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October - December 2024

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) has long been an institution dedicated to the preservation of the Palestinian cultural heritage for future generations. By showcasing the intricate artistry of this culture's textiles and artefacts, we hope not only to educate visitors about the historical and cultural significance of these items but also to express our genuine concern for and solidarity with the Palestinian people.



Director Message

As we enter the final quarter of 2024, it's worth reflecting on what happened at the start of the year. All those months ago, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) was fully engaged in its celebration of the museum's 25th anniversary. Throughout the year, this milestone has been a priority. There has been a wide variety of programmes and events to commemorate a quarter of a century of growing and learning. It has been slow and steady progress on the path to excellence. Our original aim in December 1998 was to become a leading institution in the field of art, culture and education. Since December 2023 we have had almost a whole year to assess our achievements.

Part of that process of evaluation has been a retrospective exhibition. 'A Journey Through Islamic Art' was open until July this year, displaying many of the finest and most important objects from the IAMM collection. Among the acquisitions taking centre stage were the 'stars' of the museum, along with artefacts of more historical and archival significance. Every item tells a story of the aesthetic and cultural development of the Islamic world. Every piece is part of a huge puzzle that is still being put together by the museum. The commitment is still there to ensuring that artefacts of consequence will be housed in our institution. We aim to represent Islamic art in all its diversity to our highly valued visitors.

With the gradual increase in the size of our collection, there have been further collaborations with other institutions — large and small. Back in the pandemic days, we successfully loaned around 150 objects to Japan's pre-eminent Tokyo National Museum (TNM). In August this year, we despatched 37 artefacts to the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) in the United States. We joined other lenders such as the Al-Sabah Collection, the British Museum and the Asian Art Museum for the exhibition 'Wonders of Creation: Art, Science and Innovation in the Islamic World'. Launched in September, the San Diego museum's objectives are fully in line with the IAMM's.

This year we were also fortunate in being able to acquire a considerable number of Palestinian *thobes*, a traditional embroidered female garment. These additions to our existing collection are currently on display in one of the permanent galleries and will later be shared as a future project. It's a highly topical theme; the art of *tatreez*, which we have gathered from various sources, demonstrates the diversity of regional styles, mainly from Gaza. With this collection, we intend to highlight and preserve the glories of Palestinian embroidery, an art form that deserves attention.

For 2025, there is a full programme of exhibitions and other events at the IAMM. Some of these are due to open in 2024. In December there will be the launch of a definitive exhibition that examines Southeast Asia and highlights the emergence of a cosmopolitan maritime Malay-Islamic civilisation and the consolidation of Islamic faith. The exhibition is also a consolidation of the IAMM commitment to displaying the full extent of Islamic art and ensuring that the role of the Malay world is given the exposure it seldom receives.

Lastly, I would like to thank our newsletter subscribers and all others for the support and interest shown in our institution for the past 25 years. We look forward to maintaining this relationship for the next quarter of a century.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary
 Director
 Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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Discover the Elegance of Palestinian Costume in the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) has long been an institution dedicated to the preservation of the Palestinian cultural heritage for future generations. By showcasing the intricate artistry of this culture's textiles and artefacts, we hope not only to educate visitors about the historical and cultural significance of these items but also to express our genuine concern for and solidarity with the Palestinian people. The highlights of this project consist of *thobes*, shawls and accessories from different sources; some have been commissioned from the Inaash Organization, others are from Mr Ian Rutherford, a highly committed private collector, and many from the IAMM's extensive holdings.

The art of embroidery on Palestinian thobes, or *tatreez*, has become one of the more wearable symbols of resistance against the ongoing Israeli occupation. While the dress is known as thobe in general, specific names exist for different forms and subtypes across the region. The aim of the project is also to represent and examine the multitude of designs associated with major embroidery centres throughout Palestine. In addition to Gaza there is Bethlehem, Lod, Ramla, Ramallah, Hebron, Beit

Dajan, Jerusalem and Galilee. The significance is multi-layered. The material wealth of Palestinian dresses, from silk to gold threads, points to this land's location at the crossroads of world civilisations. The wealth of the embroidery's motifs and patterns, which vary from one district to another, evoke the majesty of the Palestinian history and topography.

