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July - September 2024



The theme for this year's International Museum Day is 'Museums for Education and Research'.

This theme carries the pivotal role of cultural institutions in providing a wholesome educational experience for all. With that, IAMM is highly capable for both holistic and comprehensive approaches that definitely fit the theme.

By inviting people from all walks of life to visit us and explore our collection, we hope to foster a wider perspectives of art appreciation within Islamic art's diverse cultural heritage.

Director Message

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) celebrated International Museum Day 2024 on 18th May. As laid down by the International Council of Museums (ICOM), this year's theme 'Museums for Education and Research' aims to encourage cultural institutions across the globe to play their role in developing all-inclusive educational experiences for their audiences. This theme encapsulates the very mission and vision of IAMM since its inception in the year 1998.

Throughout 25 years of IAMM establishment, the museum has gradually developed as one of a leading educational hub and research base in the country. We equipped ourselves as an institution that opens its doors for cultural exchange, and welcome local and international researchers, academics and interns to benefit from the ocean of knowledge housed in our institution. While our artefact collection provides primary sources for arts and artefacts enthusiasts, our Scholar's Library offers references in multiple subjects related to Islamic history, art and culture, including rare books, documents, maps and photographs collections from the past.

The IAMM also puts emphasis on the development of the Education Department, as this unit is among the front liners to harness educational programmes, activities and collaborations with our counterparts, other institutions and the general public. The Children's Library major refurbishment in 2023 has been furnished with modern facilities, as well as filled with high-quality reading material for minors. The response, and participation we received from all walks of life, from young and old audiences, has shown us that the awareness to understand, and to learn about art and culture are still there. This positive reception motivates us to improve the quality of educational experiences initiated by the IAMM.

The museum is no longer as an institution to merely store and display objects, but it has a pivotal role to educate visitors through various means such as informative displays, publications and sharing programmes. The IAMM will grow with this year's IMD 2024 theme 'Museums for Education and Research.' I would like to thank everybody who walks with the same spirit with us, and has contributed to our exhibitions, publications, lecture series, educational workshops and research works throughout these years.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary
Director
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia International Museum Day 2024 celebration

Where we celebrate joy, festive and art in one place!

Held in the inverted dome on 18th May 2024, we kicked off the day with visitors' exploration of the 12 main galleries and two special galleries. It was a great way to allow visitors to learn about each region and dynasty and their historical backgrounds of Islamic art. What we offered:

Gallery Trail: Museum Roles Uncovered

This gallery trail gave a glimpse into the diverse roles and teamwork that bring the exhibitions at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia to life, starting with the role of the curators to the Scholar's Librarians, to the conservators, the graphic team, the display team, the education team and the marketing team. Whilst discovering and learning each career path in IAMM, this trail guided our visitors to related artworks and artefacts exhibited to the relevant vocation.

Gallery Trail: Birds in Focus

This trail was made for the love of birds and beauty, visitors were brought to experience the distinct features of different species in our collection, hidden

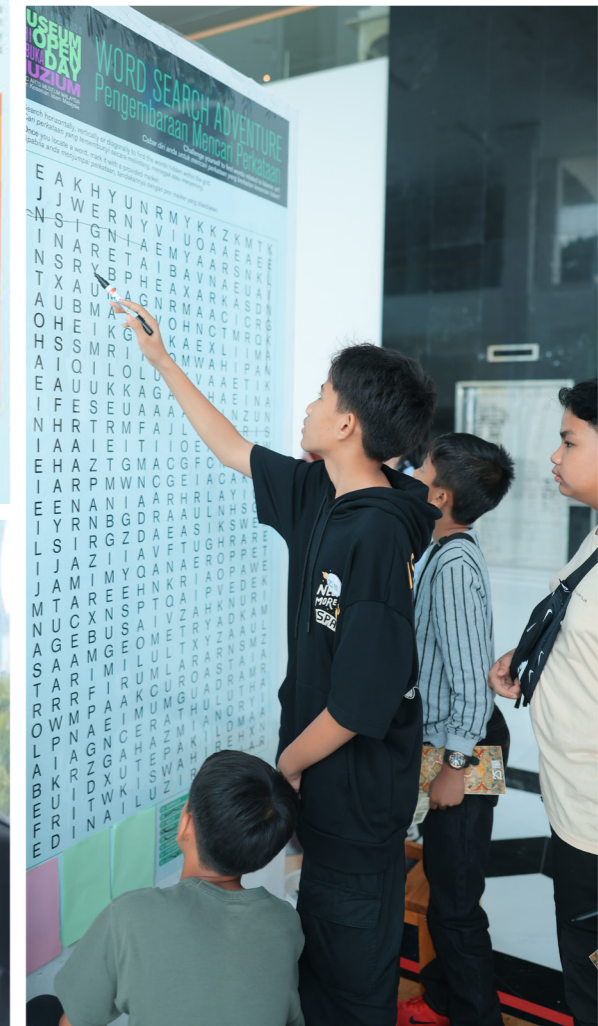
from the casual eye but nesting beautifully within the artefacts. Birds in Islamic art played a huge role because of their colourful plumage and role as messengers.

