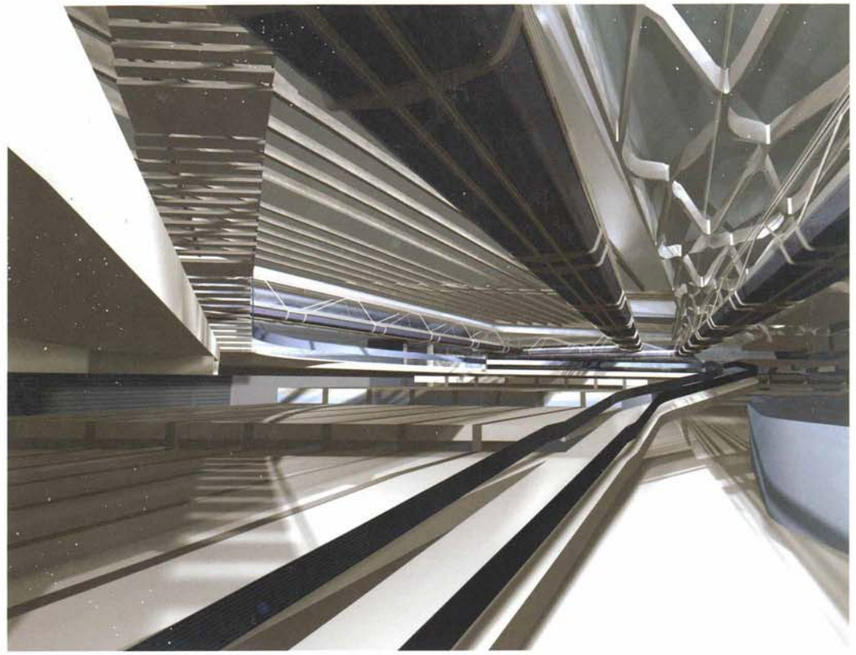

Saudi Aramco World

November/December 2002

Saudi Aramco
world

Rebuilding in
AFGHANISTAN

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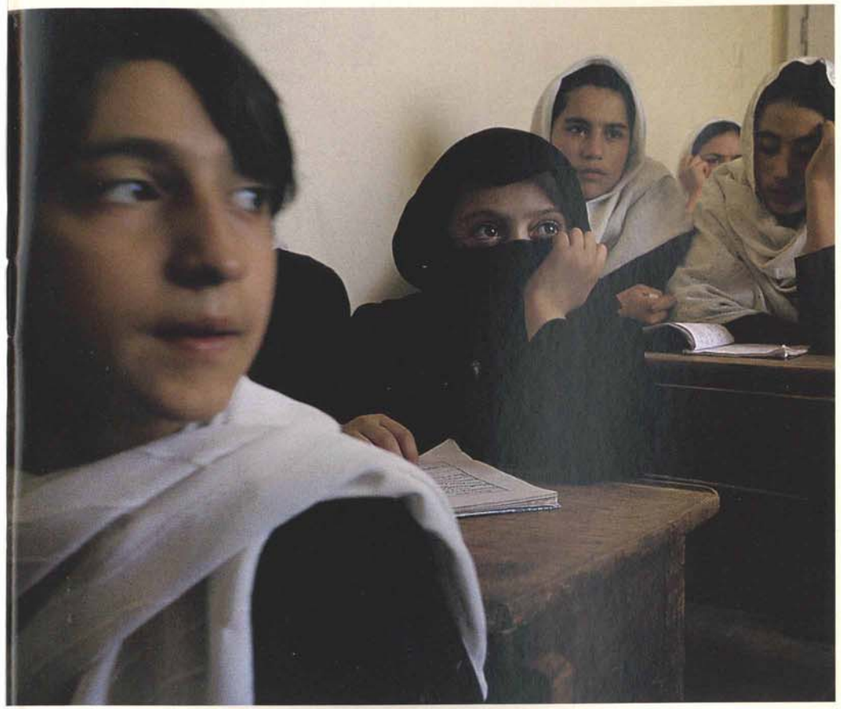
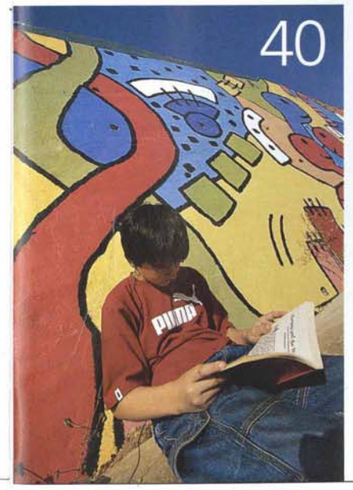
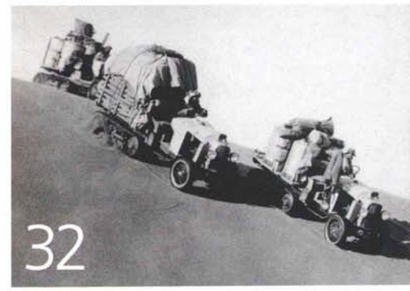
Published Bimonthly
Vol. 53, No. 6



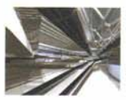




Cover:

Restoration is under way in Kabul at the 1817 tomb of Timur Shah, Afghanistan's second king. Known as "the father of modern Afghanistan," he moved the capital from Kandahar to Kabul in 1776, consolidating the realm whose extent was then roughly double what it is today. The workers are bucket-brigading mud to top off the rammed-earth walls that survived the last 23 years of war. Homes in the surrounding neighborhood are being repaired as well. Photo by Thorne Anderson.

Back Cover:



A computer projection takes the viewer inside a model of Zaha Hadid's design for a Bavarian Motor Works complex. Her kinetic, rhythmic motifs, strongly influenced by early 20th-century Russian artists, have led some critics to assert she is rethinking space more radically than any architect since the Renaissance. Photo courtesy Zaha Hadid Architects.

Publisher
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096
USA

President and Chief Executive Officer
Ahmed K. Al-Arnaout

Director Public Affairs
Jamil F. Dandany

ISSN
1530-5821

Editor
Robert Arndt

Assistant Editor
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Design and Production
Herring Design

Printed in the USA
Wallace Wetmore

Address editorial correspondence to:
The Editor
Saudi Aramco World
Post Office Box 2106
Houston, Texas
77252-2106 USA

Saudi Aramco, the oil company born as an international enterprise more than half a century ago, distributes *Saudi Aramco World* to increase cross-cultural understanding. The magazine's goal is to broaden knowledge of the culture of the Arab and Muslim worlds and the history, geography and economy of Saudi Arabia. *Saudi Aramco World* is distributed without charge, upon request, to a limited number of interested readers.

Printed on recycled paper

ZAHA

WRITTEN BY LOUIS WERNER

PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF ZAHA HADID ARCHITECTS

PORTRAIT: STEVE DOUBLE

ZAHA HADID has a problem, but it is one that other architects might envy. Having won fame —some might say notoriety—as a "paper architect" whose designs left critics awestruck but were widely considered unbuildable, she is about to do some serious ribbon-cutting. Set to open soon are her arts centers in both Cincinnati, Ohio and Rome; her ski-jump tower in Innsbruck; her highway bridge in Abu Dhabi; her ferry terminal in Salerno; her tram station in Strasbourg and her science museum in Wolfsburg, Germany. So instead of facing the critics one project at a time, her work is about to be judged almost all at once.

Herbert Muschamp, who reviews architecture for *The New York Times*, recently wrote that with these projects "Hadid has made the transition from visionary to builder, but the achievement still seems precarious. We're curious to know if she has attained the world of building with her vision still intact."

To understand Zaha Hadid, one must first recognize that the narrow definition of "architect"—one who designs buildings—does not encompass her range. She works fluidly within intersecting worlds of art, architecture, ideas and design rather in the way of Renaissance masters. Whether it is paint on canvas, steel and concrete, glazed ceramics or a sterling silver teapot, her work can be found on art gallery walls and restaurant table settings. It even surrounds pump and ladder trucks, in the form of a fire station with a distinctive flying-wedge portico in Weil am Rhein, Germany. That building, completed in 1993, was for years Hadid's only built work.

As a further analogy to the Renaissance, when frequently the same artist designed the buildings as well as painted and carved the art within them, Hadid has now taken to designing art museums in addition to her previous creation of interior spaces for the exhibition of art, most recently at the London Millennium Dome. Her temporary-display interiors have also included jewelry showcases in private salesrooms, stage decor for a world tour of the rock band Pet Shop Boys and a music-video kiosk. The list clearly puts her outside easy categorization.

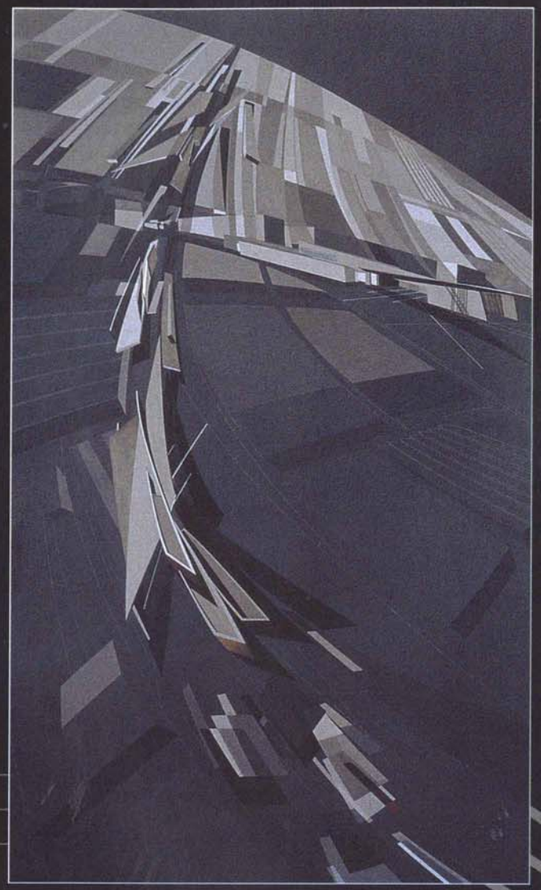
Born in Iraq in 1950, Hadid graduated from American University in Beirut with a degree in mathematics. She moved to London in the early 1970's, where she studied under Rem Koolhaas at the hothouse center for British avant-garde modernism, the Architectural Association's School of Architecture. In 1978, only a year out of graduate school, she was selected to participate in a design exhibition at New York's Guggenheim Museum.

Hadid's descriptions of her work can be both intimidatingly blunt—"I do not want to build a vase for someone else's flowers"—and as maddeningly abstract as some of her drawings—"the internal geometric complexity is a condensation of the orientations of the surrounding contexts." She largely shuns interviews, preferring to stay focused on an intense production schedule, and chooses to let her work do the speaking. For architectural critics, this makes it doubly difficult to take her measure, because so little of her work has been built. Her reputation, until recently, rested almost entirely on buildings that could be considered only in the forms of computer animations, plans, models or conceptual art.

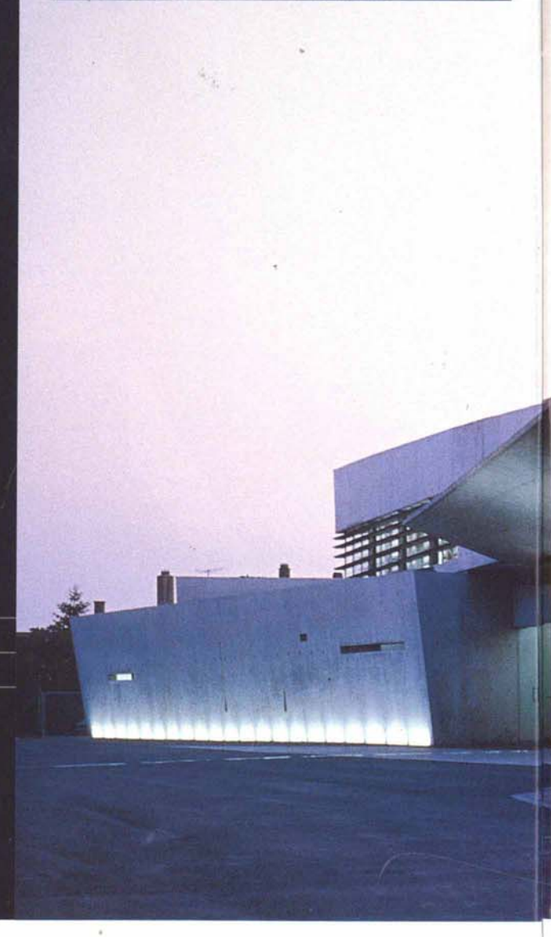
SHE WORKS FLUIDLY WITHIN A WORLD OF ART, ARCHITECTURE, IDEAS AND DESIGN IN A MANNER AKIN TO RENAISSANCE MASTERS.

MAIN PHOTO: COURTESY OF RESNICOW SCHROEDER ASSOCIATES

The exterior of the Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, now under construction in Cincinnati, hints at the complexity of the nested, seven-floor, three-mezzanine interior. Above: **A "testing field," as Hadid calls her paintings, for the Cincinnati project.** Opposite, from top: **Prototype teapots for Sawaya & Moroni; a 1985 divided painting of Trafalgar Square.** Previous spread: **A model of the central building of the future Bavarian Motor Works complex in Leipzig, Germany.**



The influence of early 20th-century Russian Suprematists, especially Malevich and Lissitzky, is clear all the way from a planning-stage painting to the finished Vitra fire station in Weil am Rhein in far southwestern Germany—until very recently Hadid's only built work.



PHOTOS: CHRISTIAN RICHTERS

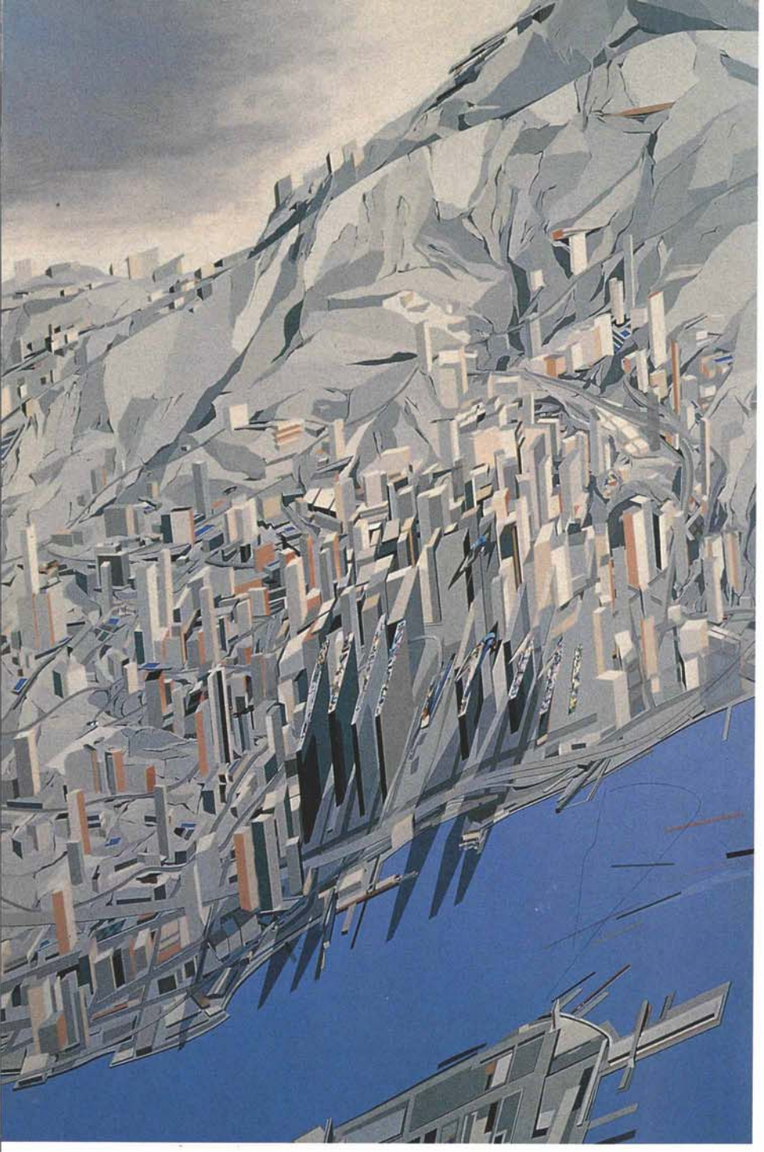
In the 1980's, Hadid rocketed to the top of the architectural avant-garde largely on the strength of designs influenced by the early 20th-century Russian movements Constructivism and Suprematism, both of which tried to assimilate ideals of abstraction, geometry and function. Painters, designers and architects all took part in a vigorous dialogue about how to organize space in a way that opened the door to nothing less than a social and esthetic utopia.

Suprematism's foremost advocate, Kasimir Malevich, wrote in a 1928 manifesto, "The Non-Objective World," that "we can only perceive space when we break free from the earth, when the point of support disappears." In her design for the Peak Club in Hong Kong, Hadid called for the building to appear to fall off the edge of a cliff in a series of cascading floors. Like much of her work, the design tried to fragment and reconfigure conventional architectural geometry.

The influence of another Russian theorist, El Lissitzky, appears in Hadid's thinking about art spaces. In 1923 Lissitzky designed an exhibition room called "Projects for the Affirmation of the New"; it was aimed at making art fit more comfortably within architectural modernism. "The great international picture-reviews resemble a zoo," he wrote dismissively of past museum designs, "where the visitors are roared at by a thousand different beasts at the same time. In my room, the objects should not all suddenly attack the viewer."

Hadid too has designed interiors meant for exhibiting art, foremost among them a reshaping of the Guggenheim Museum's great vortical lobby as a showcase for the very same Russian artists who so influenced her, in a 1992 exhibition called "The Great Utopia." It was an unexpected feat for an architect known for broken, compound angles and acute interstices to rework a smoothly circular space. Her use of temporary panels and backdrops helped each work of art define its own meaning in a way Frank Lloyd Wright's unbroken wall surface could never have done.

Little overlap is apparent between Hadid's early esthetic and her homeland's traditions of organic, continuous geometric motifs woven through architecture and applied to utilitarian objects. Nonetheless, her desire for an overall design into



a multimedia and a multinational experience. Lebanese, Cypriots, Mexicans and Koreans work beside Belgians, Austrians and lifelong Londoners. Computer programmers, pen-and-ink draftsmen and model-makers pass their work and ideas back and forth across narrow tables. Hadid sits among them for close face-to-face encounters with her staff. Her paintings —which she calls "testing fields"—line the walls. A tall stack of sketchbooks takes up much of her desktop.

At a project's initial stage, Hadid works on the concept abstractly, using black ink on lined white notebook paper. Then she reverses herself with white ink on black paper, coloring in planar surfaces in acrylic to accentuate the space's solids and voids. To a layperson's eye, these sketches resemble a science fiction nightscape more than a building in the making. To Hadid, they are "a means of investigation," a way of "understanding space through painting."

From paper, she moves to the three-dimensionality of computer animations and solid models. Model-maker Florian Migsch says that "carving her ideas" into shapes is a great challenge, and his boss clearly does not accept mediocrity. His workspace is strewn with the detritus of his first tries.

