



# Adel Quraishi. The Guardians

21 Oct – 29 Nov 2015 at the Leighton House Museum in London, United Kingdom



Adel Quraishi, Salam Oh Messenger of Allah. Courtesy the artist & The Park Gallery, London

3 NOV 2015

From 21 October Leighton House Museum presents The Guardians, a unique exhibition of portraits showing the last remaining Guardians of the Prophet’s Mosque (Al-Masjid Al-Nabawī) in Medina. Taken by Saudi photographer Adel Quraishi, these captivating images hold enormous historical significance as the only photographs to have ever been taken of the Guardians.

Since the Ottoman Empire, the keys to this holy site and the mosque’s minbar have been kept by a group of eunuchs originally from Abyssinia, known as the Guardians. Once numbering in the thousands, the Guardians date back to the 11th Century as keepers of the



## On the street

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on Instagram

Join us on Google+

Follow us on Pinterest

Join us on LinkedIn

keys to the Prophet Muhammad's burial chamber.

In 2013 Adel Quraishi was commissioned by the Governor of Medina to produce portraits of the eight remaining Guardians as an historic documentation of their final generation, with three having passed away since their portraits were taken. The works formed part of the 'Letters and Illumination' exhibition in Medina the following year and they were also showcased at Abu Dhabi Art in November, presented by The Park Gallery. The forthcoming show at Leighton House Museum will be the first UK exhibition of these photographs.

Alongside the portraits of the Guardians, Leighton House showcases a never-before-seen photograph of the interior of the mosque. Immensely detailed in its architectural rendering, yet abstract in its depiction of fluid figures, this photograph gives context to the subjects among which it will be exhibited.

Quraishi's sensitive handling of his subjects is evident in the emotion that is conveyed by the sitters, while his technicality shines through in the radiant composition of the photographs. Quraishi explains: 'As a photographer, I can connect to people more than I connect to still life. In a very deep way there were emotions not easily expressed, but I still felt it. You feel at ease around them. They have very balanced personalities. There was light in the room – not my own lighting, but there was something beyond that. A beautiful energy.'

Rendered on a large scale, described by Quraishi as fitting to the magnitude of his subjects, these photographs stir a connection between the viewer and subject and will have a striking impact when hung in the elegant surroundings of the Upper Perrin Gallery at Lord Leighton's home.

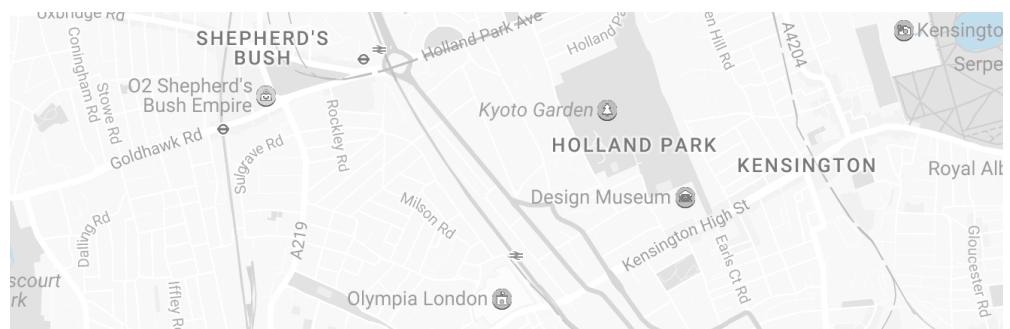
The Guardians exhibition will be on display until 29 November at Leighton House Museum, and forms part of the 2015 NOUR Festival. The exhibition is organised in partnership with The Park Gallery.

## Leighton House Museum

Holland Park Rd, 12  
London W14 8LZ United Kingdom  
Ph. [+44 \(0\)20 76023316](tel:+442076023316)  
[museums@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:museums@rbkc.gov.uk)  
[www.rbkc.gov.uk](http://www.rbkc.gov.uk)

### Opening hours

Daily from 10.00am to 5.30pm  
Thursday closed



Map Report a map error

Tweet [Share](#) [G+1](#) 0



### Captions

1. Adel Quraishi, The Guardians, exhibition view
2. Adel Quraishi, The Guardians, exhibition view
3. Adel Quraishi, The Guardians, exhibition view
4. LHM. The Guardians. Imam Husain Zaino. Courtesy the artist & The Park Gallery, London
5. LHM The Guardians. Nouri Mohammed Ahmed Ali (Shaikh of the Guardians). Courtesy the artist & The Park Gallery, London
6. Adel Quraishi, Saeed Adam Omar (Late Shaikh of the Guardians) from the Alif set of The Guardians. Courtesy the artist & The Park Gallery, London

### Related articles