

**Editorial****Intriguing Islamic art, popular cultures and the contemporary South-Asian diaspora British films**

This issue begins with Rabab Zaidi's commentary (Islamic art: A hidden revolution), which discusses the diverse artistic and cultural fusion in India focusing on the development of Islamic aesthetics in the sub-continent and beyond. Zaidi's account spans from the start of the Moghul period miniatures to present day South Asian diaspora in the UK (Amrit and Kaur Singh). Through a broad brush review the commentary has references on the influences of Islamic art in Indian architecture. However, the emphasis is on the dominant Indian and international philosophical thoughts. The commentary reviews a number of illuminating artists in India providing some unique and contemporary stylised examples. I suppose Zaidi's somewhat unusual and intriguing samples of Islamic art representations in contemporary India leads to the subtitle of 'a hidden revolution'.

Continuing with the theme of Islamic art and culture, the research article section opens with a presentation of a contemporary urban youth popular culture in the Muslim world but perhaps with more emphasis on the South Asian diaspora in the present day Britain. Shamim Miah and Virinder Kalra's article 'Muslim Hip-Hop: Politicisation of Kool Islam' takes us to one of the most deprived South Asian (mainly Bangladeshi and Pakistani) areas of England (in Oldham near Manchester) where the authors analyse the hyphenated Islamic identities expressed through musical concerts and in particular what they label as 'Muslim Hip Hop'. While there is much currency with Sufi music and Nasheed concerts within the umbrella of Muslim culture, the extension of such culture through Hip Hop is certainly an upcoming phenomenon. As such Miah and Kalra's search for 'Kool Islam' takes into a new discourse which perhaps borders with post-modernity. Here the authors dig deep into popular culture charting through a number of sound track and popular artists from the UK and North America. The post modern aspects of culture, space and technology reverberates well in this fast beat but carefully researched article where the setting is within apolitical disaffected youth of somewhat ghettoised Muslim communities in the northwest of England. The article provides an extensive review of hip hop studies in the Muslim world. The research transcends into a more politicised discourse through a micro analysis of the lyrics. This is what may be termed as the 're-politicisation

of the South Asian Muslim culture' as it is apparent within Muslim diasporic communities in Europe and in the Middle East, which makes references to Deen, Jihad, Ummah and to other politicised groups of post Iraq war.

After a commentary and an article on the politicised South Asian popular art and culture, Anna Claydon brings us the representation of South Asian identity through contemporary popular British cinema. Claydon launches a two part series on 'British South-Asian Cinema and Identity' dealing with nostalgia, South-Asian diaspora and representation of America. In part 1 (this issue, entitled 'British South-Asian Cinema and Identity 1: Nostalgia in the Post-National: Contemporary and South-Asian Diaspora') Claydon attempts to put forward her theories and concepts related to South-Asian identity as constructed through 'hybridity' and 'nostalgia' apparent in the British films of the last decade. Discussing through the representations as depicted in the popular film versions of 'East is East' (originally a play by Ayub Khan Din), 'Anita and Me' (adapted from Meera Syal's novel) and Bend it Like Beckham (A Gurinder Chadha's film) Claydon provides a theoretical framework that goes behind contemporary thinking on diaspora, post-national cinema and nostalgia. More importantly, the paper examines the rationales behind the inclusion of 'iconographies' and 'traditional ideologies' in recent South Asian community based British films. The paper also discusses the 'post-colonial otherness' and the 'globalised/postmodernist pastiche cultures' apparent in the narratives of the above and other relevant non-South Asian western films.

The remainder two regular features include a critical review of the award winning novel set against the backdrop of Bangladesh's war of independence in 1971, Tahmina Anam's 'A Golden Age' (John Murray, 2007) and an introduction to Samina Zaheer's trans-cultural painting exhibition to be opened at a newly established art gallery at Lahore on 16 December 2008.

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