Generations of Palestinian women have worn these garments as they mark rites of passage, from weddings to graduations. Ingrained in the Palestinian life cycle, the dress is a visible and indelible marker of Palestinian identity. Historically, the Palestinian thobes had become especially popular during the first half of the 20th century. For many Palestinians, this marked a period of economic prosperity. Wealth was tailored to sourcing expensive materials and exploring more intricate designs.

Interest and advocacy among Palestinians at home and in the diaspora has grown beyond 1948 and well into the digital era. In solidarity with the Palestinian cause, interest has also grown among the international community. Palestinian traditional attire has since risen to the occasion, embodying the memory of a lost landscape that is Palestine.



Opening of the Arabesque special exhibition



The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) opened its 'Arabesque' exhibition (15 August 2024 until 27 October 2024) in the Special Gallery 1, showcasing one of the most distinctive decorative motifs in Islamic art. The exhibition presents a captivating journey through the origins, evolution and global impact of the arabesque by means of almost 80 masterpieces from the IAMM collection.

Visitors to the exhibition have been able to explore the quintessential decorative motif and the development of designs in which symmetry, rhythm and complexity converge to create a harmonious whole. From *Rumi* in Ottoman Turkey to *Islimi* in Safavid Persia and *Tawriq* in

the Arab world, the regional variations of the arabesque are presented, each offering unique insights into historical interpretations and creative evolution.

The arabesque is also a symbol of cultural identity, reflecting the rich heritage of past dynasties and the interactions that occurred across the Islamic world. The exhibition delves into how the arabesque has transcended its Islamic origins to influence global art and design, from the ornate patterns of Renaissance Europe to contemporary creations. The timeless rhythm and flow of the arabesque have inspired artists for over a millennium, maintaining its appeal and relevance in the modern world.

The comprehensive collection underlines the narratives of the arabesque's inception, progression and influence within the breadth of Islamic art. Providing visitors with thematic insights, the exhibition helps visitors to gain a deeper understanding of the characteristics of the arabesque, including its use of vegetation that symbolises the Gardens of Bliss in Paradise, and the order and symmetry to reflect Islamic principles and to enhance its aesthetic appeal. The exhibition, which was first launched at the British Museum in 2018, has been augmented to provide an enlightening exploration of the artistic significance and global impact of the arabesque.

Upcoming exhibition at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia: 'Oceans that Speak: Islam and the Emergence of the Malay World'

The Malay world, situated between the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean, has long been a crucial location for global trade, especially spices. The core of the maritime civilisation in the Malay world is the port cities and harbours, scattered throughout the archipelago. These served as an important conduit for travel, trade and the movement of people as well as ideas.

Throughout the centuries, this engagement of people and ideas facilitated intellectual interactions, trade and cross-cultural connections that have coloured the vibrant region. The arrival of Islam continue to add to this vigour. The Islamisation of the Malay world saw a transformation in governance, language and art, including the introduction of Jawi script and Islamic calligraphy. Along with calligraphy, the circulation of ideas facilitated by the waves of connections established in the region resulted in the adaptation of Islamic artistic vocabularies as well as Islamised symbolism. Early Muslim rulers began to adopt royal court practices from other Islamic dynasties. These sultans began to adopt sovereign expressions of power, seeking to emulate prestigious

titles from other parts of the Islamic world and to establish their authority with similar grandeur and legitimacy to strengthen their political power and cultural influence. As regal tastes developed, they patronised exquisite craftsmanship reflected through a rich tapestry of cultural adaptations and artistic expressions.

The global exchange saw the circulation of various materials into the Malay world from distant regions. These ranged from betel and tobacco containers to wooden dowry chests and textiles, finding their way into the royal courts. Some were reproduced locally, further enriching the cultural landscape.

