

Issue **020**

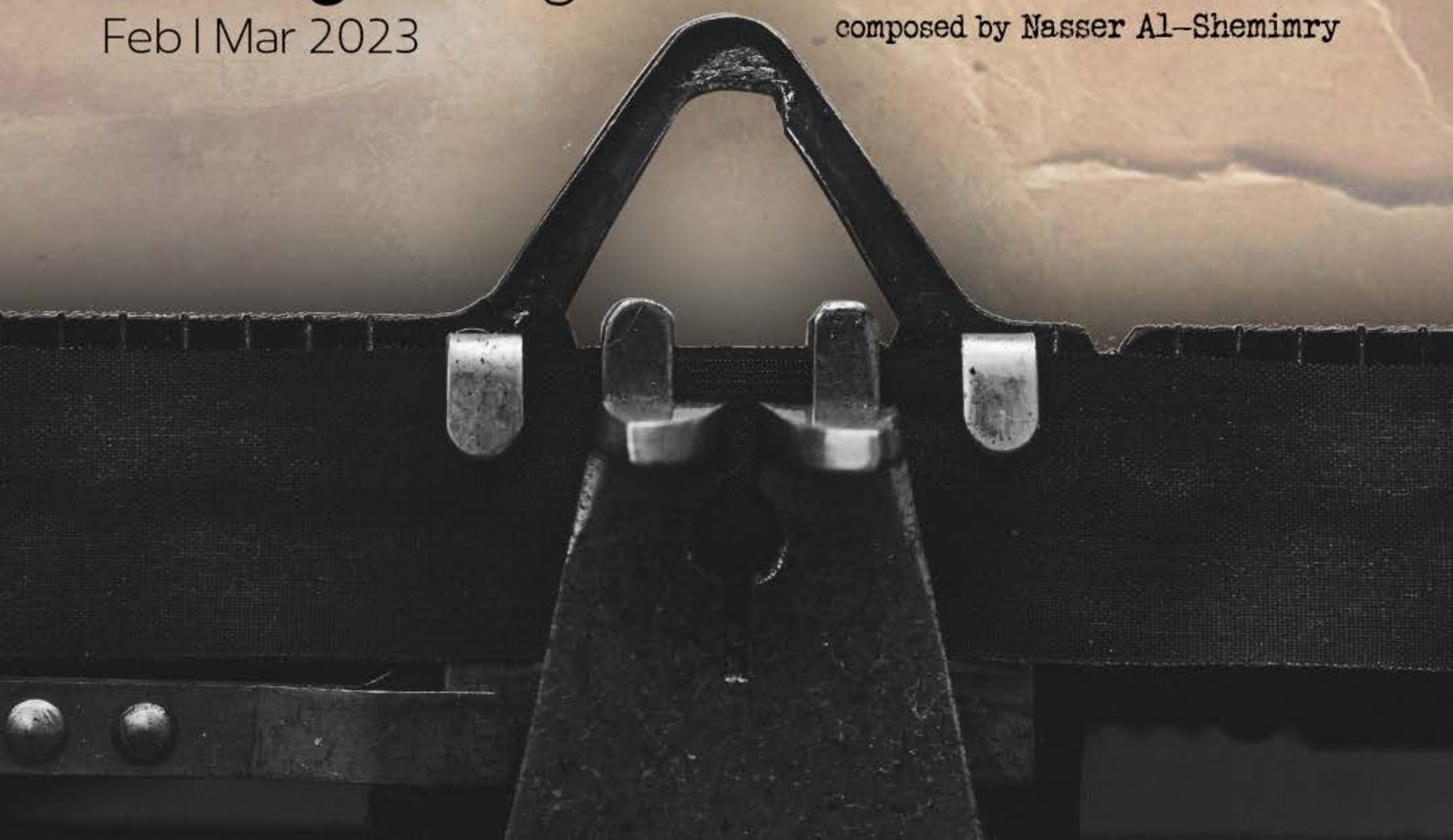


3rd  
Anniversary  
*Edition*  
**Sound**



**Ithraeyat** Magazine  
Feb | Mar 2023

**Ithraeyat Music**  
composed by Nasser Al-Shemimry







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

<b>Letter from the Editor</b> — ‘The Art of Sound,’ by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>05</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘The Symphony of Visual Art,’ an interview with artist Omar Al-Najjar by Manar Al-Mutairi.	<b>07</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘King of the Instrument of Kings,’ an interview with the iconic Naseer Shamma by Zahra Shikara.	<b>08</b>
<b>Spotlight:</b> 100th Anniversary - Homage to the Poet of Love ‘Nizar Qabbani,’ by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>09</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘Colors of Music,’ an interview with artist Fadi Al-Daoud, by Manar Al-Mutairi.	<b>10</b>
<b>Cover Art:</b> ‘The Sound of Ithraeyat,’ an interview with Saudi musician Nasser Al-Shemimry.	<b>11</b>
<b>Special Feature:</b> ‘Divine Calls to Prayer,’ an interview with artist Joe Namy by Gaida Al-Mogren.	<b>12</b>
<b>From the Field:</b> ‘The Sound of Islamic Art,’ a visit to The Diriyah Biennale Foundation’s Islamic Arts Biennale by Zahra Shikara.	<b>13</b>
<b>Special Feature:</b> ‘Art, Music, Dance & Space,’ an interview with artist Zahra Bundakj by Hafsa Al-Khudairi.	<b>14</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘The Organized Chaos,’ an interview with artist Zimoun by Manar Al-Mutairi.	<b>15</b>
<b>Spotlight:</b> ‘Songs of Generations,’ by Ghadeer Sadeq.	<b>16</b>
<b>Special Guest Columnist:</b> ‘Sounds of Heritage,’ by Somaya Badr, CEO of the Art of Heritage.	<b>17</b>
<b>Spotlight:</b> ‘Tariq Abdul Hakim - Father of Music,’ by Ghadeer Sadeq.	<b>18</b>
<b>From the Field:</b> ‘Van Cleef & Arpels - Nature & Time,’ by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>19</b>
<b>Spotlight:</b> ‘The Art of Jameel,’ an interview with Sara Al-Omran, Deputy Director of Art Jameel.	<b>21</b>
<b>Special Feature:</b> ‘Melodies are a Language and Space that welcome a Pictorial Vision,’ an interview with Tarek Al-Arabi, by Rahma Dhyab.	<b>22</b>
<b>From the Field:</b> ‘The Sound of Sculpting,’ by Gaida Al-Mogren.	<b>23</b>



