

# Adel Quraishi: The Artist Photographer Who Captured Images of The Guardians

OCTOBER 20, 2015OCTOBER 21, 2015 / NOURFESTIVALBLOG



(<https://nourfestivalblog.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/adel-quraishi-profile-close-up.jpg>)

Adel Quraishi – Artist Photographer of The Guardians © Kevin Moran Photography

Adel Al-Quraishi (<http://theparkgallery.com/artist/adel-al-quraishi/>) is a self-taught visual artist born in the Saudi Arabian city of Al Khobar in 1968. Al-Quraishi showed an interest in photography from an early age and set about capturing the world around him. Through the guidance of friend and mentor,

Brazilian photographer Humberto da Silveira (<http://dasilveira.info/biography.htm>), Al-Quraishi began to pursue his interest in becoming a photographer full-time in 1991, often employing analogue large format cameras and Canon digital cameras.

In addition to being a renowned landscape photographer, Al-Quraishi's particular interest is photographing people and seeing beyond what is immediately gleaned from a first, cursory glance. In particular, it is in portraiture that the artist's talents truly shine, although capturing that one, revealing shot can be difficult, as the artist told an audience earlier this year:

*Photography is the closest we come to freezing time, but the challenge of a photo is freezing the feeling.*

This sense of capturing a moment in time was tested when the artist was invited by the Governor of Medina to procure images of the last Guardians of the Prophet's Mosque for the "Letters of Illumination" Exhibition (2014).

(<http://www.arabnews.com/news/525676>) This exhibition brought together a collection of calligraphy and photographs dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century and offered Al-Quraishi a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to document the Guardians.

The Prophet's Mosque (<http://wmn.gov.sa>) is also known as Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi, where the Islamic prophet Muhammad is buried. This mosque represents one of the three oldest mosques in the world and is located in Medina, the second holiest Islamic city after Mecca. The Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques is Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud. A member of the Saudi royal family, Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is charged with the responsibility of protecting the two holiest mosques, including Al-Masjid Al-Haram (the Sacred Mosque in Mecca) and Al-Masjid Al-Nabawi.

The Guardians, or eunuch servants, of the mosque have a long and illustrious history, dating back to the mid-12<sup>th</sup> century. This group of Guardians, hailing from Abyssynia (a region in northern Ethiopia), hold the keys to both the Prophet Muhammad's burial chamber and the *minbar* (mosque's pulpit). At one time, their numbers rose to over one hundred strong. Today, this tradition

has now shrunk to a handful of Guardians. Indeed, three of those whom Al-Quraishi documented have subsequently sadly passed away.



(<https://nourfestivalblog.files.wordpress.com/2015/10/adel-quraishi-profile-picture.jpg>)

Adel Quraishi with photographs of The Guardians © Kevin Moran Photography

Al-Quraishi's images depict the eight remaining guardians, resplendent in finery reserved for official State functions. Despite the large scale, the portraits retain a feeling of dignity, humanity and an incredible depth of character. This collection of high-resolution portraits remains an invaluable link to a not-often-seen tradition, in all of its pageantry.

In collaboration with [The Park Gallery](http://theparkgallery.com/) (<http://theparkgallery.com/>), the Nour Festival of Arts presents "The Guardians" exhibition at the [Leighton House Museum](https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/museums/leightonhousemuseum1.aspx) (<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/subsites/museums/leightonhousemuseum1.aspx>) from 21 October to 29 November 2015. A private tour and question and answer with the artist will take place on 24 October 2015, 15:30 to 17:00 (BST). [Tickets are available here](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-guardians-artist-talk-with-) (<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-guardians-artist-talk-with->