Opening on 12th December 2024, *Oceans that Speak* is located in Special Gallery 2. It offer both local and international visitors an immersive view into the vibrant Islamic art of the Malay world, a cosmopolitan region that continues to resonate today through waves of trade, migration and intellectual exchange.



‘Wonders of Creation: Art, Science and Innovation in the Islamic World’ – The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia’s collaboration with the San Diego Museum of Art

On 7th September 2024, the San Diego Museum of Art (SDMA) launched ‘Wonders of Creation: Art, Science and Innovation in the Islamic World’. The exhibition gathered important artefacts loaned from 35 lenders: private and institutional collections that include the British Museum, John Rylands Research Institute & Library, the Al Sabah Collection and the Asian Art Museum. The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia had an opportunity to collaborate with the SDMA by lending 37 objects from its collection, thereby becoming an essential part of the contents of this important project.

The exhibition highlights the history of the influence of art and science in Islamic culture from the 7th century onwards. It was initially inspired by the *magnum opus* of Zakariyya ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini (1203-1283), which was originally written in Arabic and Persian, entitled *The Wonders of Creation and the Rarities of Creation*. In general, this exhibition displays artefacts and objects related to astronomy, natural history and medicine. The IAMM has loaned some of its important artefacts,



including the same copy of al-Qazwini’s work entitled in Arabic as *Aja’ib al-Makhlūqat wa al-Ghara’ib al-Mawjudat*. This late 17th and early 18th century manuscript from North India is outstandingly illuminated, and signed by Abd al-Majid. The IAMM is also offering some other manuscript collections that include treatises and compendiums of medicine and traditional healing, as well as astrology and astronomy. These manuscripts contain informative illustrations that were made as early as the 15th century.

Two IAMM astrolabes, dated around the 16th and 17th



centuries, were also sent to the SDMA for this exhibition. Both astrolabes are from India and Persia and are accompanied by a compendium that contains astrological treatise that show illustrated instruction on the operational aspect of an astrolabe. This visually appealing treatise from Persia is dated as 728 AH (1328 AD). In addition to that, the loan includes a 19th-century painted and lacquered papier-mâché small box with scale and counterweights potentially used for medical purposes from the Qajar period. A series of 10th to 12th-century collections of scientific and medical instruments, such as small

spoons, an incense burner and a mortar from Persia, are among priceless objects loaned to the US museum.

This exhibition, which is curated by Dr Ladan Akbarnia, Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art at the SDMA, will run until 5th January 2025. The IAMM is proud to have contributed to this special showcase by sharing its selected artefacts with a wider audience, particularly in the USA. Our objects will resume their journey next year and will be exhibited at the McMullen Museum of Art at Boston College from 1st February to 1st June 2025.



Nanocellulose: A new and promising material for art conservation

A large part of preserving historical and cultural heritage involves understanding materiality and exploring new and innovative approaches in order to safeguard them. Nanocellulose or nanopapers have gained significant attention in recent years in paper conservation, offering a versatile and effective technique for stabilising delicate and fragile paper-based materials such as manuscripts, books and documents as well as canvas, photographic materials, thin textiles and animation cells. It is one of the most recent novelties in the field of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage and consists mainly of cellulose.

In September, as part of its continuous commitment to training and development of its staff, the Conservation and Research Centre at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia successfully organised and completed a workshop on 'The Application of Nanocellulose in Art Conservation', presented by Mr Remy Dreyfuss-Deseigne, a senior paper conservator from France who specialises in Nanopapers and pioneered its application in art conservation.

