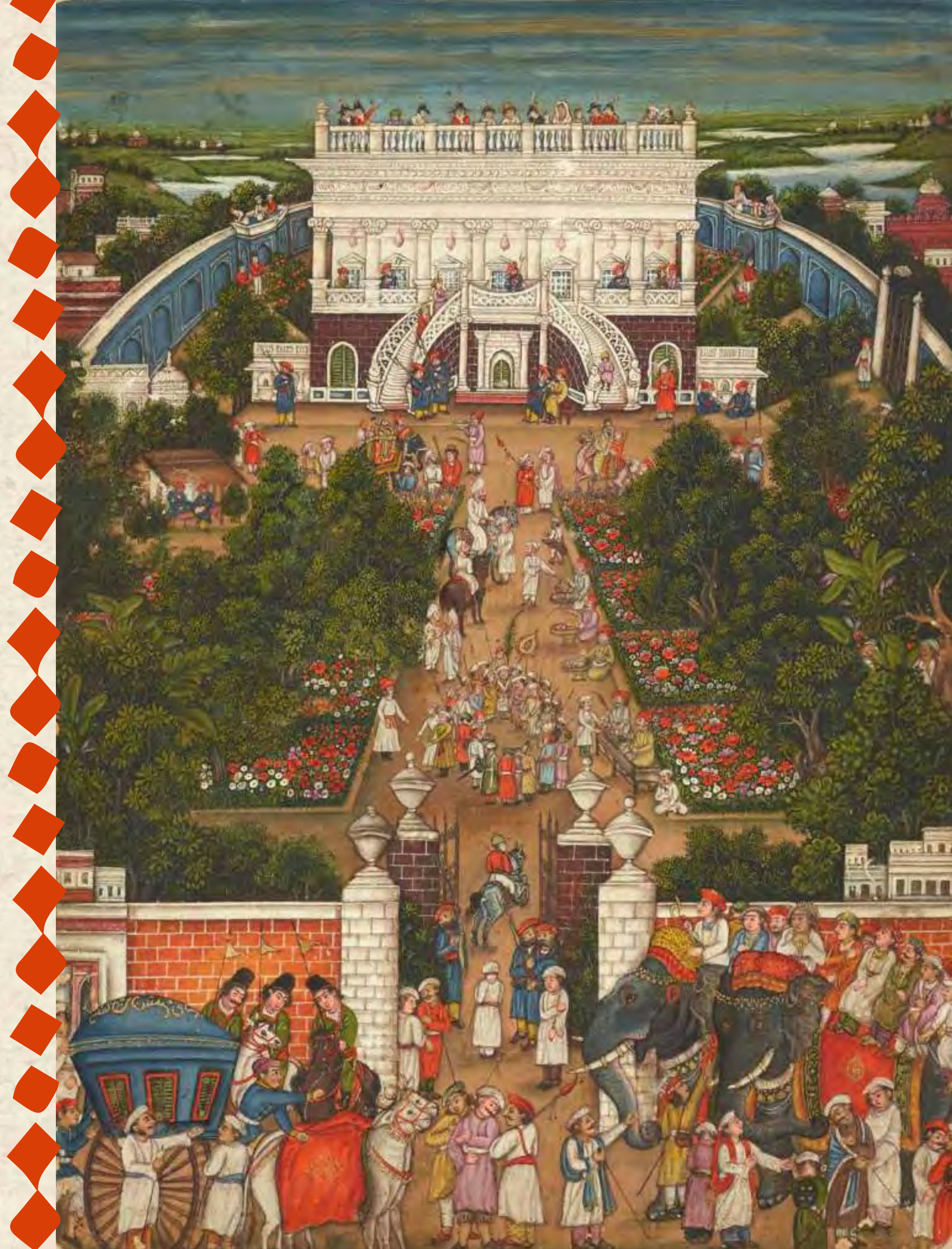
The Fragrant Roads of the Incense Trade Route

“In meadows of purple roses is their dwelling, shaded with libanos (frankincense) and laden with golden fruits... Over the lovely spot spreads the odor of those who mix every kind of spice with far-seen fire on the altars of the gods.” —

Callixeinus of Rhodes, 2nd Century BCE, talking about the Red Sea commerce

Here we introduce a different kind of spot, or rather spots, to visit in Saudi Arabia, one that leads you along an ancient aromatic route of legends. What is Frankincense? Cultivated from a desert tree known as *Boswellia Sacra*, frankincense is dried sap that forms as waxy, pale yellow and translucent nuggets. They grow only in southern Arabia and northeastern Africa, but the best quality grows in the deserts of southern Oman where the climate has the perfect combination of humidity, soil, temperature, sun and water.





