

Seismic

JULY 2026



THE *Hijab* EDITION

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At the time of this writing, the world sits in a place between absolute chaos and inactive minds forced to be activated. Lost souls searching for some sort of purpose to drive ambition, trying to find meaning in a simple yet overly complicated existence, and I am not exempt from that. Where do I actually live? My hometown of Dhaka, Bangladesh? My chosen home of Dubai, UAE? Or some lane on my Instagram feed and TikTok For You page? I'd say I find myself most comfortable a couple of hours into R.E.M., and that is completely justified. But no matter the place and time, there are stories that tie all of us together through the human experience.

If I see an injured Alien, I know it has experienced violence. Don't let me be misunderstood- I think we've created an undeserving stigma around that word, "Alien", why? Why are we so opposed to foreign concepts? Why do we have to 'other' certain groups of people in juxtaposition to ourselves? Why have we come to compare each other to extraterrestrial monsters when in reality we know nothing of them? For all we know, aliens can be as sweet as a milkshake and know to take their shoes off before entering my place.

In Seismic, I aim to deconstruct underrepresented members of society, putting a spotlight on the interpersonal stories of individuals within the groups, choosing to represent the stories in a 'see it for what it is' museum.

For the Hijabi Edition, I put my best foot forward in exploring the lack of hijabi representation in editorial media and attempt to reveal the complex interplay between systemic bias' and the fight for authentic portrayal . All of which that shows the failure to recognize Muslim women and modest fashion as a high-value consumer market. Despite the rise of modest fashion exposure on social media, traditional media remains slow to integrate hijabi women, often treating them as exceptions rather than part of the modern audience.

Well, here we are now, at my fairest directing at the idea that representation is not passive, but transformative and culturally impactful. It questions how society perceives women who visibly express their identity through fashion, religion, and culture, while encouraging audiences to reconsider their preconceived notions towards the hijab through a magazine in collaboration with hijabi and Muslim women.



EDITOR, Wasimul Rahman





MOLASSES

Iced tea melting poolside
wet circles on mahogany
bare toes on summer heat
I find patches of grass on concrete fields
befriend the morning birds on the windowsill

Forget the carcass of yesterday
a new day starts off with molasses
like biting down on pomegranate seeds
I stain today with sweetness
no bitter beginnings
red dots dancing on my fingertips
natures jewels, hard to get in
Her grass seems greener
I water mine a couple seconds longer

Because I'm still in love with the harvest moon
even in the summer, I harvest
my molasses
I grow in the brinks
my molasses
I keep in the fridge
my molasses
I spike in my drinks,
come on, takes a while to get to smithereens,
just sweet endings.

- WASIMUL RAHMAN | *Notes on optimism.*

n i y a f



m o h a m e d

Growing up, were there assumptions made about you before they even got to know you? Do you think they were targeted only at you or at all Hijabi women?

Truthfully, I feel very blessed to have been raised in a muslim country and been taught the things I have in a way that makes me deeply understand the reasoning behind my actions. If there were any assumptions made towards me, it wasn't negativity or hate towards the hijab or Islam. Instead, it was kind of the opposite. Most people assume that growing up muslim means immediately wearing the hijab when you get your period. To me, I've learned that that notion comes so much more from culture than the reality of my religion.

This assumption made my 13-year-old self, of course, want to rebel against it. i wanted to be different. So I had my fair share of regretful moments that have taught me big lessons on why I wear it in the first place.

Did you ever feel pressure to behave, dress, or present yourself in a manner that would make others feel more comfortable or accepting of you? How did that affect your sense of self?

Our generation of people is so open in some ways that it makes me always want to put myself before anyone else. My needs and self-expectations have to be respected in order for me to feel comfortable. Because of this, I never put too much care into times when I felt like I didn't fit in because of a certain quality of mine, or that I had to act a certain way to make others around me feel better. if there's any extra effort I put into acting a certain way, it's more so to be mindful while wearing the hijab, showing the good that comes with representing an entire religion rather than acting out to grab more attention. The effect this had on me was sort of unique: it makes me deeply analyze people, their actions, their words, and their reactions, trying to understand where A starts and Z ends. I think it's because sometimes people act without a reason behind it, say words without thoughts behind them. At the end of the day, I'm just a curious person.



Can you describe a moment where you became aware that society viewed you differently because of your appearance, culture, religion, or background?

Being in an environment constantly surrounded by the same type of people as my background, there was never anything I questioned regarding my outerwear or inner self. It was when I joined university that I caught a glimpse of racism, islamophobia, and prejudice outside of a non-Hollywood scene. It was almost surreal seeing people have something against you without having ever spoken to them. It truly makes me think about how much worse people have it outside of Muslim-populated countries.

Were there expectations placed on you by both your own community and wider society? If so, how did you balance or challenge those different pressures?

there are many things that come as an expectation on me from my culture and wearing a hijab was 100% one of them. as i mentioned earlier, i did go through my history of rebellious teen moments, but as i grow older i come to realize that sometimes people forget to tell some lines of a story that we are meant to understand; they forget that we're starting our journey while

they're already in the middle of theirs. Not every detail comes to you on an instruction sheet, but that's the beauty of it. Everyone is on their own path, and in this path, you come to learn things one by one to create your own list of reasons behind your decisions.