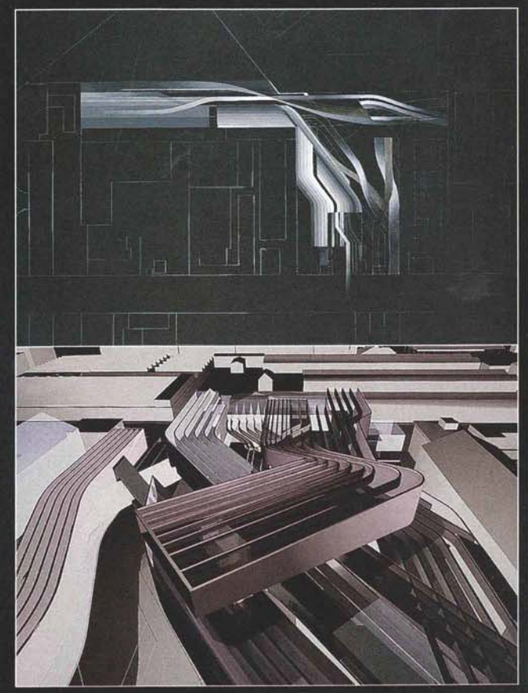
So from paper, Fome-Cor and bytes, Hadid is now turning more than ever to concrete, steel and glass. For Cincinnati's Rosenthal Center for Contemporary Art, scheduled to be completed in the spring of 2003, she appears to have taken a step away from her Constructivist predilections. Vertically, the building consists of seven floors and three mezzanines, each perforated with asymmetrical voids that permit the flow of light, air and sound among them. The back wall curls forward, toward the interior, at ground level to become the first floor, and it continues out, unbroken, past the façade wall to the sidewalk. Hadid uses the metaphor of "an urban carpet" to describe it. Similarly, the upper stories are each "cushions, or places to sit." This conjuring of comfort is one that might easily apply to a Middle Eastern living room, and in contrast to the hard-edged coolness often evoked by Modernism, it makes a setting for contemporary art seem less intimidating. The world of cyberspace also comes to mind, as the overlapping of partially open floors, through which others are always visible, could also stand as

which objects fit practically and pleasingly is consonant with her Arab roots. This approach translated well in Japan, where she designed the interior of the popular Monsoon Restaurant as well as its furniture and table settings.

As a matter of record, Hadid's former reputation as a "paper architect"—a pejorative in the field—was not entirely earned. In 1994, she won a rigorously juried competition for the Cardiff Bay Opera House in Wales that fell victim to cultural politics. Her asymmetrical concert hall, surrounded by glass-faced rehearsal rooms (a concept she called a "glass necklace"), stunned the London art critics as much as it enraged the local tabloids, one of which said the land would be better used for a football field than an opera house.

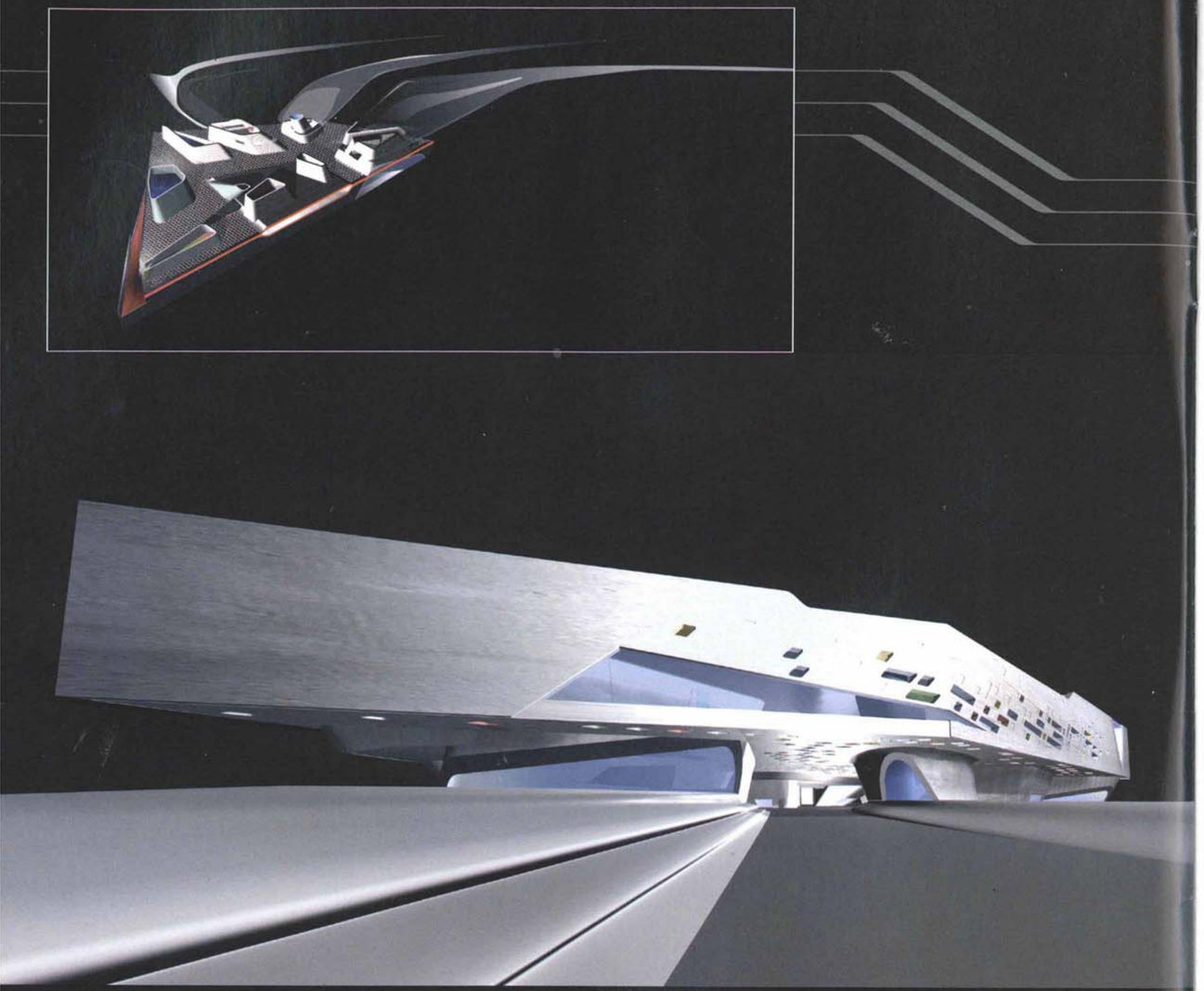
A visit to Hadid's studio, a vaulted former basketball court in London's working-class Clerkenwell section, is both

AT THE BEGINNING OF A PROJECT, HADID WORKS ABSTRACTLY. TO A LAY PERSON, HER SKETCHES MORE RESEMBLE A SCIENCE FICTION NIGHTSCAPE THAN A BUILDING IN THE MAKING. TO HADID, SUCH SKETCHES ARE "A MEANS OF INVESTIGATION," A WAY OF "UNDERSTANDING SPACE THROUGH PAINTING."



The design of Hadid's retrospective exhibition in Rome this summer, below right, **foreshadowed her plan for the National Center for Contemporary Arts in that city,** above right. Opposite: **Her 1982–1983 painting for the Hong Kong Peak Club sharply fragmented and reconfigured architectural geometry; in contrast, her ski jump tower in Innsbruck, Austria, opened this year, is essentially a single, graceful curve.**

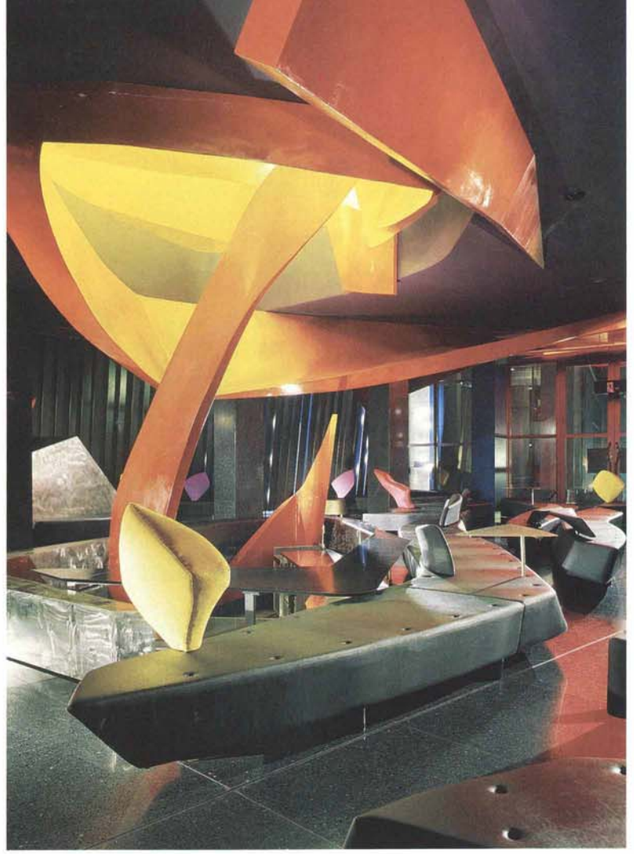
SKI JUMP AND ROME EXHIBITION: HELENE BINET



Plans for the Wolfsburg, Germany, Science Center are based on the idea of a podium, within which tapered, polygonal shapes organize the space above and below. Hadid's paintings are fewer now, as technology allows her to "sketch" using a bank of more than a dozen computer screens. Opposite, from top: **Interior of the Monsoon Restaurant, designed in 1989; her tram station in Strasbourg, France, open this year.**

SHE IS, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, *SUI GENERIS*, PART OF THAT SMALL GROUP OF WORLD-CLASS ARCHITECTS WHOSE BUILDINGS CAN TURN THEIR HOST CITIES INTO GEOGRAPHICAL CELEBRITIES.

TRAM STATION: AIRDIASOL / ROGER ROTHAN; MONSOON RESTAURANT: PAUL WARCHOL



a metaphor for the layering of a website. Muschamp loved it. He called it "a breakthrough design, transforming contemporary conceptions of space as radically as the innovations of Alberti and Brunelleschi changed space in the Renaissance."

Hadid's newest major commission is the National Center for Contemporary Arts in Rome, whose construction is due to begin in 2003. She exhibited her plans and renderings for it as part of a retrospective held last summer at the Center's current site. In these plans, she breaks completely with the sharp, angular surfaces of her previous work, using instead a ground-hugging, curvy, fluid concept that nonetheless retains the complex, intersecting, kinetic character of earlier commissions. Clearly a fan of all this, Muschamp wrote that "the National Center looks more woven than designed.... Instead of dividing spaces into identical cells, the design weaves them into a subtle background rhythm of convex and concave."

This kind of control of free-flowing space for art has a precedent in Hadid's work: In Weil am Rhein, Germany, for a 1999 exhibition building called Land Form One, she created a low-rise glass front that emerges from the earth along a slightly inclined concrete ramp. Its respect for topography is absolute, almost to the point of being invisible from the air. Across town, in stark contrast, stands the widely publicized and dynamically angular Vitra fire station.

Beyond the occasional metaphor, Hadid makes few apparent concessions to her Arab roots. A bridge she designed in Abu Dhabi is simply a sleek wonder of international functionalism. Her design submission for an Islamic Art Museum in Doha, Qatar, did perhaps echo the curves and colors of sand dunes, but it carried none of the expected architectural references of Middle Eastern domes, arches or courtyards. Her selection as a jury member in 1998 and a steering committee member in 2001 for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture did not imply that her own esthetic responded, as the award's mission statement reads, to the "cultural and spiritual expectations" of Muslims; rather simply it honored her as one qualified to discern that in others.

Though Hadid does admit to the influence of Arabic calligraphy in her more recent projects, notably Rome, she is, in the last analysis, *sui generis*, part of that small upper echelon of world-class architects whose buildings can turn their host cities into geographical celebrities, as Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum did for Bilbao, Spain. "Anything Hadid builds," wrote *Wall Street Journal* architecture critic Ada Louise Huxtable, "is bound to raise a city's cultural visibility."

"Her forms open western minds to the geometric languages inscribed over many layers of history," wrote Muschamp. "Even if we don't take the trouble to decipher their content, the visual babel is a wonder of the modern world." ⊕

Louis Werner is a filmmaker and writer living in New York, and a frequent contributor to *Saudi Aramco World* as well as *Americas* and *Archaeology*.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Aga Khan Award for Architecture: J/F 01

www.zaha-hadid.com

listening to the Arab world online

written by L.A. Heberlein illustration by Tom McNeff

For much of the past year, while researching *The Rough Guide to Internet Radio*, I listened for hours every day to radio from around the world. With as many as 10,000 stations now online to choose from—samba from Brazil, Chinese folk music, Caribbean dance tracks and pretty much anything else you can imagine—I found myself drawn again and again to a handful of Arab-world stations.

At the top of my list is **Radio Casablanca** (www.maroc.net/rc), whose musical programming is a sophisticated blend of traditional and contemporary, classical and popular. To even the most casual listener, much of it is beautiful and moving. The vocalists, singing in what is to me an unfamiliar language, always seem to be communicating with the greatest urgency: "*Listen* to this," they seem to be saying. "This is *important!*" But there is no sense of strain, as the musical accompaniment is often reassuringly formal. The rhythms are as elaborate as the most refined of Indian classical music and as driving as those of Africa. There is often a solo instrument out in front, such as a violin that traces clean lines twining like vines through the music. It is meditative enough to let me play it while writing and energetic enough to keep me going. The Radio Casablanca DJs do a great job of maintaining a musical flow, often following a classical piece with one with a contemporary bass track, but always in such a way that it seems like a development rather than a departure. There is little talk to break the mood. In my experience, it is one of the world's best stations.

The deep reservoir of Arab music, in which a multiplicity of traditions is continually replenished by countless streams of innovation, has become more accessible than ever. Including string quintets, desert folklore, pop genres and subgenres, electronica, village songs, bands and vocals of infinitely subtle variation, the music of the Arab world is profoundly diverse, and it is often surprisingly accessible to the western-trained ear.

Thanks to the advent of high-speed modems, and especially DSL and other "always on" technologies, the Internet is now the easiest way to find out for yourself.

Listening to the Holy Qur'an

The word *qur'an* means "recitation," and a single, unaccompanied voice is the oldest means of communicating the Word of God as contained in the Qur'an. Reciters employ one of seven styles that have evolved over the 14 centuries since the coming of Islam, and the sublime beauty and power of their song-like recitations remain too little known among non-Muslims. You can hear the Qur'an recited at the **Qur'an Radio Station**, from Saudi Arabia, at www.kacst.edu.sa/en/stream/.

If you have a computer connected to the Internet, browse to a radio station's website, which is easy to find using almost any search engine or the links provided here. Click on a button that says something like "listen live now." Music should come rolling out of your speakers, and the quality should resemble FM radio.

Some websites are in Arabic, but don't let this faze you, because the button to click is usually fairly self-evident. For example, **Emarat FM** (www.emi.co.ae), broadcasting from Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates, may be puzzling for the non-Arabic speaker, but trial-and-error perseverance will have its rewards. There are six streams there, and while Emirates FM1 and FM2 carry pop music that you can find closer to home, the fifth stream, "Sound of Music" (www.emi.co.ae/radio/sof.ram), is a not-to-be-missed channel emphasizing classical Arab music.

For a perky mood, from Arab versions of teenybop to classier flamenco guitar and fast-pulsing, synthesized dance tracks, try MBC (www.mbc1.tv/mbc-fm/). From Saudi Arabia the station's signal reaches throughout the Arabian Gulf and the Levant—though the existence of the Internet makes a station's geographical location less and less relevant.

Other sites offer on-demand digital "jukeboxes" instead of, or in addition to, live streams. **Radio Cairo** (available through the RealAudio button at www.sis.gov.eg) contains an extensive musical archive with sections offering classical and modern music and radio documentary programs about music. If you can't decide where to begin exploring, start at the top and try your ear on Um Kulthum, still the greatest modern Egyptian vocalist more than a quarter-century after her death. The huge emotional response her music evokes to this day from Arabs everywhere speaks to the living power of music, to the strength of national feelings and to her power as a singer, which still comes through even to listeners who don't understand the words.

Another superb jukebox is at **Radio Méditerranée Internationale** (www.medi1.com) out of Tangiers, in French. Look under "musique," and click away at hundreds of selections. You could spend months here without hearing the same thing twice.

Similarly, **Egyptian Castle** (www.egyptiancastle.com) has a collection categorized under "The Masters," "The New Generation" and "Great Oldies." Particularly interesting is the "Bride and Groom" section, a collection of traditional Egyptian wedding songs. But go here soon, as the site is up for sale and may close in the near future.

The broadest-ranging jukebox collection is that of **National Radio of Tunis** (www.radiotunis.com), which offers a broad introduction to the richly modal traditions of the uniquely Tunisian *malouf* tradition. ("Modes" are the various ways of selecting which notes will be used to form scales or chords; *major* and *minor* are the most familiar western modes. Western modes are assembled from among 12 semi-tones and Arab modes from 24 quarter-tones, so more modes are possible in Arab music.)

Radio Casablanca, too, has a "Sound Bank" with a dazzling array of contemporary *rai*, *sharqi*, *amazigh* and pop styles, including 14 live concerts ranging from those by solo vocalists to pop festivals to a folkloric concert featuring what sounds like a whole village clapping, singing and ululating to the loping accompaniment of a single drum.

Want more? Visit indexes of still more Internet radio stations—too many to list here—through your favorite search engine or links at www.heberlein.com. Feel free to e-mail me your comments on anything you hear. I'll reply to you as soon as I turn down Radio Casablanca.

Poet and writer **L. A. Heberlein** is a lifelong fan of radio, the sometime host of a world-music radio program, founder of an early Internet software company and author of *The Rough Guide to Internet Radio* (Rough Guides, ISBN 1-85828-961-0). He can be reached at radio@heberlein.net.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Um Kulthum: N/D 01
Classical Arab music: S/O 02
Malouf music: J/A 01
Arab pop music: M/A 00, N/D 01, S/O 02

Troubleshooting Your Internet Radio Connection There are two common problems in accessing Internet radio. First, if your computer lacks a media player, such as RealPlayer or Windows Media Player, you will need to download and install one. This is easy and free: Almost all radio stations' web pages have links to help you do it. Second, if you are trying to access a station through a firewall or a proxy server, such as those that protect computer terminals in many security-conscious workplaces, you may not be able to connect to a station at all. In that case, the only solution is to do your listening at home.

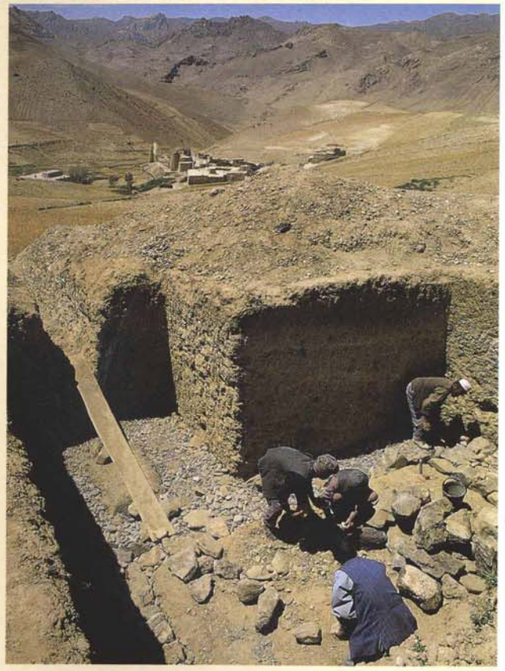
Rebuilding in

AFGHANISTAN

Written by JOHN LAWTON

Photographed by THORNE ANDERSON

Being winched over the river that divides Tajikistan from Afghanistan is an unorthodox way to enter the country, but little about Afghanistan is what outsiders would expect. Fighting and famine have subsided in the last 12 months, but the humanitarian crisis is only slowly easing, *and the rebuilding of the devastated nation has just begun.*



Top: **A team from Focus, a humanitarian-relief agency that is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), arrives at Shiva in northeastern Afghanistan.** Above: **Residents of Aman Qul build a new spring-fed reservoir above the village. In much of the country, three years of drought have exacerbated the hardship of more than two decades of war.** Previous spread: **Shiva village council members listen to an AKDN manager. They later tell him they soon expect Shiva to become self-sufficient in grain.**

In a population of 23 million, the United Nations estimates that 1.5 million Afghans died, two million were wounded, and five to six million more were made refugees in the fighting that began with the Soviet invasion in 1979 and ended with the fall of the Taliban in November of last year. In addition, since 1999, drought has devastated what remained of Afghanistan's agriculture, taking with it the herds on which the livelihood of 85 percent of the population depended. Though this year's harvest was 82 percent higher than last year's, according to the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, it still did not reach the level of 1998, the last pre-drought year.

