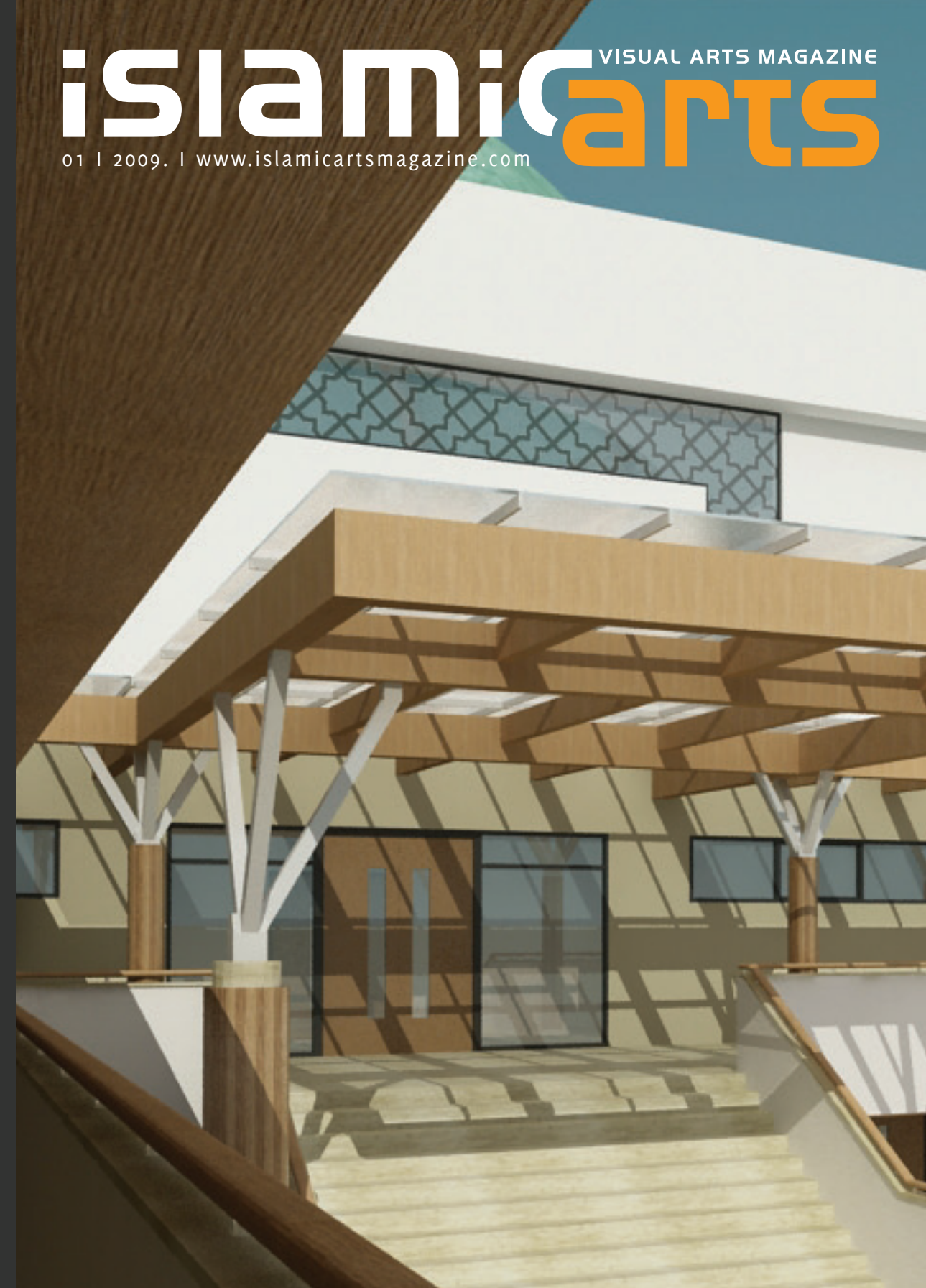


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Cover image:
AMAR ČUDIĆ, 3D model of the Mosque in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2009