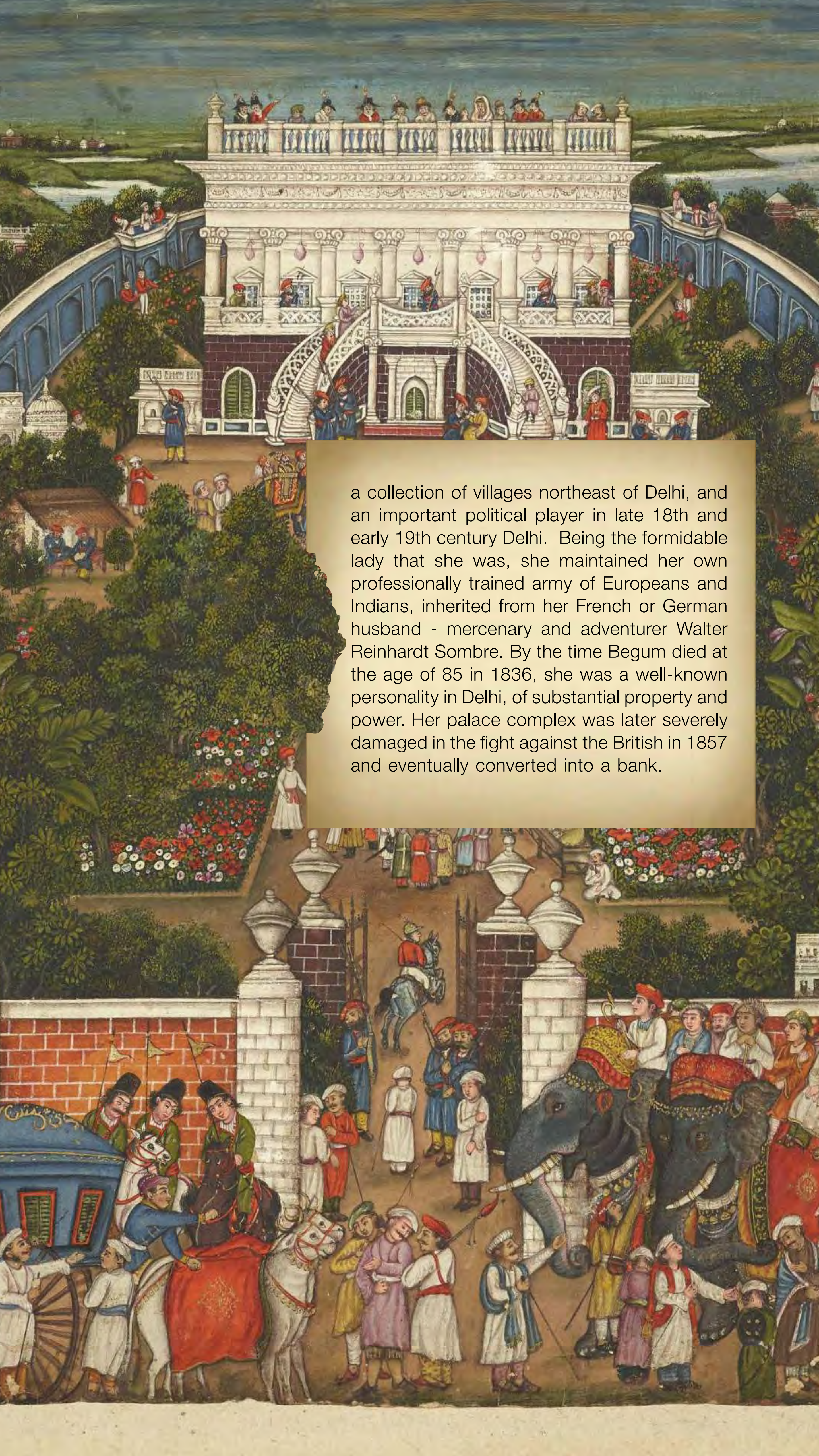
The Palace of Begum Samru in Delhi India, Delhi, ca. 1820–1830. Opaque watercolour, ink and gold on paper 29.3 x 21 cm. AKM464

Bridges: Cross-Cultural Conversations

Observing Life and Listening to the Sounds of a Street

The hustle and bustle of this lively and colorful street scene would not look out of place in any Arab city today (well, minus the elephants perhaps). Look at the multitude of people, wearing costumes that signal their many different cultural and professional backgrounds. The scene takes place outside a palace complex in Delhi, India, in the early 1800s, and its story, too, speaks of the coming together of people and cultures. Designed in an eclectic, Europeanizing

style – with its grand double staircase, roof balustrade, columns - and set in carefully laid-out, shaded gardens - the complex belonged to a remarkable woman, named Joanna Nobilis Sombre (ca. 1753 – 27 January 1836), but better known as Begum Samru. A former dancing girl rumored to be either from a noble Mughal family or a native Kashmiri sold to her husband as a slave, she was a Muslim convert to Catholicism, who became the ruler of Sardhana.



