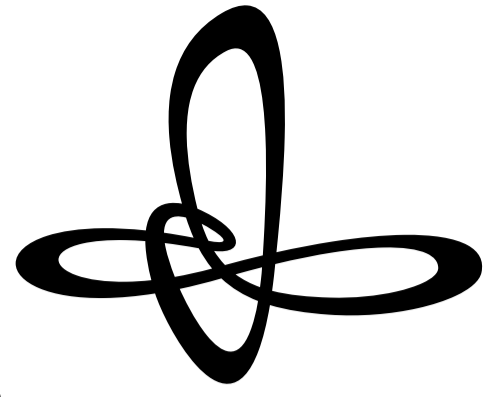
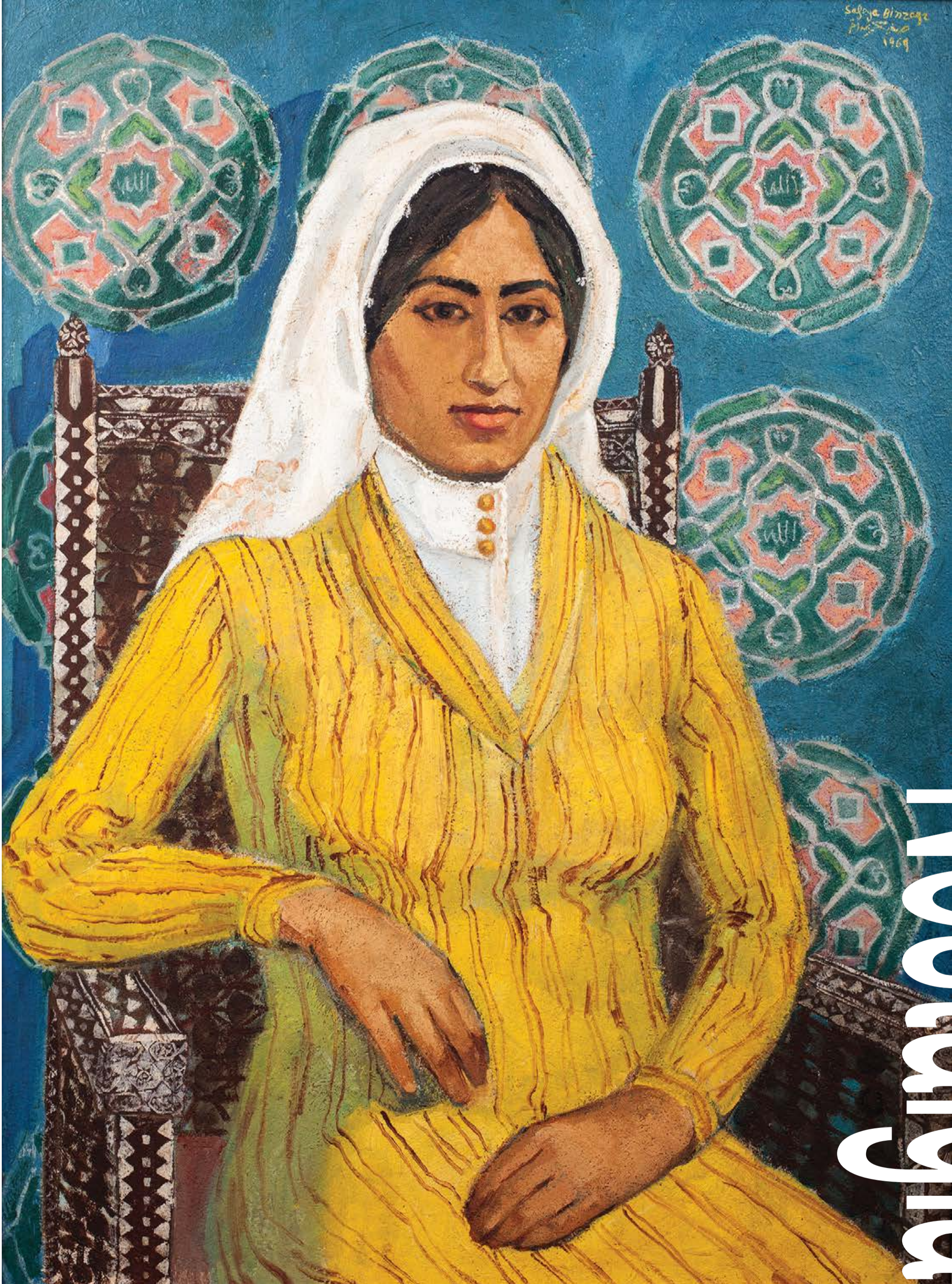


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Nostalgia

Artist: Safeya Binzagr

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.