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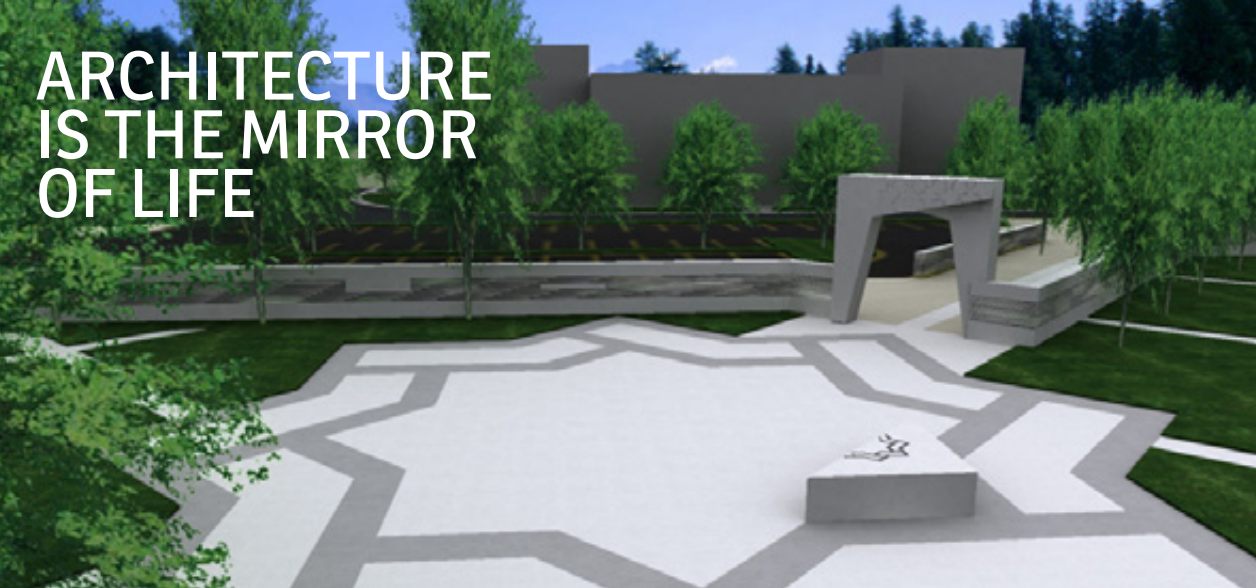
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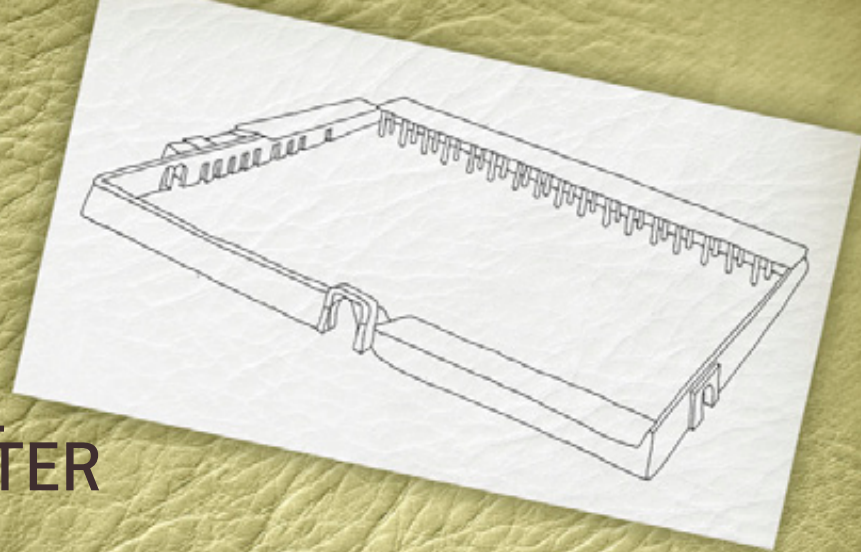


