Saudi Aramco world

Design 2008

"God is beautiful and loves beauty."
—Saying of the Prophet Muhammad, according to Muslim

Gregorian and Hijri *Calendars*

Design 2008: "Contemporary Oriental"

WRITTEN BY NADIA KHOURI-DAGHER

At Restaurant Liza, near the former Stock Exchange in Paris, the tabletops are brass trays familiar from Arab cafés—but oversize and turned upside-down. Instead of curtains, there are panels like *mashrabiyyah*s, but not of traditional turned-wood latticework: These are translucent Plexiglas inlaid with mother-of-pearl. The countertop is made of beige sea pebbles in a pattern inspired by Roman mosaics, and the whites and blues throughout hint at the Mediterranean. It's at once Middle Eastern and confidently contemporary.

"The whole concept was to show a new 'oriental' design," says 32-year-old owner Liza Soughayar, who founded the restaurant in 2005. "The idea was to create a place in Paris which represents contemporary Lebanon, a country moving with the times." To do this, Soughayar collaborated with four young designers, all Lebanese: Karen Chekerdjian did the tables, Nada Debs did the "mashrabiyyah" panels, Annabelle Kassar did the lighting and Hubert Fattal guided the overall concept.

But it's not just in Paris, and it's not coming just from Lebanon: In London, Beirut, Dubai, Istanbul, Riyadh, Manama, Lahore, Marrakech and many other places, restaurants, hotels, offices and homes are embracing a globalized, "contemporary oriental" design image. A new generation of designers is emerging who mix tradition and modernity to produce objects and spaces with fresh appeal to international eyes. You can see them at professional shows such as Maison & Objet in Paris or Design Frankfurt, in Dubai malls and concept stores, and in such western magazines as *Trend & Design, AD, The World of Interiors, Marie-Claire Maison* and *Elle Décoration*. Some of these designers work for companies such as Alessi in Italy and Vitra in Switzerland, and more than a few are winning international prizes. Since the 1990's, interior design magazines have emerged that are dedicated to the Arab regions, including *Gulf Interiors, Maisons du Maroc, Byzance* and the "Design" department of Dubai-based *Canvas*, all of which showcase new talent. Academic conferences such as Tasmeem ("Design"), held annually in Doha since 2005, and the International Design Forum this year in Dubai have lent intellectual stimulus to what Yvonne Courtney, editor of *Gulf Interiors*, calls "definitely a trend toward contemporary design in the Arab region today."

"'Contemporary' does not necessarily mean 'western,'" cautions architect Said Berrada of Morocco. "It can also mean 'oriental.' The word 'contemporary' does not belong to only one culture." Berrada has just designed a new table: a square cedar base with an inlaid square copper plate. He has also redesigned the traditional *pouf* (Ottoman), changing it from round to conical and covering it with a bright red woollen material imported from Sweden.

"Our creations are inspired by our traditions, and we take them to every part of the world by using this universal language—modernity," explains Memet Güreli, founder of Ethnicon, an Istanbul company that is extending the flat-woven *kilim* tradition into new colors and modular designs.

For many of these young designers, objects for the home come first, particularly furniture and accessories for the kitchen and dining room. Even Zaha Hadid, the Iraqi-born architectural superstar, has designed tea accessories for Sawaya & Moroni, the Milan-based company co-founded by William Sawaya of Lebanon. In Tunisia, Tarak Kamoun, who was trained on Murano, the glassmakers' island of Venice, is using colored glass to revisit *keska*s (the traditional pot to cook couscous) and other Tunisian kitchen items, and Khédija Kilani is producing copper plates and bowls whose pure lines distinguish them from their heavier ancestors.

"We belong to two cultures, so we take our inspiration from two cultures," explains Berrada, who, like nearly all of these young designers, has lived and been educated in both Arab lands and the West, and travels frequently between them.

"These designers are managing to break free from geographical contextualization. They are no longer seen as 'Middle Eastern designers' but as 'designers.' Some of them now receive international recognition, which is still not the case for visual artists from the region," observes Lisa Ball-Lechgar, editor of *Canvas*. (See page 2.) The designers' clientele shows this: Arabs, Europeans, Iranians, Americans, Japanese, Scandinavians and more are all buying. For example, Nada Debs's best-selling furniture work, "Pebble" table, fetches a cool $8000 in New York.