# 3rd Anniversary Edition

<b>Spotlight:</b> ‘The Sound of the Sea,’ an interview with artist Muneer Al-Hajji by Hassan Al-Bather.	<b>24</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘Life in Music,’ an interview with Maestro Yahya Masawa.	<b>25</b>
<b>Special Feature:</b> ‘The Color of Sound,’ an interview with Jumanah Saklou.	<b>26</b>
<b>Spotlight:</b> ‘The First Recorded Sound of Jeddah,’ by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>27</b>
<b>Arabic Treasures:</b> ‘Camel Chants,’ by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>28</b>
<b>Guest Artist:</b> ‘Music of Films - Inspiring Feelings and Memories,’ an interview with composer Peter Ata by Raghad Fathaddin.	<b>29</b>
<b>From the Vault:</b> ‘Musical Art,’ a wonderful collection from Barjeel Art Foundation by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>30</b>
<b>Bridges: Cross-Cultural Conversations</b> ‘The Rose and the Nightingale - Listen to the Art,’ by Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum.	<b>31</b>
<b>From the Archives:</b> ‘Old Sounds,’ a collection from The Aramco Archives by Rym Al-Ghazal.	<b>32</b>





Acrylic and oil on linen by David Conde Ayala. Courtesy of **AramcoWorld**.



# LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

The Art of Sound  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

"I wrote on the wind  
The name of my love  
Whose name I wrote on  
the water  
But, I didn't know the  
wind is a poor listener  
And, I didn't know  
The water does not  
remember names ..."

The legendary poet  
**Nizar Qabbani**  
(1923–1998)

What do you hear when you read these lines? Do you remember the whistles of the wind and the waves of the water?

Sound, elusive yet constant, is at the heart of the words we utter. Our laughter and voices are part of our identity.



**Sound** is at the heart of the moods and the music we listen to. It is the soul of the poems, the chants and songs we remember.

**Sound** is the voice of the world around us, and at times it is melodic, mesmerizing, memorable, and at other times, it is a cacophony of noise that is too loud to the point of becoming unheard and deafening.

“**Sound**” is a complicated and multilayered theme that Ithraeyat pays homage to as the magazine celebrates its three year anniversary. What started as a subtle lifeline for artists and creatives during the peak of the Covid-19 noise — keeping them connected to the public and the public to them — has evolved to a symphony of colors, of stories and art. **Ithraeyat even has its own sound**, its own identity of subtle soothing music that you hear when you visit its website composed for Ithraeyat by Saudi musician **Nasser Al-Shemimry**.

In this special edition, we celebrate another important milestone — **the 100 year anniversary** of one of the Arab world’s greats, the legendary **poet Nizar Qabbani**, a poet whose words capture the pulse of a heartbeat, and the sound of our thoughts. His poems are like lost letters, those private conversations we have with our close ones and with ourselves. In many ways, he remains an ambassador of the beauty of the Arabic language, in its complicated simplicity and its universal timeless themes.

We also feature what is believed to be ‘**the oldest’ recordings** (1906-1909) to come out from Jeddah, as well as interviews with iconic figures like **Naseer Shamma and paying homage to Nizar Qabbani by interviewing his son, Omar**. We include features on important figures like the ‘father of Saudi music’ **Tarik Abdul Hakim**, to sentimental figures like **Tarek Al-Arabi** whose voice reminds us of our childhood,

to the dynamic ways artists capture the essence of sound — from the calls of prayers as exhibited at the The Diriyah Biennale Foundation’s Islamic Arts Biennale to the various tunes of historic instruments and their masters of sound.

From the articles on the chants of camels to the soundtracks in films, there are sounds around us that we take for granted and only notice their central role when they are not there. We celebrate the treasures of our regular collaborations with **The Art of Heritage, Barjeel Art Foundation** and **the Aga Khan Museum**. We also welcome our latest collaborations with ‘**Van Cleef & Arpels**’ through their exquisite collection that pays homage to ‘Time, Nature and Love’ as part of an exhibit at The Saudi National Museum, as well as the sound of carvings and sculpting as part of the annual Tuwaiq Sculpture Symposium.

**A special calendar by AramcoWorld** in 2018 focused on ‘Tarab’ and the art of music that is worth rediscovering for its beautiful art and stories.

There is something for everyone in this unique edition, with various voices telling their stories, and sharing their art and creativity in the world of sound.

I hope you enjoy our latest ‘Makhzan’ (storehouse) of unique, ‘enriching’ stories.



The legendary poet  
**Nizar Qabbani**

wrote on the wind  
the name of my love  
whose name I wrote on  
the water  
but, I didn't know the  
wind is a poor listener  
and, I didn't know  
the water does not  
remember names ...”





Ninth Symphony, 2018, oil on canvas, 100 x 135 cm. Courtesy of the artist.

## Guest Artist:

### The Symphony of Visual Art

By Manar Al-Mutairi

Omar Al-Najjar is an artist known for his artistic touches that translate the sincerity of his feelings, and take the viewer on a journey of contemplation and reflection on the simple details of daily life.

Al-Najjar's paintings represent a modern view of impressionistic art, which depends on what the artist sees, as his paintings invite the viewer to look at objects and artistic images as a state of continuous movement...



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## Guest Artist:

King of the Instrument of Kings

By Zahra Shikara

“I saw a relationship between beauty and music. How can music have such an effect on people? That an ordinary housewife by day could turn into a stunning beauty by night...”

- Naseer Shamma, musician.

The oud and Naseer Shamma are pretty much synonymous. You won't find any piece written about the king of instruments (oud) without mention of its modern-day master. Shamma is widely considered the greatest oud player of the modern era, and perhaps the most gifted of all time...



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The late legendary poet Nizar Qabbani with his son Omar. Photo courtesy of the Qabbani family.

# Spotlight:

## 100th Anniversary - Homage to the Poet of Love

By Rym Al-Ghazal

**“My lover asks me: ‘What is the difference between me and the sky?’ The difference, my love, is that when you laugh, I forget about the sky...”** Nizar Qabbani (1923-1998), the legendary poet of ‘love’.

As the world celebrates ‘World Poetry Day,’ on March 21, it is perhaps no coincidence

that this date is also the birthday of one the Arab world’s greatest poets, Nizar Qabbani, who was born on the same day, in 1923. This year marks his 100th anniversary, and we at Ithraeyat pay homage to this legendary figure whose words live on, inspiring us to reflect, to feel and to remember...