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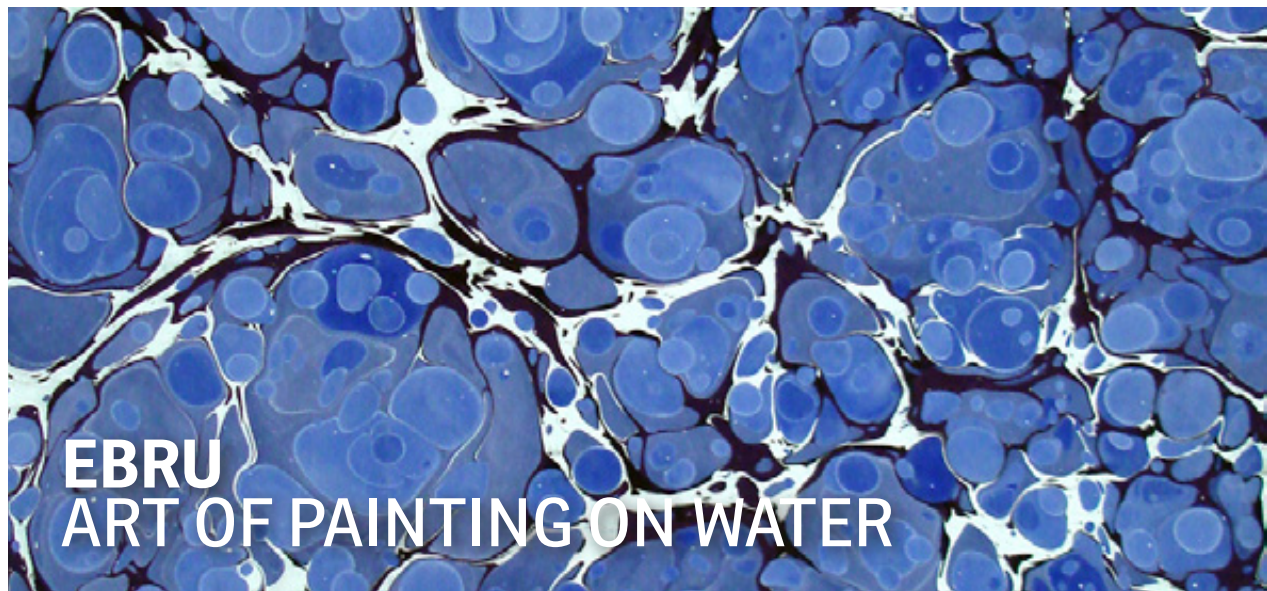
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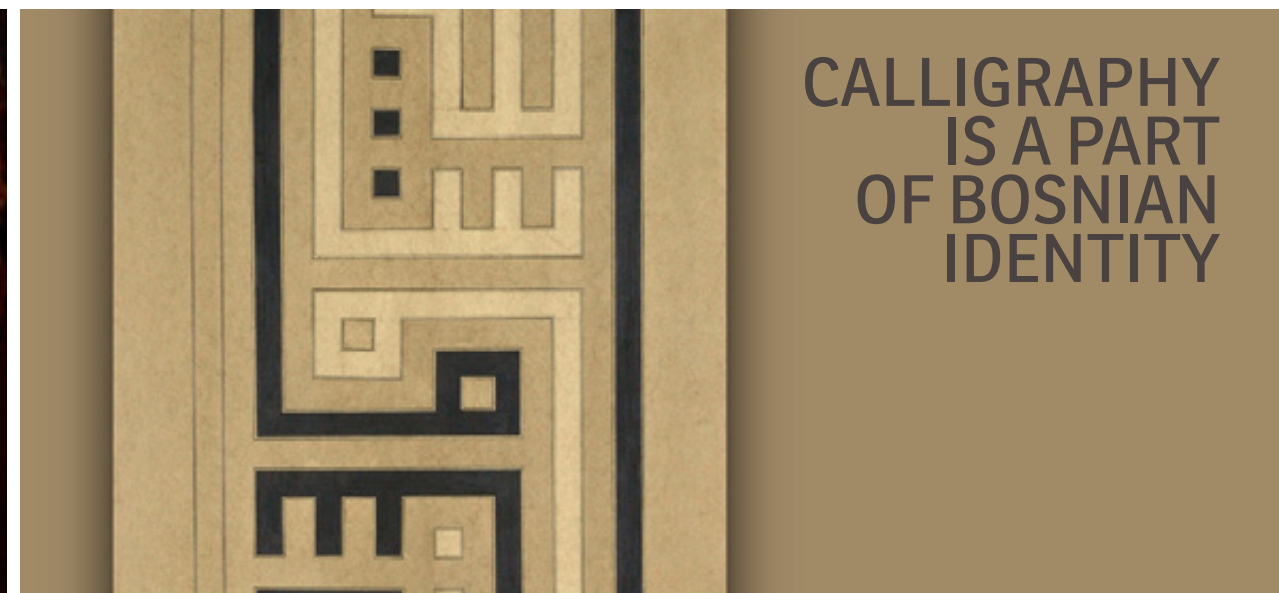
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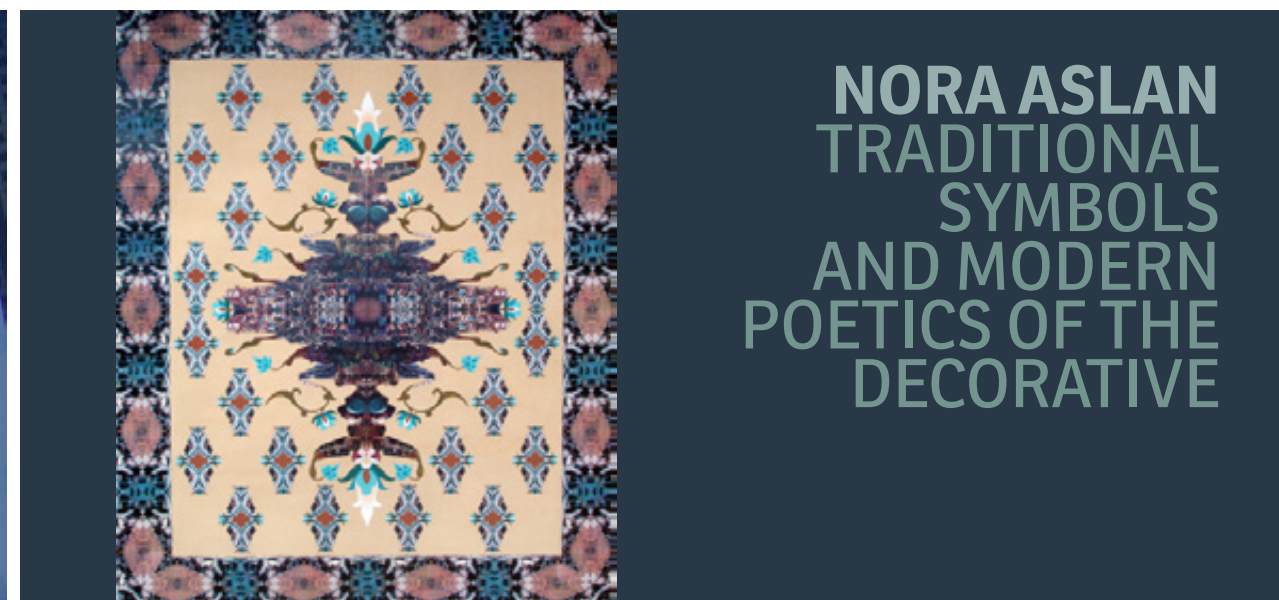
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NORA ASLAN
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The theme of this Issue