But perhaps more important for the future, these designers also are influencing the craft traditions of their countries of origin. From Morocco to Indonesia, "traditional" artisans are increasingly taking inspiration from modern creations and, in response to the new demand for contemporary design, turning out new products, from *tagine*s in bright pink to teak furniture that acknowledges Zen, Bauhaus or a bit of both. Some governments are beginning to lend official support: "Design is central to Malaysian furniture development strategies," says that country's industry minister, Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui. Similarly, Morocco is inviting top designers to meet with local craftsmen to promote new designs, and recently remodeled its Paris tourism office along "contemporary oriental" lines.

By melding the best of both of these worlds, this emerging style offers tangible evidence that modernity and tradition are not contradictory; rather, they are the seeds of our future, wherever we live.

Nadia Khouri-Dagher (www.nadia-khouri-dagher.com) is a Lebanese free-lance writer, now based in Paris, who specializes in Arab cultures. She has a Ph.D. in development economics and is the author or co-author of a dozen books.

Above: **Collaboration among four artists created the "contemporary oriental" decor of Liza Soughayar's eponymous restaurant. Photo courtesy of Liza Soughayar. ⓘ www.restaurant-liza.com.**
Cover: **Now living in Marrakech, London-born Yahya is a self-taught designer whose lamps of cut metal fill smooth modern shapes with traditional arabesque and vegetal patterns. This year's Maison & Objet show in Paris showcased his work, including this "Egg" lamp. Photo courtesy of Yahya Creation. ⓘ www.yahyacreation.com.**

Patterns of Moon, Patterns of Sun

It is he who made the sun to be a shining glory, and the moon to be a light (of beauty), and measured out stages for her, that ye might know the number of years and the count (of time).
—The Qur'an, Chapter 10 ("Yunus") Verse 5

WRITTEN BY PAUL LUNDE

The *hijri* calendar

In AD 638, six years after the death of the Prophet Muhammad, Islam's second caliph 'Umar recognized the necessity of a calendar to govern the affairs of the Muslims. This was first of all a practical matter. Correspondence with military and civilian officials in the newly conquered lands had to be dated. But Persia used a different calendar from Syria, where the caliphate was based; Egypt used yet another. Each of these calendars had a different starting point, or epoch. The Sasanids, the ruling dynasty of Persia, used June 16, AD 632, the date of the accession of the last Sasanid monarch, Yazdagird III. Syria, which until the Muslim conquest was part of the Byzantine Empire, used a form of the Roman "Julian" calendar, with an epoch of October 1, 312 BC. Egypt used the Coptic calendar, with an epoch of August 29, AD 284. Although all were solar, and hence geared to the seasons and containing 365 days, each also had a different system for periodically adding days to compensate for the fact that the true length of the solar year is not 365 but 365.2422 days.

In pre-Islamic Arabia, various other systems of measuring time had been used. In South Arabia, some calendars apparently were lunar, while others were lunisolar, using months based on the phases of the moon but intercalating days outside the lunar cycle to synchronize the calendar with the seasons. On the eve of Islam, the Himyarites appear to have used a calendar based on the Julian form, but with an epoch of 110 BC. In central Arabia, the course of the year was charted by the position of the stars relative to the horizon at sunset or sunrise, dividing the ecliptic into 28 equal parts corresponding to the location of the moon on each successive night of the month. The names of the months in that calendar have continued in the Islamic calendar to this day and would seem to indicate that, before Islam, some sort of lunisolar calendar was in use, though it is not known to have had an epoch other than memorable local events.

There were two other reasons 'Umar rejected existing solar calendars. The Qur'an, in Chapter 10, Verse 5, states that time should be reckoned by the moon. Not only that, calendars used by the Persians, Syrians and Egyptians were identified with other religions and cultures. He therefore decided to create a calendar specifically for the Muslim community. It would be lunar, and it would have 12 months, each with 29 or 30 days.