Trail and Mini Exhibition: Colours of Solidarity

This mini exhibition showcased a testament to the Palestinian people and the enduring spirit of humanity. Painted by local emerging artists of the International Islamic University of Malaysia, each artist brought their own unique perspective of unity and resilience. From vibrant hues to poignant narratives, the trail was centred around the Palestinian architecture, artefacts and the Palestinian Wall at IAMM.

Group activities: Giant Word Search & Memory Games

These were activities enjoyed by both groups and individuals. We were able to educate our visitors with words and terms relating to Islamic art. In the memory game, visitors were introduced to the history of Orientalist paintings and the art movement's inclination to the Islamic world.



Through the Lens of the Conservators

Conservators are the skilled professionals responsible for retouching and restoring artefacts to ensure they are preserved for future generations. Activities offered in this booth were related to the conservational work in stabilising objects that may have suffered from ageing, damage or wear over time. Visitors were guided through the process of a careful restoration that allows the artefacts to be displayed in their best possible condition.



This wonderful occasion was also celebrated with Angklung performances by Simfoni Tunas Warisan Angklung LA21KL, Kompong performances by Kompong Anak Seni Cheras and Dikir Barat ASWARA.

The museum received a very encouraging reception from visitors coming from all walks of life. The event recorded more than a thousand visitors from its opening at 10am until the curtain call at 5pm. Do come and join us for next year's celebration. Stay tuned to our announcement on Instagram, X and our website.

The Study of Maps

At this booth, librarians of the Scholars Library offered valuable insights into the importance of maps. Maps allow people to study the changes in territorial boundaries, ancient trade routes and urban development. Visitors were also introduced to the rare maps collection of IAMM.



Collaborators: KL Sketch Nation, Albukhary International University (AIU), Islamic Science University of Malaysia (USIM) and Sleepycatcraft (the art of crochet)

KL Sketch Nation offered sketching in the galleries. Sketching is a primary way to spark creativity that is also easy and fast. It can be done

anywhere. In this session, we had members of the KL Sketch Nation to guide our visitors on how to further enhance their creativity through sketching around our artefacts and galleries. The Albukhary International University offered an introduction to items made by their students using recycled materials through art. They were fully sustainable yet appropriate for everyday wear. At another booth, we also had members of the USIM lecturer team offering art therapy for

children, whilst introducing their Islamic lesson plans for teachers that can be accessed easily through a QR code for learning, fully equipped with different languages.

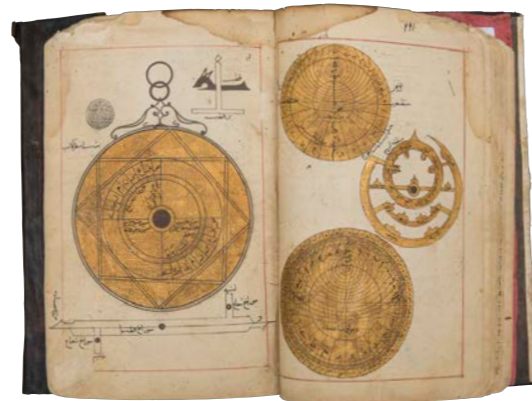
Sleepycraftcat is a passionate crocheter who loves creating a wide variety of art including bookmarks, installations, bags, table décor and wearable items. She offered a crochet demonstration and a one-to-one lesson at her booth on this special day.



Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia artefact loans to San Diego Museum of Art, United States of America

The San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) is hosting an exhibition titled *‘Wonders of Creation: Art, Science, and Innovation in the Islamic World.’* This exhibition, inspired by Zakariyya al-Qazwini’s 13th-century cosmography, delves into the rich history of the fusion of art and science in Islamic culture from the 7th century to the present day. The exhibition will showcase works, including manuscripts, paintings, maps, and scientific instruments, covering subjects such as astronomy, natural history and medicine from different Islamic regions.

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is contributing to the exhibition by lending 37 artefacts from its collection, adding a layer of historical significance to this already exceptional event. Curated by Dr Ladan Akbarnia, the exhibition runs from 7th September 2024 to 5th January 2025, before travelling to the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College from 1st February to 1st June 2025.



The Arabesque exhibition at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

One of the unique decorative elements that emerged from the Islamic world is the arabesque. This refers to a decorative theme that consists of stylised leaves that branch and bifurcate to create endless intertwined scrolls. This feature has become ubiquitous in many objects in the Islamic world since the 9th century, and it remains an important element in the contemporary Islamic arts.

From the 10th to 16th centuries, Safavid and Ottoman treatises on calligraphy and painting meticulously highlighted seven distinct modes of ornamentation. In Ottoman Turkey, the arabesque was referred to as *Rumi*, while in Safavid Persia the term used was *Islimi* (or sometimes *Islami*). In the Arab world, it was referred to as either *Tawriq* or *Nabati*, further emphasising the diversity and rich heritage embedded within this captivating art form.

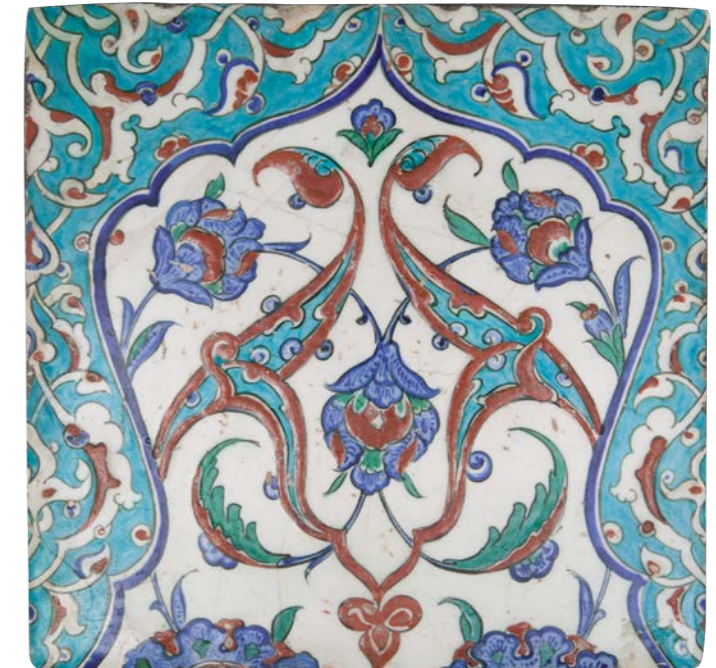
The arabesque emerged as a profound concept, with philosophies that varied depending on different perspectives. Within the Muslim context, the vegetal art form symbolises the boundless essence of faith, the oneness of God and the portrayal of the gardens of paradise. A single

design can be overlapped or seamlessly repeated as many times as desired, epitomising the very notion of infinity and emphasising abstraction over realism.

Geometry serves as an unchanging foundation that shapes the branching, foliate and curved forms of the arabesque through precise rules to avoid random, free-flowing arrangements. The use of geometric precision became the hallmark of this art form, with artists employing mathematical principles to create visually stunning compositions. The continuity and symmetrical natures of the arabesque lead to perpetual movements towards

the infinite, symbolising the Creator’s eternal nature through its seamless transitions without a discernible starting or ending point.