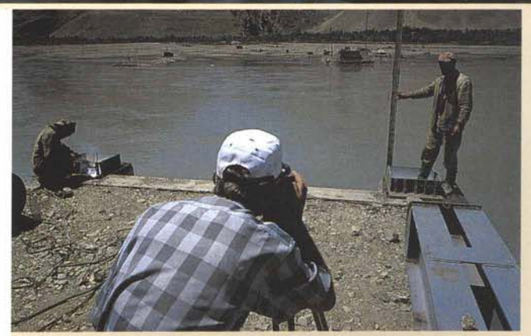
Traveling south with Muslim aid workers from the Tajik border through the highlands of Afghanistan's Badakhshan province, across the plains and then over the Hindu Kush to Kabul, photographer Thorne Anderson and I saw countless villages abandoned and towns in which water and electricity were available only intermittently. Whole sections of Kabul lay buried beneath rubble, some of it fresh, some of it now decades old.

Sixty-one nations have pledged relief and reconstruction aid, so "mending Afghanistan is a task for all of us," says United Nations Development Program (UNDP) administrator Mark Malloch Brown, who heads UN recovery efforts in the country. "It is a historic wrong to be put right, and an opportunity for North–South solidarity." Citing offers of de-mining assistance from Mozambique (GNP per capita: $230) and micro-credit lending skills from Bangladesh (GNP per capita: $350), he points out that aid from developing countries is no less important than that from highly industrialized nations, because Afghanistan's condition is more familiar to the poorer countries. At last count, there were 18 UN agencies, 83 international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and 111 Afghan NGOs working in Kabul.

Among the agencies from the Muslim world, one of the most diversified and active is the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), whose engineers winched us into Afghanistan with equipment they were using to build five new bridges. The bridges, a $2-million project, will link the remote northeastern province of Badakhshan with Tajikistan and thus to the rest of Central Asia; the first of the spans opened on November 3.

The bridges "will give people access to much-needed food," says Alejandro Chicheri, spokesman for the UN-sponsored World Food Program (WFP), the leading international food aid organization in the country. Reliably delivering relief supplies to such remote regions is a huge challenge because of poor roads and heavy concentrations of land mines, and the WFP estimates that some 1.3 million Afghans need deliveries of food urgently because winter weather will soon cut them off from further aid.

More than two million refugees returning from neighboring Pakistan and Iran have put Afghanistan's shattered infrastructure



Top: **In the northern city of Pol-i-Khumri, fewer than five percent of the city's 125,000 people had access to clean well water in mid-2002. Most use river water, collected either from the river banks or from unfiltered pipes such as this one. Some 380 Focus-sponsored wells promise healthier water for much of the city.** Above: **Engineers work on one of five bridges across the Pyandzh River that will link Afghanistan with Tajikistan. The first one opened November 3.**

under even greater strain. To meet running costs, this summer the transitional government received cash grants of some $10 million each from India, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates—carried to Kabul in suitcases, because the banking system in Afghanistan has not yet been reestablished.

In the face of obstacles of this kind, NGOs from inside and outside Afghanistan are finding unorthodox ways to rebuild the country. Driving through the highlands of Badakhshan, we passed teams of men wielding picks and shovels, widening mountain tracks into rough roads. Under the AKDN's self-help "food for work" program, these men receive not money but six kilos (13.2 lbs) of wheat for 10 hours work. The new roads they are building will give previously isolated villages access to the nation's road system, and the non-cash arrangement takes the country's structural realities into account.

Besides road and bridge construction, AKDN projects in Afghanistan range from restoring schools and historical monuments to improving health and agriculture. Over a lamplit dinner in the village of Pol-i-Ziriban, agriculture extension officer Sarwa Khalifa proudly told us that the surrounding district of Shiva had virtually recovered from drought and was now almost self-sufficient in grain, thanks partly to high-yielding seed provided by the AKDN. Under the program, farmers repay the seed in kind—and not to the agency but to the village council, thus creating a "seed bank" that serves as a buffer against future famine.

The next day, in the district of Khosh, we saw the high-yielding wheat growing alongside fields of opium poppies. "I'm convinced we can wean the small farmers off poppy farming and onto growing high-yielding grain," says AKDN agriculture program manager Iqbal Kermali. Although the cash return from poppies is 10 times that of wheat, the poppies require more than 10 times as much labor, he explains, which largely offsets their economic advantage.

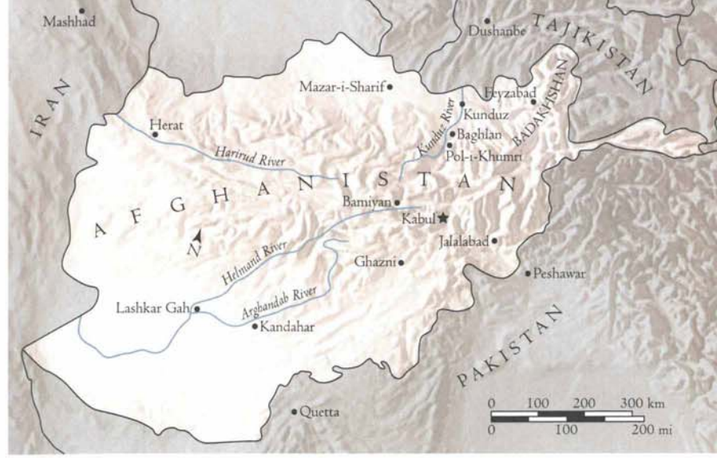
Above: **A food-for-work program repairs a road. The villagers will receive tools and seed, a portion of which they will repay into a village seed bank.** Below: **The introduction of high-yield wheat seed is displacing poppy production in the Khosh district. Poor harvests during drought years forced many subsistence farmers to turn to moneylenders, who often forced them to grow poppies, which are drought-resistant and produce higher cash yields—but require 10 times the labor of wheat.** Far right: **Given a reliable water supply, economics favor wheat: For an average field of one-fifth of a hectare (½ acre), wheat requires 25 to 30 days of labor and yields $100 to $200 profit; the same field planted in poppies requires 300 to 400 days of labor and yields $1000 to $2000 profit.**

Emerging from the Badakhshan highlands near Feyzabad, we drove between rows of red- and white-painted stones marking the way through a minefield. Repeatedly during the next few days, we passed gangs of Afghans probing delicately for mines on the roadsides.

Crossing the northern Afghan plains via Kunduz and Baghlan, we arrived in the once bustling industrial center of Pol-i-Khumri, its cement and textile factories now largely silent because of lack of spare parts and raw materials. That night, at dinner with aid workers, sitting cross-legged on the floor of their compound, talk was mainly of the prospects of permanent peace. "This time there will be peace," said one young Afghan emphatically. "People are tired of the fighting." A middle-aged engineer wasn't so sure. "The [tribal] commanders are still in control," he said. "Every family still has a weapon, and 40 percent of Afghans earn their living from their guns."

Undeniably, though, some things have changed rapidly and dramatically. When I saw the Islam Qala school at Pol-i-Khumri on a previous visit early in the summer, hundreds of boys and girls were squatting in the playground waiting for their classrooms to be renovated. On this trip, just two months later, the new school buildings were bursting with children who were obviously eager to learn, and staffed by a handful of teachers no less determined to teach.

"The thirst for education and knowledge in post-Taliban Afghanistan is enormous," says Ed Burke, UNESCO's education consultant in Kabul. Nationwide university entrance examinations in 2002 attracted 20,000 candidates, of whom 16,400—many of them women—were admitted. Now the country must answer the question, admitted to what? Afghanistan lost an estimated 200,000 teachers and academics during the last quarter-century, and its 17 universities and educational institutes function in often improvised fashion amid the devastation of the wars. The immediate priorities, says educator Lutfulla Safi, include training new teachers, building new schools, and replacing outdated curricula and textbooks. Major questions to be addressed in the long term include coeducation and the place of religion in education.



Leaving the northern plains, we climbed gradually alongside the Khinjan River through mulberry groves, then traversed steep and rugged slopes sprinkled with Asian conifers up into the mountains of the Hindu Kush. At an altitude of 3350 meters (11,000'), we passed through the 2700-meter (1.7-mi) Salang Tunnel, built between 1958 and 1964 by the Soviet agency Technoexport and the Afghan Ministry of Public Works to link the northern plains with the valleys of Koh Daman and Kabul. The tunnel is now in dangerous disrepair, with water cascading down its walls and lumps of concrete hanging ominously from its ceiling, but the UN's International Security Assistance Force is committed to keeping it open.

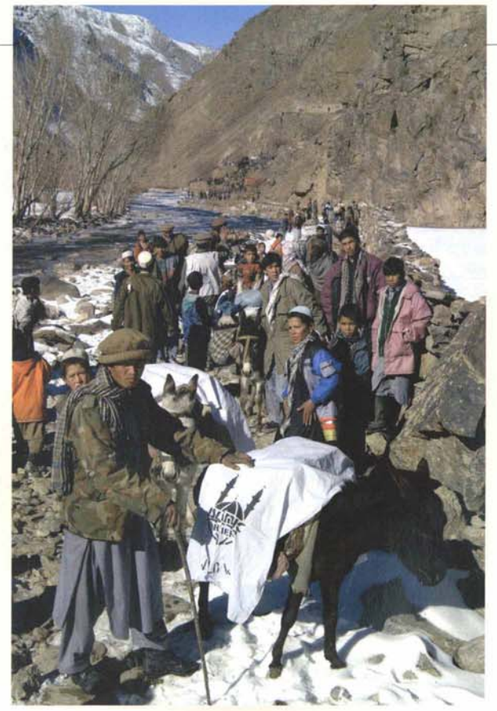
Passing everywhere the debris of war, it was difficult to imagine this land as it had been: A center of empires, a birthplace of art styles, a crossroads of culture and commerce.

In northern Afghanistan, a Bronze Age civilization developed the first trade links between the Indus Valley to the south and Mesopotamia to the west. It was from Badakhshan 5000 years ago that the finest lapis lazuli in the world first came to Sumer and to Egypt. Later, India's Maurya Dynasty built a 4200-kilometer (2600-mi) road to Afghanistan, and the imperial highways of the Persians joined it to become central arteries of the Silk Roads. *Continued on page 22*

AFGHANISTAN

From Home *and* Abroad, Muslim Agencies Pitch In

Written by ALAN GEERE



Muslim relief organizations are prominent among the international groups working hard in the drive to rebuild Afghanistan. Money and workers from around the Islamic world are helping to repair roads, dig wells and provide food, shelter and jobs.

"We are happy to welcome those Islamic and Arab organizations which have projects for the economic, social and health rehabilitation of Afghanistan," says Sadiq Mudabir, director of Afghan and international organizations at the Ministry of Planning in Kabul.

Masood Hamidzad, area manager of the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), estimates there are actually as many as 750 Afghan and 260 international organizations working in reconstruction and humanitarian aid. It is difficult for the Afghan authorities to keep track of them all, he says, because only some 350 of the total are officially registered with the government.

Among those are four major international Muslim agencies: the Saudi Relief Committee for Afghanistan (SRCA), UK-based Islamic Relief, Kuwait-based Dawa and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN).

The SRCA has pledged $40 million over the next three years, to be spent on digging wells and making improvements in education and health care. Its work will complement the much larger $220-million package of Saudi government aid earmarked to rebuild the country's main highway linking Kabul with Kandahar and Herat.

In addition to this, says Ahmad Alanzi, deputy chargé d'affaires at the Saudi embassy in Kabul, the kingdom recently pledged "another million dollars to support the new currency, and a further $1-million to the World Health Organization. Before this aid, King Fahd ibn 'Abd al-'Aziz gave $10 million for reconstruction of the bomb-affected areas, and another million dollars was spent on medicine, which was then sent to the provinces."

Islamic Relief, based in Birmingham, England, set up its Afghan mission in April of last year, having previously implemented various emergency relief projects through its Islamabad office. In November the agency opened a health clinic in Paghman, an agricultural region west of Kabul where health conditions are exceptionally poor and where some four out of five children have developed pneumonia in recent winters. It has also helped with a "food for work" program that is rebuilding 40 kilometers (25 mi) of damaged roads in Parwan province, and it has worked with a local project to build a training center for some of Kabul's 28,000 street children.

In Kandahar, it has set up 14 bakeries, run by women, to provide employment and make inexpensive bread available to poor residents. "We don't have to worry as much about where our bread will come from. This bread is cheaper than in the market," says Bibi, a homeless widow from the Noorzaishabraj area of the city. "And the people here are so friendly, it makes me feel that somebody in the world still cares about me."

In the technology sector, a $55-million plan to set up the country's much-needed second cellphone system was won recently by an international consortium led by the Aga Khan Fund for Economic Development (AKFED), a for-profit arm of the Aga Khan Foundation that promotes entrepreneurship in the private sector in selected regions of the developing world.

"By working with experienced partners to bring telephony, fax, data transfer, conference calling, voicemail and similar services to an economy in the early stages of reconstruction, we hope to be able to leapfrog older technologies and quickly contribute toward increased efficiencies," says Karim Khoja of AKFED. Initially, the system will serve Kabul, Herat, Kandahar, Mazar-i-Sharif, Jalalabad and Kunduz. At present, a government-backed telecom operator serving only about 20,000 subscribers is the sole alternative to the nonfunctional, pre-1979 land-line network.

The AKFED isn't yet disclosing its intended rates, but Khoja says, "We have come to assist Afghans. Our company operates to very high standards and our mobile phones will be very inexpensive and easy to buy."

One of the largest of the Afghan organizations is the Kabul-based Organization for Mine-Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation, or OMAR. Now 12 years old, it operated successfully throughout the Taliban period, and it now has more than 750 employees working on both mine awareness and mine clearance nationwide. Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined areas of the world, with several million landmines and other unexploded ordnance lying in fields, roadsides and canals and amid the rubble of buildings. The UN estimates that the mined areas amount to some 725 square kilometers (180,000 acres) and that 10 Afghans are killed or injured by mines every day. In addition to OMAR, the UN and the British-based HALO Trust are also active in de-mining.

"OMAR is entirely dependent on donor contributions and benefactors, and we pray for their continued support," said a spokesman. "To this date, seven brave men have lost their lives providing hope for the people of Afghanistan, and many more have been injured. The survival of OMAR guarantees that their sacrifice will not have been in vain." OMAR has cleared 26 square kilometers (6500 acres) to date. Its major sources of support include the United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs, NGOs from Germany, Japan and the Netherlands, and the governments of Japan and the Netherlands.

So far more than 7.5 million people have been through OMAR's mine awareness program, which is available to Afghan citizens, international workers and refugees awaiting repatriation. The classes are held in such local meeting places as schools, mosques and bazaars, and they help participants identify the different sorts of mines and know how to avoid dangerous areas.

ONE AFGHAN AID COORDINATOR ESTIMATES THAT IN ADDITION TO 260 INTERNATIONAL AID ORGANIZATIONS WORKING IN THE COUNTRY, THERE ARE ALSO AS MANY AS 750 AFGHAN ONES.

A much newer local organization is the Asian Women Service Society. Up and running only since 1999, it is funded through the philanthropy of Afghan businessman Abdul Ghafar Davi, whose wife, Shokria Barakzai, serves as the society's director. The women began their work secretly during the Taliban times, when they held courses and vocational training for girls in private homes. Now the organization has seven branches in Kabul, each with a different specialization: education, health, handicrafts, engineering, agriculture, media and social services; others in the group survey the returning refugees and offer help.

Under the Taliban, "we would also send the women's handicrafts to foreign countries in order to sell the goods for them," says Barakzai. "But now we are working openly, freely."

OPPOSITE, BOTTOM: MANOOCHER/WEBISTAN

In partnership with the World Food Program and other international agencies, UK-based Islamic Relief has distributed emergency food and directed food-for-work programs nationwide in Afghanistan. Opposite, top: **Weighing dough at one of Islamic Relief's 14 women-run bakeries in Kandahar.** Bottom: **The non-partisan, uncensored *Kabul Weekly*, now almost a year old, is published in English, French, Pashto and Dari by AINA, a new independent media center that also publishes *Malalai*, a new women's magazine.**

Alan Geere spent three months in Kabul this year teaching journalism for the Institute of War and Peace Reporting. He runs a communications consultancy for charities and nonprofit organizations (www.the-nose.org) based in England. His e-mail address is alan@the-nose.org. Geere thanks **Rahimullah Samandar** and **Mohammad Ajmal Stanakzai** for their field-reporting assistance in Kabul.

www.un.org
www.akdn.org
www.islamic-relief.com
www.saudiembassy.net
www.lukepowell.com
www.aims.org.pk
aacadad.synisys.com
www.afghan-web.com

All across Afghanistan are the ruins of the ancient cities where east, west, north and south all joined: Kapisa, in the heart of Afghanistan, yielded to archeologists a trove of Indian ivories, Chinese lacquer work and Roman art. Ai Khanoum, on the northern plains, holds the remains of an orientalized Greek city. Tillia Tepe, in the same region, displays artistic motifs that reflect and blend the disparate styles of India, Greece, Iran, China and nomadic Central Asia.

Although national university entrance examinations this year admitted 16,400 students —many of them women—to the country's 17 universities, *Afghanistan has lost some 200,000 teachers and academics since 1979.*

After Alexander the Great invaded the region in the fourth century BC, marking the eastward extent of his empire, his successors' kingdoms patronized the rise of what became Gandharan art. In the 15th century, Herat, in northwestern Afghanistan, was the capital of the Timurid Empire, one of Asia's most flourishing centers of Muslim art and learning.

The Valley of Bamiyan, where the monumental Buddha statues fell to Taliban artillery, lies in the heart of the Hindu Kush mountains, about 240 kilometers (150 mi) northwest of Kabul. From there, we drove up the steep-sided Shibar valley, passing en route a group of US soldiers who told us that they were trying to arrange alternative winter accommodation for refugees in Bamiyan who had taken shelter in cave dwellings originally built by Buddhist monks. In that exchange, the aid coordinators whom we were traveling with promised to bring stoves to the Americans for delivery to the refugees.

At Eljanak village, we found 60-year-old Hussain Ali rebuilding his house with the help of his neighbors. The wooden beams supporting the house had been stolen after Ali and his family fled, causing the roof to collapse and most of the mud walls to cave in. A neighboring house, though blackened by fire, was largely intact. In fact, although most damage we saw in urban areas was caused by fighting, most of the damage in rural areas seemed to result from the theft of wooden beams, the only things of value left in houses after their owners fled.