This gives the lunar year 354 days, 11 days fewer than the solar year. 'Umar chose as the epoch for the new Muslim calendar the *hijrah*, the emigration of the Prophet Muhammad and 70 Muslims from Makkah to Madinah, where Muslims first attained religious and political autonomy. The *hijrah* thus occurred on 1 Muharram 1 according to the Islamic calendar, which was named "*hijri*" after its epoch. (This date corresponds to July 16, AD 622 on the Gregorian calendar.) Today in the West, it is customary, when writing *hijri* dates, to use the abbreviation AH, which stands for the Latin *anno hegirae*, "year of the *hijrah*."

Because the Islamic lunar calendar is 11 days shorter than the solar, it is therefore not synchronized to the seasons. Its festivals, which fall on the same days of the same lunar months each year, make the round of the seasons every 33 solar years. This 11-day difference between the lunar and the solar year accounts for the difficulty of converting dates from one system to the other.

Though they share 12 lunar cycles—months—per solar year, the *hijri* calendar uses actual moon phases to mark them, whereas the Gregorian calendar adjusts its nearly lunar months to synchronize with the sun.

The Gregorian calendar

The early calendar of the Roman Empire was lunisolar, containing 355 days divided into 12 months beginning on January 1. To keep it more or less in accord with the actual solar year, a month was added every two years. The system for doing so was complex, and cumulative errors gradually misaligned it with the seasons. By 46 BC, it was some three months out of alignment, and Julius Caesar oversaw its reform. Consulting Greek astronomers in Alexandria, he created a solar calendar in which one day was added to February every fourth year, effectively compensating for the solar year's length of 365.2422 days. This Julian calendar was used throughout Europe until AD 1582.

In the Middle Ages, the Christian liturgical calendar was grafted onto the Julian one, and the computation of lunar festivals like Easter, which falls on the first Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox, exercised some of the best minds in Christendom. The use of the epoch AD 1 dates from the sixth century, but did not become common until the 10th. Because the zero had not yet reached the West from Islamic lands, a year was lost between 1 BC and AD 1.

The Julian year was nonetheless 11 minutes and 14 seconds too long. By the early 16th century, due to the accumulated error, the spring equinox was falling on March 11 rather than where it should, on March 21. Copernicus, Christophorus Clavius and the physician Aloysius Lilius provided the calculations, and in 1582 Pope Gregory XIII ordered that Thursday, October 4, 1582 would be followed by Friday, October 15, 1582. Most Catholic countries accepted the new "Gregorian" calendar, but it was not adopted in England and the Americas until the 18th century. Its use is now almost universal worldwide. The Gregorian year is nonetheless 25.96 seconds ahead of the solar year, which by the year 4909 will add up to an extra day.

Historian **Paul Lunde** (paullunde@hotmail.com) specializes in Islamic history and literature. His most recent book is *From the Meadows of Gold* in the Penguin Classics "Great Journeys" series.

Converting Dates

The following equations convert roughly from Gregorian to *hijri* and vice versa. However, the results can be slightly misleading: They tell you only the year in which the other calendar's year *begins*. For example, 2008 Gregorian includes the last days of AH 1428 in January, all of AH 1429, and the first days of AH 1430 in December. Though the equation tells you that 2008 "equals" 1429, in fact 1429 merely begins during 2008.

Gregorian year = [(32 x *Hijri* year) ÷ 33] + 622

***Hijri* year** = [(Gregorian year – 622) x 33] ÷ 32

Alternatively, there are more precise calculators available on the Internet: Try **www.rabiah.com/convert/** and **www.ori.unizh.ch/hegira.html**.

Saudi Aramco world 2008

Moroccan Hicham Lahlou's international recognition came through his "Koubba" teapot, designed in 1999 and 2000, exhibited at the Institut du Monde Arabe and inspired by the round domes common in Arab architecture. The teapot is now part of the collection of the Alessi Museum in Milan, and re-editions of it have been acquired by the Wereldmuseum Rotterdam. Photo courtesy of Hicham Lahlou. ⓘ www.hichamlahlou.com.