EBRU, ART OF PAINTING ON WATER

Bosnian artist Azra Hamzagić makes ebru. Photo by Islamic Arts Magazine



Ebru, as the most specific form of Islamic decorative art, is called 'PAINTING ON WATER'. This makes ebru special in the history of painting.

Usually, we paint or draw directly on 'hard' materials as paper, wall, wood, ceramic, canvas, etc. However, ebru presents a different approach. As a story tells us, Ebru appeared when artists attempted to paint clouds on water. This dreamy approach, so characteristic for Turkish and Iranian artists, got its ingenious technical performance. Therefore ebru, in general, is most sensible expression of Islamic decorative art.

On the surface of water (mixture of water and certain compounds), in a bowl, an artist, with the technique

of spraying and dripping, applies the colour of mineral origin on the surface of the water. After a number of interventions artist collects the already shaped art form on a selected paper. In this way 'the magic' of ebru appears, which can't leave anyone indifferent. Thus, being present at this process is a fascinating experience.

Today, we can't tell where ebru exactly came to life, but its origin is related to the regions populated with Turkish and Iranian people. This kind of art appeared in the 11th century, most probably in the Middle Asia. At first, it began to spread in the region of Turkmenistan and then Iran where it was called **EBRU** (cloud) or **ABRU** (the face of water). In the Ottoman's

art it appeared in the 16th century. From then, this way of decorative art becomes permanently present when books and calligraphy would be decorated, and it became the trademark of the Ottoman's art. Within the Islamic art we can talk about certain style characteristics developed, depending on the area in which they appeared, so it seems that ebru is filled with the sensibility of Turkish and Iranian artists.

Ebru can be ranged within large context of the Islamic ornamentics, although, according to its formal shaping and technical performance it differs from other approaches of decorating, not because it can be made on paper (technically possibly on some other materials like silk),

but, because it can function as freely shaped abstract picture. However, like the curly ornaments, flower samples and geometric arabesques, ebru represents recognizable decorative art, often combined with calligraphy. On the other hand, ebru can be treated also as the independent fine art, since it can be perceived as an abstract painting.