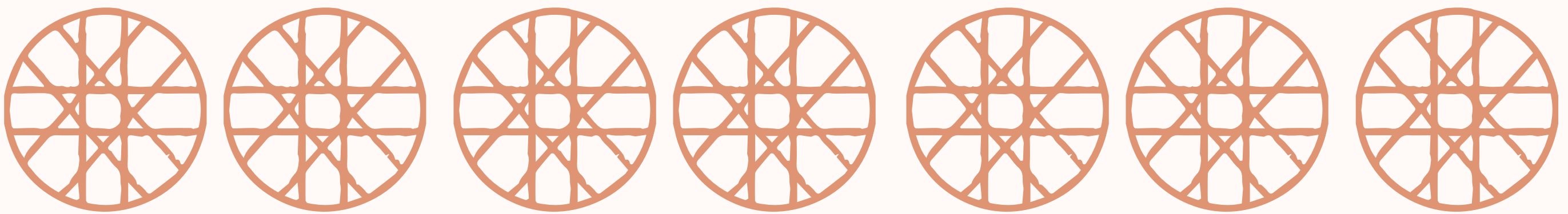


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Oud Player 140x200cm. Acrylic on canvas. Courtesy of the artist.



## Guest Artist:

Colors of Music  
By Manar Al-Mutairi

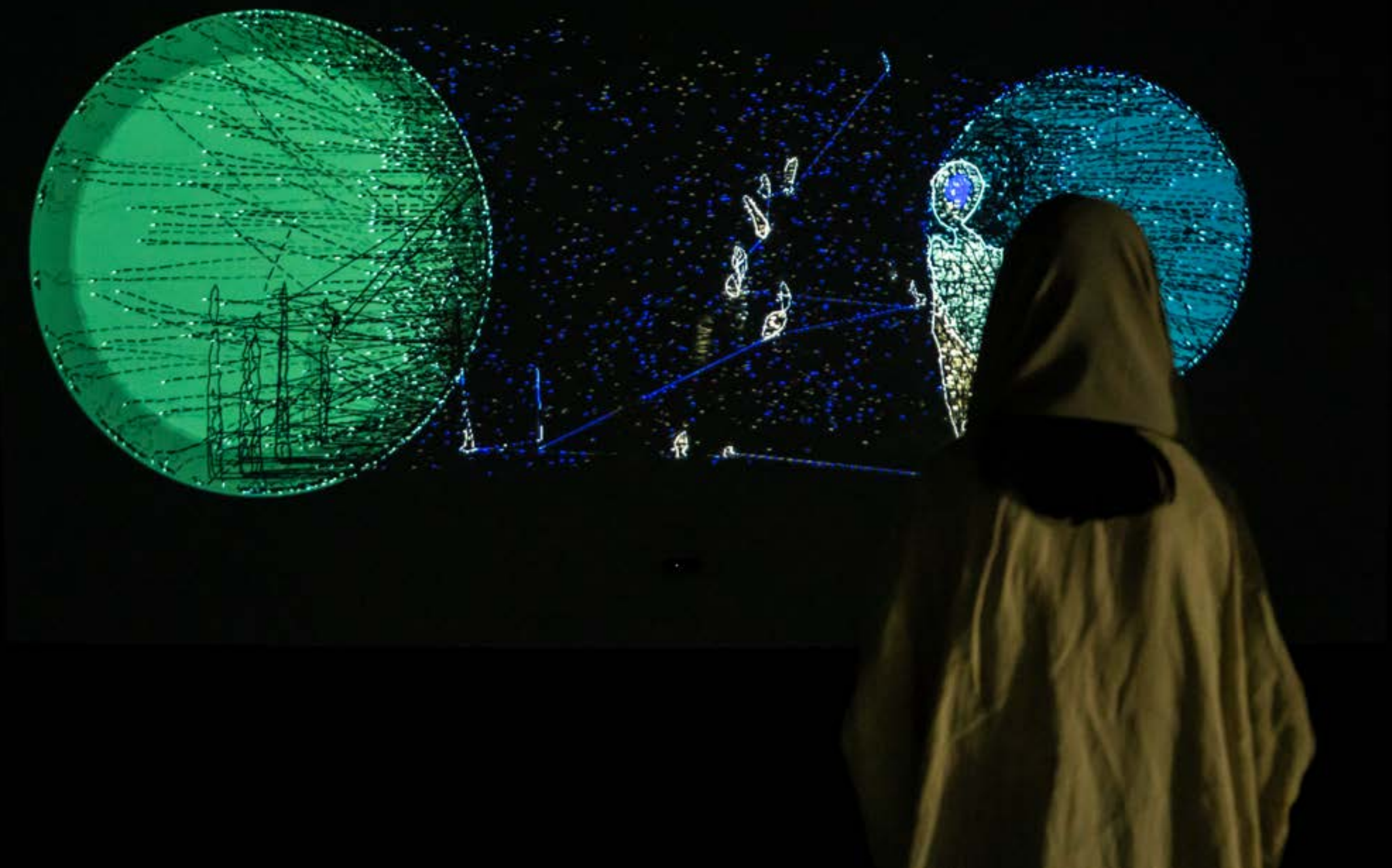
The artist Fadi Al-Daoud loved music, so he made a baton out of his brush to play the most beautiful and unique visual formations on his paintings...Al-Daoud's brush is characterized by high fluidity, as the visual formations in the painting allow you to imagine the smooth movement of the musicians, so that you can almost hear their

playing. His paintings, which chose music as a theme, reflect his sense of nostalgia for the beautiful past, as each corner of the painting tells a moment from the past embodied in visual instrumentals that take the viewer to memories of the golden age of the Arabic song...



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Nasser Al-Shemimry, Inner Light, 2022. Courtesy of the artist.



## Cover Art:

### The Sound of Ithraeyat

‘Soothing, soft, classical and timeless...were the inspiration behind Ithraeyat music...’