In what ways did media representation, or the lack of it, affect how you saw yourself growing up? At any point in your girlhood, did you feel invisible, misunderstood, or misrepresented?

Misrepresentation is still the biggest form of communication error ever made in our society. No, we don't take our hijabs off the second we see a cute guy. No, I don't hate my parents or my culture because of my religion. All in all, there are many factors within Western media that make me deeply uncomfortable to think about what possibly goes on in that part of the world. Because of this misrepresentation, it opened my eyes to a different side of film. I started getting into a side of small production films, Turkish films, and many more that not only represent me well, but also include factors where I can learn and absorb more positive qualities and life lessons that will stay with me throughout my life.

What role did family, friends, or community play in helping you resist stereotypes and stay connected to your identity?

While some people, like myself, grow out of rebellion, there are still many more people who don't. And the people who don't stop standing on business, and showing that they made their choice and there can't be any changes to it, are those people who resist stereotypes. This comes from no disrespect at all; I firmly believe that this section of "raised Muslims" still has a lot to teach you, they have a lot to share, and it truly deepens my acknowledgement of them and their decisions. As I said, everyone has their own path, and it would be a bummer to not live it out, making your own decisions.



If you could speak to younger people growing up under similar expectations or stereotypes, what would you want them to understand about identity, self-worth, and belonging?

I would want to tell them about change, how fast it is, how drastic it can be, how beautiful it can make your life. We always take change in a negative way and fight against it with such a force, but I view it as the opposite. How can you grow without change? Your identity is ever-changing. We could be 100 different people in our lifetime. It's only our core values and traits that explain our real identities. A beautiful person doesn't always have the best soul, and the beautiful soul doesn't always run around shouting about themselves.

Have you ever felt the need to constantly "prove" yourself against stereotypes? What emotional impact does that have on a person over time?

There could be a million reasons why not to do something, a hundred people you admire who don't fall under your values, tens of situations that make you want to act differently, but there's only one person who truly makes the decisions. Living on autopilot your entire life truly seems like it would dull your senses and keep you out of reality. The day we start to see new possibilities in front of our eyes, our minds go into a frenzy. My point is that when we live in a world full of options and distractions and time-wasting [activities], we get so desensitized to real matters. As a practicing muslim hijabi woman, I can speak for many other individuals when saying that resistance at some point comes as an ease because of how eye-opening it is when you're not always part of the crowd; your senses automatically work for you with warning. Your ears hear that you shouldn't go in there; your nose smells the rot in people a mile away; your mouth spills the truth before your mind gets a chance to think of a lie. When you know your purpose in life, that's where we see the full stop to a happy ending.







THE HIJAB IN western media.

There has long been prejudice in the matter of authentic representation of Hijabi women in conventional media, often categorizing them into harmful stereotypes like the ‘oppressed’ victim or token background character that serves a monetary purpose in existing. Showcasing just a woman in a hijab is not enough any longer, and that expectation has persisted in real hijabi voices for as long as the inception of those harmful ideas. What defines the Western media where these stereotypes are bred? It’s the Hollywood productions that reach the most exposure, the news sources that encompass everyone’s screens, and the prolonged preconceptions that riddle social media, often boosted by Western conservative outlets. These persistent portrayals shape public perception and influence how Hijabi women are treated, understood, and represented within society. The effects extend beyond media consumption, impacting self-image, social interactions, professional opportunities, and feelings of belonging. The Al-Furqaan Foundation, in pursuit of authoring the meaning of the hijab, questioned Hijabi women about what the journey means to them:

“

The most important lesson I have learned is that hijab is not just about fabric—it is about mindset, patience, and sincerity. People will have opinions, some supportive and some critical, but at the end of the day, my hijab is between me and Allah (SWT). It has taught me resilience, self-worth, and the beauty of obeying my Creator with love, not just obligation [...] it is about liberation from societal pressures to look or dress a certain way. Just as many women choose modesty in different forms, Muslim women wear the hijab as an expression of their faith, their identity, and their autonomy! It is a personal and spiritual choice that brings peace and self-respect.

”

— Saniya Hassan

And these sentiments in consensus lead to Hijabi women taking control over their narrative, since change can only be in motion once there is fuel in the tank, and Hijabi women are the drivers of said vehicle. Hana Ali, a Yemeni writer based in California, vows to never write on two tropes, “The first is the voyeur perspective on hijab. The second is the hyper-aggressive archetype of Muslim men.”

The past, present and future of media in its most prevailing is film; notably and critically the global influence of Hollywood. Reaching far beyond geographical boundaries, the conflicting ideologies in the Hollywood representation of Muslim women work in tandem with the already narrow oppressive perspective the west has towards the Hijab in undermining the diverse hijabi experience.

Muslim women are infamously presented in quieter and subserved roles, often manipulated by the surrounding men in their lives. They are profiled to be radical islamists and unwilling of change towards the western culture, stuck in their ‘archaic’ ways or involved in territorial activities. But one stereotype stands out amongst the rest for its both patriarchal and racist tendencies and that is of the “White Knight” saving the oppressed Hijabi from her cruel world, this often depicts a white man serving the purpose to ‘free’ a hijabi woman. The Anadolu Agency of Marmara University refers to these depictions as ‘oriental fantasies’, as a mystery to the majority of West, it has led to prejudiced narratives around them.