The Arabesque exhibition travelled to the British Museum in conjunction with the launching of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World back in October 2018. Starting from 15th August this year, the exhibition will be held at Special Gallery 1. Local and foreign audiences can expect an immersive showcase of the beauty and splendour of the arabesque from the collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.



Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia participation in *Kerja Jalan* programme



On 27th April 2024, IAMM proudly began the first instalment of our series: *'Museum and the City'*, a collaboration with *Kerja Jalan* as we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the museum. It was an exploration of the vibrant surroundings and walkable areas around the vicinity of the Islamic Arts



Museum Malaysia. This walk covered the hidden gems and notable buildings within 3 kilometres of the museum.

The walk started off with an introduction to the museum's architecture, the ideas and the vision of the institution's establishment. Participants were introduced to the Iwan structure and its historical significance. Participants were then exposed to similarities with Islamic art in the architecture of surrounding buildings such as the National Mosque, the Kuala Lumpur train station and the Daya Bumi building.

The walk continued on to downtown Kuala Lumpur, which was once the heart of the city before KLCC was built. Participants walked through Taman Megalith, City Parking, the elevated pathway from the Daya Bumi building bridges through the river of life, and the Central Market.

The walk ended back at IAMM, where participants were then brought to a special viewing of the dome at the View Terrace.



Embroidery Workshop

This workshop was held on 25th May 2024 as the first workshop in the Textile Workshop series, organised to promote our textile collections. Embroidery is an art of decorating on fabrics and has many usages and forms. The workshop started off with a tour to our Textile Gallery and tekat collection. The tour focused on embroidery and weaving traditions as decorative materials. After that, participants were brought to the education workshop to learn the basic stitches in embroidery, guided by the instructor Nursarah Aqilah, using a 5 centimetre wooden hoop on fabric with pre-printed floral patterns. The next workshop that will be introduced in this series will be on tekat. Stay tuned for our announcement!



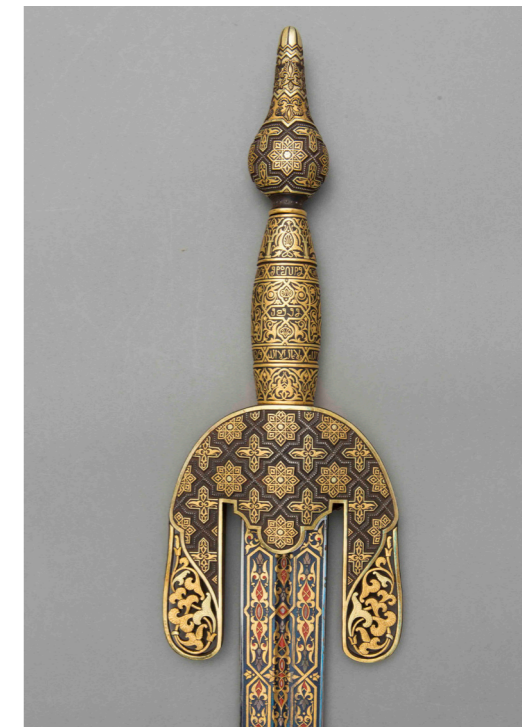
Object in Focus: A Toledo Sword



Inscribed on the handle with the motto of the Nasrid dynasty of the Emirate of Granada “There is no conqueror but God” this late 19th century double-edged sword serves as a reminder of the wealth, majesty and legacy of the last Islamic dynasty in Spain. The Emirate was established in 1232 as the wider kingdom of Al-Andalus was broken down by successive stages of Christian reconquests from northern Spain. The Emirate finally dissolved in the final stages of the Reconquista with the Surrender

of Granada in 1492. From the pommel to the crossguard and down nearly half of the blade, gilded and etched gold and silver add an air of royal finery

while flowing gold and red enamel palmettes beautify the finely forged steel. This kind of sword known as a ‘Jineta’ is inscribed with “Arta Fabrica de Toledo 1891” which references the once massive industrial complex of the Toledo Weapons Factory. The factory located on the right bank of the Tagus river in Toledo, Spain was the main source of extremely high quality steel swords and later ammunition and firearms to the Spanish armed forces until its final closure in 1996 after a period of steep decline starting in the 1960s. The fine craftsmanship and enduring quality of this sword is a tribute to the enduring legacy of Islamic presence in the Iberian Peninsula for over 700 years.