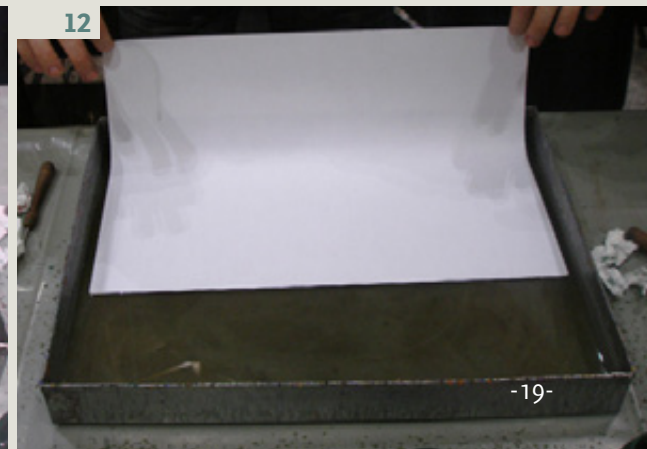
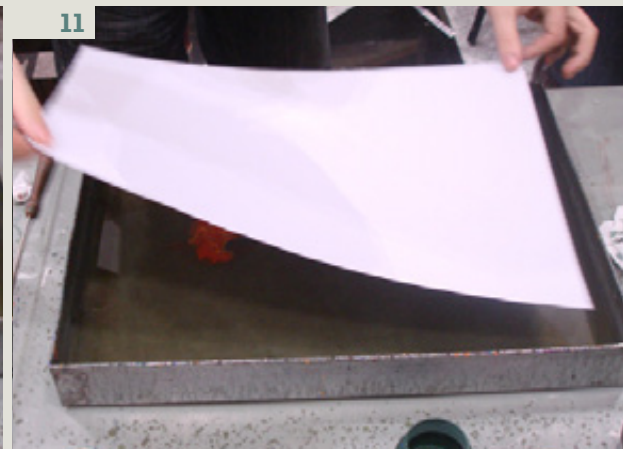
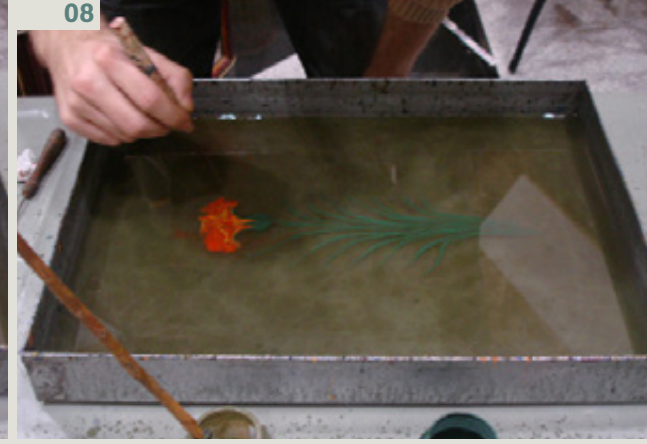
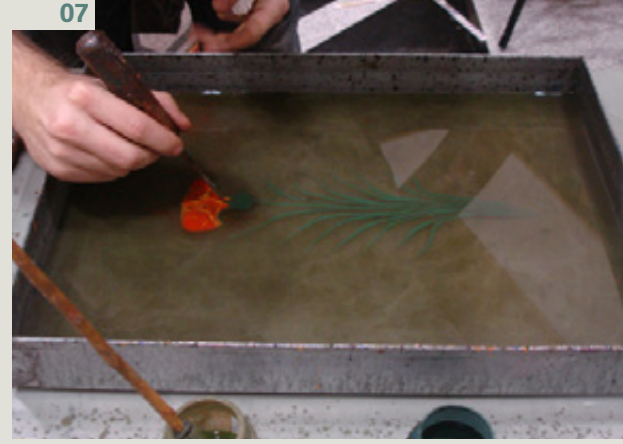
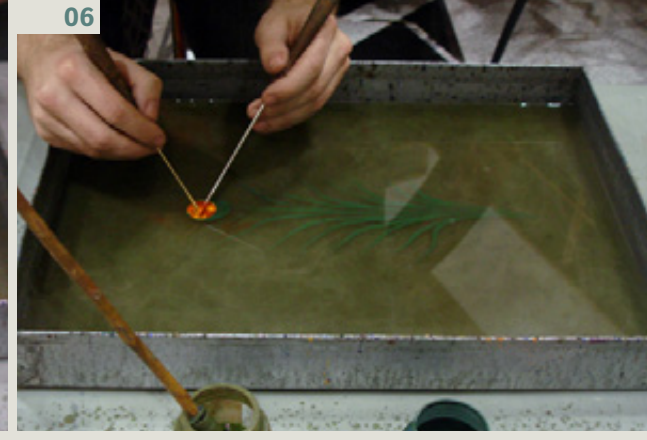
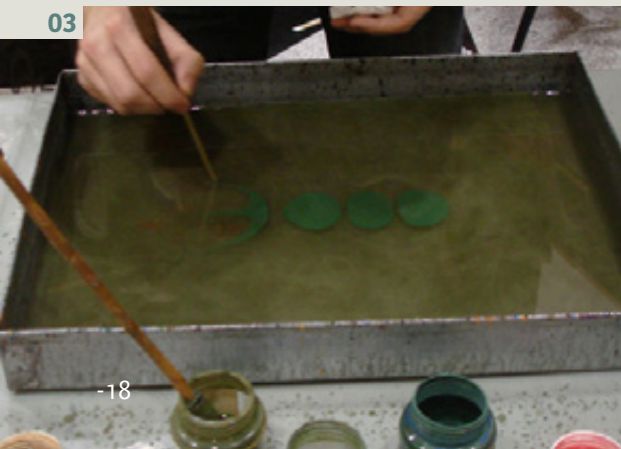