JANUARY

DHU AL-HIJJAH 1428 – MUHARRAM 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 22	**2** 23	**3** 24	**4** 25
5 26	**6** 27	**7** 28	**8** 29	**9** 30	**10** 1	**11** 2
12 3	**13** 4	**14** 5	**15** 6	**16** 7	**17** 8	**18** 9
19 10	**20** 11	**21** 12	**22** 13	**23** 14	**24** 15	**25** 16
26 17	**27** 18	**28** 19	**29** 20	**30** 21	**31** 22	

FEBRUARY

MUHARRAM – SAFAR 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
						1 23
2 24	**3** 25	**4** 26	**5** 27	**6** 28	**7** 29	**8** 1
9 2	**10** 3	**11** 4	**12** 5	**13** 6	**14** 7	**15** 8
16 9	**17** 10	**18** 11	**19** 12	**20** 13	**21** 14	**22** 15
23 16	**24** 17	**25** 18	**26** 19	**27** 20	**28** 21	**29** 22

Saudi Aramco world 2008

Lebanese designers Hoda Baroudi and Maria Hibri fell in love with Central Asian textiles, and under the brand Bokja—from *bohça*, the Turkish word for the beautiful textile a gift is wrapped in—they produce "haute bohemian" furniture: largely western forms decorated with textiles from Tajikistan and Uzbekistan. They describe their style as "slightly eccentric and decidedly off-*piste*—without taking ourselves entirely seriously." Photo courtesy of Bokja. ⓘ www.bokjadesign.com.

MARCH

SAFAR – RABI‘ I 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 23	**2** 24	**3** 25	**4** 26	**5** 27	**6** 28	**7** 29
8 30	**9** 1	**10** 2	**11** 3	**12** 4	**13** 5	**14** 6
15 7	**16** 8	**17** 9	**18** 10	**19** 11	**20** 12	**21** 13
22 14	**23** 15	**24** 16	**25** 17	**26** 18	**27** 19	**28** 20
29 21	**30** 22	**31** 23				

APRIL

RABI‘ I – RABI‘ II 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 24	**2** 25	**3** 26	**4** 27
5 28	**6** 29	**7** 1	**8** 2	**9** 3	**10** 4	**11** 5
12 6	**13** 7	**14** 8	**15** 9	**16** 10	**17** 11	**18** 12
19 13	**20** 14	**21** 15	**22** 16	**23** 17	**24** 18	**25** 19
26 20	**27** 21	**28** 22	**29** 23	**30** 24		

MARCH

SAFAR – RABI‘ I 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 23	**2** 24	**3** 25	**4** 26	**5** 27	**6** 28	**7** 29
8 30	**9** 1	**10** 2	**11** 3	**12** 4	**13** 5	**14** 6
15 7	**16** 8	**17** 9	**18** 10	**19** 11	**20** 12	**21** 13
22 14	**23** 15 Easter	**24** 16	**25** 17	**26** 18	**27** 19	**28** 20
29 21	**30** 22	**31** 23				

APRIL

RABI‘ I – RABI‘ II 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 24	**2** 25	**3** 26	**4** 27
5 28	**6** 29	**7** 1	**8** 2	**9** 3	**10** 4	**11** 5
12 6	**13** 7	**14** 8	**15** 9	**16** 10	**17** 11	**18** 12
19 13	**20** 14	**21** 15	**22** 16	**23** 17	**24** 18	**25** 19
26 20	**27** 21	**28** 22	**29** 23	**30** 24		

Nada Debs is a furniture and interior designer of Lebanese descent who grew up in Japan and graduated from the Rhode Island School of Design. In her "Console" tables, she blends Japanese minimalism with the Middle Eastern tradition of mother-of-pearl inlay. "When handmade patterns are added to the contemporary furniture I design, the creations start to evoke emotions in people," she says. Photo courtesy of Nada Debs. ⓘ www.nadadebs.com.