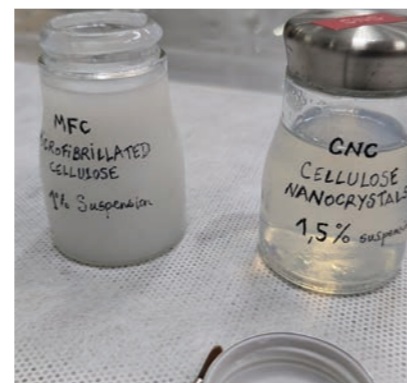


This four-day intensive workshop provided conservators and librarians — who work closely with historical documents and rare books — with a theoretical and practical foundation for understanding the use of Nanocellulose films in conservation. The workshop primarily involved hands-on activities, in addition to lectures, group discussions and examinations of various Nanocellulose films, the making of some films such as microfibrillated cellulose (MFC) and MFC-based nanocomposites as well as the application of this versatile material to a selection of artworks and documents.

Participants were able to gain a deeper understanding of its use

in conservation as an exciting alternative to conventional techniques. In addition to its excellent optical and mechanical properties, high stability against temperature and humidity, and its ability to be applied without adhesives, it is also environmentally friendly and sustainable.

It is evident that the field of nanotechnology offers many new possibilities to the field of art conservation. This workshop has provided a valuable opportunity to the conservators at IAMM to further explore this unique material as an effective and green solution for some specific problems experienced with museum collections.



Crafting People's Experience with Islamic Arts!

To share and inspire the community with a harmonious blend of motifs, ideas and culture.

As an institution, we are always eager to provide an environment that emphasises all aspects of Islamic art and history. Our aim is to bridge a shared heritage by connecting the past with the present, fully equipped with admiration and reverence. With that, we offer a variety of exciting programmes and activities for everyone to learn, explore and experience. Here is the list of our recent programmes for the third and fourth quarters of the year.

Letters to Gaza Open Space Gallery 2nd September 2024 - 20th October 2024

This exhibition focuses on Malaysian children writing letters to children in Gaza in order to foster empathy and solidarity. A project initiated by *Viva Palestina Malaysia*, displayed at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia's Open Space Gallery, was held with the intention of showcasing the support of Malaysians, children specifically, with their wonderful writing, creative doodles and drawings that relay the messages of hope, strength and unity.



These letters are planned to be sent to Gaza via email and physical mail, safely involving Malaysian children in a global cause of goodwill. The *Letters to Gaza* programme and exhibition demonstrates how simple acts of kindness can transcend borders, bringing hope and comfort to those in need.



Arabesque Pattern Lab 31st August 2024

Held on Merdeka Day and in conjunction with the ongoing 'Arabesque' exhibition, visitors were invited to the Education workshop to learn different arabesque styles and techniques. We offered free sketching materials, different colouring media and a one-to-one guide to design their own arabesque pattern. It was a structural and challenging process and yet visitors had fun and enjoyed it. *The Pattern Lab* is aimed to be held again in



October and visitors may refer to our Instagram account for future announcements.

Traditional Turkish Archery: History & Techniques 14th September 2024

Islamic archery, as with so many aspects of Islamic culture, has a rich history and tradition. The significance is primarily due to its practical utility, not just in sports, but also in warfare. Archers were vital as their strategic placement played an important role in battles. Dr Anwar Mutaqqin presented

an interactive lecture to further his belief in the rediscovery of historical techniques. Learning archery is also valuable to improving coordination, balance and core muscles. The talk started with an introduction to archery's history, techniques and importance. Visitors then were brought to the carpark in front of the auditorium for a demonstration, and then a try-out. An exceptional activity to start the day with!

Arabesque Tote bag Art Workshop
14 September 2024

This was another wonderful art session in conjunction with The Arabesque Exhibition at IAMM. Held from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Participants had an inspiring time creating beautiful, personalized tote bags in this workshop guided by the talented Mr. Ashraf from Art Core Malaysia. Through intricate Arabesque pattern, they explored the rich tradition of Islamic design while crafting unique, functional art pieces step by steps.



Be A Storyteller Children's Workshop
20th September 2024

'Be A Storyteller' was planned to cultivate a love for reading and to help boost children's confidence through reading aloud. Participants were guided on how to differentiate emotions and express them with many gestures while also learning how to engage with the audiences in front of them. The aim for this workshop is also to let them explore their own creativity and gain confidence in the art of relaying messages through emotions, body language and facial expressions.