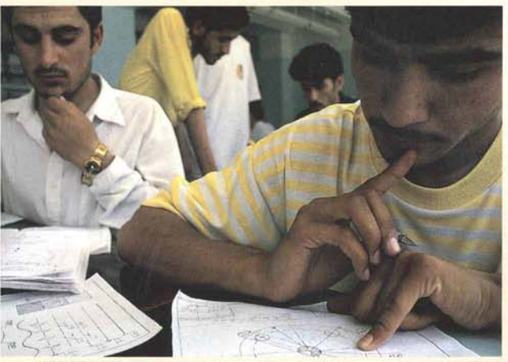
On the opposite side of the valley was Amanqoll, a village dominated by an 800-year-old mud-brick fort last used during the Soviet invasion. Here, under another AKDN self-help program, villagers were working without pay under engineer Tahir Qany, using materials and equipment provided by the agency to build a water depot that will provide the village with up to 2800 liters (720 gal) of spring water a day.

Crossing the Shibar Pass, we descended to the Ghorband Valley, site of heavy fighting in 2001. Amid the burnt-out armored cars, the broken bridges and the abandoned homes, there were signs that life was returning: Children were hurrying to school, among them groups of laughing girls.

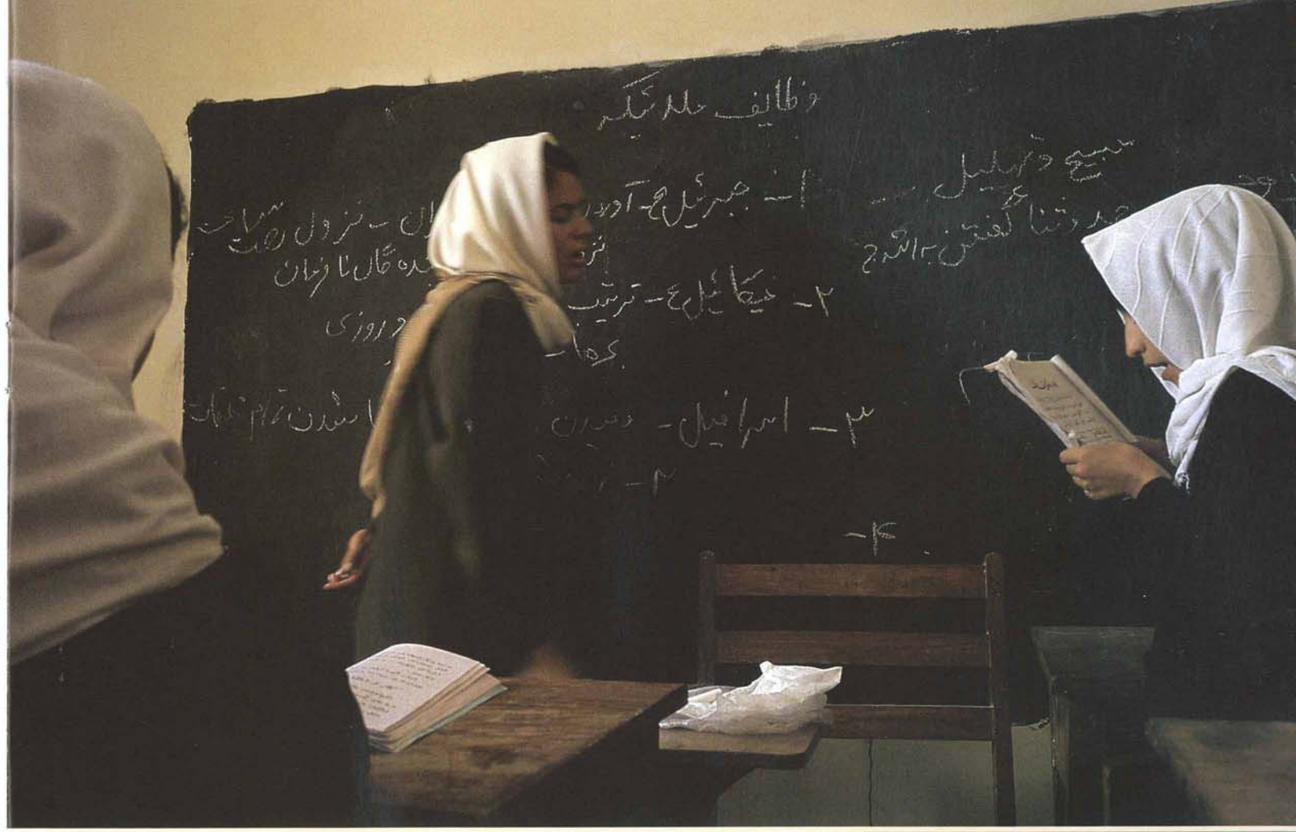
A bit farther on, emerging from the Hindu Kush mountains, we crossed the Begram Plain, whose strategic location at the southern base of the Hindu Kush had made it a war zone for a generation. In ancient times the passes it led to were the gateways to India, China and Central Asia. Alexander the Great built a city here; the Kushans later made it the capital of their vast empire and named it Kapisa.

The Begram Plain is desolate today, but in 1939 French archeologists excavating Kapisa discovered artifacts that testified to a refined and cultured citizenry. Hidden in a chamber of the royal city were painted glassware from Alexandria in Egypt and Chinese lacquered furniture encrusted with Indian ivory, some of which can be seen at the Musée Guimet in Paris.

Approaching Kabul, we passed dozens of abandoned villages, the grim remnants of thousands of homes, the withered remains



Engineering students crowd the restored library at Balkh University in Mazar-i-Sharif, where the stairways again clatter with the footfalls of both male and female students.



of millions of vines and the stumpy expanses of former orchards of almond, pear, apricot, fig and cherry trees, now stripped, mainly for firewood. Crippled tanks, burned trucks and twisted artillery littered the roadside, which was lined with the now-familiar signs warning of landmines.

In the city, we passed the ruins of Bagh-i-Babur, the first Mughal "paradise garden" and the predecessor of other famous imperial gardens in the South Asian subcontinent. Once covered by magnificent stands of plane trees, wild rose and jasmine, it had been built by Babur, who claimed direct descent from both Genghis Khan and Timur, or Tamerlane. Babur seized Kabul and carved out a kingdom in Afghanistan, from where, in 1525, he launched the invasion of India that made him the first of the Mughal emperors.

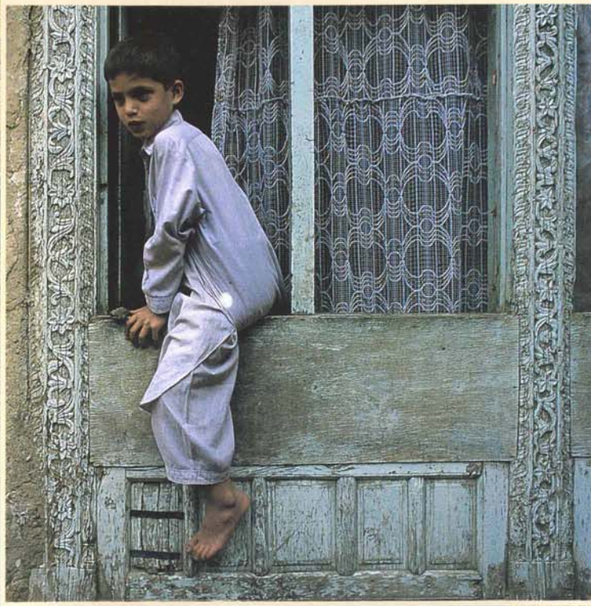
Babur never forgot Kabul and, when he died in 1539, he was buried there, according to his wishes, in Bagh-i-Babur. A century later, Shah Jahan, who built the Taj Mahal, constructed a small marble mosque in the garden, and in the late 19th century, Amir Abdur Rahman built an elegant pillared pavilion there whose veranda looks out on the city from the hillside in which the garden is set.

These and several other architectural gems of Kabul are now being restored by Development Humanitarian Services of Afghanistan (DHSA), the Society for the Protection of Afghanistan's Cultural Heritage (SPACH), the Aga Khan Trust for Culture and other organizations, including UNESCO. The gardens will be replanted with trees, flowers and other ornamentation appropriate to Mughal tradition, and walkways and benches will be constructed so that residents of Kabul may enjoy the gardens again.

As if in answer to anyone who might question whether historic sites should be rebuilt when so much of modern Afghanistan is still in ruins, a banner hung over the entrance of the Kabul Museum proclaimed: "A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive." The *Continued on page 30*

The Tajwarsultana School for Girls in Kabul has been rebuilt, refurbished and repainted by the AKDN; it is serving 4350 girls, who attend in three shifts.

To anyone who might question whether historic sites should be a priority for rebuilding, a banner hung over in the Kabul Museum replied, *"A nation stays alive when its culture stays alive."*



Left: **Mud bricks await AKDN-sponsored masons at the tomb of Timur Shah in Kabul, one of the city's leading historic monuments. Its restoration is part of a larger program to restore the country's cultural heritage.** Top: **Ahmad Zia, 9, sits in the window of his home in a Kabul neighborhood that is under study to save the historic woodwork adorning the homes.** Above: **One shovelful at a time, workers labor to restore the passageways in the tomb of Timur Shah.**

AFGHANISTAN

Herat *Is* Where *the* Heart Lives

Written and Photographed by FARIBA NAWA

This summer, I went home.

After 22 years of exile in the United States, my father and I returned to Afghanistan to renew family connections and explore the 5000-year-old culture and its people. I was eight when my parents took me, my brother and my sister west from our home in Herat to flee the 1979 Soviet invasion, thus joining the six million Afghan refugees who spread across the world.

I grew up in the San Francisco Bay area, where some 60,000 Afghans now make up the largest Afghan community in the United States. Immersed in this enclave, I often wished to see what had become of my childhood home. The first time I returned was in October 2000, but I only stayed for seven days. Under the Taliban, Kabul and Herat were silent cities, with no music and no laughter, only whispers of discontent.

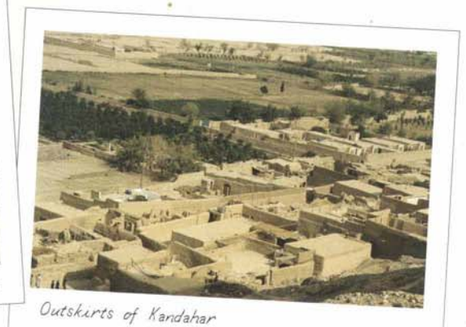
It came as little surprise that young people, who make up 40 percent of the population, seemed the most impassioned. My talks with young Kabulis were full of hope.

This summer I returned for three months, and it was sounds that I noticed first. Indian pop music was blasting from the shops. The click of women's heels echoed on the sidewalks. Girls giggled and teased on their way to school. Most important, people talked freely and passionately. While Afghanistan remains a much-troubled nation, I found that a cultural revival was sweeping it from Kabul in the east to Herat in the west, moving at an amazing pace because people have been so starved for self-expression. Afghans also are afraid that the peace may not last, and they have to seize this moment.

To take the cultural pulse of the country, I did a rather American thing: I took a road trip from the capital, Kabul, 1050 kilometers (650 mi) west to Herat, to see the revival through the eyes of the people I had been missing for two decades.

It was early June when I arrived in Kabul. The city of two million was growing daily with the flow of returning refugees (and more than a few fellow journalists). Everyone was tuned in, either through palm-sized radios or shoebox-sized television sets, to the proceedings of the *loya jirga*, the meeting of 1500 representatives from across the country that was forming Afghanistan's transitional government, the political embodiment of the country's new beginning.

Going to Kandahar with Naseer, Farouq and Natalie



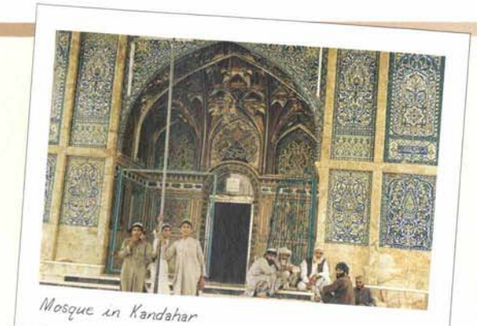
Outskirts of Kandahar

Everywhere, it seemed, people were working on or talking about reconstruction. They were rebuilding war-ruined homes, schools, libraries and museums—including the world-famous National Museum, from which most of the artifacts have been stolen over the last 20 years. There were also new institutions: One of the most dynamic is Aina, the Afghan Media and Culture Center, founded in June by Iranian photographers Reza and Manoocher Degati, and funded by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and several other international aid groups. It is the home of at least 30 media-oriented projects, including cinema production, newspapers and magazines. These are run out of 20 offices, and there are a printing press, radio and video production units and photographic and language-training laboratories. Already more than 100 writers and others have found a voice in these new publications, which are virtually free of censorship. Aina has become a central point for innovative ideas and expression.

It came as little surprise that young people, who make up 40 percent of the population, seemed the most impassioned, and this was especially true among the repatriating refugees. My talks with young Kabulis were full of hope, and these days everyone, it seemed, was a reconstruction activist.

On one sizzling morning, I visited the Afghan Assistance Coordination Authority (AACA), the clearinghouse for reconstruction money. I was supposed to meet a friend, a returning exile like myself, but instead I met Akbar Quraishi.

A soft-spoken 28-year-old, Quraishi came back from Pakistan in January, three weeks after the interim government had been installed. He had been studying computer science. Now, he works in the technology department at AACA to earn some money; on the side, though, when he's not fixing computer glitches, he's running a youth center or he's writing poetry. He sneaks in the fun work when his bosses aren't looking.



Mosque in Kandahar

Dapper in slacks and a collared shirt, Quraishi sported a neatly trimmed beard. His concentration and eloquence showed his literary passion.

"Literature and poetry aren't practical," the closet artist said. "So I had to find a more profitable means for supporting myself. But this is where my heart is."

While still a refugee in Peshawar, he published a bimonthly magazine in the two major Afghan languages, Pashto and Dari, called *Youth's Desire*. He funded it from his own pocket for about a year, until he could no longer afford it. When he came back to his native Kabul, Quraishi opened one of the first youth centers in the city, this time using money raised from private donors.

Now, he's hoping his projects can tap the flow of reconstruction aid coming through the AACA, which so far has amounted to $1 billion of the $4.5 billion pledged in Tokyo last winter by 61 countries and 21 international organizations.

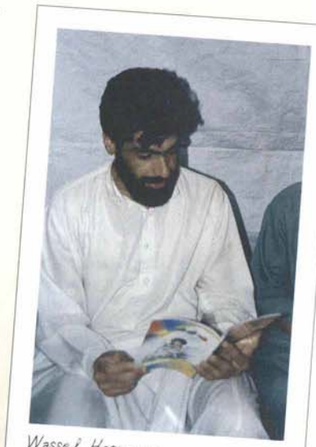
He described his youth center with a big smile and sweeping hand gestures. It's a two-story house where more than 100 boys come to play chess and pool, take recreational classes or just hang out. He wants to start league sports, get another youth magazine going and expand so that there will be a place for girls as well. Although there were a few such places during the Soviet-led regime, the demand has never been greater than now.

"University students come knocking at the door even when we can't fit in any more people. They're starved for free fun," he said.

After the *loya jirga* concluded with the election of President Hamid Karzai and the plan to draft a constitution, I left the capital in a minivan in the company of free-lance photographer Natalie Behring; *Chicago Tribune* correspondent Laurie Goering; her interpreter, Farouq Samim; and our driver, Naseer. We drove out at dawn, as the muezzins were beginning to recite verses from the Qur'an, before the call to morning prayers. We carried two spare tires, a few boxes of mineral water, our cameras, travel bags and not much else. The road to Kandahar was gravelly at best and bone-rattlingly rocky at its worst, all 550 kilometers (350 mi) of it.

Tile-making in Herat

I talked to Samim. Charming in his manner, with tanned skin, a thick head of black hair and a mustache, he is part of the educated middle class that is desperately needed to rebuild the country, but which is also deeply frustrated by the lack of job opportunities and training. Now 26 and a full-time interpreter, he was in his last year of medical school when his education was interrupted, and his training has been too poor to allow him to treat patients, he said. He spent most of the 23 years of war in Kabul, where he learned to speak fluent English at a language institute. In our conversations, however, we spoke in our native tongue, Dari, the common language of the northern regions.



Wassel Hosanyar, clothing merchant and poet

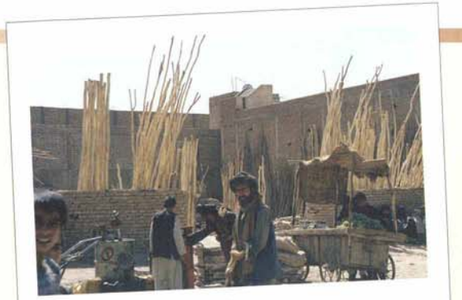
As the hot air and dust blew in our faces, he and I admired the vast landscape of smooth-rolling hills and dry desert. We rode past nomads on their camels in Ghazni province, home of the Ghaznavid Dynasty of the 10th century. After three years of drought, rain is again nourishing the acres of green here, and so Afghans who had become refugees because of the drought are returning, too. We could see orchards of apricots and peaches.

At intervals during our talk, Samim helped Naseer fix first one, then another, and another—in the end, seven flat tires. "I want to find a way to go to an English-speaking country, re-study medicine and then come back," he says. "Of course I'll come back. I put up with war for this long; I want to be here to help heal the country."

As night began to fall, we had still not arrived in Kandahar. Luckily, there was no curfew there as there had been in Kabul, where residents had to be in their homes by 11:00 p.m. Finally, 17 hours after leaving Kabul, we entered the historic gates of the city. Despite the late hour, shops were still open. In the streets, three-wheeled motor rickshaws whizzed by, and men in striped turbans strolled on paved sidewalks.

Kandahar is the second-largest city in the country, with 450,000 people, and the central,

ethnically Pashtun city, complete with old and new quarters that reflect several eras. The old city, much of which has been destroyed by the wars, is classical Afghan, with its mud-baked walls, its dome-ceilinged rooms, its central courtyards and its fountains. The new city, which emerged during King Mohammed Zahir's modernization project in the mid-19th century, boasts whitewashed three-story buildings with balconies and windows all around.


Rebuilding houses in Herat

Kandahar was the first capital of Afghanistan at its inception as a separate country in 1747. Before that, western Afghanistan was governed by the Persian Safavid Empire, and the eastern region was part of the Mughal Empire. The founder of Afghanistan, Ahmad Shah Durrani, whom Afghans affectionately call Ahmad Shah Baba, built an Afghan empire that stretched from Mashad to Delhi and north to Samarkand —about twice the size of Afghanistan today.

Herat was the cradle of culture in the region, and now the age-old Herati crafts of blue glass, silk shawls and tilework are blossoming again alongside new contemporary art.

The city still has four gates, which open onto the highways to Kabul and Herat. There are numerous historical sites, including Chihil Zina, a monument of 40 stairs propped on a hill overlooking the city. Atop a steep stairway is a chamber with Arabic inscriptions on its wall testifying that the founder of the Mughal Empire, Babur, built the monument in the 16th century.

The next day, the Ministry of Information and Culture invited me to the opening of a new literary association and told me that Wassel Hosanyar, a clothing merchant turned poet, was going to read. He had just published his first book, *Za`ow Sham (The Candle and I)*, a series of romantic poems dedicated to the current Afghan enlightenment.

"I have come out of the darkness and the candle's flame is giving me strength," he said. The candle, of course, symbolizes for him the new peace in Afghanistan. A close translation of one of his poems echoes the same message.

"The heart of my nation
has burned with missiles
and weapons,
But I fell on the sand in
this storm still content,
Because these weeks,
I see new revolutions."