MAY

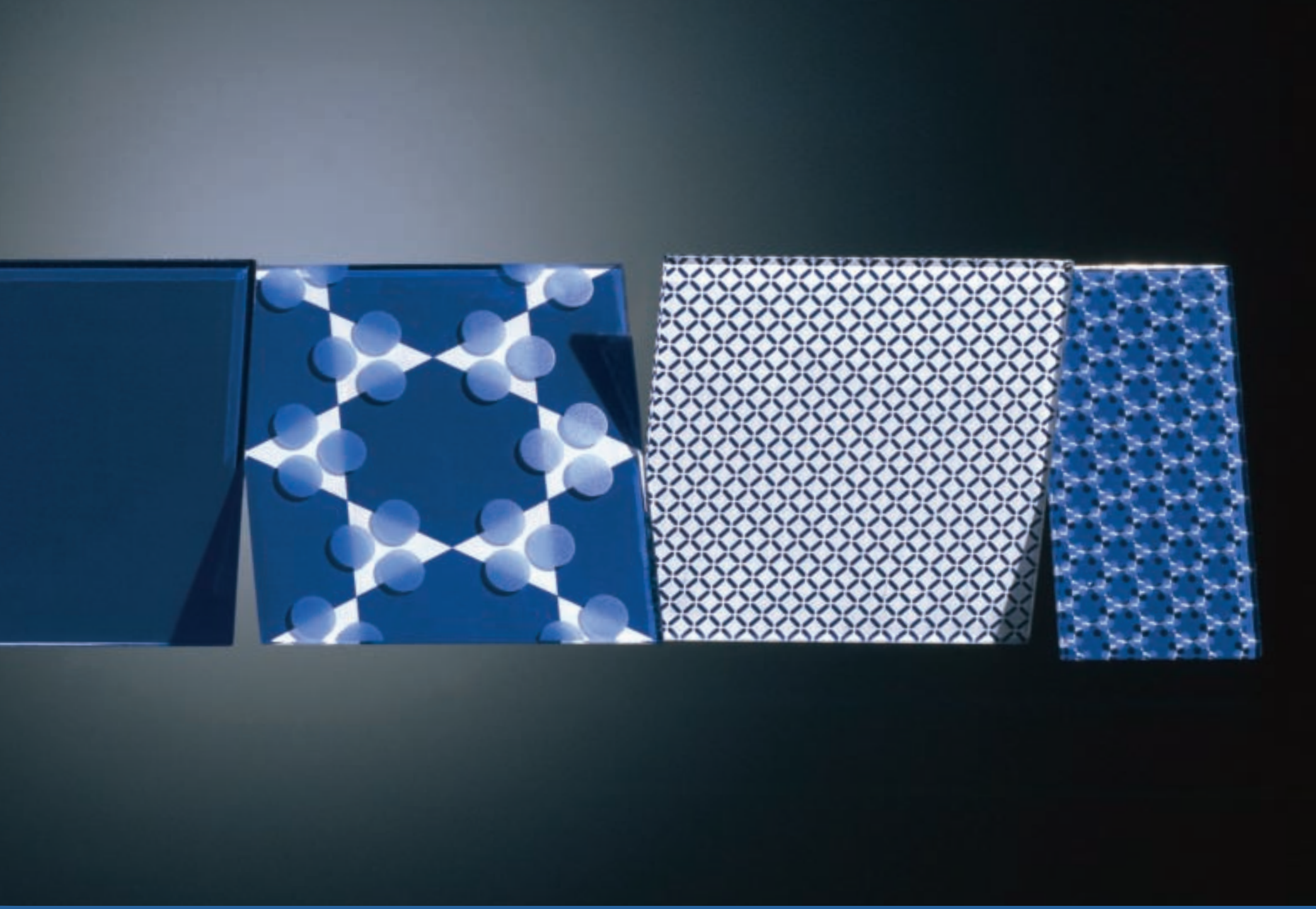
RABIʿ II – JUMADA I 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
					1 25	**2** 26
3 27	**4** 28	**5** 29	**6** 1	**7** 2	**8** 3	**9** 4
10 5	**11** 6	**12** 7	**13** 8	**14** 9	**15** 10	**16** 11
17 12	**18** 13	**19** 14	**20** 15	**21** 16	**22** 17	**23** 18
24 19	**25** 20	**26** 21	**27** 22	**28** 23	**29** 24	**30** 25
31 26						

JUNE

JUMADA I – JUMADA II 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
	1 27	**2** 28	**3** 29	**4** 30	**5** 1	**6** 2
7 3	**8** 4	**9** 5	**10** 6	**11** 7	**12** 8	**13** 9
14 10	**15** 11	**16** 12	**17** 13	**18** 14	**19** 15	**20** 16
21 17	**22** 18	**23** 19	**24** 20	**25** 21	**26** 22	**27** 23
28 24	**29** 25	**30** 26				



Saudi Aramco world 2008

Milan-based Turkish designer Defne Koz's modern "Iznik tiles" won the 2006 Red Dot Design Award, one of the most prestigious in the world. Her designs maintain traditional geometric patterns while simplifying them and modernizing the overall motif. For the Swiss design firm Vitra, she has created a series of contemporary washbasins and bathroom fixtures based on traditional materials and forms—such as the circle, a reminder of the old metal washing bowl. Photo: Necati Ufuk Başkır. ⓘ www.defnekoz.com.