While these stereotypes have persisted for decades, there has been a gradual shift in recent years as Muslim women have begun to challenge these narratives both on and off screen. Rather than existing solely as symbols of oppression/conflict, or religious extremism, contemporary portrayals have started to acknowledge Hijabi women as multidimensional individuals with aspirations and agency

beyond their faith. This change has largely been driven by Muslim writers, actors, and filmmakers demanding greater authenticity and creative control over their own stories.

One notable example is the Marvel Studios television series ‘Ms. Marvel’ (2022), which presents a Pakistani-American Muslim family without reducing their identity to terrorism or oppression, or any of archaic tropes previously mentioned. While the protagonist Kamala Khan does not wear the hijab, supporting characters such as Nakia Bahadir demonstrate a more nuanced perspective. Nakia openly discusses choosing to wear the hijab for herself, and directly challenges the long-standing assumption that Muslim women are universally forced into wearing the hijab. Her character is politically engaged and independent, displaying confidence in her demeanor, offering audiences a portrayal rarely afforded to Hijabi women in mainstream Western media, especially on a platform as big as Disney’s Marvel.

Similarly, Hulu’s ‘Ramy’ presents Muslim women whose identities extend beyond religious symbolism, delving into exploring personal ambitions and moral complexity. Although the series has faced criticism from some Muslim audiences, it nevertheless contributes to a broader conversation by depicting Muslim characters as ordinary people rather than political statements to fulfil any sort of agenda.

Outside of scripted entertainment in Hollywood, the fashion scene in western Media has played a significant role in reshaping perceptions of the hijab, although its progress remains complex and uncertain at points. The emergence of hijab wearing models such as Halima Aden marked a turning point, challenging long standing beauty standards that excluded visibly Muslim women. Major brands including Nike, H&M, and Dolce & Gabbana introduced modest fashion collections and featured

Hijabi models in global campaigns, signalling a growing recognition of Muslim consumers and demonstrating that modest fashion could coexist with mainstream trends. However, these developments have also attracted criticism. Many campaigns have been accused of “modest fashion capitalism” where diversity is celebrated primarily as a marketing strategy rather than a genuine commitment to inclusion. Representation often remains superficial, favouring aesthetically pleasing imagery over authentic storytelling or the lived experiences of Hijabi women.

As a result, on the red carpet we have seen the rise of hooded veils and head cover decorations that mimic the hijab, yet fails to recognize it’s origins, and yes, I am talking about Anya Taylor Joy’s outfit at the ‘Dune: Part Two’ premiere. While fashion has broadened visibility, it continues to navigate the tension between meaningful representation and commercial exploitation, raising questions about whether inclusion is driven by social progress or consumer demand.

Social media has transformed how Hijabi women tell their own stories, shifting the power of representation away from traditional Western media. Platforms such as Instagram and TikTok primarily have become spaces where creators share their identities in a plethora of outlets; vlogs, fashion, podcasts and beauty, offering narratives that challenge long standing stereotypes. Voices like Dina Tokio have cultivated communities that celebrate authenticity and belonging. Yet these same platforms remain double edged, alongside empowerment exists a tide of Islamophobic abuse and unrealistic expectations surrounding modesty and appearance. While social media has opened the door to more diverse and self-defined representation, it remains a contested landscape where visibility is both a source of liberation and vulnerability.

Despite recent progress, authentic representation remains the exception rather than the norm. Muslim women continue to be underrepresented across Hollywood and wider Western media, and when included, are often disproportionately alienated by violence or cultural otherness. Ultimately, meaningful representation is not simply about visibility, but about portraying Hijabi women as complex individuals whose identities extend far beyond the hijab, allowing them to define their own stories rather than having them shaped by prejudice.



TO (Be in Love) DANCE W I T H F A S H I O N



Interview with Arisha Zaman.

Do you think the Hijab limits fashion?

People often think modest fashion limits what you can wear, but I have always felt the opposite. For me, it has made fashion more creative. I don't see dressing modestly as following a different set of rules. I see it as styling clothes in a way that still feels like me.

When I put together an outfit, I usually start with one piece that I really like. It could be a handbag, a pair of shoes, or even a jacket. From there, I build the rest of the outfit around it, just like anyone else would. The only difference is that I naturally think about layering and proportions. A fitted top with loose trousers, or wide sleeves with a slimmer skirt, creates balance. Sometimes all a look needs is a lightweight long sleeve underneath or a high neckline to make it work modestly.

Do you keep up with trends?

I think fashion should be experimental. There is no single way to dress as a hijabi. Everyone has a different body shape, personality, and lifestyle. It takes time to find what works for you. One thing that has helped me is building a wardrobe of basics. Having full sleeve tops, high necks, leggings, and simple layering pieces in neutral colours makes almost any trend wearable without losing your own style.

Who inspires you in fashion?

I get inspiration from many different places, and not all of them are modest fashion creators. I love Amina Ktefan's Paris-inspired modest and edgy outfits, and also those from Tamara Kalinic, Emily Ratajkowski and the like. They wear a lot of clean silhouettes, long dresses, and timeless pieces that can easily be adapted for modest fashion.