Comfortable in traditional starched, white, loose pants and a knee-length shirt, Hosanyar sat cross-legged outside the ceremony on a plastic chair, his deep brown eyes gazing back at his watching fans.

At 30, he has been writing poetry for eight years in exile in Pakistan. He's self-taught, inspired by renowned Pashto poet Khushal Khattak, the Greek philosophers and Shakespeare. For Hosanyar, every image is a poem. Fans say he owes his popularity to his upbeat subjects of love and romance.

"You don't need a formal education to be a poet," he said. "You need to have talent, creativity and a variety of books to read. Every word of my poetry is a part of my body. I don't like just one or the other."

From Kandahar, I traveled with a Spanish writer and a German photographer on the three-hour drive west to Lashkar Gah ("Place of Soldiers"), a city in Helmand province. My earliest memory of Afghanistan is from my family's two-year residence in this historic city, which in the 1970's was called "Little America" because of its rapid modernization. I was four, and I recall a narrow trail along the clear water of the Helmand River. On the other side were fields, probably of wheat and barley; villagers were washing clothes in the river, and I ran with other children, barefoot. I remember that once, during a rain, there was a rainbow over the farms and the river.

Lashkar Gah is home to Qalai Bost, the vaulted gateway to the ruins of a fort and castle dating from the Ghaznavid era. So famous is it that it appears on the 10,000 Afghani note. In the 1970's, the late President Mohammed Daoud Khan filled the gateway to the top with bricks as a stopgap preservation measure, in order to keep the fragile structure from toppling.

Rosta Malang is the semi-official guard of the gateway, and he spends part of each day leaning against its side, crouching on the red dirt. When I approached him, I found that his life was a history in some ways as rich as that of the structure he attends. Malang had lived through all the regimes, all the bombs and rockets, sitting in the same corner, fingering his *tasbih*, or prayer beads.

He believes he's 80 years old. He has been widowed three times. Each wife, he said, he loved dearly, but all of them died in childbirth. After his third beloved died, he bid farewell to the material world, and he found peace near the ruins of the great kings. "I gave all my love to them. Now I give it to God," he said in a voice that quavered with age.

He said he wanted to die under the archway, which was indeed in danger of collapsing, despite the bricked-up doorway. UNESCO is spending $3 million to refurbish about a dozen historical sites in Afghanistan, including this one. I hoped they got here in time. I squinted under the sun to view the grand structure before me, and I felt privileged to be one of the few tourists around. Malang said that this year they have had about 50 tourists, the most he had seen in six years.


Roya Hamid

My final destination was my hometown, Herat. My father was already there, enjoying time with our family. My love and fascination for this city of 330,000 people comes partly from my personal connection, but also from its rich history. Located on the border of Iran and Turkmenistan, Herat was the cradle of culture and civilization in the region, especially in the golden 15th century, during the Timurid Empire. Art, architecture, poetry and literature flourished there.

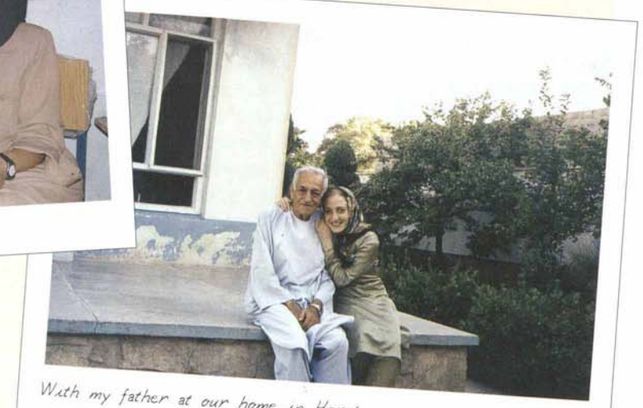
More than anywhere else, national reconstruction and the cultural renaissance are visible here. On a drive around the city, I saw workers paving roads, building a state-of-the-art addition to the old public library and creating a new park.

Herat is the wealthiest province in the country, which partly explains its rapid development. The Afghan transit trade, which has been going on for millennia, begins in Herat and ends in Pakistan, daily transporting hundreds of thousands of dollars' worth of goods ranging from electronics to fabrics. Each truck pays customs fees to Herat province.

Though Herat was destroyed during the war against the Soviets, it was rebuilt after 1992, and the Heratis, as the people are called, are not as worn as residents of the other Afghan cities. They come to the present day with zest and a seemingly insatiable motivation to produce and create. Age-old Herati crafts now blossoming again include thick blue glass, silk shawls and tilework. Many of the craftsmen work in the vicinity of the magnificent Friday Mosque, and from morning until evening prayers they try to meet the demand of their customers.

The city is a haven for art, including students such as one I met, Roya Hamid. At 24, she seemed to personify Herat's energy and will. She was accepted at the local medical school, but joined the faculty of fine arts to follow her artistic aspirations. During the six years when women were forbidden to work or go to school, Hamid took art lessons at home. She now has reentered the university as a third-year student. Her most prized work is her oil painting of a woman, shown behind bars; a tear, her symbolic cry for help, falls on an image of the Ka'bah at the center of the Holy Mosque.

"This is how I have felt for the last six years. But we have been freed now," she said.


With my father at our home in Herat

Hamid uses every free minute to work, even though she does not have a studio. She lays her papers and colors on the family carpet and hunches over them to draw. But her love is drawing intricate miniatures on blue glass goblets. It takes her a month to finish a gold-bordered design, brushing delicate, detailed strokes of color on the curved surface.

"I used to draw half-heartedly, not knowing who would see my work, but now I'm better and quicker. It's this sensation, this time. We feel that if we don't take advantage of it, somebody might take the opportunity away from us. I don't dream of returning to 15th-century Herat, but that time inspires me to make the 21st century an even greater era."

Fariba Nawa is a free-lance journalist who specializes in Islamic cultures. Her work has appeared in the *London Sunday Times*, *Mother Jones*, *The Village Voice*, *The Christian Science Monitor* and other publications. She lives in New York, where she is pursuing a master's degree in journalism and Middle Eastern Studies at New York University. She can be reached at fnawa@hotmail.com.

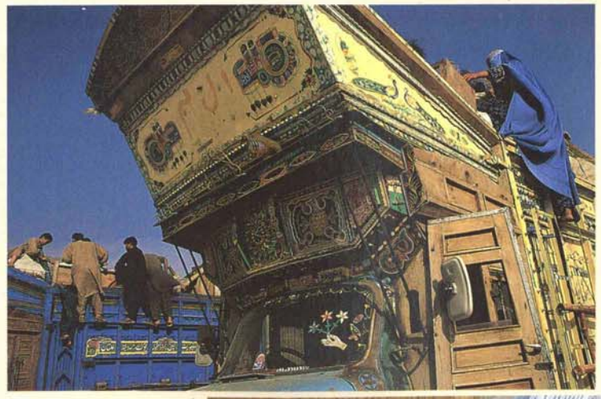

My relatives at a wedding celebration


Now that music is legal, my cousins play it loud

museum was repeatedly hit by rockets during the 1991–1996 civil war, and two-thirds of its unique collection, spanning a period of 6000 years, was looted. Today, the fragments of smashed statues wait in crates, in the hope that experts, using digital technology and virtual-assembly techniques, will be able to reconstitute them. Museum staff also hope that, as soon as the museum is physically secure, it can begin to take steps to recover some of the artifacts illegally taken abroad.

At the very heart of Kabul stands a monument to Timur Shah, a member of the Durrani Dynasty that ruled Afghanistan from its beginning as a separate state in 1747 until 1818. Dominating the commercial district, its octagonal exterior is ornamented with deeply recessed, arched niches and with small towers on each of the eight corners. The thick brick walls form a square interior pierced by vaulted galleries. These give access to the upper level, composed of a drum decorated with shallow niches, and a second drum topped by a huge dome, ribbed inside and almost hemispherical from the outside.

Once surrounded by the calm of a park, the monument is now beset by the bustle of bazaars and partly hemmed in by some 360 steel shipping containers, inside which tradesmen who lost their jobs during the Taliban regime have set up improvised shops. Kabul Municipality has agreed to gradually relocate the shops and restore the site.



Some returnees come on buses, others in shared taxi vans and still others ride ornately decorated Pakistani lorries to the Pul-i-Charikhi refugee return station in Kabul, where 7000 to 14,000 people have been arriving daily.

With 61 nations participating in relief and reconstruction aid pledges, "mending Afghanistan is a task for all of us. It is a historic wrong to be put right, *and an opportunity for North-South solidarity.*"

Among the more pleasant noises of reconstruction in Kabul is live music, now especially savored. So before leaving the city, I bought tickets to an evening of traditional music. It was organized by the Coordination of Humanitarian Assistance (CHA), an Afghan NGO that, after three years in exile in Pakistan, recently opened the Gallery of Fine Arts and Traditional Afghan Crafts in Kabul.

Besides paintings and calligraphy, the gallery also displays examples of handicrafts—*somak* wall hangings, *kochi* dresses, Herati glassware and silver jewelry set with semiprecious stones. In an effort to revive Afghanistan's carpet-weaving industry, the CHA provides wool and natural dyes free of charge to more than 160 weavers, mostly women working in their homes. CHA then buys back the finished carpets at $35 a square meter ($3.25/sq ft) and sells them in the gallery shop.

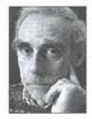
Though they are small compared to the national scope of the multi-billion-dollar recovery effort that Afghanistan requires, it is these relatively simple projects in the cities and self-help schemes in the countryside, run by AKDN and other international and Afghan NGOs, that are keeping the hopes of Afghans alive.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Bangladesh micro-credit: M/J 99
Indus Valley trade: S/O 99
Silk Roads: J/A 88, S/O 96, J/A 98
Numismatic history of Afghanistan: M/J 94, S/O 97
Landscapes of Afghanistan: M/J 91
Islam in Afghanistan: S/O 77

Throughout history, Afghanistan's high mountains and deep valleys have helped its peoples preserve their independence, but often at the cost of unity among themselves. The resulting strong regional and ethnic divisions are still generally intact, despite the extensive population displacements that have taken place since 1979. Tajiks, who are of Indo-European stock, live mostly in the northeast and the west; Uzbeks and Turkmen, both of Turkic origin, live in the north-central region. South of them, in the central mountains, live the Hazaras, who are of Mongolian origin. In the east and south are the majority Pashtuns. But it is the Tajiks who hold most of the key posts in the Transitional Government that is running Afghanistan until the elections in 2004—with the prominent exception of President Hamid Karzai, who is Pashtun.

In this human geography, Islam has been the most important force for unity since its coming in the eighth century. From the final decades of the 10th century through the 11th and 12th centuries, Afghanistan was the seat of powerful Muslim kingdoms: first the Ghaznavid Dynasty, then the Ghorid Dynasty. During these periods, Islam spread from Afghanistan to northern India, and today almost all Afghans are Muslims.



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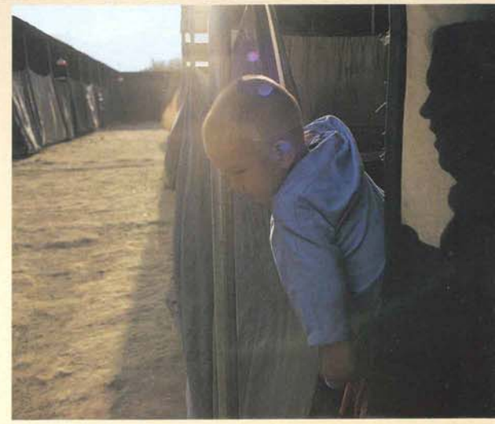
Thorne Anderson (tikva@rocketmail.com) is a free-lance photographer based in Belgrade.



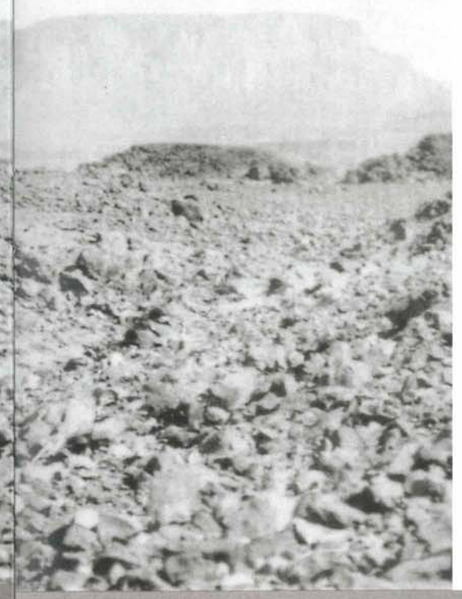
Top: **Some 400 years ago, the Babur Gardens in Kabul flowed with twin waterfalls fed by an elaborate irrigation system, hailed as a wonder of the world. The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, in cooperation with archeologists, is excavating that irrigation system and restoring the gardens, which were the first of many Mughal "paradise gardens" throughout central and south Asia. Babur, founder of the Mughal Empire, took control of Kabul in 1525 and from there launched his rule of the Indian subcontinent. He was buried in these gardens after his death in 1539.** Above: **After registration and receipt of food and money, most returnees spend but one night in the transition camp before continuing their journey to the homes that some have not seen since 1979.**

Searching for Zerzura:

The Exploration of the Libyan Desert

The vast barrenness of the Libyan Desert stretches from the Nile westward across Egypt and northern Sudan to Tripolitania in Libya. For the ancient Egyptians it was the realm of the afterlife, overseen by Osiris, a place of fear and dread. According to the historian Herodotus, writing in the fifth century BC, a huge sandstorm once swallowed up an entire army of invading Persians there without a trace. To modern Egyptians, the Libyan Desert is increasingly a realm of hope—a hope based on extensive irrigation schemes to increase agricultural land and relieve crowding in the Nile Valley.

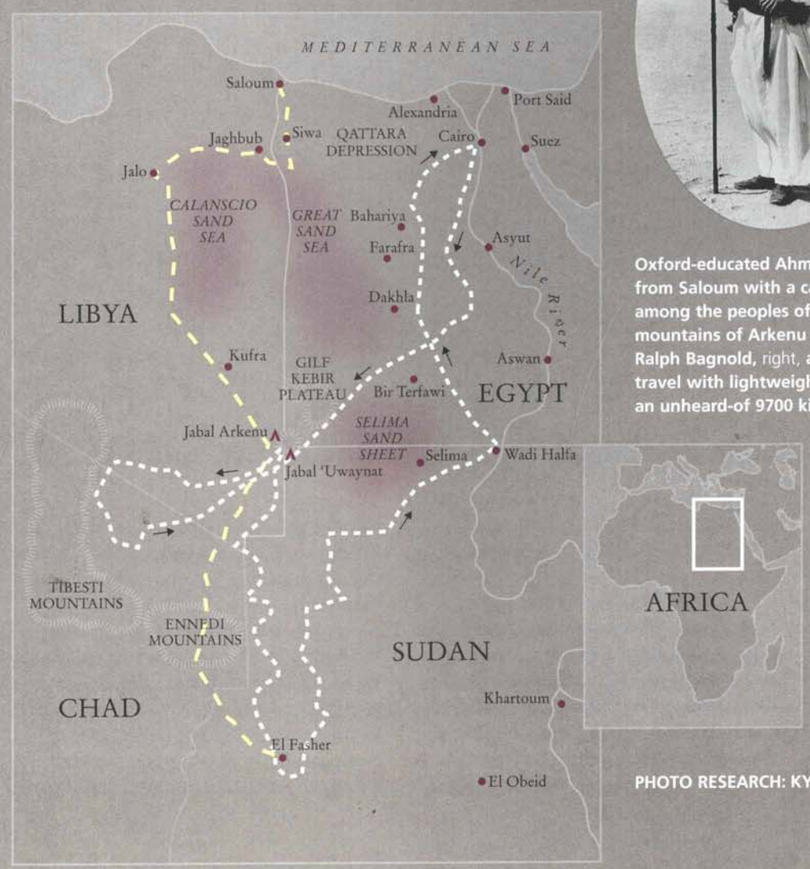
Written by Robert Berg



At the beginning of the 20th century, the desert to which Egypt now turns with such energy was almost entirely unmapped. Even among the sprinkling of nomads who braved its harshness, knowledge was fragmentary at best. Large areas were entirely avoided due to lack of water or daunting terrain. Legends of the desert echoed in the minds of the inhabitants of the Egyptian oases: tales of spirits and shadowy raiders, of lost oases and lost treasure.

The legends surrounded one of these "lost oases" in particular: Its name was Zerzura. For three decades at the opening of the century, that name tugged at the imagination of every explorer of the Libyan Desert. Its existence and location were debated in the distinguished pages of the *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society* under such titles as "The Zerzura Problem," "Problems of the Libyan Desert" and "Lost Oases of the Libyan Desert."

Oxford-educated Ahmed Mohamed Hassanein Bey, left, **set out in 1923 from Saloum with a caravan of camels and the promise of friends among the peoples of the western desert. He was the first to map the mountains of Arkenu and 'Uwaynat, the highest points in the region. Ralph Bagnold,** right, **a British officer, in 1932 revolutionized desert travel with lightweight Model A Fords and sand ladders, covering an unheard-of 9700 kilometers (6000 mi).**



MAIN: JOHN BAIL / ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY; INSETS: ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

PHOTO RESEARCH: KYLE PAKKA

Tracked vehicles, shown here cresting a dune, were first used in the region in 1923 when Prince Kemal el Din set out west from Dhakla Oasis.

The searchers for Zerzura would indeed find treasure, but of new knowledge, not gold. They would discover evidence of earlier peoples who had lived in the region before the climate changed, and they would develop new ways of traveling across the great oceans of dunes. One of them would outline the science of dune formation, and this knowledge in turn would prove to have literally other-worldly applications.

In Arabic, the word *zerzura* can connote a location populated by starlings or other little birds. The oldest record of a location with this name is found in a document dating to the mid-13th century, written by the amir Osman al-Nabulsi, regional administrator of the Fayyum. An anonymous 15th-century Arabic treasure-hunters' guide, *Kitab al-Kanuz*, "The Book of Hidden Pearls," describes Zerzura as a whitewashed city of the desert on whose gate is carved a bird. The treasure seeker is advised to "take with your hand the key in the beak of the bird, then open the door of the city. Enter, and there you will find great riches...."

The first European reference to Zerzura is in an 1835 account by the English Egyptologist John Gardner Wilkinson, based on a report by an Arab who said he had found the oasis while searching for a lost camel. Placed five days west of the track connecting the oases of Farafra and Bahariya, the "Oasis called Wadee Zerzoora" abounded "in palms, with springs, and some ruins of uncertain date." Although tales of secret desert locales found by searchers for stray camels were common enough, Wilkinson's account was bolstered when later explorers found a number of previously unknown oases that had been named in his account along with Zerzura. But they did not find Zerzura itself.

Five days' travel west of the Farafra–Bahariya track would place Zerzura within or near the eastern boundary of the Great Sand Sea. Although the existence of this large mass of sand dunes south of Siwa Oasis had been known at least since the time of Herodotus, how far it extended into the interior of the country was not known to outsiders before the 1874 journey of the German explorer Gerhard Rohlfs. Traveling west from Dakhla Oasis, he penetrated the eastern edge of the sands and, finding his westward progress blocked by great dunes running north and south, he turned northward to Siwa, making good time on the hardened "roads" between the dunes. At a place he named Regenfeld because of a chance rainstorm, he left a cairn of stones to guide future explorers. Decades would pass before any ventured forth.