Our Green City: A Museum and the City Series
21st September 2024

A family-friendly walk exploring the parks around the IAMM, with the museum as a starting point. Participants moved towards the Bird Park and into the Perdana Botanical Gardens. With ten children and their respective guardians registered for this walk, our educator and Kerja Jalan advocates discovered nature, learned about Islamic art, and enjoyed a morning of fun. The walk then continued with all the participants getting a ride on buggies back to the museum. It was a success in bridging nature with wonders of Islamic architecture and mindful walking.

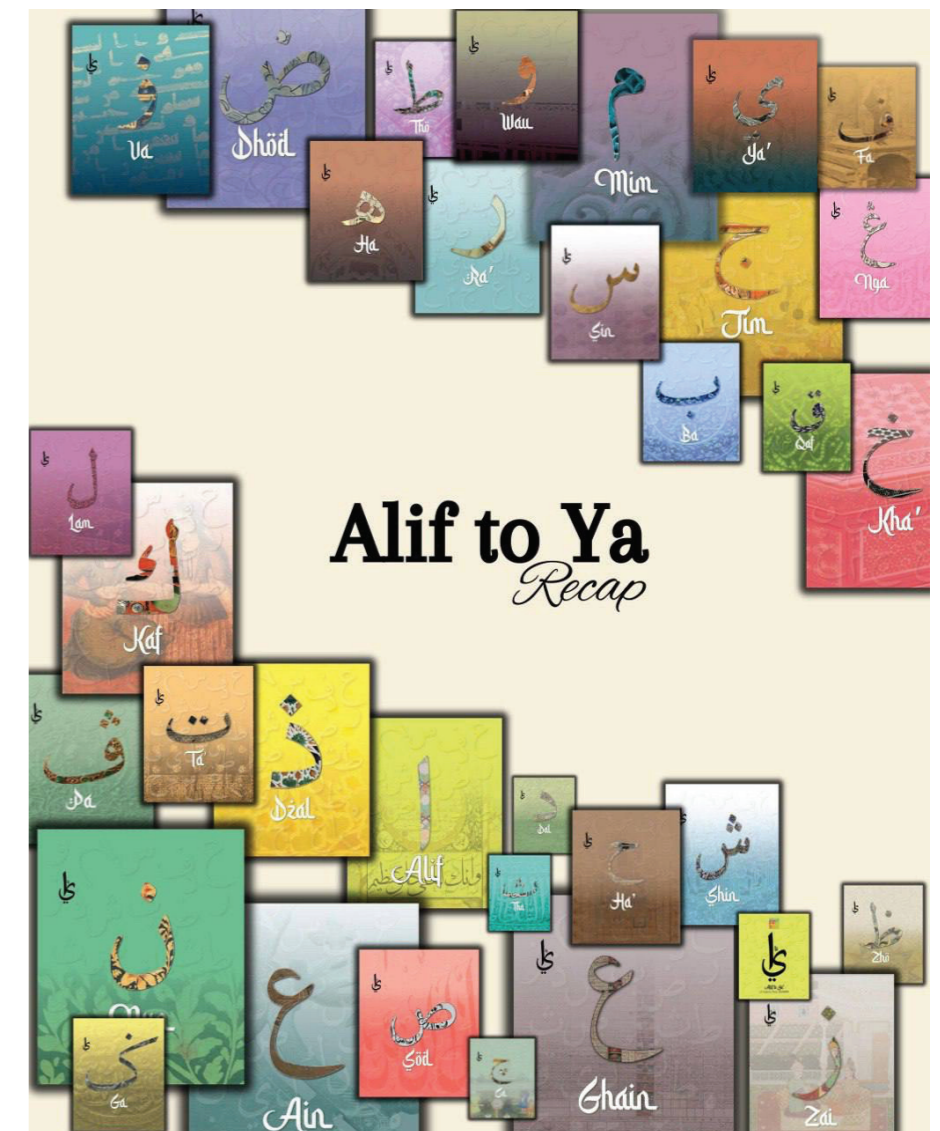
Kerja Jalan is an advocate for walkability and urbanism, dedicated to creating enriching walking conversations and experiences in neighbourhoods across cities. The goal is to uncover the hidden stories within the urban structure while creating a chance for everyone to observe our surroundings via walking.