Visit by Dr Hamid Shahriari, Secretary-General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought

On 1st April 2024, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia had the honour of hosting Dr Hamid Shahriari, Secretary-General of the World Forum for Proximity of Islamic Schools of Thought (WFPIST). Dr Shahriari's visit was part of his scholarly tour within Malaysia, aimed at strengthening ties between Muslim communities worldwide and addressing contemporary challenges.

During his visit, Dr Shahriari explored some of IAMM's

finest collections housed in the Special Galleries of the 'A Journey Through Islamic Art' and 'Alif Lam Ra' exhibitions. He expressed particular admiration for the Persian pieces, highlighting their cultural and historical significance. Among his favourites were the magnificent Qajar group portrait depicting 24 royal courtiers, attributed to 'Abdullah Khan Naqqashbashi (1810-20 AD), and the painting of Nasir Al-Din Shah at a royal banquet in the Gulestan Palace Gardens, attributed to Yahya Ghaffari, Sani' al-Mulk II (1870-1880 AD), both displayed in Special Gallery 1. In Special Gallery 2, he was especially captivated by the masterpiece Shahnameh by Firdawsi made during the Safavid era (1611 AD).

Dr Shahriari emphasised the importance of preserving Islamic art in maintaining the spiritual and ethical heritage of Muslim communities. He believes that Islamic art promotes virtue and can serve as a bridge to address divisions and unite the Ummah for the greater good. He commended IAMM and its dedicated staff for their tireless efforts in upholding these values and expressed his hope to return for future visits.

Dr Shahriari's visit underscores the vital role of cultural institutions like IAMM in fostering global understanding and unity through the preservation and celebration of Islamic art.



Visit by HE Zheenbek Kulubaev, Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan

On 2nd April 2024, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia was honoured by the visit of His Excellency Zheenbek Kulubaev, Foreign Minister of Kyrgyzstan, and his delegation. The tour included Special Gallery 1 and the first floor of the permanent galleries. The visit was part of His Excellency's official itinerary within Malaysia, aimed at strengthening bilateral relations through meetings with Prime Minister Dato' Seri Anwar Ibrahim and other ministers, with the IAMM visit serving as a gesture of goodwill.

During the tour, several highlights stood out. His Excellency showed great interest in the presentation of historical artefacts alongside modern artwork in the 'A Journey Through Islamic Art' and 'Alif Lam Ra' exhibitions.

Another significant moment was His Excellency's in-depth discussion with the curator, Fareed Badr, about the evolution of Islamic calligraphy. From simpler scripts to intricate designs with accent marks, our visitor was captivated by the historical narrative.



His Excellency's previous experience in China made him particularly appreciative of the Chinese Islamic calligraphy collection, including the Chinese Qur'an and the calligraphic scrolls. He noted the historical Islamic influence in China and praised IAMM's efforts in showcasing it through the China Gallery.

The Minister was especially impressed by the massive Safavid Isfahan gallery carpet (mid-17th century AD), the Kashan lustre pottery vessel in the form of a seated female ruler

(12th-13th century AD), and the Qing Dynasty 30 separate Judz Qur'an. His notable feedback included praise for the tour's quality and timeliness, and a particular interest in the historical connections between Kyrgyzstan and the Mamluks, highlighting the shared heritage between the regions.

The visit was a meaningful exchange, reinforcing cultural diplomacy and international relations.

OPENING HOURS

Monday – Sunday (except Eid ul-Fitri & Eid ul-Adha)
9:30 am – 6:00 pm
Last entry at 5:30 pm

ADMISSION FEE

Adult RM20.00
Others (Visitors below 18 years old, Students of Higher Learning
Institutions & Malaysian Senior Citizens) RM10.00

Children below 6 years old FREE


FREE ADMISSION

Museum Shop
Children's Library
MOZA Restaurant
Education Centre


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