



Message from the Editor

My mother-in-law always wore the dresses that she and her oldest daughter had sewn by hand. Made of white soft fabric, they were embroidered in red, yellow, orange, and green. Sadly, she passed away twenty-six years ago. It has been almost twenty years since my sister-in-law made her last dress. My daughter, like most girls of her generation, has never learned to embroider. The knowledge and craft that was an integral part of daily life and that – amidst avid engagement to preserve it not only from time but also from appropriation – was included on UNESCO’s list of intangible heritage in December 2021 is falling prey to our fast modern lifestyle. But the dresses that once were the most precious possession of Palestinian women have not lost their splendor. Most fascinating is that their design tells you where the wearer lived and what marital status she had. The intricacies and splendor of traditional *jellaya* (popular before the 1930s) or *malak* (more modern) wedding dresses will enchant you, even though images can never match the experience of seeing or touching a real *thobe*.

This beautifully illustrated issue introduces you to some of the most important experts, collectors, and collections of Palestinian embroidery. *TWiP’s special thanks go to Bank of Palestine and Pharmicare PLC who each supported this issue with a bronze sponsorship.* Our gratitude goes also to Maha AbuShusheh for her financial support, and to both her and George Al-Ama for their help in gathering the content of this benchmark issue. Moreover, we wish to thank our authors: Widad Kawar, venerated as the “mother of the Palestinian dress,” and her daughter Mary Kawar; Inaash Association that supports Palestinian refugee women in Lebanon; novelist Amani Al-Junaidi, the director of the National Register of Intangible Cultural Heritage at the Palestinian Ministry of Culture; Maha AbuShusheh, a collector of Palestinian embroidery and jewelry; George Al-Ama, an academic, researcher, and collector, and the founder of Dar Al Sabagh Diaspora Studies and Research Centre; Maha Saca, the founder and head of the Palestinian Heritage Center; Giovanni Scepi, the head of the Culture Unit at the UNESCO Ramallah Office; anthropologist and artist Dr. Ali Qleibo; H.E. Mounir Anastas, ambassador and cultural adviser of the delegation in Palestine to UNESCO in Paris; Baha Jubeih, a museum registrar and curator; and Haidar Hajjeh, the general manager of the Palestine Standards Institution. Our Historical Personality of the Month is Samiha Khalil and our Artist of the Month Riham Isaac. Instead of one Book of the Month, we present a selection of books on Palestinian embroidery. Visit our Exhibition of the Month, *Trails of Colours*, and enjoy the listed events.

The entire team at TWiP wishes you a happy International Women’s Day – and peace in Ukraine and Eastern Europe!

Sincerely,

Tina Basem