My South Asian culture has also shaped my style. I have always loved soft draping, beautiful fabrics, and classic tailoring, so those details naturally find their way into my wardrobe.



How does your environment influence your style?

Living in London has also changed how I think about fashion. There was a time when I dressed very casually everywhere. I wore basics and streetwear most days, and I sometimes felt like I stood out in the wrong way.

Whether that was because I wore a hijab or simply because I looked different, I cannot say for sure. But I did notice a change when I became more intentional with how I dressed. I did not become more fashionable overnight. I simply started presenting myself in a way that felt polished and confident. Since then, I have received more compliments, felt more included, and found that people often notice my style before they notice anything else.

Any final words?

If there is one thing I would tell other hijabis, it is not to limit where you look for inspiration. Fashion has no boundaries. Follow people whose style you admire, even if they do not dress modestly. Take ideas from different cultures, cities, and designers, then adapt them in a way that feels true to you. That is what personal style is really about. It is not about dressing like someone else. It is about making every outfit feel like your own.



LUNCH UNDER THE Sun.



Curated by Arisha Zaman

The summer heat gets to the best of us, the sweat, humidity and warm winds can finds ways to be so hostile and as an hijabi, I have worked out personal ways to dress for the weather.

Finding materials like high count cotton and linen to add to my closet is very important as they are very breathable. I think many would find it extremely uncomfortable to cover up in heat but wearing these fabrics help a lot!

I also dont stop myself from having fun with fashion in the summer, I love wearing patterned or colorful hijabs since I usally reach for neutral colors and having pops of colors in accesoris like bags, jewelry, belts, and hats.

FYI: Blues, Yellows, and Oranges are my favorite to be experimental with in the summer.

Dont let the heat stop you from having fun with fashion!



VIKODAH Leopard Satin Hijab
AED38



CHIARA BONI La Petite V-neck [Mustard Yellow]
AED1230



FENDI Zucchini Canvas Large Studded Mama Forever Shoulder Bag [Yellow / Beige]
AED3170



SKIMS Cotton T-shirt [White]
AED190



THE FRANKIE SHOP Malvo Long Pencil Skirt
AED710



NEXT Cotton Ruffle Ankle Socks
AED24



G.H. BASS Weejuns Slingback Penny Loafers
AED946



HURESON Shimmer Lightweight Hijab [Cream]
AED50



MISSONI Striped-pattern Long-sleeve Maxi Dress
AED2980



STAUD Reef Beaded Handbag [Cream]
AED1450



STRADAVARIUS Stiletto Heeled Sandals [Cream]
AED189



ANIDL Cotton Hijab [Pale Orange / Brown]
AED42



ALEXANDER WANG Gathered Bust Shirt [Oxford Blue]
AED990



JW PEI Tessa Denim Embossed Shoulder Bag [Blue]
AED392



ZARA Straight Trousers with Linen [Oyster White]
AED199



PUMA Speedcat OG Sneakers Unisex [Orange Glo-Poised Pink]
AED519

OUTFIT 1

OUTFIT 2

OUTFIT 3





How would you define your experience wearing the Hijab?

Growing up, I had a strange view of how I saw the hijab. All the women in my family swore by tradition, covering with a thin veil. Only now, over the years since they migrated to the Middle East, did they adopt the Middle Eastern tradition of the full headscarf, without fully knowing what it truly means to wear one.

In Islam, it's a commandment to protect our beauty. But somewhere along the lines, it got heavily misinterpreted into a male-centred ideology. That was the ideology I was raised with, eventually causing me to question: so if I were to wear the hijab, I'm doing this because a man can't keep it in his pants? Is that still not paying attention to them when we've been told to do everything of the opposite?

These juxtaposing ideals and thought processes, all shaped by cultural conformations, simply put didn't make sense, so it put me on a very rocky path. While I immensely adore hijabi women around me and respect them so much for committing to it, I've always struggled with it ever since I was told to put it on.

Do you think to any extent it makes you a lesser Hijabi for not wearing it routinely?

I think for me it's a part of my identity I can never fully get rid of, even if I wanted to. Being born a Muslim woman in a family who practices the religion extensively, it is always going to be a part of me. With how I viewed it when I was younger, it was disturbing, but the older I get, the more I'm starting to dislike it less, which means something.

Do you feel there are any discrepancies between you and other Hijabi women?

Of course. I mean, while they do it because it's in their heart, I do it to please my family. While I have been vocal about my views on it and how I'd like to take my time in discovering what it truly means to represent yourself as a Muslim woman, they forbade it under the statements of

"what if people were to talk?"

—because then I wouldn't be labelled the perfect marriage material and potentially be known as a slut. Especially with my inconvenient career choice in the creative field, it just adds to the accusations even further.





How would you interpret the societal pressures, contradictions, and expectations on yourself?