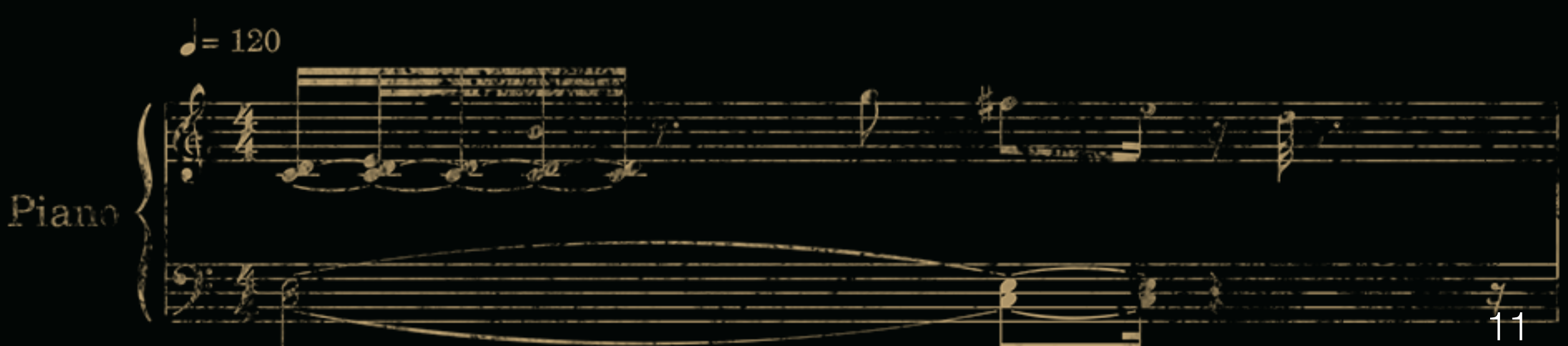
Nasser Al-Shemimry, Saudi musician

What started off as a more somber musical piece, based on Hejzi maqam, ended up being more of a universal piece; one inviting reflection, nostalgia and peace. The man behind the Ithraeyat musical piece

that plays on the **Ithraeyat website** (🎵), and is now part of the brand’s identity, is a young dynamic man who is always exploring the world of sound and art...



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# Special Feature:

## ‘Divine Calls to Prayer’

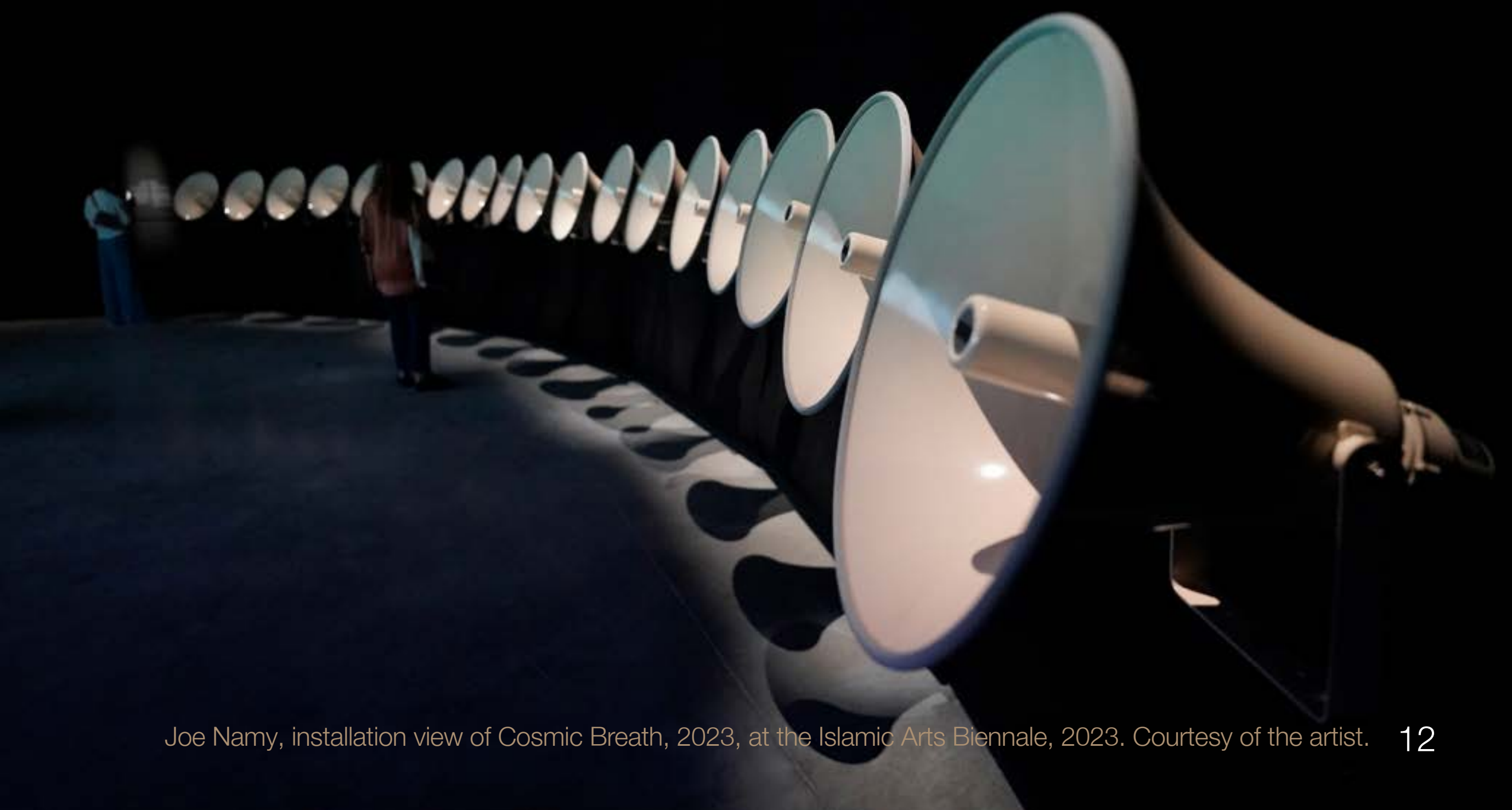
By Gaida Al-Mogren

Sound art is a form of contemporary art that is becoming today's hottest emotive medium. Using sound as a channel for creative expression is the most direct way for viewers to engage with art as sound can affect your emotions immediately, without any thought or explanation. Sound art is

not only an aural experience, as some artists use sound by bridging and crossing barriers between environmental and other non-musical sounds, and music in a contemporary or historical sense. Others investigate the political and cultural implications of certain sounds...



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Joe Namy, installation view of Cosmic Breath, 2023, at the Islamic Arts Biennale, 2023. Courtesy of the artist.



# From the Field:

## The Sound of Islamic Art

By Zahra Shikara

What does Islamic art sound like? What does the call to prayer ‘adhan’ look like? When talking about the art of sound, one naturally thinks of music, but it is important to distinguish that not all musicality is music. A better term is “the art of

sound” or “handasat al sawt,” (the composition of sound) for religious and non-religious compositions that are melodious and pleasant sounding, but not music as such...



Wave Catcher by Basma Falemban, 2023. Photo by Manar Al-Mutairi.



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The Voice of Listening, 2022, Courtesy of the artist, Zahra Bundakji.

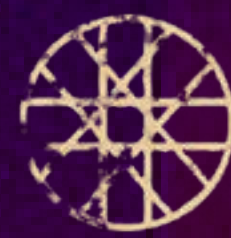
# Special Feature:

Art, Music, Dance & Space

By Hafsa Al-Khudairi

The visual artist Zahra Bundakj is a multidisciplinary research-based artist focused on ethnographic explorations through art. Her current interest is in dancing and music in private and public spaces. Yet art is the viewpoint from which she understands music and dance and

analyzes them. So understanding what art means to her seemed like a natural starting point. “Art is a multifaceted thing that means different things to different people,” and that is where her fascination with art lies...



