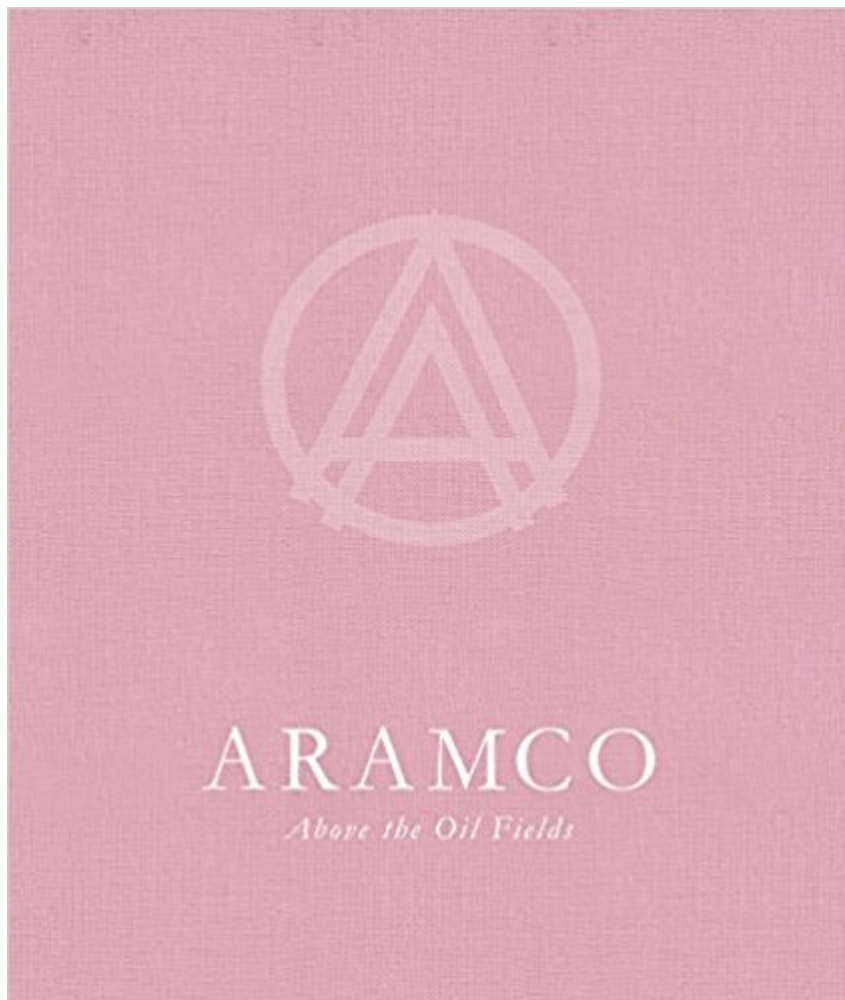


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# ARAMCO: Above The Oil Fields



## Synopsis

In ARAMCO: Above the Oil Fields, Ayesha Malik delivers a personalized account of life within Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, a gated community originally created as a home for American employees of the Arabian American Oil Company, now known as Saudi Aramco. This small town houses the world's wealthiest company with the world's largest energy reserves. In 2018, as part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 plan, the public sale of a percentage of the company is expected to be the biggest IPO in history, valued at around \$2 trillion. Malik shares the surprising warmth, familiarity, and timelessness of this 22-and-a-half square-mile place that so many Aramcons call home. Her photographs raise conversations about perception and preconceived ideas regarding a home that is neither fully Saudi nor fully American, a home unlike any other.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Ayesha Malik divides her time between New York City and Saudi Arabia working on self-directed photo projects. Her work has been featured in Time Lightbox, VICE Magazine, Le Monde's M Magazine, The New York Times, Refinery29, and Offset, amongst others. Elizabeth Renstrom is a photographer and photo editor at VICE Media.

This work definitely is most appropriate for Aramcons (or folks who want to understand us better lol). I'm not sure an audience outside of that would rank this work as highly. Because a 'look inside' is not possible, I'll try and add as much detail as possible. A really unique part is that the author has

included reproductions of ephemera from her grade school work to receipts from film developing in arabic and English. These are oddly sized and are nice treats as you flip through the book. The photos are of the very mundane which was the appeal to me- there are multiple photos of the ever present 'caution-gas line' signs, the houses in the hills (sadly not my little windmill abode), respectful photos of ex-pats and Saudis in Abaya and Nicab going about every day errands, photos of expat youth playing on their sports teams, etc. . Honestly, I did not take many photos of the mundane so when folks ask me what it was like, I'm pleased to now have this book. I have to say the photo of LuLu's made me a bit teary because I always went there when I felt homesick- because a westernized market and Cinnabon fixes everything- I oddly miss LuLu's. I wish there could have been a photo of those ever present gates...to me passing through those gates really is a symbol of my time there... but know photography is not allowed for security reasons so I didn't expect they would have made the cut. My favorite part was an interview in the back where the author provides some insight into her thoughts of not being able to 'visit' where she lived for 22 years- it's also interesting that she addresses how living in DH has changed from her time there. I think the article will provide much context for folks who fall slightly outside the time range of her experience. Lastly, there is also text in the back that provides a brief history of Aramco which is again helpful for non Aramcons but I think we've all heard it...many times... so I appreciated it was short, sweet, and to the point. I only went for a 4 over a 5 because I found the portraits, of which there are quite a few, less interesting for me as someone seeking a memoir of my time in DH. They are beautiful though and add a human element to the work.

This is an impressive book with photos and snippets from the photographer's life on Aramco camp. Beautifully put together and poignantly told that makes life on Aramco strangely familiar to those brought up in the West. Buy this book. You will not regret it.

I lived in Dhahran for years, have very fond memories of the place, and am presumably a member of the intended audience for this book. Such a disappointment. It is, as noted elsewhere, a scrapbook of family photos, most of no real interest. Pictures of refrigerator doors, badly cropped group shots of adolescents in sports gear, a pair of New Balance sneakers sitting on top of a washing machine. Amazingly, given the price, many pages have no photo at all. At least three pages are devoted to photos of the envelopes in which a developer returned photos. A few stray reproductions of singularly dull ephemera (a child's fan letter to Leonardo DiCaprio, newspaper clippings about a horse) round out the scrapbook effect. Anything else by way of documentation

here? Well, an "index of photos" informs the proud owner of this very large, very fuzzy pink book that page 35 is, in fact, a "Kodak envelope," while the photo on page 48 is indexed as "toy car." Two pages of Wikipedia-level intro to Aramco's history gives way to a maundering "author interview," with the standard heavy breathing about identity and home. Jaysus. In short, expensive, superficial and inexplicably ugly. Not a book you'll want to keep on hand, unless you're actually a member of the Malik family or one of the author's three closest friends.

unfortunately, I have to say honestly that I'M very dissapointed with the book. it's huge, heavy, mostly family photos, not much written interesting information about Aramco....

This is a waste of money. Looks like a scrap book.

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