That's one of the big reasons I struggle to wear the hijab because I don't want to be put in a box. I wanted to remove myself from their blatant stereotypes of what a woman should be and completely sever ties from those disgusting apprehensions. But unfortunately, I've also come to discover that it's the same even if I don't wear one, it's just a different set of pressures. All the same issues, but in different fonts and different situations. I think as a woman, you can never be rid of performing under the public eye. To be perfect is what's sought after, and if you are not, then names are called. You gain a little weight, you're no longer in your prime. You say you have an affection for someone, you're labelled a slut. You say you have no interest in those who pursue you, you're labelled cold and a man-eater. You pursue a career you've long dreamed of as a child and you're labelled selfish and don't think of your loved ones. Everything and anything you do would never be enough, and I think I speak for all the women out there.



Have your views on the hijab changed over time?, and if so, what experiences contributed to those changes?

I guess recently it has. For a good while, with my personal life, I've always struggled with socialising with the right crowd because of how anxious I used to be. Now that's no longer there, I've been more confident in the way I carry myself. But with that confidence and charm, it has done me more harm than good. My beauty was valued over my work, and that's what was seen first, rather than what I do. I also found myself being objectified in ways that made it hard to be seen beyond my appearance. As much as I love having pictures taken of myself, I don't want modelling to be my main career. When trying to progress in my career through my work, I always get asked to have my photo taken or to pose for a video. I want to remove myself entirely from that. And I think the hijab changes how people see you in that sense. Instead of what's on the surface, they start to focus more on you as a person, and I guess you can filter out the wrong crowd with that. I'd like to be known for my work and my character, not my beauty. I've been in situations where people have only stayed around me solely because of that, and when that fades, I'm no longer needed. Like a doll you got bored of once it's no longer shiny.

Do you think people make assumptions about your faith or values based on when you choose to wear the hijab and when you don't?

Oh absolutely. When I used to have it on, everyone assumed I was super religious. And when I took it off, you can guess, they assumed I rejected my religion. Which is strange, because my faith has grown stronger than ever the minute I decided to rediscover Islam for myself, which involved the removal of my hijab. Surface-level assumptions are an epidemic I hope society can move away from. Whatever I do is between me and God, there's no third person involved.

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What is the emotional cost of existing within the paradox of feeling both connected to and distant from the hijab at the same time?

Losing a huge part of myself. Because you don't know which part of you makes you you. Is it the one ideal I conform to based on what my society infers it to be my true self? Or the one I created to hold my peace? Yet the one I've created, misogyny still finds a place to disrupt me of it. So what is my true self? I still don't know. And that identity crisis is still what I'm stuck in.



What do you wish people understood about women whose relationship with the hijab does not fit into conventional expectations?

It would be lovely if empathy and compassion were strongly advocated for, because you never know what they're going through. Leaving room for kindness helps with growth, rather than stalling it with ruthless comments. Mind your own business and lead your own life instead of telling others how to deal with theirs.



LOST IN TRANSLTION.





*Mustafizul
Khan*



Candlelight Dinner
with the Girls.



Curated by Fiza Faizal

There's just something about candlelight dinners with the girls that makes me want to dress extra feminine and romantic.

As someone who loves to dress up, I love putting together outfits that feel elegant but still comfortable. I'm always reaching for satin skirts, flowy abayas, and pieces with lace details because they make the whole look feel so soft and dreamy.

I also love having fun with textures and prints. Polka dots have my heart, and I can never say no to baby pink tones or dainty accessories. Whether it's a cute bag, pearl jewelry, or a little bow detail, I think those touches make the outfit feel complete.

Oh, also! Baby pinks, creams, and burgundy are my favorite colors to experiment with for dinner nights with the girls.

And honestly, dressing up for a cozy candlelit dinner with my girls is half the fun. Don't be afraid to romanticize the moment and wear the outfit that makes you feel pretty.

POISON DROP
Aloud Clip-on Earrings
AED139

CHARLES & KEITH
Agatha Chain-Strap
Shoulder Bag [Black]
AED450

ZARA
Jumper Knit with Belt [Oli]
AED149

POISON DROP
Aloud Gold-plated
Bracelet
AED249

MASSIMO DUTTI
Linen Blend Flared
Skirt with Pocket
AED370

STEVE MADDEN
Ellison-E Ballerinas Negro
AED400

NOURMODESTY
Daisy Abaya' Set
[Pink]
AED300

SWAROVSKI
Lilia Necklace
[Rose Gold]
AED479

OYSHO
Fitted Ribbed Long-
sleeve
AED79

RALPH LAUREN
Linen Wide-Leg Trousers
[White]
AED535

MIU MIU
Satin Crystal Embellished
Sandals
AED519

JEELOW
Silk Lightweight Scarf
[Champagne Bloom]
AED119

LANVIN
Long-sleeve Cardigan
[Lilac]
AED450

ALAIA
Le Teckel Small Bag
[Ivory]
AED10400

JOHN LEWIS
Saumi Polka Dot Maxi
Skirt
[Cream / Black]
AED679

WORLD MARKET
Lilac Butterfly Sheer
Socks
AED25

VIVAIA
Square-Toe Mary Janes
[French Cream]
AED565

Anthropocene

We're still in the holocene
but they're shortlisting names for the future
Anthropocene, the hopeful hymn of change
machines and satellites disrupt the systems
sometimes a backwards thinker
looks behind until it's neck hurts
setting up podiums for endless speeches
on how we're all seismic creatures,
some go crazy over a piece of fabric,
some drive at the speed limit
there's an error in the connection
they're stepping on the cable
lost is oceanic spaces,
wandering department stores
thinking of how the morning coffee becomes more important,
Than the hands that make it
we have the key to a beautiful chemistry in our primordial instincts
but never use it
the next ice age is around the corner,
and we'll use our cellphones as campfire.