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658 prepared dc-motors, cotton balls, cardboard boxes 70x70x70cm, 2017. Courtesy of Studio Zimoun.

# Guest Artist:

The Organized Chaos  
By Manar Al-Mutairi

“We hear what we see, and we see what we hear”  
- Zimoun

Zimoun is a Swiss artist who is known for creating unique sound sculptures that take the visitor into a visual auditive experience, allowing them to explore sound from new angles. With his special talent Zimoun creates sound installations that carry an emotional depth, exploring the conflict between the orderly patterns of modernism and the chaotic forces of life...



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# Spotlight:

## Songs of Generations

By Ghadeer Sadeq

‘Exceptional Saudi songs that left their impact on everyone and stood the test of time...’

The history of Saudi songs extend back decades before the establishment of the Saudi state, as each tribe had its own songs and chants. They were sung in peace or war

time, or during happy occasions, and it was one of the most important components of the intangible heritage in the Kingdom...



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Oud artwork, 140X 140 cm, Fatimah Al-Nemer. Courtesy of the artist.





A traditional drum. Courtesy of The Art of Heritage.

## Special Guest Columnist:

Sounds of Heritage

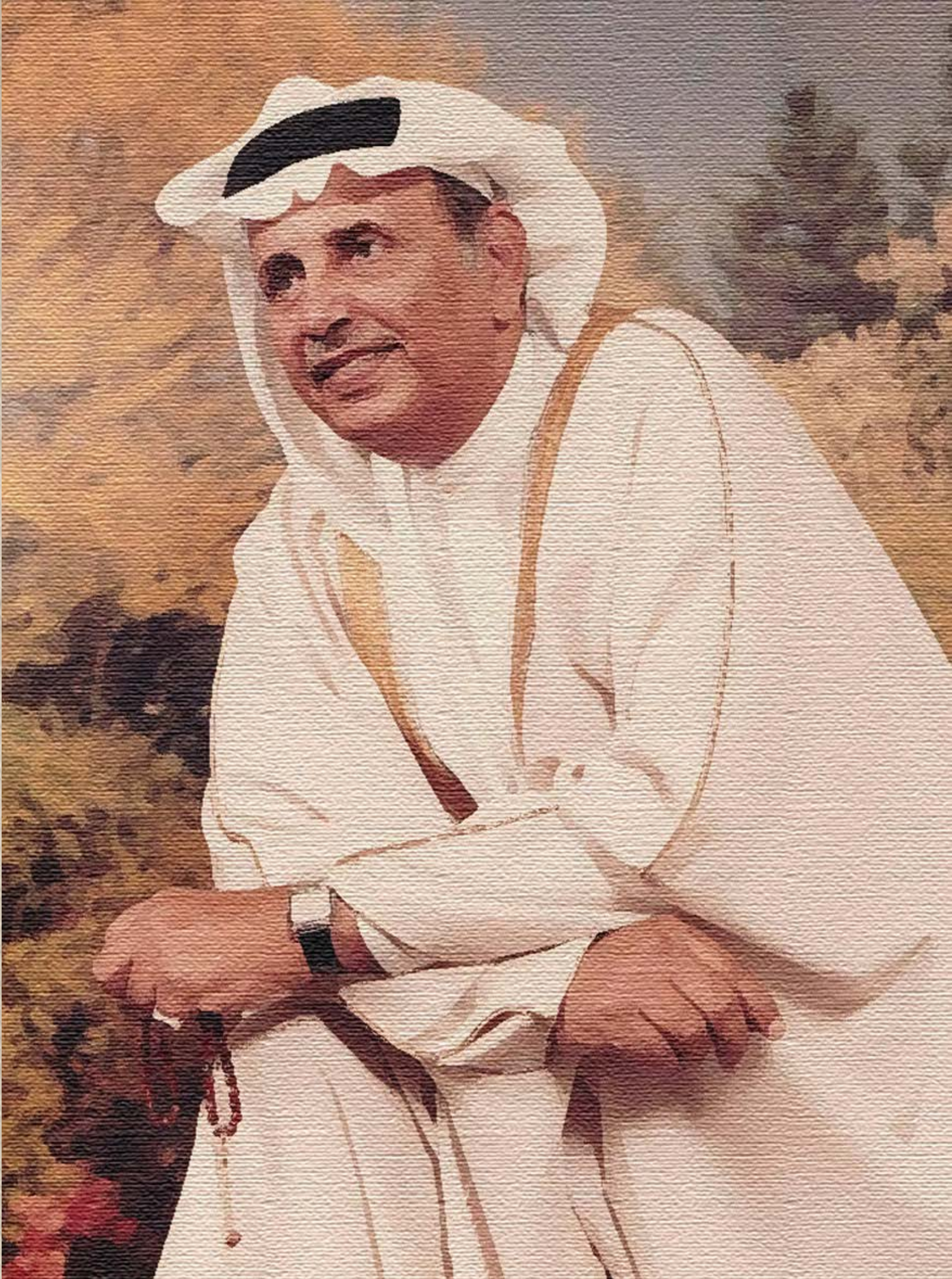
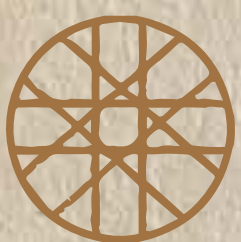
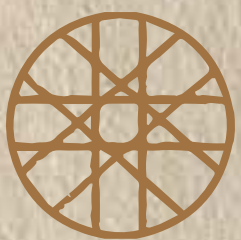
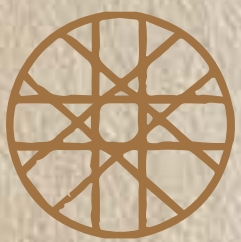
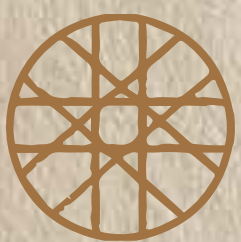
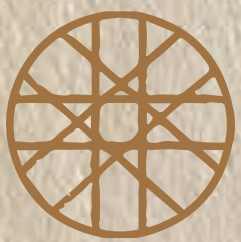
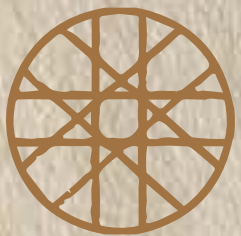
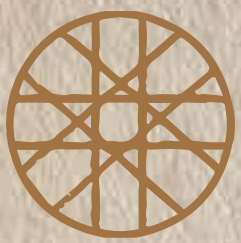
By Somaya Badr, CEO of The Art of Heritage

One of the most universal aspects of human culture is the use of musical instruments. Some academics have hypothesized that the earliest instruments sprang from everyday tools like cooking pots (drums) and hunting bows (musical bows)...



