



PEABODY MUSEUM  
*of* ARCHAEOLOGY & ETHNOLOGY

*PRESS RELEASE: For immediate release*

## Sacred Spaces

### A Journey with the Sufis of the Indus

*Devotees look for a sacred space to pray,  
but the friends of Unity find sacred space  
anywhere.*

– Al-Hujwiri

**(Cambridge, September 1, 2009)** Imaginative, vibrant, and saturated with the rich colors of South Asia, Samina Quraeshi's photographs, calligraphic works, and montages reflect the diversity of Islamic expressions of faith. Her work is a creative response to the experience of pilgrimage to the Sufi shrines in the Indus Valley.

The images evoke the music, dance, and acts of faith that animate these sacred spaces.

Raised in Pakistan and India, Samina Quraeshi is the first Robert Gardner Visiting Artist at the Peabody Museum. Quraeshi says, "Sufi mysticism complicates the all-too-common view that Islam is monolithic—unable or unwilling to recognize the internal plurality of devotion and interpretation among its faithful." Her images bring to life a landscape and a culture that reverberate with the Sufi traditions of mystical Islam.

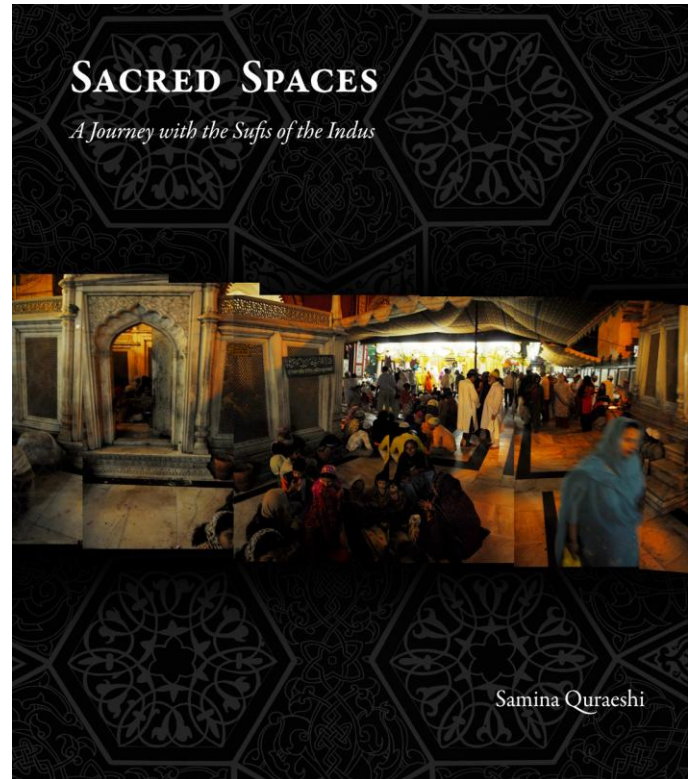


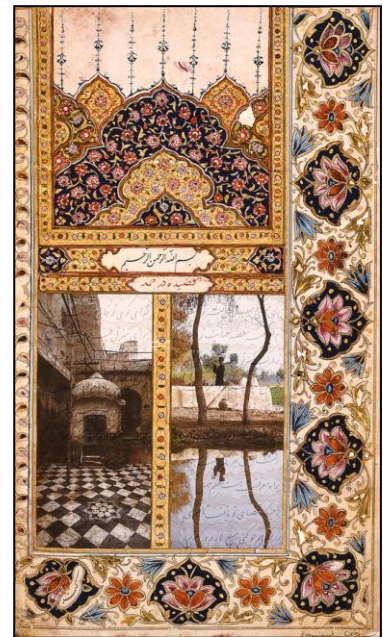
Photo montage by Samina Quraeshi, 2009.  
Photos by Andreas Burgess.

Through vivid storytelling illustrated with over 250 color images, Quraeshi adds her voice to the long tradition of mystical Islam and illuminates the ways in which sacred spaces act as profound expressions of both faith and culture. Her journey, infused with childhood memories and ancient legends, explores the localized traditions of Sufi practices in the Indus Valley region. Essays by scholars Ali S. Asani and Carl W. Ernst and by Pakistani architect Kamil Khan Mumtaz supplement Quraeshi's personal journey with discussions of the musical, political, and architectural dimensions of Sufism in South Asia.