a collection of villages northeast of Delhi, and an important political player in late 18th and early 19th century Delhi. Being the formidable lady that she was, she maintained her own professionally trained army of Europeans and Indians, inherited from her French or German husband - mercenary and adventurer Walter Reinhardt Sombre. By the time Begum died at the age of 85 in 1836, she was a well-known personality in Delhi, of substantial property and power. Her palace complex was later severely damaged in the fight against the British in 1857 and eventually converted into a bank.

The energy of life in this 19th-century street scene can still be found in many of our own streets today. Next time you are out, why not take a stroll and enjoy the people, the colors, the sounds and the beauty of nature in your street or neighborhood.

Written by Special Guest Contributor Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Interim Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum, Toronto. In each issue, we feature a special treasure from the **Aga Khan Museum**, one that tells a story, captures a moment and inspires conversation.



From the Vault:

The life around us

We all have different memories of that souq, that bus ride, that pause along a bridge, that walk along a street with a parent, a loved one, or even alone. The sounds, the smells, the things we bought and looked at, the people we met, the crowds we bumped into, the voices we heard of the sellers and the noise of the traffic nearby. In this special collection of art from **Barjeel Art Foundation**, we get to enjoy the many moments of the world just outside our door.

‘Watermelon Sellers’ by **Hafidh Al Droubi**. 1969. Oil on canvas, 61 x 41 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.





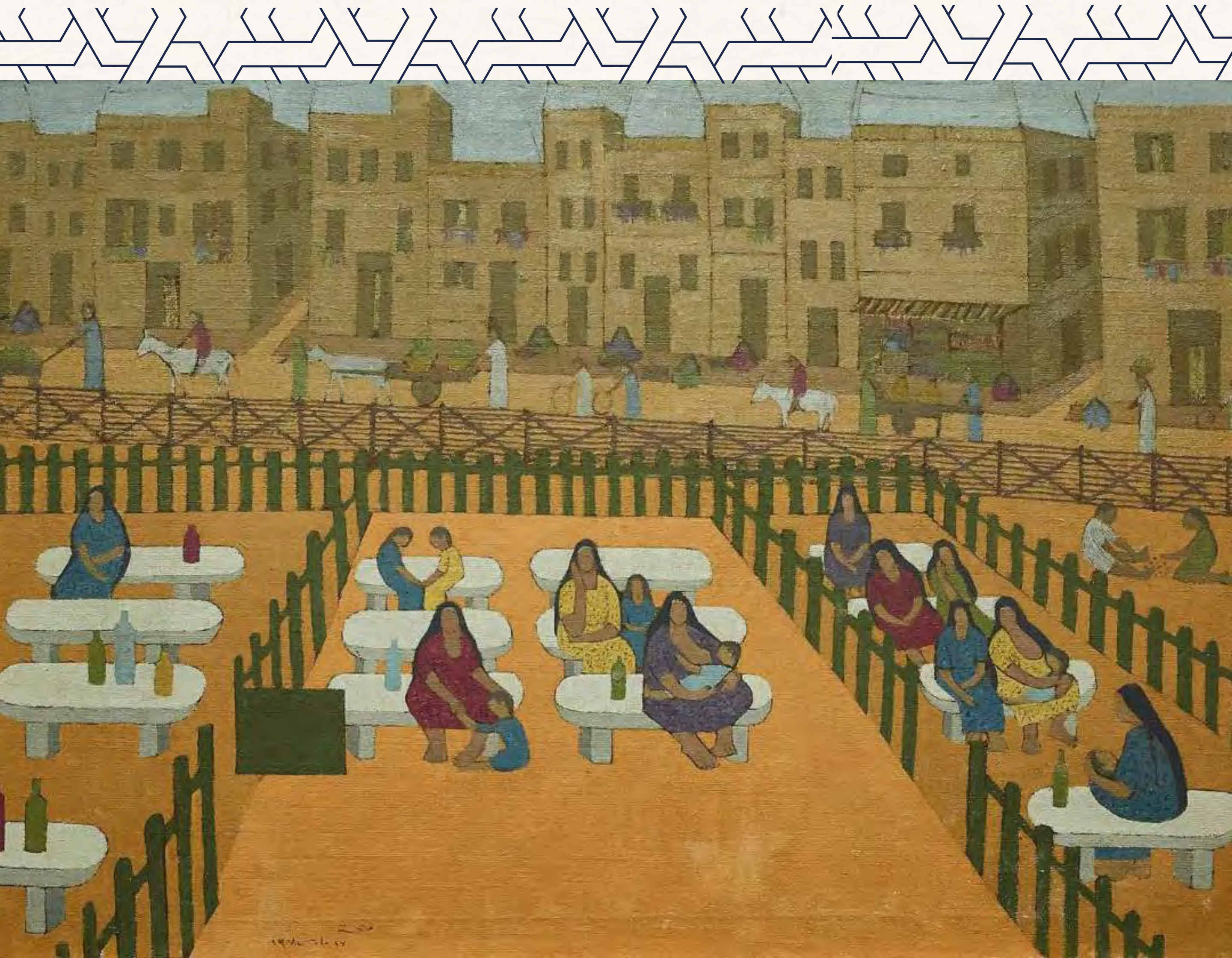
‘Zinnober,’ by **Driss Ouadahi**. 2014. Oil on canvas, 190 x 240 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.