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Tariq Abdul Hakim Al-Tuwairqi (1918-2012)- Sketch of the ‘Father of Saudi music’.

## Spotlight:

### Tariq Abdul Hakim - Father of Music

By Ghadeer Sadeq

“Art is the mirror of peoples, and a nation is known only by its music.”

Tariq Abdul Hakim - Saudi artist and musician

Do you know who developed Saudi Arabia’s national music, including its military march, its national anthem, all the while reviving the country’s folkloric heritage and protecting it from oblivion?

Do you know who was credited with transferring Saudi music from the stage of auditory melody to the stage of musical notes written on sound, scientific foundations?



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Bird of paradise clip, 1927. Courtesy of Van Cleef & Arpels, part of the “Van Cleef & Arpels: Time, Nature, Love” exhibition held at the Saudi National Museum in Riyadh.

# From the Field:

Van Cleef & Arpels - Nature & Time  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

Pieces of jewelry carry more than the exquisite craftsmanship of their makers. They carry stories of time and place through their precious materials and design. They evoke a sense of nostalgia and memories in those who met them before, and ultimately they capture life and its many sounds in their dazzling intricacy and graceful stillness.

From the flutter of butterfly wings and the chirps and songs of birds, to the growls of lions, the meows of cats, the barks of dogs, and the ominous ‘tik tok’ of a clock reminding us all of the unstoppable father time, all these sounds come alive upon viewing the masterful collection by Van Cleef & Arpels...



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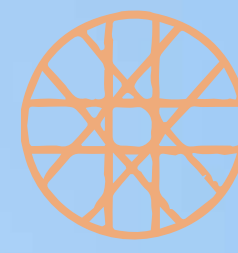
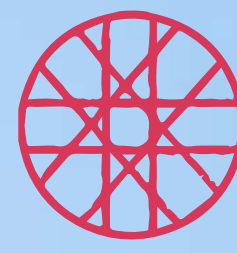
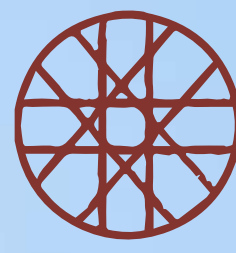
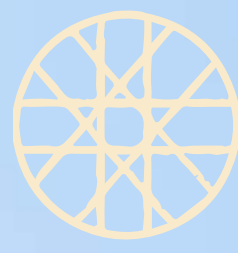
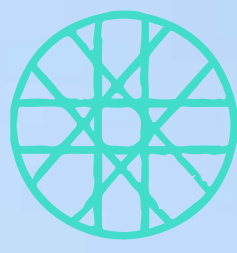
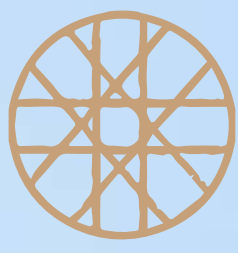
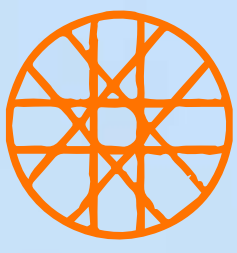
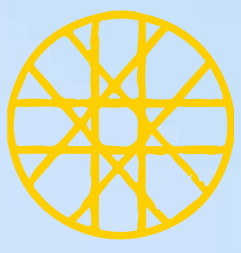


# THE SOUND OF TIME



Skeleton pocket watch, circa 1925. White and yellow gold, rock crystal, diamonds. Courtesy of Van Cleef & Arpels, part of the “Van Cleef & Arpels: Time, Nature, Love” exhibition held at the Saudi National Museum in Riyadh.





## Spotlight:

### The Art of Jameel

Art Jameel is a renowned cultural entity that supports artists and creative communities. Founded and supported by the Jameel family philanthropies, the independent organization is headquartered in Saudi Arabia and the UAE and works globally. Here we meet one of the leaders at Art Jameel, Deputy Director Sara Al-Omran, who oversees their regional and international strategy and is leading Saudi Arabian initiatives and projects, including the development and launch of Hayy Jameel...



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## Special Feature:

Melodies are a Language & Space that welcomes a Pictorial Vision  
By Rahma Dhyab

“Music is a dynamic state capable of creating movement  
and raising generations”

- Artist Tarek Al-Arabi

Between the love of music and the challenges of generations, composer and singer Tariq Al-Arabi talks about his artistic archive and the abundant masterpieces of music that span 30 years to the present day.

In every pause of his artistic history, his eager audience is amazed by the sweetness of his melodies and the beauty of his words, and his melodies still mix mirth and art with the innocence of childhood...



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‘Door of Water’ by Tatsumi Sakai, Tuwaiq Sculpture 2023, exhibition at Durrat Al-Riyadh. Courtesy of Riyadh Art.

# From the Field:

The Sound of Sculpting  
By Gaida Al-Mogren

Riyadh, with its sandstone hills, is the home of the annual Tuwaiq Sculpture Symposium. Its 4th edition took place in Durrat Al-Riyadh from January 8 to February 10, and it featured 30 artists from 20 countries who produced large-scale sculptures that will become permanent fixtures of Riyadh’s urban landscape as public art...



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Pearling Flock, Muneer Al Hajji. Courtesy of the artist.

## Spotlight:

### Sound of the Sea

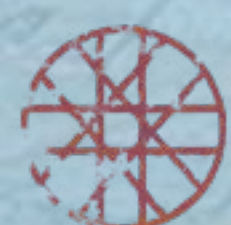
by Hassan Albather

“The heart of man is very much like the sea, it has its storms, it has its tides and, in its depths, it has its pearls too.”

Artist Vincent van Gogh

In the old days, a big part of livelihood was reliant on higher risks and wearing your heart on your sleeve. A time when our forefathers, on the coast of the Arabian Gulf, held their breaths, against all

odds, and defied nature. They were away from their families and loved ones for long periods of time, leaving their lives behind for the abyss and anguish of the turbulent sea...