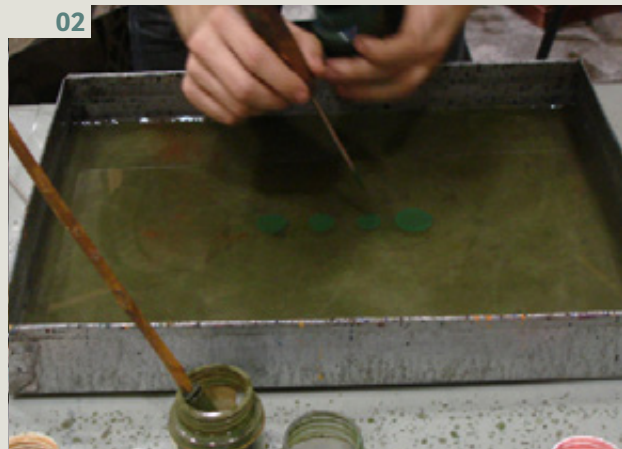
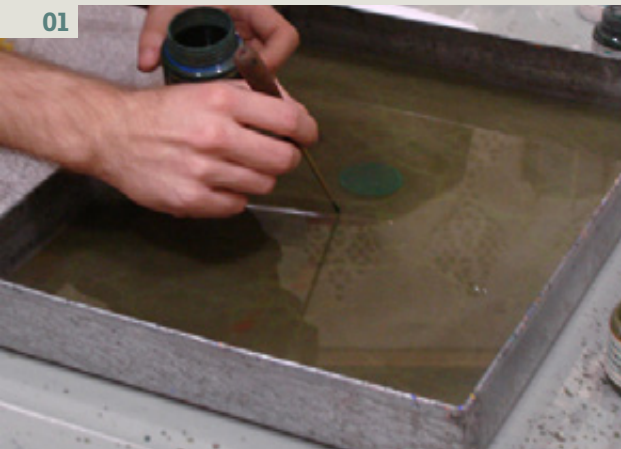
However, especially with the Ottomans, various flowers were made in ebru technique, which later became the recognizable mark of this art.