- WASIMUL RAHMAN | *Notes on self-destruction.*





look for strange places.
look for love in people.
look for new shoes to walk in.

WEAPONIZING OF THE HIJAB

EMANCIPATING THE POLITICS.

The hijab has long existed as more than a piece of fabric. Within modern political discourse, it has become a canvas upon which nations project anxieties surrounding a lost of of politics. According to the Islam Channel, political and media narratives have increasingly weaponised the hijab as a symbol of cultural conflict, allowing governments and public figures to debate Muslim women without genuinely engaging with their lived experiences. In this transformation, the individual disappears and all is crucified in an echo chamber of preassumed ammo. A woman becomes a headline, a campaign promise, or a statistic, while her personal agency is eclipsed by narratives imposed upon her.

Across Europe and parts of North America, debates surrounding religious dress have frequently been framed as matters of liberation or social integration. Yet these discussions reveal a striking contradiction, societies that celebrate individual freedom simultaneously attempt to regulate what Muslim women wear. Whether through restrictions in schools, workplaces, or simply a general public space that allows access to ‘everyone’, the hijab is treated less as an expression of personal faith and more as a visible marker of political ideology. Consequently, Muslim women are placed in an impossible position where both wearing and removing the hijab become politicised acts, scrutinised by those who rarely understand the personal significance behind the choice.

The consequences extend far beyond parliamentary debates and televised discussions. Political rhetoric gradually filters into everyday life and shapes the experiences of Hijabi women regardless of their age

and cultural background. A young girl entering school may become aware that her appearance sets her apart before she fully understands why. A university student may question whether her abilities will ever be recognised before assumptions about her religion are made. In professional environments, qualified women often navigate the workplace while carrying the additional burden of proving that their competence exists independently of the hijab they wear. The political symbolism attached to the hijab quietly follows them into every street they walk in.

This burden is not confined to legislation alone. It reveals itself through the breathing days; lingering stares, discriminatory hiring practices, hostile remarks, and the expectation that every hijabi woman must somehow represent an entire faith. The hijab, intended by many as an intimate act of devotion, is repeatedly recast as a public statement, forcing women to defend a choice that should require no justification. What should be a symbol of personal conviction instead becomes a site of constant interpretation, where identity is reduced to appearance and individuality is overshadowed by prejudice.

Yet despite these challenges, the hijab continues to embody resilience as much as faith. Every woman who chooses to wear it reclaims ownership over a narrative that politics has attempted to define on her behalf, over and over again. Until Muslim women are given the space to tell these stories in their own voices, the hijab will continue to bear the weight of meanings that were never theirs to carry, a weight that is at times crushing.

The relationship between the hijab and feminism has long been misrepresented through a Western lens that too often mistakes visibility for liberation. According to feminist scholar bell hooks, feminism is

“a movement to end sexism,

sexist exploitation,

and oppression”,

a definition that centres liberation on dismantling systems of inequality rather than prescribing how women should dress or express themselves. Viewed through this lens, the hijab need not exist in opposition to feminism; instead, it can represent a woman’s autonomy to define her own identity with her body beyond the expectations imposed by either patriarchy or Western ideals of empowerment. Yet, when the subject turns to Muslim women, this principle becomes paradoxical. The freedom to choose is frequently celebrated only when that choice aligns with Western ideals of empowerment, leaving little room for women who find liberation through modesty rather than its rejection.