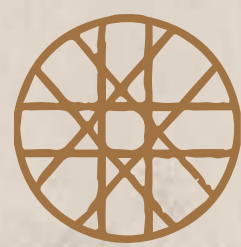


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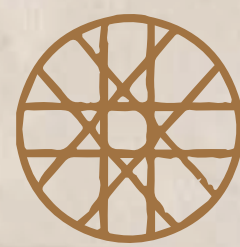




Watercolor on paper by Norman Macdonald. Courtesy of AramcoWorld.



## Guest Artist:



‘Life in Music,’ an interview with Maestro Yahya Masawa.

He loved world music from a young age, and was fond of the music of Beethoven, Mozart, Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Bach, and others. While his peers spent their money on sweets and local songs, he searched for a suitable place to study music in Riyadh, but it did not work. He turned to football to compensate for his passion for music...



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“Sensing beyond the frame” project. One of the winning projects from the Creative Solutions program, Courtesy of Jumanah Saklou.

# Spotlight

The Color of Sound

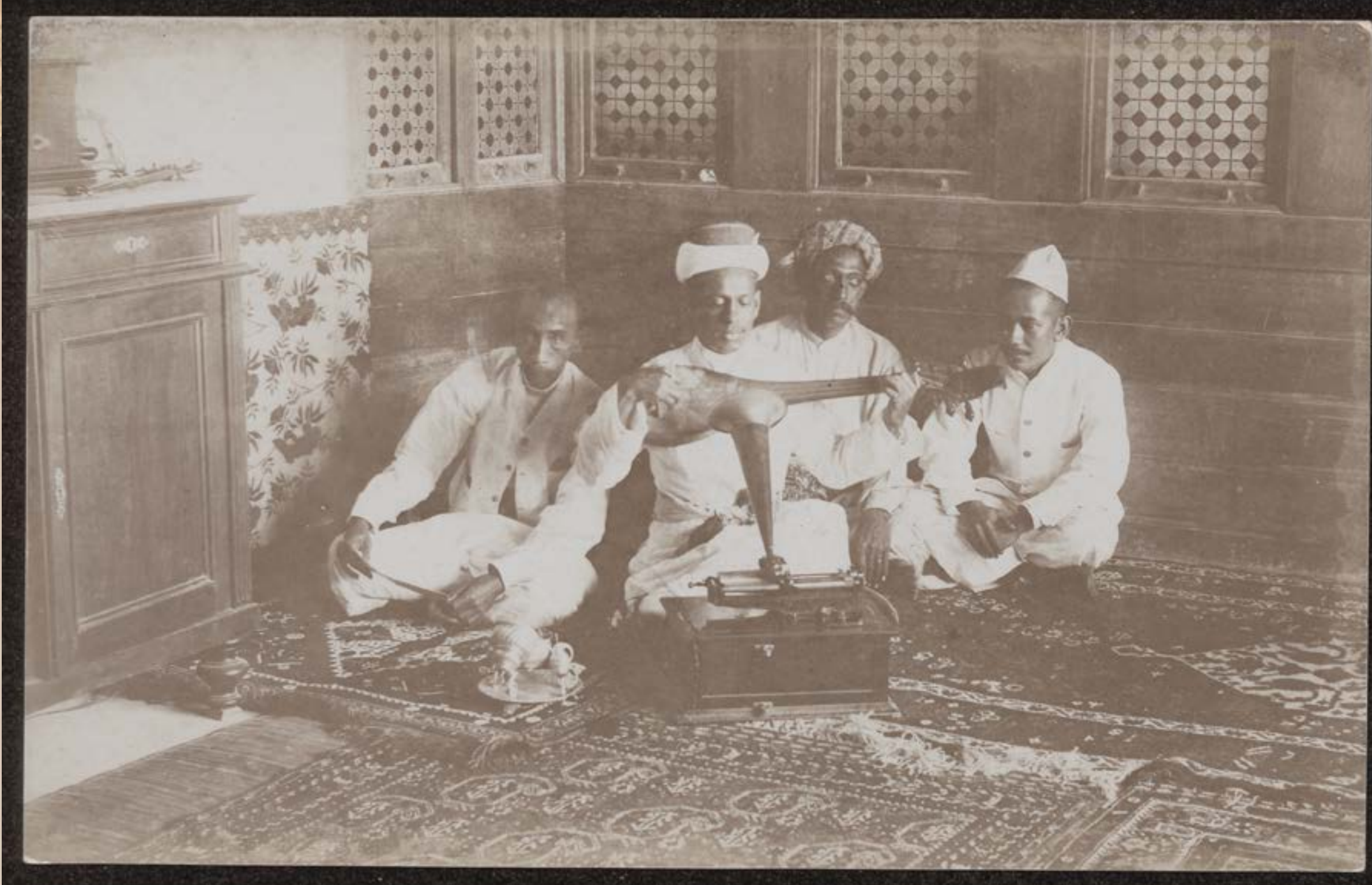
Have you ever wondered what color would sound like? What would the colors look like and what shape would they form? When it comes to the legendary Russian artist Wassily Kandinsky (1866–1944), who pioneered abstract art, his source of inspiration was drawn from his ability to see colors when

he heard sounds. He drew his painting as a visual response to hearing musical concerts or instruments. He had a condition called Synesthesia, which is defined as a condition where people experience the activation of one sense as the result of experiencing another...



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Photograph of a musical recording session in the Dutch Consulate, Jeddah, February 1908, 9x14 cm.  
Photo courtesy © Leiden University Libraries' Collection.

# Spotlight:

The First Recorded Sound of Jeddah  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

“Sounds enable [us] to be more intimately connected to a historical place and time...”

Dr. Luitgard Mols,  
curator and consultant on art from the Arab World.

We all carry certain memories with certain sounds. Some timeless music, like classical pieces by composers long gone, have had generations of listeners, each with their own story associated with a composition.

As we celebrate this elusive yet powerful theme of ‘Sound,’ we pay homage to the oldest and often first recordings to come out of a place, that if one listens to, one realizes that not that much has actually changed...



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Camels and their riders. Images are from the Ithra film ‘Hadi Aleis’.

# Arabic Treasures:

Camel Chants  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

“Trust in God, but tie up your camel...”

From a Hadith by Prophet Mohammed (PBUH).

Camels are majestic, and may appear quite stoic at times, but in fact, are actually poetic creatures. They enjoy and respond to different kinds of music, chants, songs and, well, the right words. ‘Ikh! Ikh!’ makes camels kneel, while ‘Yaahh! Yaahh!’ urges them on, with the added ‘Hut! Hut!’ inspiring them to go forward faster...



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# Guest Artist:

## Music of Films - Inspiring Feelings & Memories

By Raghad Fathaddin

“I am most excited when I can combine cultures and show off our very rich Arabic musical culture, so most of my music is some sort of fusion...I like experimenting in genres and musical styles that haven't been tried, or that others think are incompatible...”