‘Overview,’ by **Driss Ouadahi**. 2013. Oil on canvas, 240 x 160 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.



Untitled (Cityscape) by **Aref El Rayyess**. 1961. Oil on masonite, 50 x 130 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.



'Outpatient Clinic,' by **Menhat Helmy**. 1958. Oil on canvas, 66 x 80 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.



‘Reflecting,’ by **Lateefa Bint Maktoum**. 2008. Archival print, 100 x 60 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.

Along the Streets:

Public art comes in many forms and styles, and there are many Saudi street artist stars who are conquering this field. Here are just a few to discover and enjoy their creations.



Kla5 (pronounced Klakh), who is currently one of the country's popular street artists, painted the legendary pioneer Saudi singer, Ibtisam Lutfi.

Vibrant calligraphic circles and geometry by Calligraffiti **Mohammed Khader**.





Nugamshi, is known for exploring the evolution of traditional calligraphy and typography and creating unique street art.



Colorful representation of the diversity of the Saudi women, by dynamic artist **Alyaa Al-Shail**.



‘Series of Under the Safelight 4,’ by **Osama Esid**. 2019. Materials: archival inkjet print. Size 76 x 110. Courtesy the artist and **Hafez Gallery**.



‘Series of Under the Safelight 5,’ by **Osama Esid**. 2019. Materials: archival inkjet print. Size 77 x 110. Courtesy the artist and **Hafez Gallery**.

From the Archives:

The Art of Streets



Rarities from the Aramco Archives.

Taif July 18, 1931.

You can almost hear the sounds, feel the texture and imagine yourself exploring these old streets through this unique collection of old photos. The scene in Taif, from early 1930s, was taken by Karl S. Twitchell, a geologist and **an early pioneer** who was closely associated with the Saudi Royal family. His images from the 1940s capture a minaret towering over the then quieter streets of Jiddah, a typical day in Qasr Al-Derri in Riyadh,

and then the bustling market with unique architecture and mud houses. The rest of the photographic treasures by different photographers take us back to simpler times on the streets, where people would gather in corners doing business, and donkeys and animals were essential modes of transport. Then slowly with the rise of the cars, the sound of the streets changed, littered with the noise of engines and honks.



1947
Jeddah, May



1945 | Riyadh,
April 1



1950s.

Jeddah



1945

Riyadh,
April 1.



1950

Jeddah,
Taken by T. F. Walters



1935

Main street in Hofuf



1950s. | Market day in Hofuf



1971 | Khamis Mushayt,
Taken by Dorothy Miller



1975

Taif,
Taken by Shaikh Mohammed Amin.

The Art of **Digital**

In its support of the ever evolving digital art, Ithraeyat magazine will feature a special section dedicated to the various forms of Typography, providing a one of a kind expressive platform for Saudi and international digital artists. Here, the artists will debut their unique experimental creations in relation to the themes in all its diversity and imagination, pushing boundaries and inspiring conversations.





'RCOVERY UNCERTAIN MEMORY Corrupted Files Series_file3690,' by **Arif Al-Nomay**. 2014. Materials: Print On Paper. Size 102 x 152. Courtesy the artist and **Hafez Gallery**.

From the World Wide Web: Art stories to browse through

- +Steps underway to boost Saudi art, culture contribution to GDP
- +Saudi artist wins global recognition for work celebrating GCC Summit
- +Saudi Arabia issues first licences as part of creativity drive
- +Lebanese composer, lyricist, Elias Rahbani dies at 82
- +How El Anatsui Broke the Seal on Contemporary Art

We look forward to sharing our ‘makhzan’ of stories with you every month.

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Special thanks for contributing artists & art:





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

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