'Composition with fish,' (1975), oil and sand on masonite, by one of Saudi Arabia's most respected artists: Abdul-Halim Radwi. Originally from Makkah, Radwi (1939-2006) was a painter, poet and sculptor with a special focus on traditions, and a pioneer of contemporary arts in the Kingdom. Courtesy of **Barjeel Art Foundation**, Sharjah.

A gift of song:

“Bring her home...Bring her home...”

Songs, lullabies, nursery rhymes and chants are melodious echoes from the past. They capture a story, an identity, a feeling and a memory.

And one of the most powerful nostalgic timeless songs are the traditional 'songs of the seas' by pearl divers from the Arabian Peninsula. Hums and drums and chants of the blues, of love, of home and the great yearning for families back on land.

Pearling dominated the thoughts and way of life of nearly all the coastal inhabitants of the Gulf for centuries. The industry gradually collapsed due to cultured pearls and other factors, and by 1939, pearling had almost completely disappeared from the ports of Saudi Arabia.

But the songs live on.

Pause and enjoy **this traditional pearl diving ballad**, passed down across many generations.

For a modern artistic interpretation, listen to **Bahara (Men of the sea)** by Saudi artist **Ahaad Alamoudi** who stages a soundscape in which the reverberations of the sea are merged with a modernized version of the song of “El Yamal,” a folkloric anthem sung by Saudi pearl divers and sailors, known in Arabic as Bahara, to give them strength in their seafaring endeavors. For the artist, this work honors the traditions of these seamen whose now defunct trade was in its heyday a crucial part of the economy of the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula.

Project commissioned in 2018 by **Ithra**, the video courtesy Ahaad Alamoudi and **Athr Gallery**, Jeddah.

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“If you have the will, you will,” is a motto the legendary Saudi artist Safeya Binzagr lives by.



Meet our ‘theme-special’ featured Saudi artist, **Safeya Binzagr**, the “mother of art.”

R

With over 35 exhibitions, over 450 artworks, Ms. Binzagr, known as “mother of art,” has spent a lifetime creating and capturing the multifaceted beauty of past Saudi life— the essence of its people, its colorful traditions, deep heritage and long history.

“Art is my life,” she told Ithraeyat Magazine in an exclusive interview. For the past five decades, Safeya Binzagr’s art creations have been and remain one of the Kingdom’s most memorable cultural ambassadors, telling the story of a nation and its human spirit....

T



Nostalgia

“Those were the days....”

