



Kalsh Rhythm

Other names:

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Domain

Performing Arts
Dance

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LOCATION



Community groups

The Ankesna, Berta, and Qamaz groups. South of the Blue Nile.



Practitioners

Sudanese Men and Women



Purpose / Use

Special and public occasions, harvest celebrations, and some weather-related activities.



Knowledge / Skills

The skill of Khaleeji dance relies on the coordination of group performance, where everyone lines up to dance, intertwining the arches of women and girls with the arches of boys in calculated and agile rhythmic movements accompanied by swaying of the waist tied with a piece of cloth. The girls move towards the boys with harmony and precision, striking the ground with their feet and tapping on the tambourines until the arches intersect in sharp angles, arches, and circles, only for these circles to quickly disappear and order to return in the form of straight lines.



Transmission

Traditional practice and experience.



Tools, Equipment, Services

Musical instruments such as the rababa, drum, or castanets, colorful clothing, and accessories like necklaces and palm leaf bracelets.



HISTORY

It is a tradition associated with the local cultures of the Blue Nile tribes since pre-Islamic and pre-Christian times. It is believed to have a direct connection to some local religious rituals and was inspired by some Sufi sheikhs during the era of the Blue Sultanate of the Funj Kingdom, such as Sheikh Salman al-Zugharats.

INTRODUCTION

It is a lively musical rhythm that includes dancing, singing, and playing instruments, and relies heavily on moving the upper and middle parts of the dancers' bodies, such as swaying the waist, moving the shoulders, and hands. It is performed at social occasions such as weddings, planting and harvesting seasons, and some rituals specific to ethnic groups that perform it. It is played with a string instrument called the rababa, known in local languages as abangarang, and is used in singing by both genders alongside the waza instrument. The dance of khalsh is performed between men and women facing each other, starting to move forward and backward and in a circular motion counterclockwise. The dancers wear ornate costumes from the local culture and wear belts made of palm leaves, adding local accessories such as colorful plates and gourd rattles. It is a collective dance ritual where there is no distinction between the audience, as all present participate in its performance.

Cultural Value:

Next to the heritage value and the authenticity of the rhythm and dance, there is a prevalent popular belief that the Khalsh dance has a spiritual healing nature as well. It is noticeable that the Khalsh dance is not practiced during the day, but rather during moonlit nights. Local residents believe it is a remedy for magic, and its melodies and rhythms make the spirits residing in human bodies flee outside. The rhythms and sounds emanating from the castanets and drums are nothing but harmonious incantations that disturb the peace of the spirits inhabiting human bodies and cause them to panic and flee. Therefore, shaking the body and swaying through the Khalsh dance opens windows for escape to the outside, leaving the bodies light and the spirits pure and transparent.

Associated Practices:

Marriage, agriculture, harvesting, and ceremonial celebrations.

Cultural Expressions

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VIABILITY

Threats:

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Natural Resources used

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► Link(s)