

The Silver Thread: Silver filigree and traditional arts in Kosovo

Speaker: Elizabeth Gowing

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From the early Kosovan silver mines which are mentioned in Dante, through the 20th twentieth century politics over Kosovo's mines which resulted in a war and a golf course, a silver thread winds through Kosovo's history. Its most intricate tanglings are in the country's cultural capital, Prizren, where a seventh generation of filigree artisans use 'filum' and 'granum', zigzags, 'mouse-tooth' designs and other twists and makes magic lacy creations from dull sticks of raw material. The results – in boxes, buttons, jewellery, religious ornamentation and the talismans of superstition – are a fine narrative of Kosovo's history and traditions.



Elizabeth Gowing studied at Magdalen College Oxford before working as a teacher in inner London. She moved to Kosovo in 2006 and co-founded 'The Ideas Partnership', a charity that supports the education and integration of children from marginalised and minority communities. She speaks fluent Albanian. Elizabeth is also the author of four books about Kosovo – *Travels in Blood and Honey*; *becoming a beekeeper in Kosovo* (2011), *Edith and I; on the trail of an Edwardian traveller in Kosovo* (2013) *The Rubbish-Picker's Wife; an unlikely friendship in Kosovo* (2015) and *the Silver Thread: a journey through Balkan craftsmanship* (2017).