From 1909 to 1911, W. J. Harding King made several journeys along an old trade road that ran southwest from Dakhla and which, he reasoned, must have had watering points along its length. He had heard stories of Zerzura, including one that described it as an abandoned city with palm and olive groves. After seeing a flight of small birds enter Dakhla from the southwest and finding freshly eaten olives in their stomachs, Harding King became convinced he would find the lost "olive" oasis southwest of Dakhla. He retraced 320 kilometers (200 mi) of the old road but found no abandoned desert city.

Six years later John Ball, director of the Egypt Survey Department, used Dakhla as a base for his initial attempt to find the lost oasis. Traveling by car, he advanced 320 kilometers west from Dakhla, rounding the southeast extremity of the Great Sand Sea. Some 160 kilometers (100 mi) from Dakhla, he did find a cache of clay jars—some raiding party's water depot—but no lost oasis.

In the years 1921–1924, Lieutenant Colonel N. B. de Lancey Forth made several journeys by camel into the Great Sand Sea. To avoid getting lost in the dunes, Forth "marked our route with thin palm branches placed in conspicuous positions, at distances varying from a few hundred yards to a mile or more apart." He made observations of dune movement and found important evidence of Stone Age habitation within the sands: flint implements, remains of ancient campfires and fragments of petrified ostrich and oyster shells. These provided insight into the climatic changes that had occurred over the millennia—but again, no forgotten oasis revealed itself.

In Arabic, the word *zerzura* can connote a "place of little birds." An anonymous 15th-century treasure-hunters' guide described Zerzura as a desert city upon whose gate is carved a bird whose beak opens the door to "great riches."

JOHN BALL / ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

MAIN: A. M. HASSANEIN BEY / ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY; INSET: SWAINE / ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY

A view of A. M. Hassanein Bey's camp from the slopes of Jabal 'Uwaynat, which, he wrote in his book *The Lost Oases*, "rose before us like medieval castles in the mist." Inset: John Ball, director of the Egypt Survey Department, added significantly to geographic knowledge of the Great Sand Sea and the Gilf Kebir, a plateau the size of Switzerland.

The late 1920's saw the debate over Zerzura reach fever pitch. A number of articles about the "rather complex subject" of Zerzura appeared in the *Journal of the Royal Geographic Society*. Strongly held viewpoints were aired there and at the explorers' Cairene haunts.

The first breakthrough in Libyan Desert exploration did not happen until 1923. It was the result of an extraordinary journey by an equally extraordinary man: Ahmed Mohamed Hassanein Bey. Esteemed by his contemporaries, Hassanein Bey blended his Oxford education with a heartfelt loyalty to the customs and beliefs of his native Egypt. Traveling by camel with only a handful of companions, Hassanein Bey based his hopes for safe passage on his extensive friendships among the Senussi, a Sufi brotherhood whose main center was at Kufra, and on the tribal peace they had induced in the region. Setting out from Saloum on the Mediterranean coast in early January, he followed caravan routes through the oases of Siwa, Jaghbub and Jalo before reaching Kufra Oasis on April 1, 1923. On April 18th, after reciting the *Fatihah* and praying with his men, he led his refitted caravan south from Kufra into the unknown.

High daytime temperatures necessitated long hours of night travel over rough terrain. Men and animals tired rapidly. In the early hours of April 24, the column was "having a hard time of it crossing the high steep sand-dunes when suddenly mountains rose before us like mediaeval castles half hidden in the mist." Letting the caravan go on, Hassanein Bey sat for half an hour atop a dune savoring "the outstanding moment of the whole journey." One hundred and eleven days after leaving Saloum, he had located the "lost" mountain oases of Arkenu and 'Uwaynat. Unlike the artesian-fed oases scattered across the desert, Arkenu and 'Uwaynat, the highest mountains in the Libyan Desert, were found to be sustained by rainfall that collected in caves. After exploring the oases and visiting with the Guraan tribesmen at 'Uwaynat, Hassanein Bey set out for El Fasher in the Sudan, reaching it at the end of May. His remarkable journey had covered 3500 kilometers (2200 mi).

Significant contributions to geographic knowledge resulted from Hassanein Bey's careful measurements. He fixed the positions of Arkenu and 'Uwaynat, previously known to the outside world only by rumor, and determined more accurate positions for a number of other locations. The map prepared by the Egypt Survey Department from his account of his journey gave the most accurate overview of the Libyan Desert of the time. Vast areas, however, remained blank. The Gilf Kebir, the Qattara Depression, the Selima Sand Sheet and most of the Great Sand Sea remained unknown.

Another Egyptian, Prince Kemal el Din, played a major role in filling those blanks. The grandson of Khedive Ismail, he brought an active mind, adventurous spirit and—importantly—deep pockets to the search for Zerzura. To help extend the speed and range of his expedition, he commissioned manufacture of a group of tracked vehicles from Citroën. Using these, he and Ball made several journeys together. In 1923 they headed west-southwest from Dakhla to further explore the extent of the Sand Sea and to look for a lost oasis that would link Dakhla with oases to the west. In 1924 they drove into the Sand Sea. In 1925 they were the first to reach Jabal 'Uwaynat from the Nile Valley, traveling via Bir Terfawi in the Selima Sand Sheet, where they found "absolutely nothing to be looked at...but the eternal smooth curving outlines of the sand repeating themselves with geometric regularity." In 1926 the prince was also the first to reach Jabal 'Uwaynat from the direction of Dakhla. In the process, he discovered the Gilf Kebir, a plateau the size of Switzerland, ringed by cliffs, between the Sand Sea and 'Uwaynat.

Kemal el Din and Ball's journeys mapped large areas in the southern and western regions of the Egyptian portion of the Libyan Desert. Their clarification of the extent of the Sand Sea, and the prince's discovery of the Gilf Kebir, provided Egypt with a clear picture of this natural defensive barrier of huge dunes and sheer cliffs. Utilizing their findings, Ball produced a contour map of the Libyan Desert and also mapped the static water table beneath it.

The late 1920's saw the debate over Zerzura reach fever pitch. A number of articles about the "rather complex subject" aired strongly held viewpoints. Based on evidence he had found on his travels, de Lancey Forth thought the oasis could be found west-northwest of Dakhla. Ball felt that it could possibly be found within the Sand Sea, more likely to the west of Bir Terfawi. Harding King clung to his idea of a rain-fed "olive" oasis between Jabal 'Uwaynat and Dakhla. Douglas Newbold of the Sudan Service placed it west of the Selima Oasis. The Hungarian Count László Almásy believed it would be found in the area of the Gilf Kebir.

While the debate raged, advances were being made in the technology of desert travel. An enterprising group of English officers, including Ralph Bagnold, found they could traverse dunes in the lightweight Ford Model A by lowering the pressure in the tires. They developed "sand ladders" of wire and bamboo to help vehicles run atop soft sand and modified the cars' bodies to make them expedition-efficient. By developing a system for conserving radiator water, they enormously extended the potential range of expeditions. These improvements allowed them mobility unattainable with the heavier Citroëns, opening the Sand Sea to broader exploration. And soon aircraft began to accompany expeditions.

This combination of technology and intellectual fervor was brought to bear on the desert's remaining secrets. In 1930, Bagnold and his companions traveled from Farafra to Jabal 'Uwaynat, penetrating the Sand Sea to an unprecedented depth. But they found that, despite new innovations, travel there remained perilous. When their cars stuck in a dead end amid the dunes, "no one made any effort to move." They lay on the sand "dreaming pleasantly, ...rather interested, in a detached impersonal way, at our own apathy." This dehydration-induced stupor could easily have had a fatal outcome, but "someone had a bright idea. We broke into the water supply and had an extra pint all round. The effect was marvelous; the water acted as a stimulating drug." In two hours they freed their vehicles and they began to retrace their tracks. After 20

COURTESY OF STEPHEN BAGNOLD / J. HANBURY-TRACEY / ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY (2)

In 1932, the same year Ralph Bagnold made his 9700-kilometer trek, Pat Clayton and Lady Dorothy Clayton helped spot two green valleys from the air, but their overland journey to find them failed. Opposite: **A modified Model A of the 1932 Bagnold expedition ascends a slope in Egypt's western desert.**

kilometers (12 mi) they found a gap in the dunes that they had missed earlier; it opened onto a broad avenue of firm ground.

In 1932 an expedition including a young English baronet, Robert Clayton East-Clayton, Count Almásy, Colonel Pat Clayton of the Survey Department and Wing Commander H. W. G. J. Penderel made an aerial sighting of two green valleys in the Gilf Kebir. Was Zerzura found at last? Attempts to reach the valleys overland failed when gasoline ran short. At one point Penderel and Pat Clayton found themselves stranded. Undaunted, they "brewed a cup of tea from radiator water. Although the water was darker than the tea," Clayton related, "I have never tasted a drink nearly so good."

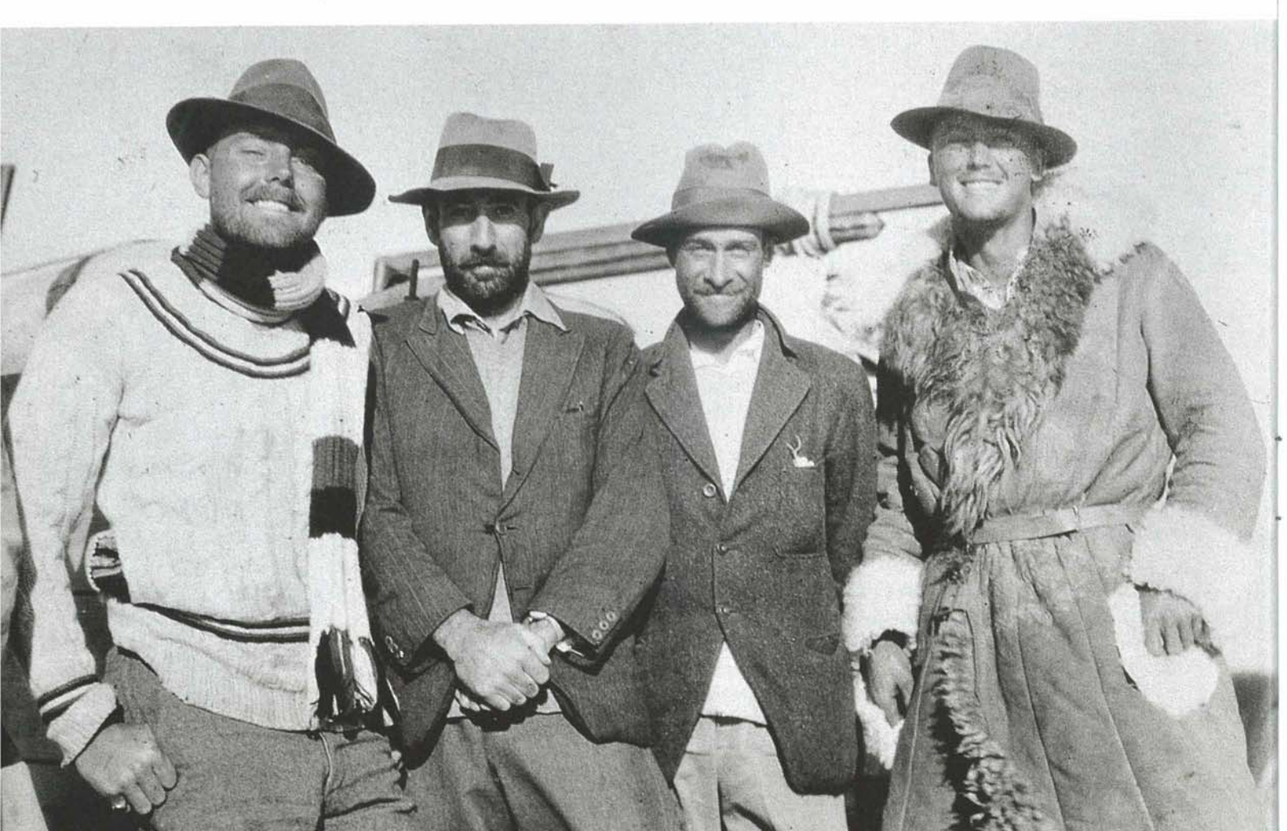
Their sighting created a sensation, and in early 1933, two separate expeditions returned to the Gilf Kebir. The first was that of Pat Clayton and Lady Dorothy Clayton, the widow of Sir Robert. Meeting at Kufra, they explored the western face of the Gilf Kebir and located the two green valleys, Wadi Hamra and Wadi Abd el Melik. A short time later, Almásy and Penderel explored the eastern face of the Gilf Kebir. They found a third green valley, Wadi Talh, as well as the Aqaba Pass, which cuts through the plateau from east to west. (During World War II Almásy used this passage to evade Allied patrols while smuggling the German spy "Rebecca" to the outskirts of Dhakla. Almásy's exploits were the chief inspiration for the novel *The English Patient*, by Michael Ondaatje, and the 1996 Oscar-winning film of the same name.)

Ralph Bagnold and his companions also undertook an incredible odyssey in 1932. Traversing 6000 direct kilometers (3700 mi), 9600 kilometers total (6000 mi), they crisscrossed the desert from Cairo to northern Chad, ending at Wadi Halfa on the Nile in Sudan. Although Bagnold wasn't as caught up in "Zerzura fever" as many of his colleagues, the search lingered in the back of his mind as he set out, "in case, by the merest chance....!" The extent of his journey revolutionized the scope of desert travel.

The explorations of 1932 and 1933 filled the last major blanks on the Libyan Desert map, the Qattara Depression having been placed by George Walpole in 1926. Prior to his death in 1932, Prince Kemal el Din had written that "the one remaining unaccomplished journey in Africa" was that from Kufra to Siwa through the Sand Sea. A first east-to-west crossing of the Sand Sea was accomplished with some difficulty in December of 1932 by Pat Clayton. Early in 1933, he and Lady Dorothy Clayton made the first direct passage from Kufra to Siwa with relative ease.

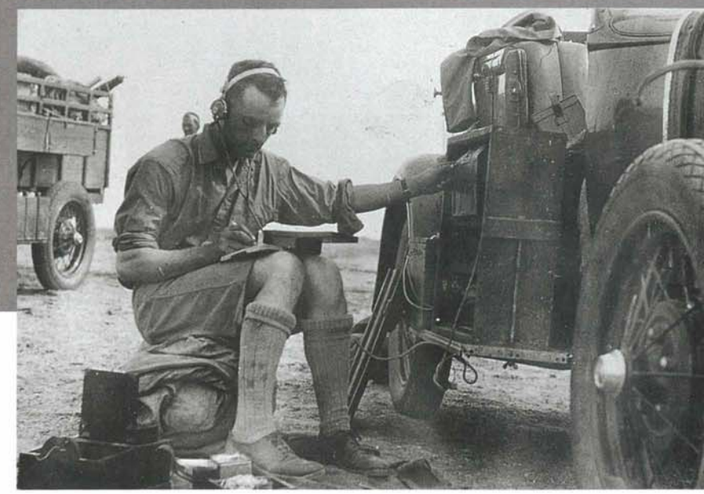
What remained unresolved was the debate over whether Zerzura had in fact been found. A century earlier, Wilkinson had been told by nomads at Dakhla of a mysterious oasis formed by three green valleys. But was this different from the "Wadee Zerzoura" that lay to the west of Farafra with its "ruins of uncertain date"? Perhaps the green valleys of the Gilf Kebir were the Zerzura of legend. Perhaps Zerzura was a location swallowed by the desert like the Persian army. Or perhaps it had never existed outside men's imaginations.

Ralph A. Bagnold (third from left) with expedition partners I. B. Fernie, V. F. Craig and D. W. Burridge on a 1929 expedition into the Sand Sea.



COURTESY OF STEPHEN BAGNOLD (2)

After his days of desert exploration, Ralph Bagnold set up wind-tunnel experiments in England to further study the mechanics of sand-dune formation. Later, oil companies benefited from this knowledge, as did the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration.



V. C. Holland takes a radio time signal to help fix the position of the 1929 expedition.

Nonetheless, the energy and intellect that was applied to Zerzura's discovery produced a wealth of knowledge. The barren vastness of the Libyan Desert was mapped, as was the water table below it—vital knowledge for the Egyptian nation in the modern era. Technical advances provided a foundation of knowledge for future motorized desert travel—knowledge that a number of the English explorers would utilize in the Long Range Desert Group in World War II. (Ralph Bagnold reportedly proposed formation of the unit to General Sir Archibald Wavell, Commander in Chief of Middle East Land Forces, with the words, "How about some piracy on the high desert?")

It was also Bagnold who almost single-handedly made some of the most important intellectual contributions that sprang from the search for Zerzura. Throughout his journeys, he had been fascinated by the shapes, consistency and movement of sand dunes. He wondered how their surfaces seemed to flow under foot in a strong wind; how they kept their shapes as they moved, even repairing damage done to them; how they grew rather than being dispersed by the wind and, in some areas, bred "babies" that ran ahead of the parent dune. Since the Libyan Desert was virtually free of foliage and habitation, dune movement was unimpeded, and Bagnold had a perfect "laboratory" for field observations.

After his days of active exploration were over, Bagnold set up experiments to try to find answers to his questions. From 1935 to 1939, he worked at his homemade wind tunnel in England, with a return to the Gilf Kebir in 1938 for additional field study. His findings were published in 1941 by Methuen under the title *The Physics of Blown Sand and Desert Dunes*, which remains the standard in the field. Its principles also formed a basis for the study of wind erosion of agricultural land. Decades later, Bagnold also found them applicable to predicting the movement of sediment in rivers. The rapidly developing oil business in the Middle East was an early beneficiary of Bagnold's insights into how dune movement could threaten drilling rigs and how such movement might be channeled.

The search for Zerzura also benefited exploration of a much more distant barren landscape. In 1977, the US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) succeeded in landing an unmanned probe on the surface of Mars. Photos taken by the probe showed what appeared to be sand dunes similar to those of Earth. In an effort to better understand these Martian dunes and any hazard they might pose to the probe, NASA called on the services of an 81-year-old desert explorer and seeker of Zerzura, Ralph Bagnold.

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Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Siwa Oasis: J/A 79, S/O 88

Amman's Year of the Arts

In the courtyard of Darat al-Funun, Amman's leading contemporary art center, the feathery branches of jacaranda trees brush second-century marble columns as some 50 people sit in rows of folding chairs. They have come to listen to the first of a series of lectures by Mohanna Durra, who introduced abstraction, expressionism and cubism to Jordan and, in 1972, established the country's first formal contemporary-art training program.

Written by Lee Adair Lawrence
Photographed by Bill Lyons

Durra arrives dressed in coat and tie, but he speaks with the informality of a friend who has dropped in for a visit. As his voice filters through the loudspeakers, a cool breeze intermittently wafts over the gathering, bringing with it the muffled sounds of downtown traffic and the happy yelps of children playing in the streets.

For any society to thrive, he tells his audience, "art is not a luxury—it is a necessity." Mingling personal reminiscences with historical observations about everything from the symphonies of Beethoven to the writings of Kabir, from Kandinsky's paintings to research in chromotherapy, Durra is here preaching to the choir: Tonight's listeners are mostly fellow artists, architects, students, writers and other art lovers. But the fact that Durra's message is neither unique nor new in Amman, which this year bears the United Nations title "Cultural Capital of the Arab World," is precisely what makes his talk exciting.

The title is one the city wears with pride, perhaps because Amman has never enjoyed the cultural cachet of Beirut, Cairo or Baghdad. A much younger city, Amman was just a village when it became Jordan's capital in 1921. Since then, it has grown at a frenetic rate. Since 1943 in particular, the city's population has skyrocketed from 30,000 to 1.8 million as refugees from Palestine, Lebanon and, more recently, Iraq have remade their lives in Jordan. Perforce, providing housing, education and other basic services has been the priority.

