

9th Birzeit Heritage Week

A Celebration of Palestinian Heritage and National Identity

By Hanan Ziadeh, Director
9th Birzeit Heritage Week

While the elaborate henna design dries on the bride's hands, the older women dress up in Palestinian traditional *thobes* to lead the traditional *zaffa* (entry procession) of the newlywed couple through the alleys of Birzeit Old Town, declaring the opening of the 9th Birzeit Heritage Week.

Birzeit Heritage Week is an icon among Palestine's summer activities and a major attraction among annual national festivals. Organized by Rozana Association, Heritage Week offers unique and diverse experiences that advance Palestinian cultural identity and seek to foster fresh functions for the old houses and open spaces in Birzeit's historic area. The festival is tailored to facilitate understanding of the complexity and distinctiveness of Palestinian cultural heritage and illustrates its interconnectedness among the various strata of Palestinian society. Successive ministers of the Palestinian Authority – with the ministers of culture and of tourism and antiquities at the forefront – have consistently sponsored the event, emphasizing that it enhances Palestinian cultural identity and disseminates concepts of development among rural communities.

Previous Birzeit Heritage Weeks have attracted the interest of local public, private, and civil-society organizations (among them Saadeh Science House, Hannoun Tea House, People's Museum, and Palestine Circus School) who have participated as essential partners, and the festival provides a platform for exchange with world cultures, as the participation of international cultural organizations completes the festival's cultural mosaic and contributes to the reinforcement of important linkages with the world, especially Europe. The flags of participating countries will be raised above Birzeit's municipality, and various opportunities for firsthand encounters between visitors and the local community aim to break the matrix of isolation and control exerted by 50 years of occupation. Heritage Week is both a manifestation of cultural and cultural-heritage production and a tool for research, development, and empowerment of all forms of cultural identity in Palestine.

As in previous years, Birzeit Heritage Week 2017 will include the traditional Flower of the Countryside event that brings together more than a dozen villages and communities from across Palestine in a competition over knowledge and protection of heritage. Young girls dressed in traditional costume from the period before 1948 will astonish audiences with the splendid diversity they collectively share. Their village- and community members rally behind them in a cultural heritage demonstration that culminates in the on-stage performance of various heritage activities. The Flower of the countryside tradition is generating a strong sense of community and celebrates Palestine's pluralism, tolerance and acceptance of the other in a cultural setting. The competition furthermore promotes the role of Palestinian women as citizens equal to men and as preservers and promoters of Palestinian national identity – as women's important role in promoting national narrative and identity is frequently underestimated.

Bring your family and friends and join us in celebrating heritage and cultural exchange!



أسبوع التراث في بيرزيت
Birzeit Heritage Week
تموز 2017
JULY 16-12

الداعم الرئيسي	بالشراكة مع	تحت رعاية	تنظيم
 EUROPEAN UNION الاتحاد الأوروبي	 بلدية بيرزيت BIRZEIT MUNICIPALITY	 Palestine وزارة السياحة والآثار Ministry of Tourism & Antiquities	

بدعم من



الراعي الإعلامي