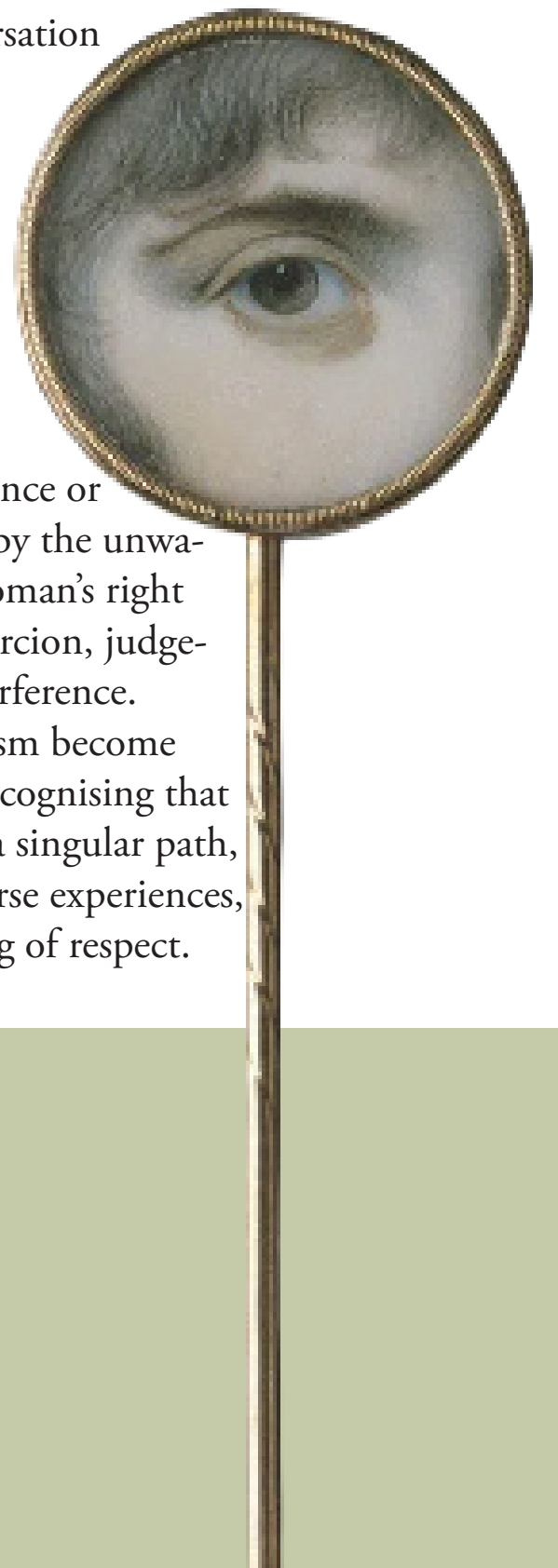
As *Our Streets Now* observes, “the hijab is a mental ideology which Muslims take with them, to remind them to live in a way where you focus on God in all your daily tasks.” This understanding shifts the hijab beyond its physical form, revealing it not as a restriction imposed upon women, but as a deeply personal expression of spirituality and discipline. It is not merely something worn upon the body, it is woven into one’s purpose.

The tension arises when Western feminism assumes that emancipation must always resemble unveiling. Such a perspective unintentionally mirrors the very systems of control it seeks to dismantle by prescribing what liberation should look like. A woman who removes her hijab is often praised as courageous, while one who chooses to wear it may find her agency questioned, or cynically; her intelligence underestimated and feminism dismissed. In both instances, her body remains the subject of public interpretation rather than personal ownership.

Islamic feminism offers a different philosophy. It does not reject equality but instead grounds it within the principles of Islam, arguing that faith and feminism are not opposing forces but complementary ideas. Rather than seeking freedom from religion, many Muslim women seek freedom through it, challenging patriarchal interpretations while embracing their spiritual convictions. Their struggle is not against the hijab itself, but against the societal structures that deny them the right to define its meaning.

Ultimately, the conversation surrounding the hijab should not centre on whether it is inherently oppressive or liberating. Its meaning belongs solely to the woman who wears it.

True feminism is not measured by the presence or absence of a veil, but by the unwavering defence of a woman’s right to choose without coercion, judgement, or political interference. Only then can feminism become truly intersectional, recognising that empowerment is not a singular path, but a tapestry of diverse experiences, each equally deserving of respect.



Humayra

Nabir



To not be a deer in headlights.

How has your hijabi experience been so far?

I would want to tell them about change, how fast it is, how drastic it can be, how beautiful it can make your life. We always take change in a negative way and fight against it with such a force, but I view it as the opposite. How can you grow without change? Your identity is ever-changing. We could be 100 different people in our lifetime. It's only our core values and traits that explain our real identities. A beautiful person doesn't always have the best soul, and the beautiful soul doesn't always run around shouting about themselves.

How do you align the hijab with your personal faith and beliefs?

To me, the hijab is a constant reminder of my faith in God and helps me stay grounded to my personal beliefs and goals. In a very empowering yet humble way, it helps me stay true to myself by defying how a woman is "expected" to dress, especially in the west. I never feel like I quite fit into the traditional view of how women should dress in the Muslim community nor do I ever feel accepted by western cultures, and I never really have the urge to fit into it either. In addition I would say it also helps me stay away from certain situations that otherwise would have drawn me in. My hijab helps me view the world from a unique perspective.

Has there been a need of a support system in your hijab experience?

In my opinion, I never really felt the need of an external support system. I grew up watching only my mom wear it and neither of my aunts/cousins or friends wore it. I grew up going to multiple international schools and I was often the only person in the entire school who would be wearing the hijab.

My parents did express their concerns regarding me starting at a young age but I never really cared about what others had to say about my clothes. Despite feeling the need of a support system, I feel a lot of joy seeing and relating to honest representation on social

media and women sharing their personal experiences with the hijab, how they style it in different ways and how their perception changes over time.

Living internationally, how has the world viewed you in different spaces?

I grew up & lived in Dhaka, Bangladesh till I was 13 and surprisingly, that is where I faced the most criticism regarding my hijab. Starting with relatives who didn't "approve" of me wearing my hijab while some criticised me for not wearing it "properly" (mind you, I was still a child).

I think criticism that affected me the most were the boys in my 5th grade class when I moved to a new international school. I was called so many names and was made fun of, which was so funny to me because so many of these boys' mothers and other female family members wear the hijab too. And growing up in a country where wearing the hijab is so common, I expected them to have a little more respect and understanding towards it.