Alif to Ya Completion: three years filled with wonders. Artefacts and 37 Jawi Letters: A learning resource available now.

Initiated three years ago, Alif to Ya was shared on Instagram on the 12th day of every month in conjunction with the date of the IAMM's establishment. This is an informative/sharing initiative that relates artefacts with the 37 letters of the Jawi script. Be

it the name, origin or its visual characteristics, this is a project focusing on the name play and facts about our collection in two different languages and three types of writing: English, Malay and Jawi. We hope to guide the community with more Jawi-related materials in the future! The whole collection is now available on the website.



Visit by HE Yasar Guler Minister of National Defence, Republic of Turkiye



The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia hosted a special visit by HE Yaşar Güler Minister of National Defence, Republic of Turkiye on 20th August 2024. During the official visit, HE Güler was accompanied by HE Emir Salim Yüksel Ambassador of the Republic of Turkiye to Malaysia. The entourage was brought to the artefact collection displayed in the permanent galleries as well as a special photography

exhibition that was recently launched in the museum. Entitled ‘Makkah, Madinah, al-Quds & Istanbul: Through the Eyes of a Believer’, this exhibition highlights a series of spectacular photographs depicting three holy sites and Istanbul, taken by Orhan Durgut. The photographer is among the pioneers of aerial photography and has captured and documented thousands

of images of three holy sites to Muslims. In the exhibition gallery, the entourage enjoyed their time appreciating the works of the renowned photographer.

Visit by the President of Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA), Datuk Seri Ir. Dr Wee Ka Siong

On 16th August 2024, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia received a visit from Malaysian Chinese Association (MCA) President, YB Datuk Seri Ir. Dr Wee Ka Siong and his entourage. Datuk Seri Ir. Dr Wee visited the newly launched exhibition ‘Arabesque’, which is currently on display at the Special Gallery 1 until 27th October this year. The delegation spent the whole morning walking through the permanent galleries. The president and his board of officials were excited to have a closer look at the collection of Islamic calligraphic porcelain and incense burners from China. He generously praised the Albukhary Foundation’s vision and commitment in making IAMM not just an archive of Islamic art, but also a vital centre for education and cultural enrichment by showing the dedication to preserving and promoting Islamic heritage. He mentioned that MCA is eager to organise more visits to the museum in the future and to explore further forms of collaboration. He also stressed the importance of inclusivity



