

ISA INTERNATIONAL GUEST LECTURE

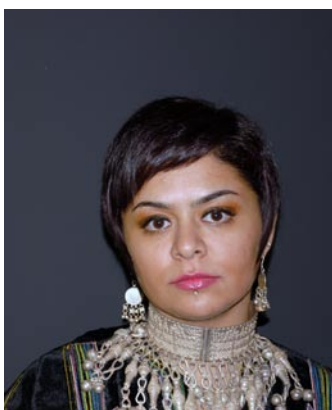
An inquiry into the challenges and possibilities of reviving the 'dying' art of Asir

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Thursday, 12th of May 2011, 4.00 pm [s.t.]

Centre for Studies in Asian Cultures and Social Anthropology
Seminar room 1, A-1030 Wien, Apostelgasse 23

This paper will produce a critical contemporary history of women's Art-making in the Asir community between "1920-2012" and considers the possibility of the revival being required by the Saudi government. It investigates and documents the history of Fresco-making in Asir and the traditions related to it, including their religious and cultural significance. Rather than assuming the skills associated with fresco are probably lost through the termination of economic and public features of the art. The paper will question whether the 'dying' art of Asir contains its own seeds of cultural flexibility and renewal as some academics and leaders in Saudi Arabia have suggested. As the art of Asir is referred to as 'traditional', the use of this term will be problematical in the paper. Religion, politics and socio-economic forces have all impacted on Saudi Arabia. A key aim of this paper is to change ideologies that have affected the principles attached to it.



Haifa Al-Hababi is a PhD student at the School of Oriental and African Studies SOAS London University in the Department of Art and Archaeology, UK. Her primary research is on the "The Art of the Woman of Asir, Saudi Arabia". Ms. Al-Hababi received her Masters of Philosophy Degree in Art, Design and Architecture in Education from the University of Glasgow, Glasgow School of Art. She has made a documentary Film that shows the region of Asir, its art, architecture, frescoes, lifestyles, religion, politics, and socio-economics, and its impact on Saudi Arabia in general and the region of Asir in particular. The film explores the underlying reasons that might have played a role in the change of the status of the art of the women of Asir. She is writing her first book about her trip to Asir and in particular her field experience with women in Asir.