All these different approaches led to the style classifications of ebru, so with the artistic imagination and a large possibility of combinations of the initial ebru patterns, many different decorative patterns appeared.

Step-by-step process of painting the floral ebru in the form of carnation

Ottomans, in particular like making different flowers in ebru technique, and with time, they became recognizable mark of this art. Most often artists paint rozes, tulips, hyacinths, carnations and pansies.

Alen Glušac presents step-by-step Carnation ebru. All photos by Islamic Arts Magazine

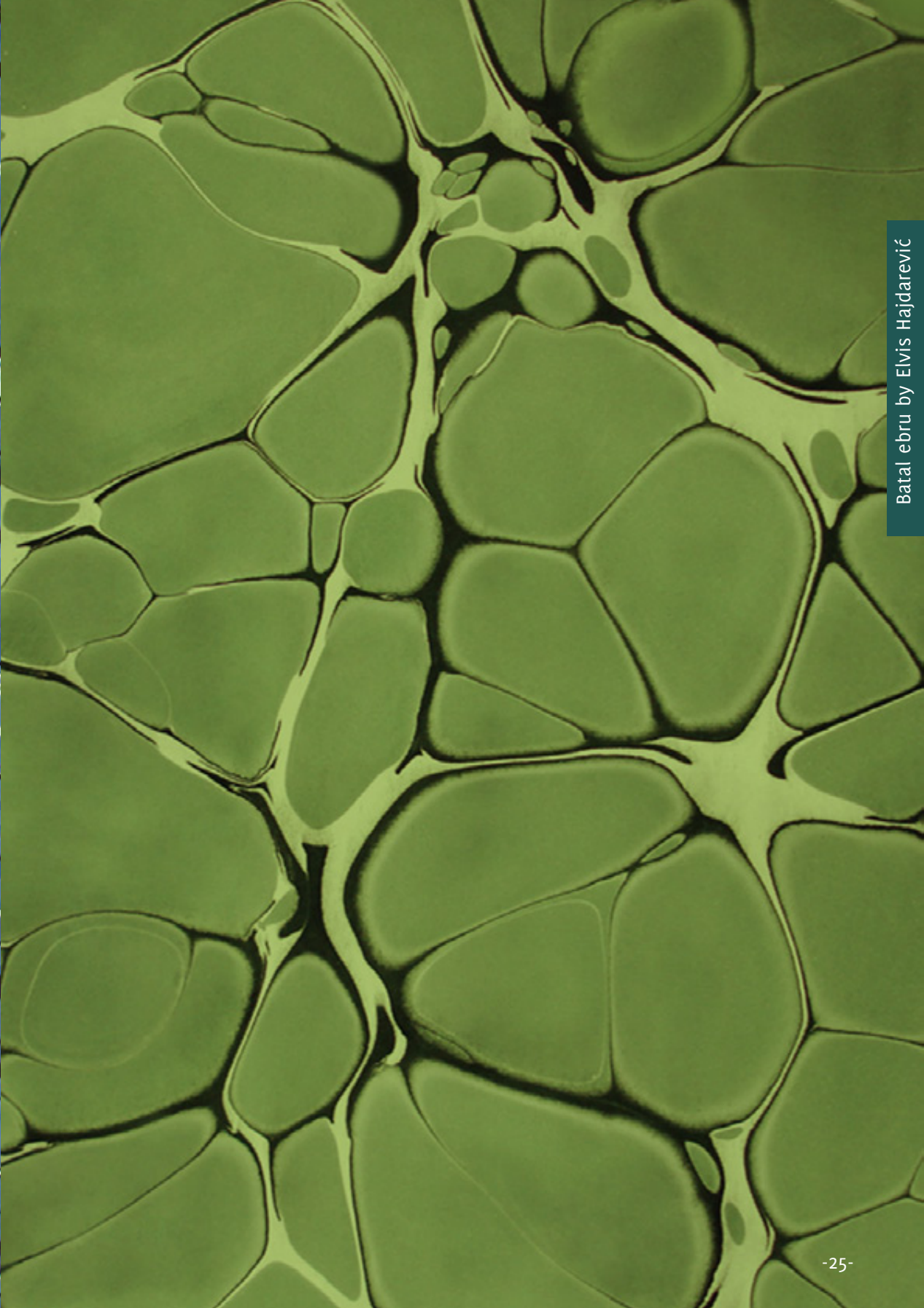


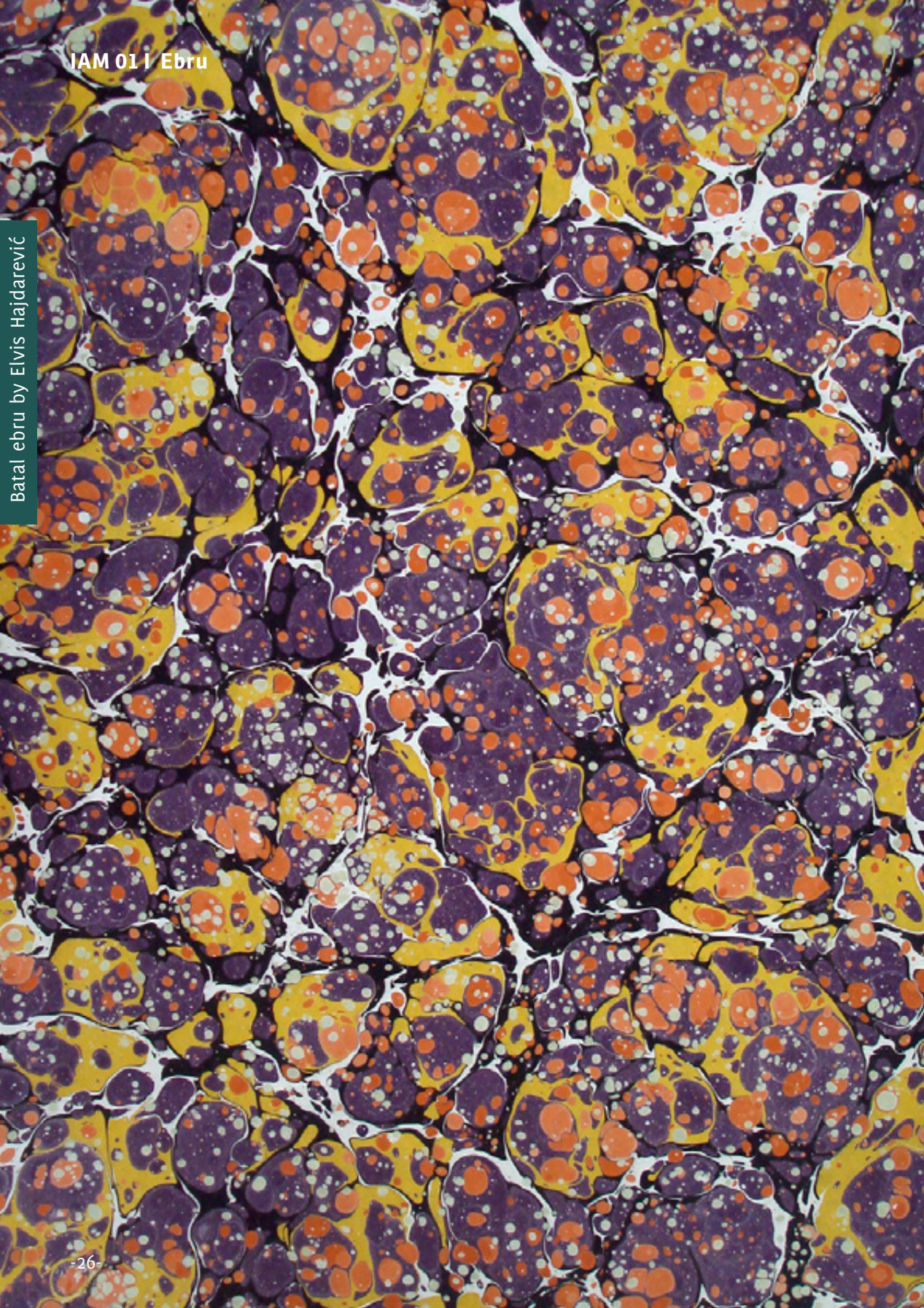


Ebru is categorised by shape, intensity of colour and theme.

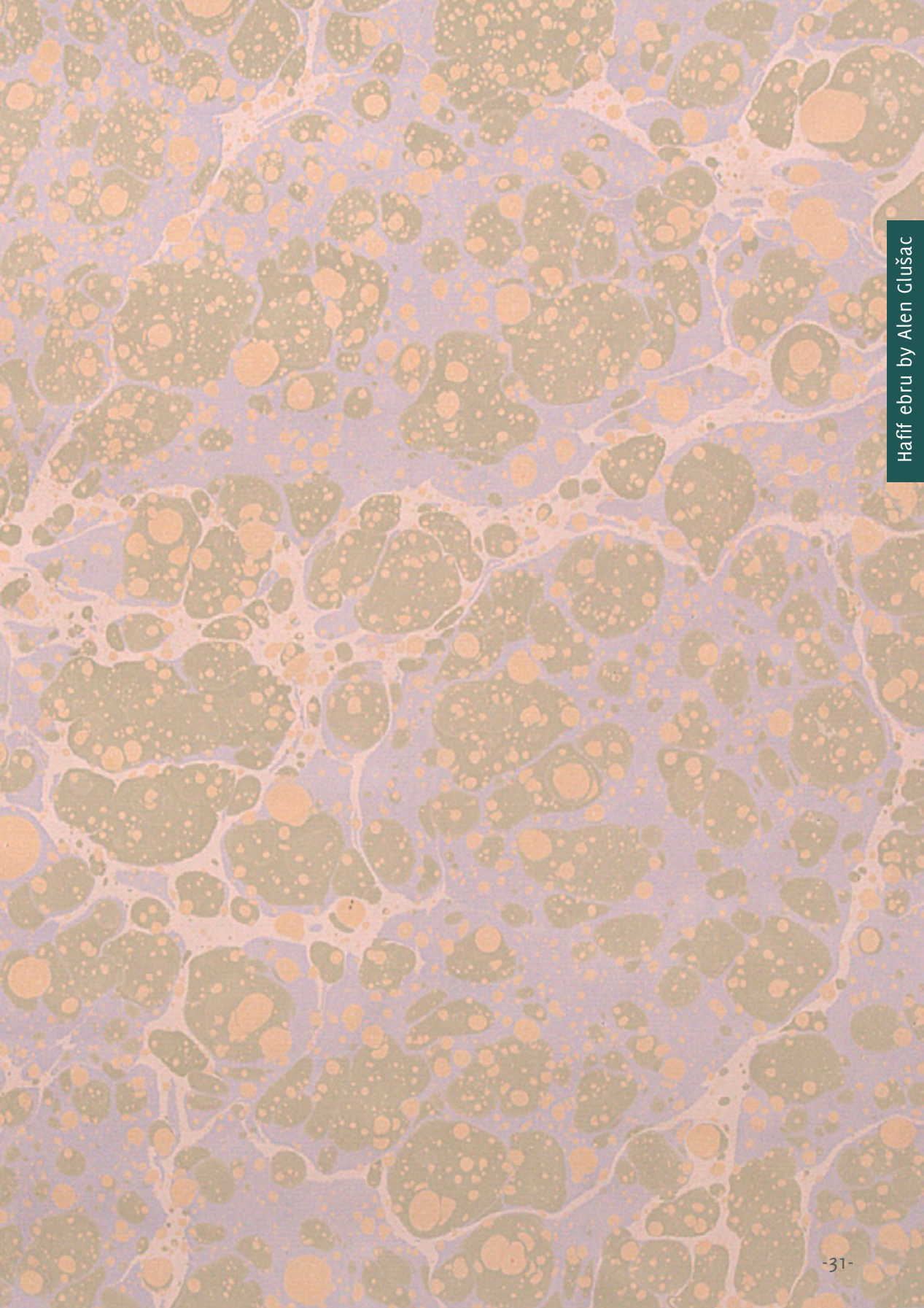
















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