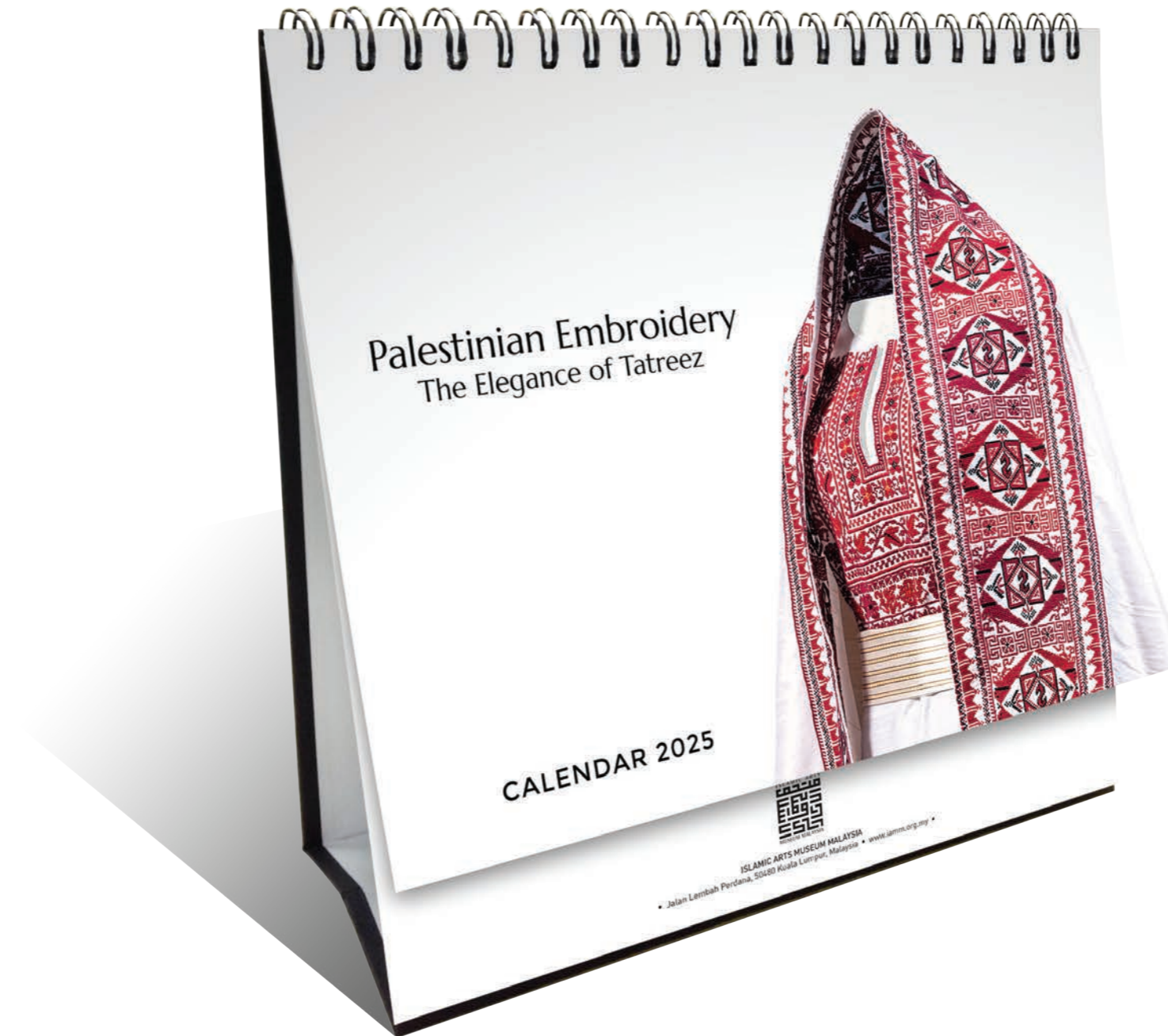
and multiculturalism in today’s world. In his own words, “We believe that such initiatives can play a crucial role in strengthening cultural ties, fostering goodwill, and bridging communities. By promoting cultural heritage, supporting arts, education, and tourism, we hope to contribute to a greater understanding and appreciation of our shared histories and values.”

Calendar 2025

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia's 2025 calendar featuring *Tatreez* is a vibrant celebration of Palestinian heritage through the timeless art of embroidery. Each month showcases stunning images of traditional *thobes*, shawls and embroidered household items, adorned with intricate cultural patterns that reflect Palestine's rich identity. This calendar tells the story of *tatreez*, passed down through generations as a symbol of resilience and pride. Perfect for your home or as a gift, it offers a year of beauty and inspiration while supporting the preservation of this treasured tradition.

The IAMM Museum Shop is open from 10 am to 6 pm, Monday to Sunday, including most public holidays, and entrance is free. Follow our Instagram page @islamicartsmuseumshop for the latest updates and ordering. Alternatively, you can contact us at: museumshop@iamm.org.my Tel: 603 2092 7140 / 7142 Fax: 603 2274 0084

Calendar 2025
Price MYR 22



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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 Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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