After I moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at the age of 14, I felt a shift in the way I felt so comfortable in my hijab, despite going to an international school. I was called so many names and was made fun of, which was so funny to me because so many of these boys' mothers and other female family members wear the hijab too. And growing up in a country where wearing the hijab is so common, I expected them to have a little more respect and understanding towards its concept.

After I moved to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia at the age of 14, I felt a shift in the way I felt so comfortable in my hijab, despite going to an international school that had a much lower percentage of Muslim students. I would

say, compared to my environment in Bangladesh, Malaysia was a much more diverse and accepting community for me. Despite having barely any Muslim and no hijabi friends there, I felt more confident and comfortable in my hijab. I felt a drastic change in how I felt in my hijab after having moved to Germany at the age of 19 to start university. Moving to Europe after growing up in Muslim majority countries was very eye opening to me in regards to how hijabis are viewed around the world. I am more cautious of my presence in certain areas and around certain people and still often feel the need to minimize myself to prevent any added attention to myself.

Living internationally, how has the world viewed you in different spaces?

I would think it has mostly to do with how Muslim women are portrayed in all forms of media. Whether it be the news, social media or hijabi characters in movies and shows. There is a very skewed perspective of what hijabis are like and how they think, where in reality we are just like any other woman. We all have our niche interests, personalities and beliefs. The idea that hijabi women in general are all oppressed is something that upsets



me because while I do understand and empathize with how not everyone has the choice in certain parts of the world, that is neither the case for every hijabi nor a true reflection of our religion and reasons behind why it is worn.

Have your struggles ever wavered your faith and question the purpose of the hijab?

I wouldn't say it has ever wavered my faith in God and my religion but I definitely do question time to time the purpose behind why I wear the hijab myself. I often question the different interpretations of religious texts and what makes me more skeptical about certain interpretations is that it's mostly done by men, whereas the hijab (or at least the traditional meaning of hijab which in general is just a head covering) mainly concerns women. So even in the most earnest intentions, I don't think they can ever fully grasp what it is like to be a hijabi woman, especially in the west. Something else that makes me question the purpose of my hijab is how differently is perceived by the different cultures, issues surrounding autonomy and the various angles of criticism that comes with it.

Any last words?

To the hijabis; don't let people command you why and how you should wear your hijab! Religion is a very personal topic which can be strengthened with community but I

believe your faith can be shaken and weakened just as much when you tend too much to other people's opinions. That being said, I think it is just as important to do your own research on the topic of hijab and the different perspectives on it and come to your own informed conclusions. To everyone else that do not wear the hijab; just

and stop policing what people wear. It's a very polite thing to just respect what people chose to wear, despite how revealing / modest it is even if you don't understand why they do it. Be kind!

A BUSY DAY at Work.



Curated by Humayra Kabir

As I've been wearing the hijab for such a long time, I've come to know the types of silhouettes that compliment it and easily recognize if an item is not meant for me. I usually love to layer with my outfits and create dimension through textures, colors, and patterns.

In my fashion choices, I don't necessarily have a strict aesthetic that I reach for but rather just dress with pieces and brands that align with myself and make me feel good in my appearance and give me confidence. But I'm not going to lie, I do tend to like vintage and grunge pieces and have certain moodboards for them that I am inspired by.

My favorite colors to usually style are greys, blue's, or blacks as that is exemplary in the outfit I've curated as well. These 3 colors compliment each other so well and are compatible with so many other colors as well!



ZORA
Chiffon Hijab
[Grey]
AED580



EN ROUTE
Lunar Veil Moss
Agate Ring
AED109

JACQUEMUS
Button-fastening
Denim Jacket
AED2610

12 STOREEZ
Merino Jumper
AED650

DIESEL
D-akii 068hn
Flared Bootcut
Jeans
[Black]
AED650

CHLOÉ
Mony Handbag
Canvas
[Blue Denim]
AED3340

ONITSUKA TIGER
Mexico 66 TGRS
[Oyster Grey]
AED709

A DATE WITH Monet.



Curated by Radiya Rafat

I've been wearing hijab long enough to know what works for me, but that doesn't mean I've stopped experimenting. Two years ago you would only catch me in a black hijab, but I don't even own one anymore. Even the way I drape my scarf has completely changed with trial and error.

There's so much noise around hijab. Non-muslims saying we're oppressed. Non-hijabis (including men) policing how we tie our scarves. Other hijabis disapproving of how someone else chooses to wear theirs. It can be a lot. But when you drown it all out and just do what works for you, there's no better feeling.

I love wearing dresses. I love going online and finding one that makes me feel beautiful. A lot of people try to make hijabis feel like beauty isn't for us. They act like covering up means deprioritizing ourselves, and I refuse to believe that. Finding a dress, pairing it with the right hijab, and building an outfit from there is one of my favorite things to do!



HURESON Shimmer
Lightweight Hijab [Brown]
AED1450

PRADA Medium
Bonnie Handbag in
Suede
AED12200

TORY BURCH
Thin Icon Hinge
Bracelet
[Tory Gold]
AED580

LICHI
Maxi Satin Dress
with Long-sleeves
and Asymmetrical
Draping
[Brown]
AED699

STEVE MADDEN
Reef Beaded
Handbag
[Blush]
AED405

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