For the past 30 years, however, in spite of hard economic times and regional instability, the city has also worked to expand its cultural offerings and broaden audiences for the arts. As a result, this city of hills and buff-colored houses today bubbles with festivals, concerts, theater performances, art shows and poetry readings. To be sure, this year's UN-designated banner prompted the municipality to add new venues to the city's cultural infrastructure, and it inspired a greater fullness in its arts calendar, but the spirit that fueled these additions both predates the title and promises to long outlive it.

From Nuha Batshoun, who opened Amman's first commercial art gallery in the early 1970's, to 24-year-old college student Maral Yessayan, who teaches ballet and modern dance to children, Amman's arts community acts out of a deep commitment to creativity and to the creation of a cultural identity that looks into the future and beyond political borders. In choreographing a work for children for the Children's Song Festival in October, Yessayan is drawing both on the movements in *debkeh* folk dance and on jazz steps. She is convinced that "we need to keep building on existing traditions, and maybe new artists and techniques will emerge. This is how we can add to our culture, inflect it without taking away its identity. After all, life is dynamic, just like dance."

To celebrate its year as Cultural Capital of the Arab World, Amman has decorated its municipal building with an arcade of the flags of Arab countries. Left: **Folkloric dance and song thrive alongside performance schedules that include modern works.** Opposite: **Mohanna Durra is a painter, former Arab League ambassador to Moscow and founder of Jordan's Institute of Fine Arts.**

In this land, which has for millennia been a crossroad for trade and cultural exchange, the process of making art is laced with unbridled and deep-rooted curiosity about all cultures. "Had Islam not opened up from the first day and accepted—not just tolerated, but accepted—other cultures and built on their ideas, it would never have become one of the most enduring civilizations," observes Princess Wijdan Ali, founder of the National Gallery and dean of the newly established Faculty of Arts and Design at the University of Jordan.

To immerse oneself in Amman's art scene is to bear witness to this building process. In his studio on the outskirts of Amman, the internationally known sculptor Samer Tabbaa runs his hand over massive slabs of wood and marble while discussing his lifelong exploration of elemental textures and materials. In a modest apartment overlooking downtown Amman, emerging artist Hani Alqam uses thick, bold paint strokes to depict the blocky architecture of his beloved city, and he speaks of the "truth" he finds when he makes portraits of working-class patrons at the University Café. Across town, in a ground-floor apartment-*cum*-showroom, ceramist Hazem al-Zubi incises pots with designs that long predate current politics, be they from the Phoenician alphabet, the source of Arabic and Hebrew scripts, or from ancient symbols found in places as different as Iraq and Mexico.

In music, composer Tariq al-Nasser sometimes draws on Bedouin melodies for compositions with electric and acoustic guitars, vocals, piano and a variety of percussion instruments, from drums and castanets to rhythmic thigh-slapping. "It is not enough to merge two kinds of music, because you still see the elements of each," says the intense young al-Nasser, whose hand instinctively reaches for the electronic keyboard that is attached to his computer.

Behind him, CDs fill the shelves, each containing recordings he has collected as ethnomusicological field research in various parts of Jordan, the Middle East and Central Asia—along with a host of his own compositions and recordings of his own New Age-style band, called Rum. "When you add a third kind of music," he explains, "the elements will mix in a way that will change them and create something new"—a world music for a new age.

While al-Nasser travels with Rum to international festivals, he is in this respect a relative rarity, as most other artists and art lovers in Amman depend on foreign cultural offerings to come closer to them, whether in the form of a film week, a theater or poetry festival with international participants, concerts or recitals by visiting musicians, or art exhibitions from abroad. These are sometimes independently organized, as in the case of the salon-like Blue Fig, where each month the self-styled "cultural café" celebrates a different country through live music and slide projections. More often they result from frequent collaborations between local

The Cultural Capitals of the Arab World

Since 1996, one city has been selected every year as the Cultural Capital of the Arab World by ALECSO, the Arab League Educational, Cultural and Scientific Organization, which was founded in 1964 to lend regional support to the global work of UNESCO. Past and future holders of this distinction are:

1996: Cairo, Egypt
1997: Tunis, Tunisia
1998: Sharjah, United Arab Emirates
1999: Beirut, Lebanon
2000: Riyadh, Saudi Arabia
2001: Kuwait City, Kuwait
2002: Amman, Jordan
2003: Rabat, Morocco
2004: Sana'a, Yemen
2005: Khartoum, Sudan

Above: Rabia' al-Akhras's "Man and History" is a new addition to Amman's collection of public sculpture. Main photo: **The subsurface "Street of Culture," which opened in late summer, is the latest addition to the capital's high-end Shmeisani district.** Right: **The band Rum draws its influences from styles ranging from Bedouin to New Age electronica.**

The most popular dance of the region, the *debkeh*, is performed in style in Ajlun. Below: Drum lessons at the National Conservatory of Music, home of Jordan's national children's orchestra. Lower: The 4 Walls Gallery is among the numerous contemporary art galleries in Amman.

groups and internationally funded institutions, such as the Instituto Cervantes, the Centre Culturel Français, the British Council and others.

Even in the world of literature, where one might expect language to prevent writers from looking beyond the Arab world, the same openness prevails. On Sunday evenings at the Ammoun Café, conversation ranges widely among writers who have taken to congregating here. Award-winning novelist Samiha Khrais, poet Hikmat Nawaysh, short-story writer Sa'ud Qubaila and novelists Hashem Gharaibeh and Muhammad Sanajleh always sit at the same table. They half-jokingly call themselves The Bleeding Rose Band —each one a blossom of literature, they say, and each one in pain.

One evening, enveloped by sweet smells from a jasmine bush and a nearby waterpipe, they sip sugared tea and discuss the strength of Ernest Hemingway's style, the dream of pan-Arab unity and the potential for new forms of fiction based on the Internet's use of hyperlinks. Talk also turns to an earlier generation of Jordanian writers and to the "revolution in the Arab literary world" wrought by Tayseer Sbool's 1968 novel *You Since Today*.

But for all their admiration, they resist becoming too beholden to their predecessors. "In Jordan, we have no single [literary] father. We all have many fathers and, with translations, we read all the more," says Khrais. Four heads nod as curls of cigarette smoke fill the air around them.

They and other writers hold readings periodically at such venues as the Jordan Association of Writers, Darat al-Funun or any of Amman's dozen commercial art galleries. Nawaysh also sometimes reads his free-verse poems at the Wednesday evening gatherings of Bayt al-Shair, the House of Poetry, a restored 1920's-era home in the city center that overlooks Amman's Roman amphitheater. No more than two or three dozen people usually attend such readings, in contrast to readings of traditional, nationalist poetry, or to performances of political satires by Nabil Sawalha or Nisham Yanis, all of which draw bigger crowds than theatrical performances by troupes that strive for a more sober note.

Similarly, plays replete with song and dance and the occasional television star routinely fill the Royal Cultural Center's main theater for runs of 20 days and more, while the sometimes experimental plays of the al-Fawanees troupe, or serious works performed by actors from the Performing Arts Center of the Noor Al Hussein Foundation, fill the theater for at most three to four nights, usually during a much-publicized festival.

The desire to strengthen audiences for "serious" theater is one of the reasons behind the proliferation of plays and performing-arts outreach programs for children. The Performing Arts Center puts on children's plays and uses drama in schools as a way of helping children work through such common problems as bullying, family disagreement and death. Yet the center is well aware that their actors are at the same time introducing theater itself, "indirectly creating future audiences," as director Lina Attel Batayneh confides.

Theater is not the only art form thus building for the future. All around the city, children and young adults can choose among many private and government-sponsored classes in subjects ranging from sculpture, painting and ceramics at the Orfali and Dar al-Anda galleries, to dance and theater at the Haya Cultural Center, graphic arts at the National Gallery of Art, music at the National Conservatory, and ballet and acting at the Performing Arts Center. Similarly, the National Gallery of Art regularly welcomes schoolchildren by the busload. Its collection, which highlights more than 1800 sculptures and paintings from around the "developing world," is exposing a younger generation to contemporary art.

There is a similar emphasis on efforts to broaden adult audiences, often by creating mixed-media events. For example, as poetry lovers listen to a reading at Bayt al-Shair, their eyes can take in not only photographs of such beloved poets as Jordanian Mustafa Wahbi al-Tal, known as "'Arar," and Palestinian Mahmud Darwish, but also an eclectic assortment of contemporary paintings. Similarly, when people come to listen to Iraqi poet Ata Abdul Wahab at the Orfali Gallery, attend a piano recital or a children's play at the 4 Walls Gallery, or wend their way through the Darat al-Funun complex to a lecture, they find themselves amid sculptures or paintings that they might never have sought out for their own sake.

"All the arts belong together," says Nermeen Obiedat, owner of the Zara Gallery. "Maybe this way you can also attract more people."

These sentiments echo throughout the city's arts community, and they were at work when, in October 2000, the municipality opened the Al Hussein complex of theater, exhibition halls and library on the edge of the city's poorer district. This way, as people go about their daily business, they glimpse paintings and sculptures through the floor-to-ceiling windows and will perhaps one day wander in to learn more. In the same spirit, every other summer the National Gallery offers the public a chance to watch six to eight sculptors from around the Arab world chisel stone, carve wood or forge metal in Amman's only public park. The gallery then installs the resulting large-scale sculptures in public areas around the city.

The most recent mixed venue is the Street of Culture, completed in August. In a commercial district with popular restaurants and cafés, the city carved out a 500-meter (⅓-mi) pedestrian island where, on a recent autumn evening, one end fills with the amplified voices of puppeteers while, at the other, the rhythmic sounds of folk dancing attract a circle of onlookers. In between, kiosks displaying books and handicrafts bookend a sunken walkway lined on one side by a black stone wall with water flowing down its surface and, on the other, by a gleaming white exhibition space reserved for contemporary art.

On that night, the busy, colorful canvases of Hilda Hiary hang on the walls like so many mosaics teeming with abstract figures. The young painter is thrilled at the chance to bring her art to the street. "This is an entirely different group of people, ordinary people who are stopping to look at the paintings and ask questions," she says, one eye on an older couple outside that is gravitating closer and closer to the paintings.

If in his evening talk at Darat al-Funun Mohanna Durra lamented that the Amman of his childhood was drab and monotonous, with nothing to inspire a young artist's soul, the Amman of today is a city that is transforming itself, slowly and steadily, into one that not only nourishes its artists, but will also serve as a regional cultural focal point long after its one-year reign as Cultural Capital of the Arab World has passed.

Sculptor Hazem al-Zubi draws on worldwide sources for his ceramic work. This vase commemorates Amman's selection as the 2002 Cultural Capital of the Arab World.

Free-lance writer **Lee Adair Lawrence** lives in Washington, D.C. and specializes in the arts of the Middle East and Asia. **Bill Lyons** (www.billlyons.com) lives in Amman, where he has photographed regularly for *Aramco World*, *Saudi Aramco World* and other editorial and corporate clients for nearly two decades.

Related articles have appeared in these past issues of *Aramco World* and *Saudi Aramco World*:

Darat al-Funun: J/A 96
National Gallery of Art: M/A 97

www.jordanhere.com
www.stararabia.com
www.baladna.com.jo/tourism/jordan-culture

Events&Exhibitions

COMPILED BY KYLE PAKKA

The Legacy of Genghis Khan: Courtly Arts and Culture in Western Asia, 1256–1353 explores the influence of China's Yüan Dynasty, founded by Kublai Khan (a grandson of Genghis Khan), on the art and culture of Iran's Ilkhanid Dynasty, founded by Hülegü (another of his grandsons). Artisans in Iran were introduced to previously unknown artistic traditions from East Asia, and this convergence of two major cultures transformed local artistic traditions, especially the arts of the book. More than 200 works are on display, including rare textiles, ceramics (including tiles from Takht-i Sulayman in Iran, the only surviving ruined palace of the Ilkhanid period), jewelry and metalwork, works in stone and wood, and outstanding illustrated manuscripts. Of particular note are two royal Ilkhanid manuscripts—Rashid al-Din's *Jami' al-Tawarikh* (or *Universal History*, the first ever "history of the world," two volumes of which have survived) and over 30 pages from the Great Mongol *Shahnamah*, or *Book of Kings*, the epic poem of Persia by Abu al-Qasim Firdawsi. Catalog. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, November 5 through February 16.

Frieze tile with a scene from the *Shahnamah:* Bahram Gur, the 15th Sasanian king, hunting gazelles with his harpist Azada riding postillion. Fritware, overglaze luster painted, ca. 1270–1275

<<< November

Discoveries is the first annual festival of the most acclaimed films to have come out of Asia in the past year. Films are subtitled in English.
November 15 *Silence…We're Rolling*, Egypt
November 21 *That Is Life* and *Women Like Us*, Iran
Freer Gallery of Art, **Washington, D.C.**

In the Footsteps of Pilgrims: Historic Journeys of Faith explores the influence that the concept of pilgrimage has had on world cultures. The Muslim Hajj, or pilgrimage to Makkah, comprises nearly half the exhibit. YMI Cultural Center, **Asheville, North Carolina**, through November 15.

Up the Nile: Egypt in 19th-Century Photographs showcases approximately 45 photographs of Egypt and includes some of the earliest camera images of the country's dramatic landscapes, inhabitants and imposing monuments. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, November 16 through April 13.

Treasures of Islamic Art is a new installation of items from the museum's permanent collection, including ceramics, metalwork and, in rotation, paintings from a 16th-century copy of the *Shahnamah*. University of Michigan Museum of Art, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, opens mid-November.

Beauty of Ancient Egypt examines traditional ways of portraying beauty through statues, engravings, jewelry and cosmetics implements gathered from the Roemer Pelizaeus Museum in Hildesheim, Germany. The exhibit travels in **Japan** for one year; dates are tentative. **Okinawa**, November 20 through December 10; **Okayama**, January 10 through February 16.

Life in Death: An Exploration of Ancient Egyptian Funerary Practices features replicas of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, original Roman coinage and Greek and Roman pottery and glass. Museum of Antiquities, University of Saskatchewan, **Saskatoon, Canada**, through November 20.

The Quest for Immortality: Treasures of Ancient Egypt displays coffins, masks, jewelry, papyri, sarcophagi and sculpture drawn from Cairo's Egyptian Museum. An IMAX film, *Mysteries of Egypt*, and a planetarium program, *Stars of the Pharaohs*, are shown in conjunction with the exhibit. A **Quest for Immortality Seminar**, December 7 and 8, will explore the spiritual development of ancient Egyptians. $350 for both days. Information: 708-383-8739 or e-mail: journeys@earthlink.net. Museum of Science, **Boston**, November 20 through March 30; Kimbell Art Museum, **Fort Worth**, May 4 through September 14.

Teaching About the Arab World and Islam is the theme of teacher workshops co-sponsored by the Middle East Policy Council in Washington, D.C. and conducted by Arab World and Islamic Resources and School Services (AWAIR) of Berkeley, California. The program is fully funded and workshops can be requested by any school, district office of education or university. Scheduled sites and dates include: **Phoenix**, November 21 and 22; **Atlanta**, November 25. Information: 202-296-6767 or 510-704-0517; www.awaironline.org.

Beyond Egypt: Exotic Art in the West complements the exhibit **Up the Nile**, listed above, by exploring the impact of Egyptian art on American and European decorative and fine arts. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, opens November 22.

The Arab Horse in Islamic culture and civilization and its expansion into the West are covered in five thematic and chronological sections: pre-Islamic Turco-Mongolian, Iranian and Arab horsemanship; Muslim Arab horsemanship; the horse as symbol of power and authority; the horse as "hero" of religious and profane literature; and the diffusion of the Arab horse and its mythology in the West. Institut du Monde Arabe, **Paris**, November 25 through March 30.

<<< December

The Dutch East Indies Company (VOC): Indian Textiles for Coffee, Copper and Cinnamon examines the trade in textiles in the 17th and 18th century between Europe, Indonesia, Japan and Iran. Fifty works are on display as part of the 400th anniversary of the Dutch East Indies Company. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, through December 1.

The Holy Land features all 250 tinted lithographic images from David Roberts's monumental publication of the same title. St. Luke's Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, December 6 through January 11.

The Battle of Qadesh: Ramses II Versus the Hittites for the Conquest of Syria, took place at the end of the 13th century BC as the culmination of a long rivalry for control of the region between Mesopotamia and the Mediterranean—and the extensive trade that passed through that territory. Using a broad range of sources, this exhibition attempts to answer the most important question about this first recorded battle: Who won? Museo Nazionale Archeologico, **Florence, Italy**, through December 8.

The Hidden Treasures of the Egyptian Museum marks the great museum's centenary celebration. On display will be nearly 150 artifacts brought up from the basement and not seen in public for many years, including gold amulets and jewelry from the tomb of Tutankhamun. Egyptian Museum, **Cairo**, from December 9.

Berber! exhibits turn-of-the-century picture postcards of Berber life and great cities of the Maghreb taken by noted photographers Lehnert and Landrock and their contemporaries. Sony Gallery, American University in **Cairo**, through December 12.

Scenes from Libya: Photographs by Rosalind Waddams is a three-part exploration of Libya: traditional crafts and *suqs*; Tripoli, Jabal Nefusah, the coast and the Roman cities of Leptis Magna and Sabratha; and Fezzan and the southwestern interior, especially the Awbari Sand Sea and Akakus Mountains. Brunei Gallery, **London**, through December 13.

Beauties of Egypt: Those Whom Age Cannot Wither explores the concept of beauty in pharaonic Egyptian thought and the admiration of beauty—of gods, kings, mortals and objects—in Egyptian life. Musée du Malgré-Tout, **Treignes, Belgium**, through December 15.

The Best Workmanship, the Finest Materials: Prayer Carpets from the Islamic World. Drawn mainly from the Harvard University Art Museums collection, the rugs date from the 18th and 19th centuries and represent a fine range of both technique and design. Sackler Museum, **Boston**, through December 15.

Bright Stones, Dark Images: Magical Gems. Precious and semiprecious stones engraved with images and inscriptions were often used as amulets in Roman Egypt, especially in the second century. The exhibition includes some 150 stones. Schloss Wilhelmshöhe, **Kassel, Germany**, through December 15; Kestner Museum, **Hannover, Germany**, Spring 2003.

David Roberts: Lithographs welcomes the addition of a ninth lithograph—of the Monastery of St. Catherine at Mount Sinai—to the museum's collection; all nine lithographs will be on display. Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, through December 15.

Ornements de la Perse: Islamic Patterns in 19th Century Europe explores the relationship between Islamic patterns and European design in the 19th century through a variety of objects from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Leighton House Museum, **London**, through December 15.

Egyptian Odyssey: Fact and Fantasy examines the development of Egyptology and the phenomena of "Egyptomania" in 19th- and early 20th-century European and American literature, music, decorative arts and architecture. Berman Museum of World History, **Anniston, Alabama**, through December 29.

From the Two Pens: Line and Color in Islamic Art surveys the tradition of calligraphy. Highlights include a 14th-century Qur'an manuscript from Cairo, a 16th-century manuscript from Shiraz and contemporary works. Williams College Museum of Art, **Williamstown, Massachusetts**, through December 29.

Word and Worship: Approaching Islam through Art emphasizes the international scope of Islam, its history and its contemporary presence as a living faith. On display are objects in current use by local Muslim communities and examples of Qur'anic calligraphy by contemporary artists from America and Pakistan. Ackland Art Museum, **Chapel Hill, North Carolina**, through December 29.