*Sacred Spaces: A Journey with the Sufis of the Indus* will be published in October 2009 by the Peabody Museum Press and Mapin Publishing. The book will be available for purchase at the Opening Reception and at the Museum. It may also be ordered by sending an e-mail to [peapub@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:peapub@fas.harvard.edu) or by calling (617) 495-4255. Hardcover, \$65. Samina Quraeshi will sign books during the Exhibition's Opening Reception on October 22, 2009, at the Museum.

**Related exhibition: *Sacred Spaces: Reflections on a Sufi Path***

The Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology presents a new exhibition opening on October 22, 2009: *Sacred Spaces: Reflections on a Sufi Path* by Samina Quraeshi. The exhibition includes photographs, calligraphy, and mixed media compositions. It opens Thursday October 22, 2009, at 5:30 PM with brief talks by Ms. Quraeshi and by Thomas W. Lentz, Director of the Harvard Art Museums and William L. Fash, Director of the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. Their remarks will be followed by a performance of Sufi music and by an Opening Reception and Book Signing in the Peabody Museum. ***Sacred Spaces: Reflections on a Sufi Path*** at Harvard's Peabody Museum will be on view through April 30, 2010.



The Garden of Paradise. Mixed media. Samina Quraeshi, 2009

**Companion Exhibition: *Sacred Spaces: The World of Dervishes, Fakirs, and Sufis*** at Harvard's Arthur M. Sackler Museum is on view through January 3, 2010.

**Samina Quraeshi** is an educator, designer, artist, photographer, and author. Formerly Henry R. Luce Professor in Family and Community at the University of Miami and Director of Design for the National Endowment for the Arts, she is currently the Gardner Visiting Artist at the Peabody Museum, Harvard University. Ms. Quraeshi has exhibited her artwork internationally and is the author of *Legacy of the Indus: A Discovery of Pakistan*, *Lahore: The City Within*, and *Legends of the Indus*.

Professor of Indo-Muslim and Islamic Religion and Cultures at Harvard University, Ali S. Asani has written, "Samina Quraeshi offers us a unique account of a journey through her childhood homeland in search of the wisdom of the Sufis. Along this meandering path she has created an imaginative personal history and a rich body of photographs and works of art, all of which reflect the seeking heart of the Sufi way."

#### **About the Robert Gardner Visiting Artist Fellowship**

The Robert Gardner Visiting Artist Fellowship permits an established practitioner of the arts to create and disseminate original work in still photography, film, and related media through such means as exhibitions, books, journals, lectures, symposia and the web.

The Fellowship was given by Robert Gardner, award-winning documentary filmmaker and author, whose works have entered the permanent canon of non-fiction filmmaking. Gardner's works include the documentary films "Dead Birds" and "Forest of Bliss" and books *The Impulse to Preserve: Reflections of a Filmmaker* and *Making Dead Birds: Chronicle of a Film*. In the 1970s Gardner produced and hosted "Screening Room," a series of more than one hundred 90-minute programs on independent and experimental filmmaking. The series, considered an invaluable historical record of modern cinema, has been transferred to digital format for archival preservation by the Museum of Film and Broadcasting in New York City. Robert Gardner received Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts degrees from Harvard University and was director of the Film Study Center from 1957 to 1997. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

## About the Peabody Museum

The Peabody Museum is among the oldest archaeological and ethnographic museums in the world and houses one of the world's finest collections of human cultural history. It is home to superb materials from Africa, ancient Europe, North America, Mesoamerica, Oceania, and South America in particular. In addition to its archaeological and ethnographic holdings, the Museum's photographic archives, one of the largest of its kind, hold more than 500,000 historic photographs dating from the mid-nineteenth century to the present and chronicling anthropology, archaeology, and world culture.

**Location:** The Peabody Museum is located at 11 Divinity Avenue in Cambridge. The Museum is a short walk from the Harvard Square MBTA station.

**Hours:** 9 A.M. to 5 P.M., seven days a week. The Museum is closed on Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Admission is \$9 for adults, \$7 for students and seniors, \$6 for children, 3-18. Free with Harvard ID or Museum membership. The Museum is free to Massachusetts residents Sundays, 9 A.M. to noon, year round, and Wednesdays from 3 P.M. to 5 P.M. (September to May). Admission includes admission to the Harvard Museum of Natural History. For more information call 617-496-1027 or go online to: [www.peabody.harvard.edu](http://www.peabody.harvard.edu).

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