JULY
JUMADA II – RAJAB 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
			1 27	**2** 28	**3** 29	**4** 1
5 2	**6** 3	**7** 4	**8** 5	**9** 6	**10** 7	**11** 8
12 9	**13** 10	**14** 11	**15** 12	**16** 13	**17** 14	**18** 15
19 16	**20** 17	**21** 18	**22** 19	**23** 20	**24** 21	**25** 22
26 23	**27** 24	**28** 25	**29** 26	**30** 27	**31** 28	

AUGUST
RAJAB – SHA'ABAN 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
						1 29
2 1	**3** 2	**4** 3	**5** 4	**6** 5	**7** 6	**8** 7
9 8	**10** 9	**11** 10	**12** 11	**13** 12	**14** 13	**15** 14
16 15	**17** 16	**18** 17	**19** 18	**20** 19	**21** 20	**22** 21
23 22	**24** 23	**25** 24	**26** 25	**27** 26	**28** 27	**29** 28
30 29	**31** 30					

Such traditional geometric Islamic crafts as inlay, metalwork and ceramics were designed primarily with compass and ruler, whose use developed from early peg-and-rope survey techniques for planning buildings. For this rack display of Arab coffee cups, Saudi designer and interior architect Essam Al-Suhaimi inscribed 208 squares within a circle, creating a symmetrical pattern of subdivision with contemporary lines and classical proportions. A trace of spherical depth gives the circle a dynamic third dimension. Photo: Robert Pollock. ⓘ essam@suhaimi.biz.

SEPTEMBER
RAMADAN 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 1	**2** 2	**3** 3	**4** 4	**5** 5
6 6	**7** 7	**8** 8	**9** 9	**10** 10	**11** 11	**12** 12
13 13	**14** 14	**15** 15	**16** 16	**17** 17	**18** 18	**19** 19
20 20	**21** 21	**22** 22	**23** 23	**24** 24	**25** 25	**26** 26
27 27	**28** 28	**29** 29	**30** 30			

OCTOBER
SHAWWAL – DHU AL-QA'DAH 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
				1 1 'Id al-Fitr	**2** 2	**3** 3
4 4	**5** 5	**6** 6	**7** 7	**8** 8	**9** 9	**10** 10
11 11	**12** 12	**13** 13	**14** 14	**15** 15	**16** 16	**17** 17
18 18	**19** 19	**20** 20	**21** 21	**22** 22	**23** 23	**24** 24
25 25	**26** 26	**27** 27	**28** 28	**29** 29	**30** 1	**31** 2

Saudi Aramco world 2008

Belgium-based designer and silversmith Nedda El-Asmar, named 2007 "Designer of the Year" by the Belgian Interior Foundation and *Weekend* magazine, joined with chef Pierre Gagnaire to design this porcelain serving piece, "Oasis," for the in-flight service company de Ster. In addition, her modernist *nargile*, the traditional water-pipe, developed for Airdiem of France, this year won a "Label de l'Observeur du Design '08" from the International Council of Societies of Industrial Design. Photo: Jacques Gavard. ⓘ www.nedda.be; www.airdiem.com.

NOVEMBER

DHU AL-QA'DAH — DHU AL-HIJJAH 1429

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 3	**2** 4	**3** 5	**4** 6	**5** 7	**6** 8	**7** 9
8 10	**9** 11	**10** 12	**11** 13	**12** 14	**13** 15	**14** 16
15 17	**16** 18	**17** 19	**18** 20	**19** 21	**20** 22	**21** 23
22 24	**23** 25	**24** 26	**25** 27	**26** 28	**27** 29	**28** 30
29 1	**30** 2					