Tomb Treasures from Ancient Egypt marks the first time that finds from excavations supported by the Ny Carlsberg Foundation from 1908 through 1933 are displayed together. Items on display include mummy cases, *shawabtis* and weapons. Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek, **Copenhagen**, through December 31.

<<< January

In the Fullness of Time: Masterpieces of Egyptian Art from American Collections displays 48 objects on loan from some of the most distinguished Egyptian collections in the United States, including examples of painting, relief, sculpture and the personal arts ranging from the predynastic era to the Roman period. Lectures and a film series are also scheduled. Catalog. Ford Museum of Art, **Salem, Oregon**, through January 4; **Boise [Idaho]** Art Museum, March 8 through June 29.

Herzfeld in Samarra displays the notebooks, sketchbooks, travel journals, watercolors and ink drawings, site maps, architectural plans and photographs of Ernst Emile Herzfeld, one of the most prominent archeologists and scholars of Islamic art in the first half of the 20th century. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through January 5.

Nomadic Art of the Eastern Eurasian Steppes presents over 200 bronze, gold and silver works such as horse tack and harness fittings, chariot fittings, belt ornaments, garment plaques, weapons and vessels that reflect the cultural exchange between China and the West in the first millennium BC. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through January 5.

Kenro Izu: Sacred Sites Along the Silk Road displays approximately 27 large-format platinum prints of sacred sites in western China, Ladakh and Tibet. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 5.

Secrets of Silk traces the life cycle of the silkworm and examines how generations of weavers and embroiderers have exploited silk's unique properties to create splendid textiles. Items on display include a 16th-century Ottoman cope, a sarong from the Malaysian court, an Afghan turban, a Turkmen *kapunuk* (a textile "welcome," hung around doors) and elegant Persian silks. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through January 5.

7000 Years of Persian Art: Treasures From the Iranian National Museum in Tehran provides a panoramic overview of one of the world's great cultures through approximately 180 objects that illustrate the most important phases of development. Kunsthal St. Peter's Abbey, **Ghent, Belgium**, through January 5.

Théodore Chassériau: The Unknown Romantic is the first retrospective to be held outside France of the work of the painter who fused the lush color and exoticism of Delacroix with the linear precision of Ingres. Some 50 paintings and 80 works on paper include images inspired by a trip to Algeria in 1846. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through January 5.

Charles Masson: Collections in Afghanistan presents archeological finds collected by Charles Masson (1800–1853), the first explorer and recorder of ancient sites in the region of Kabul and Jalalabad from the Greek to the Islamic period (third century BC to 16th century). British Museum, **London**, through January 9.

Islamic Art in Paradise is an international symposium featuring speakers from the Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah in Kuwait, the National Gallery of Art, Harvard University, the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and the University of Edinburgh, among others. Information: 808-523-8802. **Honolulu** Academy of Arts, January 9 through 11.

Nomadic Textiles from Afghanistan: Lakai Uzbek Embroidery displays textiles by the Lakai Uzbek tribe from a collection of 19th- and 20th-century pieces. British Museum, **London**, through January 9.

<<< February

Pharaoh's Artists: Deir el-Madinah and the Valley of the Kings uses 300 objects from the museum's collection to present the private, daily and imaginative lives of the artists, craftsmen and workers who lived at Deir el-Madinah in the New Kingdom period and worked to create the royal tombs of the Valley of the Kings. Royal Museum of Art and History, **Brussels**, through January 12; Palazzo Bricherasio, **Torino, Italy**, February 11 through May 18.

Under Foreign Influence: Eastern and Western Enamel illustrates the various enameling techniques of Islamic, European and East Asian traditions through the presentation of religious and secular objects ranging from the 12th to the 21st century. MAK Museum, **Vienna**, through January 12.

Ancient Egypt is an elaborate re-creation of the interior of an Egyptian temple complex, including the actual mummy of Padihershef, a 26th-dynasty Theban stonecutter, along with his decorated coffins, plus tools, baskets and other objects from everyday Egyptian life. Smith Art Museum, **Springfield, Massachusetts**, January 15 through January 6, 2004.

Life in Late Roman and Early Islamic Egypt illustrates aspects of daily life in Egypt in the late Roman and early Islamic periods. Items on display include coins, papyri, ostraca and ceramics. Andersen Library, **Minneapolis**, January 15 through March 15.

The Jean and Khalil Gibran Collection displays 80 contemporary artworks selected from a recent gift of 125 works from the Gibrans. Khalil Gibran is cousin to the famous poet of the same name. Danforth Museum of Art, **Framingham, Massachusetts**, through January 19.

Treasures from the Royal Tombs of Ur presents 150 extraordinary objects revealing traditions of royal life and death, excavated in the 1920's by Sir Leonard Woolley. They include the famous "Ram in the Thicket"—a statuette of a goat nibbling the leaves of a tree—jewelry, games, furniture, and seals and vessels of gold, silver and alabaster. Catalog $50/$35. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, through January 19.

Breaking the Veil: Women Painters from the Islamic World breaks stereotypes about Muslim women through 63 paintings and etchings in a variety of genres from 52 artists. The artists themselves reflect the mixed faiths and cultures found within the 21 Islamic countries represented in the show. Palace of the Grand Knights, **Rhodes**, Greece, through October 15; Benaki Museum, **Athens**, January 26 through February 26.

Contemporary Arabic Calligraphy is the first one-person show by Khaled al-Saa'i, a native of Syria and an internationally recognized master of Arabic calligraphy. University of Michigan Museum of Art, **Ann Arbor, Michigan**, through January 26.

Empire of the Sultans: Ottoman Art from the Khalili Collection explores the influence of the Ottoman sultans on affairs of state and religion with displays of calligraphy, Qur'anic and other manuscripts, arms and armor, metalwork, ceramics, textiles and scientific instruments from the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art. Catalog. Museum of Art, Brigham Young University, **Provo, Utah**, through January 26; **Oklahoma City** Art Museum, February 15 through April 27.

Afghanistan: A Timeless History provides an overview from the Bronze Age to Islamic periods. In its only North American venue, the exhibit illustrates the exceptional riches of Afghanistan's heritage, including early bronze representations of human and animal forms, ceramics from the era of Alexander the Great, Chinese lacquer boxes, Indian ivories and paintings, and metalwork from Persia. Museum of Fine Arts, **Houston**, through February 9.

French Nineteenth-Century Drawings in the Robert Lehman Collection features more than 80 works, including drawings by noted orientalist Eugène Delacroix. Catalog. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through February 9.

Sheherazade: Risking the Passage is an exhibition of contemporary Muslim women artists born or raised in Muslim communities. El Colegio Gallery, **Minneapolis**, February 12 through May 15.

The Classical Tradition in Anatolian Carpets presents more than 50 carpets dating from the 15th to the 19th century and constituting a body of art immensely varied in technique, design, symbolism and function. Catalog. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through February 16.

Renoir and Algeria is the first exhibition devoted to the Algerian subjects of Pierre Auguste Renoir. On display are roughly 12 portraits, landscapes and genre scenes inspired by the artist's two trips to Algeria in 1881 and 1882. Catalog $45/$29.95. Clark Art Institute, **Williamstown, Massachusetts**, February 16 through May 11.

Land of the Pharaohs displays predynastic pottery, *shawabti* figures, bronze figurines, jewelry, amulets and an extremely rare jackal head of the god Anubis, most likely part of a costume worn by an Egyptian priest while performing mummification rituals. Royal Pump Room Museum, **Harrogate, North Yorkshire, England**, through February 23.

The Myth of Tutankhamun features a 24-square-meter walk-in replica of the 20-year-old pharaoh's burial chamber, along with artifacts that illuminate his life and relationships, especially with Echnaton and Nofretete. The history of the burial chamber itself is also documented. Badisches Landesmuseum, **Karlsruhe, Germany**, through February 23.

VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

The Adventures of Hamza (the *Hamzanamah*)

is a fantastic traditional adventure story based very loosely on the travels of Hamza, an uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, who traveled the world spreading Islam. The narrative tells of his encounters with giants, demons and dragons; of abductions, chases and escapes; of those who believed and those who resisted the truth. The tale was told in coffee houses from Iran to northern India and was also a favorite story for illustration. The greatest manuscript of the *Hamzanamah* was made for the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar, and originally included 1400 oversize illustrations, of which only a fraction survive. Some 58 of them are presented, alongside new translations of the related text passages, in this exhibition, the first to examine narrative aspects of the text in such depth. Additional works on display explore the pivotal role of this manuscript in the development of Mughal painting. Catalog. **Brooklyn** Museum, **New York**, November 1 through January 26.

***Arghan Dev Brings the Chest of Armor to Hamza*. Opaque watercolor and gold on cotton, ca. 1570**

BROOKLYN MUSEUM OF ART

<<< March

Egyptian Galleries Reinstallation marks the completion of a 10-year project when 557 objects go on display in seven newly designed galleries. These items, some not on view since the early 20th century, date from the Predynastic Period (4400 BC) to the Eighteenth-Dynasty reign of Amenhotep III (1353 BC) and include the exquisite chlorite-stone head of a Middle Kingdom princess, an early classic stone deity from 2650 BC and the completely reassembled tomb of a major Twelfth-Dynasty official. **Brooklyn** Museum of Art, opens March.

A Century of Collecting marks the 100th anniversary of the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology and offers nearly 700 objects drawn from diverse world cultures and civilizations dating back to 4000 BC. Hearst Museum of Anthropology, **Berkeley, California**, through March 1.

Shawabtis: Pharaonic Workers for Eternity illustrates the diversity and evolution of *shawabtis*, the statuettes of assistants who would serve the deceased in the afterworld. Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, March 7 through June 30.

Carpets of Andalusia explores the diverse cultural influences that affected the designs of carpets woven during the final century of Islamic rule and after the Christian reconquest of Spain. The designs and patterns are drawn from Roman, Islamic, Christian, Visigoth and indigenous Iberian traditions. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, March 8 through August 10.

Auto Focus: Raghubir Singh's Way Into India presents 50 photographs by Singh (1942–1999) that document the Indian landscape, viewed from, framed by or reflected in the mirrors of the quintessentially Indian Ambassador car, whose silhouette has remained unchanged since Indian independence in 1949. Sackler Gallery, **Washington, D.C.**, March 9 through August 10.

The Lands Within Me: Expressions by Canadian Artists of Arab Origin presents the largest exhibition of works by contemporary Canadian artists of Arab origin ever shown in Canada. More than 60 works form an "homage to cultural intermixing" in varied styles and genres, including figurative and abstract painting, folk art and fine crafts. Musée Canadien, **Quebec**, through March 9.

Nomads Between the Nile and the Red Sea presents the everyday life of the Abada tribes in southern Egypt and northern Sudan. Photographs, objects of everyday use and drawings by Abada schoolchildren reveal a nomadic culture in the course of change. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, through March 9.

The Eternal Image: Egyptian Art from the British Museum is the first loan ever of some 150 pieces that span 3000 years of Egyptian history, from a tiny royal portrait in carved ivory to the colossal granite statue of Seti II. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, through March 16; Field Museum, **Chicago**, April 25 through August 10.

Mamluk Rugs of Egypt: Jewels of the Textile Museum's Collections displays one of the most significant groups of classical carpets—those woven for the Mamluk rulers of Egypt. Dating from the late 15th century, the rugs form a cohesive design group displaying an exuberant play with geometric shapes and stylized forms. Textile Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, March 28 through September 7.

The Art of African Women: Empowering Traditions features more than 75 photographs by internationally acclaimed photojournalist Margaret Courtney-Clarke taken over the course of her 20-year quest to document artistic traditions in North, West and South Africa. Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, **New York**, through March 30.

The Eye of the Traveler: David Roberts' Egypt and the Holy Land displays 20 prints from the famous collaboration between Roberts and master lithographer Louis Haghe. **Minneapolis** Institute of Arts, through March 30.

Noble Steeds: Horses in Islamic Art celebrates the bond between chevalier and horse through displays of equine equipment and works of art. Islamic Arts Museum, **Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**, opens April 2.

<<< Later

Jefferson's America and Napoleon's France: The Arts of the Republic and the Empire contrasts the opulence of the Bonapartes with the graceful simplicity of Jefferson. Included in the exhibit are antiquities collected during Napoleon's campaign in Egypt. **New Orleans** Museum of Art, April 12 through August 31.

"The Poem of the Creation," written down in Babylon near the end of the second millennium BC, will be retold on April 14 by Muriel Bloch as part of the activities surrounding the opening of the new Mesopotamian Galleries. Other events include a presentation by a curator and an architect on the new Code of Hammurabi Room (April 16); a discussion of a single object, "Head of a Babylonian King" (April 18); lectures on "Sumerian Chronicles" by Gerald Cooper of the University of Baltimore (April 23, 25 and 28); and a reading of "Ninurta the Proud," a Mesopotamian mythological poem translated by Samuel Noah Kramer and Jean Bottéro (April 28). Musée du Louvre, **Paris**.

Tenth International Conference on Oriental Carpets features exhibitions, scholarly presentations and a carpet fair showcasing the wares of more than 70 international dealers, auction houses and booksellers. Information: www.icoc-orientalrugs.org. **Washington, D.C.**, April 17 through 21.

The Path of Beauty and Happiness features objects—including a decorative carpet from the Ka'bah in Makkah—related to the personal quest for happiness within Islam. Wereldmuseum, **Rotterdam**, April 19 through September 5, 2004.

Ramesses I: Science and the Search for the Lost Pharaoh sifts the scientific and archeological evidence in a quest to discover if the identity of a male mummy acquired by the museum in 1999 is that of Ramesses I. This show marks the mummy's only exhibition in the United States. Upon the show's conclusion, the mummy will be returned to Egypt with appropriate fanfare. Carlos Museum, **Atlanta**, May 3 through September 14.

Art of the First Cities: The Third Millennium BC from the Mediterranean to the Indus explores the emergence of the world's first city-states in Syria and Mesopotamia and relates these developments to artistic and cultural connections stretching from the eastern Aegean to the Indus Valley and Central Asia. The works of art, many brought together for the first time, include nearly 400 examples of sculpture, jewelry, seals, relief carvings, metalwork and cuneiform tablets, and illustrate the splendor of the most famous sites of the ancient world, including the royal graves of Ur, the palace and temples of Mari, the citadel of Troy and the great cities of the Indus Valley civilization. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, May 8 through August 17.

The Blue Head of Tutankhamun is the subject of a single-object curator's talk at the Musée du Louvre, **Paris**, May 15.

The Pharaohs illustrates the multifaceted nature of the Egyptian sovereign and sheds light on life at court in ancient Egypt. On display are 140 items from the Cairo Museum, including an 18th-Dynasty quartz statue of Akhenaton. Palazzo Grassi, **Venice**, through May 25.

Silver Speaks: Traditional Jewelry from the Middle East reveals the myriad roles ornamentation played in Middle Eastern women's lives. Bracelets, anklets, finger and toe rings, headdresses and hair ornaments, earrings, necklaces, buckles, belts, chains, charms and amulets from Oman, Yemen's northern and Hadramaut regions, Saudi Arabia, Siwa and al-Arish in Egypt, Syria and Kurdish regions, as well as selected costumes from these areas, will be on display. Bead Museum, **Washington, D.C.**, through May 31.

Arms and Armor for the Permanent Collection: Acquisitions Since 1991 celebrates more than a decade of acquisitions including examples of Islamic arms. Metropolitan Museum of Art, **New York**, through June 29.

Courtly Arts of the Indian Subcontinent are displayed in an installation depicting the Maharaja's library. Royal portraits from the 18th and 19th century and 22 miniature paintings are on display, along with a marble table inlaid with semiprecious stones, ivory figures and an embroidered tent hanging, all in the Mughal style. **Newark [New Jersey]** Museum, through June.

Demonstrations of Ancient Egyptian Craftwork and Technology is part of a newly established exhibition featuring live demonstrations—using replica tools from the predynastic and dynastic periods—of drilling holes in stone vessels and beads and cutting reliefs into soft and igneous stones. Pharaonic Village, **Cairo**, permanent.

Qurna Discovery: Life on the Theban Hills 1826 is a unique record of the village of Qurna (Gourna) and of the Theban necropolis that has long supported the village economy. The exhibition includes copies of two 360-degree panoramic drawings, showing tombs, tomb dwellings and the richness of Qurnawi life, that were made by Scottish artist and explorer Robert Hay in 1826. The panorama copies, a gift of the British Museum, are housed in the renovated Omda (Mayor's) House. **Qurna, Egypt**, permanent.

The Saudi Aramco Exhibit, newly renovated, relates the heritage of Arab-Islamic scientists and scholars of the past to the technology of today's petroleum exploration, production and transportation, set against the background of the natural history of Saudi Arabia. **Dhahran, Saudi Arabia**, permanent.

Information is correct at press time, but please reconfirm dates and times before traveling. Most institutions listed have further information available on the World Wide Web. Readers are welcome to submit information for possible inclusion in this listing.

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SAUDI ARAMCO WORLD
(ISSN 1530-5821)
is published bimonthly by
Aramco Services Company
9009 West Loop South
Houston, Texas 77096-1799, USA

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Saudi Aramco World
Box 469008
Escondido, CA 92046

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1. Publication Title: *Saudi Aramco World*. **2.** Publication Number: 1530-5821. **3.** Filing Date: 10/4/02. **4.** Issue Frequency: Bimonthly. **5.** Number of Issues Published Annually: 6. **6.** Annual Subscription Price: Free. **7.** Complete Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: Aramco Services Co., 9009 West Loop South, Houston (Harris County) Texas 77096-1799. **8.** Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters: Same as item 7. **9.** Full Names and Complete Mailing Addresses of Publisher: Same as item 7; Editor: Robert Arndt, address same as item 7; Managing Editor: None. **10.** Owner: Aramco Services Co., 9009 West Loop South, Houston, Texas 77096-1799. 100 percent of the stock of Aramco Services Co. is owned by Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco), Box 5000, Dhahran 31311, Saudi Arabia. **11.** Known Bondholders, Mortgagees and Other Security Holders: None. **12.** Tax Status: Not applicable. **13.** Publication Title: *Saudi Aramco World*. **14.** Issue Date for Circulation Data Below: July/August 2002. **15.** Extent and Nature of Circulation: AVERAGE NO. COPIES EACH ISSUE DURING PRECEDING 12 MONTHS: **A.** Net Press Run: 164,264; **B1.** Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: 160,325; **B2.** 0; **B3.** 0; **B4.** 0; **C.** 160,325; **D1.** 0; **D2.** 0; **D3.** 0; **E.** 0; **F.** 0; **G.** 160,325; **H.** Copies Not Distributed: 3,939; **I.** Total: 164,264; **J.** 100%. **15.** Extent and Nature of Circulation: ACTUAL NO. COPIES OF SINGLE ISSUE PUBLISHED NEAREST TO FILING DATE: **A.** Net Press Run: 162,331; **B1.** Paid/Requested Outside-County Mail Subscriptions: 158,372; **B2.** 0; **B3.** 0; **B4.** 0; **C.** 158,372; **D1.** 0; **D2.** 0; **D3.** 0; **E.** 0; **F.** 0; **G.** 158,372; **H.** Copies Not Distributed: 3,959; **I.** Total: 162,331; **J.** 100%. **16.** Publication of Statement of Ownership: November/December 2002; **17.** Signature and Title: /s/ Robert Arndt, Editor. Date: 10/4/02. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on this form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including multiple damages and civil penalties).

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