

People of the Prophet's house : artistic and ritual expressions of Shi'i Islam

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Despite their distinct theological differences, Shi'a and Sunni Muslims, followers of the two main branches of Islam, share a number of core beliefs including an allegiance to and love for the Prophet Muhammad and members of his family. For Shi'a Muslims, reverence for the Prophet and allegiance to his household (Ahl al-bayt, 'People of the House'), comprising his immediate family and their descendants, constitutes an essential principle of belief that has directly impacted how Shi'i artists, rulers, patrons and ritual participants have conveyed their love and loyalty through material culture and religious ritual. The 22 essays in this volume, richly illustrated with over 200 colored images, present a diversity of beliefs and practices expressed through the arts, architecture, material culture and ritual that spans Shi'i history from the tenth century to the present day. With contributions from experts in the fields of anthropology, religious studies, art and architectural history, numismatics, film studies and contemporary art, the book also calls attention to the global diversity of the artistic and devotional expressions of Shi'a Muslims from across Trinidad, Senegal, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, India and China. Additionally, some essays draw upon important female Shi'i figures and female ritual practices and many chapters underscore the theme of love for the Ahl al-bayt beyond Sunni and Shi'i demarcations. This work contributes to a growing body of scholarship dedicated to the religious arts and rituals of Shi'a Muslims around the world

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