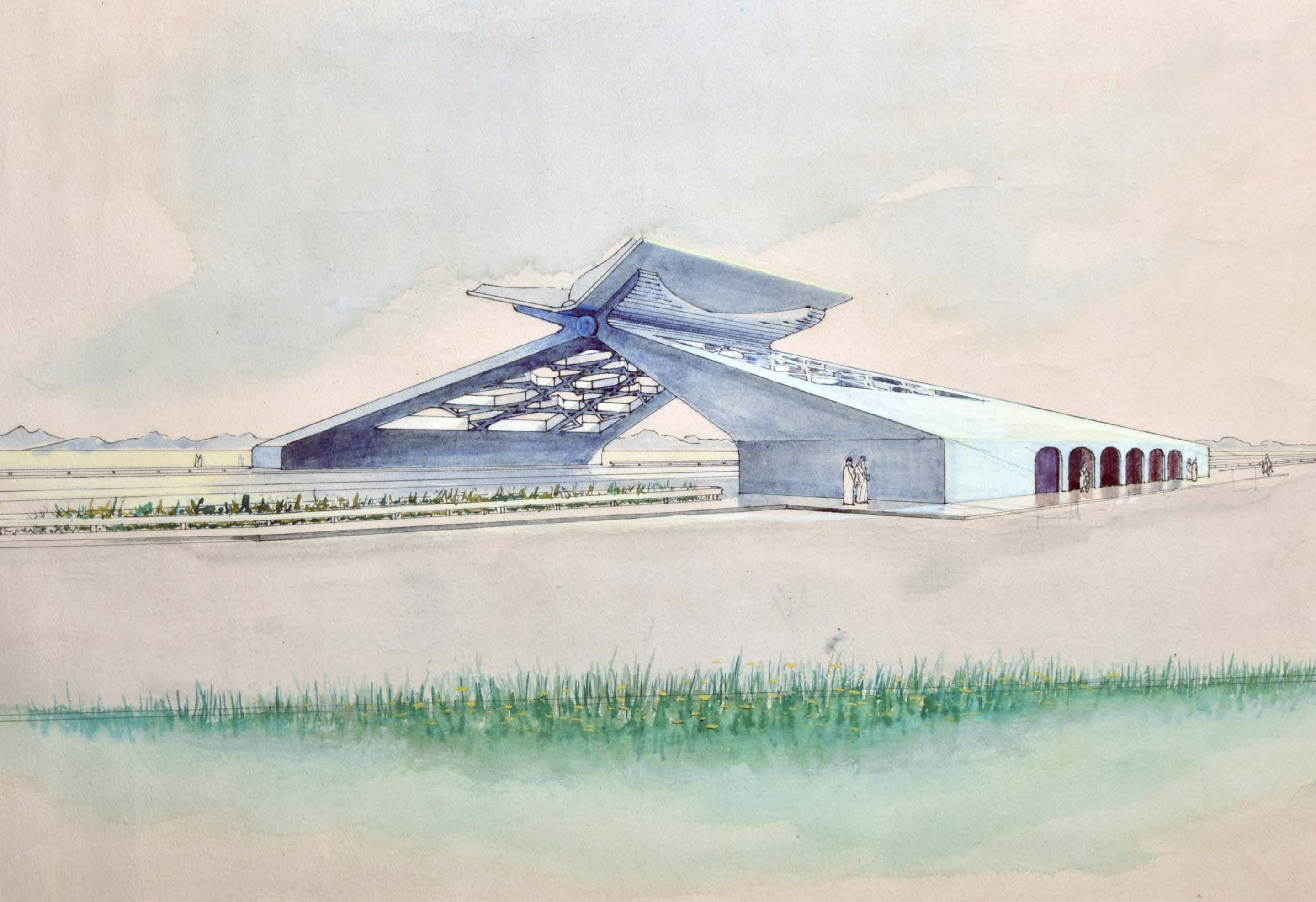
We all have a nostalgic notion for a time period, often what we believe was a more ‘innocent time,’ a decade or two with personal meanings and connections, childhood memories, songs, books, cartoons, crushes and love stories, school moments, dishes cooked by mother, locations visited and houses lived in, many things fall under **‘Nostalgia’** — the theme of this issue.

For many, there is a yearning for a pre-COVID-19 era, one that can be globally traced to just a few months ago. With every change there are positives, and negatives, and a chance to learn new things and

appreciate the things and people have for granted.

In the third issue of Ithraeyat Magazine, we pay homage to Nostalgia in its different forms, and the revisit the importance of having artistic creations that trigger this sense in its citizens and its visitors.

The art on the cover is of ‘Al Zaboon’ (1969)—also known as the **‘Mona Lisa of Hijaz’**—one of the famous art pieces by the legendary Saudi artist **Safeya Binzagr**, who is one the country’s first artists with many milestones. Her art pieces capture traditions and stories, and a way of life that many are nostalgic for.



A sketch of the famous Makkah Gate by Saudi artist **Dia Aziz Dia**, dated 1979/8/14.

The Art of Nostalgia

**“Stop, friends! Let us stay and weep at the thought of my love
She lived here on the desert’s edge between Al Dakhooli and Howmali
Tudiha and Mirkat! the campsite has not been erased
even as the south and north winds cross weave across the sands...”**
—The 6th Century Prince Poet Imru’ Al-Qays

A place, a song, a certain fragrance, a particular dish, a specific date: All of these can trigger memories and a sense of nostalgia and longing for something that once was.

For some, a particular sand dune in the middle of the desert can lead to tears, as they have for past poets and travelers across its harsh terrain.

And for the past 35 years, a particular Saudi landmark has been imprinting itself on the memories of millions of travelers, who upon seeing it again, are overwhelmed with feelings of longing.

“The Makkah Gate has become the gateway to the hearts of all Muslims. I am honored to have been part of creating a collective sense of nostalgia and a memory of a journey for all those who have passed through,” said Saudi artist Dia Aziz Dia, the structure’s designer in an exclusive interview with Ithraeyat.

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

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