



CENTRO STUDI  
DI CIVILTÀ E SPIRITUALITÀ  
COMPARATE

*fondazione*  
GIORGIO CINI ONLUS

MAGNUM  
PHOTOS

Sabiha Çimen presents  
*Hafiz: the Guardians of the Qur'an*



25 November 2022, 5:30 – 7:00 PM

Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Isola di San Giorgio Maggiore



“They are so much more than a piece of fabric”

Sabiha Çimen



**Sabiha Çimen** was born in Istanbul, Turkey in 1986. She is a self-taught photographer, focusing on women, Islamic culture, portraiture and still life. Çimen graduated from Istanbul Bilgi University with an undergraduate degree in International Trade and Finance, and a Master's degree in Cultural Studies. Her Master's thesis on subaltern studies, which includes her photo story titled 'Turkey as a Simulated Country', was published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing in 2019. In 2020, she obtained: the Eugene Smith Grant, the Canon Female Photojournalist Grant, the World Press Photo, Long-Term Projects, 2nd prize. In 2019 she was awarded the PH Museum, Women Photographers Grant, 3rd prize and the Gomma Grant, Honourable Mention. Other activities include the World Press Photo Foundation Joop Swart Masterclass 2018. Finally, Sabiha Çimen became a Magnum Nominee member in 2020.



In her work *Hafız: the Guardians of the Qur'an*, Sabiha Çimen documented Muslim girlhood in Turkey. She portrays them in the context of Qur'anic schools where, as a 12-years old girl, she was a student herself together with her twin sister. It was on her return to such a school, with her camera, that Sabiha Çimen discovered her artistic voice. In this work, Sabiha explores teenagers' everyday life, intimacy, piety, but also rebellion and quirkiness.

The Qur'anic schools are single-gender residential schools, which range in size from 50 to 600 students. The intensive training, for children and teenagers between 8 and 17 years old, lasts between 3 and 4 years. The Qur'an is composed of 114 surat (chapters) for a total of 6,236 verses. Students who memorised the Qur'an are highly praised by pious Muslims, considered as guardians of the holy word, keeping it alive for future generations. These Muslims can use the honorific title "Hafız" before their names.





One of the main objectives of the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilisations and Spiritualities is to promote the dialogue between art and social sciences, or to foster the so-called “artistic research”. In fact, at the Centre, we consider that the comparative approach does not concern only different cultures or religions, but also different ways of thinking and living the world, such as the scientific-discursive approach and the artistic-intuitive method.

For these reasons, the visual anthropologist Valentina Bonifacio (Ca’ Foscari University of Venice) and the anthropologist of Islam Fabio Vicini (University of Verona) will join Sabiha Çimen in discussing contemporary Islam in Turkey and the use of images.

The event is free of charge, but places are limited.  
Registration is mandatory at the [following link](#).