DECEMBER

DHU AL-HIJJAH 1429 — MUHARRAM 1430

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 3	**2** 4	**3** 5	**4** 6	**5** 7
6 8	**7** 9 'Id al-Adha	**8** 10	**9** 11	**10** 12	**11** 13	**12** 14
13 15	**14** 16	**15** 17	**16** 18	**17** 19	**18** 20	**19** 21
20 22	**21** 23	**22** 24	**23** 25	**24** 26	**25** 27	**26** 28
27 29	**28** 30	**29** 1	**30** 2	**31** 3		

NOVEMBER

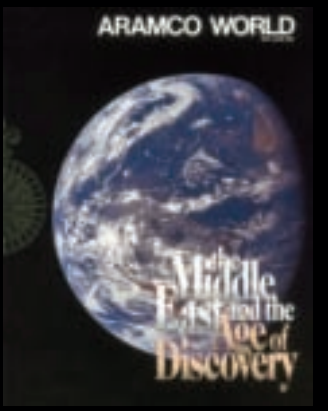
DHU AL-QA'DAH — DHU AL-HIJJAH 1429

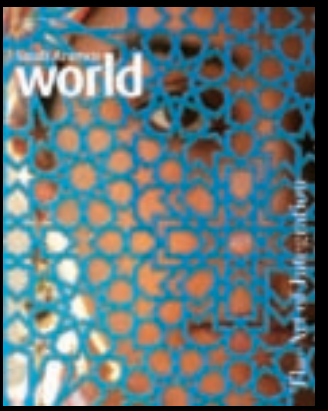
Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1 3	**2** 4	**3** 5	**4** 6	**5** 7	**6** 8	**7** 9
8 10	**9** 11	**10** 12	**11** 13	**12** 14	**13** 15	**14** 16
15 17	**16** 18	**17** 19	**18** 20	**19** 21	**20** 22	**21** 23
22 24	**23** 25	**24** 26	**25** 27	**26** 28	**27** 29	**28** 30
29 1	**30** 2					

DECEMBER

DHU AL-HIJJAH 1429 — MUHARRAM 1430

Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 3	**2** 4	**3** 5	**4** 6	**5** 7
6 8	**7** 9 'Id al-Adha	**8** 10	**9** 11	**10** 12	**11** 13	**12** 14
13 15	**14** 16	**15** 17	**16** 18	**17** 19	**18** 20	**19** 21
20 22	**21** 23	**22** 24	**23** 25	**24** 26	**25** 27 Christmas	**26** 28
27 29	**28** 30	**29** 1	**30** 2	**31** 3		





In November 1949, the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) launched an interoffice newsletter named *Aramco World*. Over the next two decades, as the number of Americans working with Saudi colleagues in Dhahran grew into the tens of thousands, *Aramco World* grew into a bimonthly educational magazine whose historical, geographical and cultural articles helped the American employees and their families appreciate an unfamiliar land.

The magazine is now published by Aramco Services Company in Houston, Texas on behalf of Saudi Aramco, which succeeded Aramco in 1988 as the national oil company of Saudi Arabia. In 2000, *Aramco World* changed its name to *Saudi Aramco World* to reflect this relationship.

Today, *Saudi Aramco World*'s orientation is still toward education, the fostering of cooperation and the building of mutual appreciation between East and West, but for the last four decades the magazine has been aimed primarily at readers outside the company, worldwide, as well as at internal readers. Its articles have spanned the Arab and Muslim worlds, past and present, with special attention to their connections with the cultures of the West.

Subscriptions to *Saudi Aramco World* are available without charge to a limited number of readers interested in the cultures of the Arab and Muslim worlds and their connections with the West. Multiple-copy subscriptions for seminars or classrooms are also available. From Saudi Arabia, please send subscription requests to Public Relations, Saudi Aramco, Box 5000, Dhahran 31311. From all other countries, send subscription requests—signed and dated, please—by postal mail to *Saudi Aramco World*, Box 2106, Houston, Texas 77252, USA; by fax to +1-713-432-5536; or subscribe online at www.saudiaramcoworld.com.

The texts of all back issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World* can be found on our Web site, www.saudiaramcoworld.com; articles from issues since the end of 2003 include photographs. The Web site is fully searchable, and texts can be downloaded. In addition, many of the photographs from past issues are available at photoarchive.saudiaramcoworld.com and may be used once permission has been obtained online.

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