Arab-American music composer Peter Ata, who composed the soundtrack of Ithra's latest film 'Hadi Aleis'



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Chant Avedissian, You Are Love, 2008, Gouache on cardboard, 49 x 69 cm. Image courtesy of Barjeel Art Foundation, Sharjah.

## From the Vault:

Musical Art  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

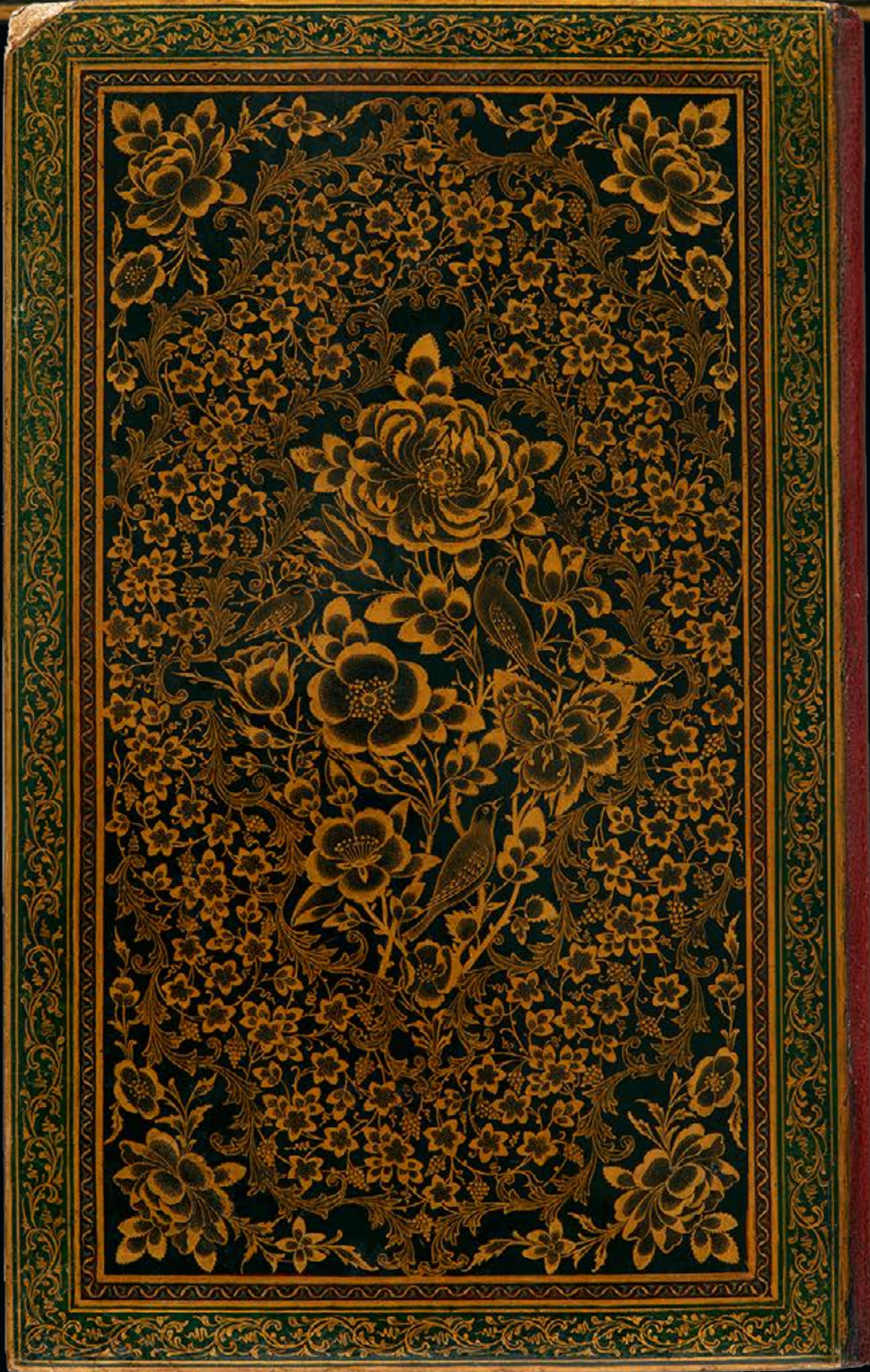
We each have a different relationship with sound. Some sounds we seek to give us peace, to inspire us, and make us dream. Other sounds we listen to, to learn new things and for work. Then there is the sound of song

and music, that we listen to for entertainment and to forget where we are for a moment. We are always very blessed to be able to regularly feature the timeless beautiful works of art from Barjeel Art Foundation in Sharjah...



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Manuscript of *Zad al-Ma'ad* (Provisions for the Hereafter) by Muhammad Baqir Majlisi (1626–99)  
Binding by Mahmud Muzahhib-bashi Shirazi  
Iran, Tehran, dated 1313 AH/1895–96  
Ink, watercolor, and gold on paper; Binding: pasteboard, painted and lacquered  
H. 22.3 cm × W. 14.0 cm × D. 2.8 cm  
The Aga Khan Museum, AKM 277

## Bridges: Cross-Cultural Conversations

### The Rose and the Nightingale - Listen to the Art

By Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis,  
Director and CEO at the Aga Khan Museum.

Have you ever listened to an artwork? Or smelled its scent? Not the usual approach we take with art. And yet, if you imagine doing just that for a moment with this intricately decorated lacquer binding - exploring and immersing yourself in its delicate beauty - a totally unexpected, sensuous world may unfold.

Listen to the three nightingales that perch ever so gently on the twigs of the rose bush - what songs might they sing? And as you listen, close your eyes, inhale, and enjoy the heavenly scent of the rose...



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**1948**, Hofuf. A Saudi national playing a flute. Courtesy of The Aramco Archives.

# From the Archives:

Old Sounds  
By Rym Al-Ghazal

For those who grew up on traditional TVs and radios, the static noise that comes on when switching between channels and searching for that station brings back memories of perhaps a much simpler and “less choices” time.

Streaming and watching shows and movies on mobile phones and laptops have taken away a great part of the social aspect of watching something together with the rest of the family, as well as fighting over the remote control...



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The background of the entire page is a textured, aged, light brown paper. At the top, there are two staves of musical notation. The first staff contains several measures of music with notes and rests. The second staff is mostly empty, with a few notes and a large, stylized treble clef on the right side. The paper has a torn edge at the top, and there are some faint, circular stamps or markings on the right side.

# About Ithra

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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 Ithra Tower. For more information, please visit:  
[www.ithra.com](http://www.ithra.com)

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