

**International  
Museum Day 2025!**  
*Step into diverse  
traditions and  
artistic expressions  
across the Islamic  
world!*  
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**More Than A Day As A Tiger:  
The Legacy Of Haider Ali  
And Tipu Sultan  
of Mysore (1761-1799)**  
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July- Sept 2025



*International Museum Day  
is the most anticipated day  
of the cultural year. It marks  
a meaningful opportunity  
to engage with our visitors,  
invite them to explore and  
delve into the rich stories  
behind our artefacts and  
to appreciate the beauty of  
Islamic art. It is a call to  
deepen our understanding of  
one another, to be inspired by  
diverse expressions of culture,  
and to learn continuously.*

## Director Message

Dear All,

More than two decades after its establishment, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia still adheres to its original vision: to build a collection that truly represents the history, art and culture of the Islamic world. This ambition is reflected in our ever-growing number and quality of artefacts that originate from a wide diversity of regions; stretching from the shores of the Atlantic Ocean in the West to China in the East.

For the third quarter of this year, IAMM will be launching a special exhibition that directs our visitors' attention to magnificent artefacts from a region of the Indian Subcontinent that does not always receive the attention that it deserves. The two rulers who are featured in the exhibition rarely receive the credit they are due either. *More than a Day as a Tiger: The Legacy of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore (1761-1799)* will be open to the public on 6 August 2025. The exhibition will showcase important artefacts and associated memorabilia from the era of Muslim rule in the kingdom of Mysore in southern India. Many of these objects have not been seen for more than two centuries – and all are from the collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. There is much to learn about and to be impressed by with Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan. These two essential figures in the global history of the eighteenth century have already seen a reawakening of interest around the world. We hope to take this curiosity to another level, and I welcome all of you to visit the exhibition, which will be on display until January 2026.

By the end of this year, we will also be opening a special exhibition dedicated to the traditional costumes and textiles of the Malay world. It will showcase an extensive variation of the vibrant woven and embroidered output for which the Malay Archipelago is renowned. Visitors will have an opportunity to take a closer look at the rich Malay textile heritage represented by our collection.

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is as committed as ever to its responsibility of holding exhibitions that are designed to educate and to be enjoyed. Next year will also feature a full programme. In the meantime, I would like to thank our newsletter subscribers, and our visitors, as well as all of those who have continued to support us throughout the years.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary  
Director  
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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## International Museum Day 2025! *Step into diverse traditions and artistic expressions across the Islamic world!*

By Umi Amalin Zafirah Sakri

With the global theme ‘The Future of Museums in Rapidly Changing Communities’, we aimed to raise awareness of the importance of museums in preserving cultural heritage and historical narratives. Various activities took place throughout the day, allowing everyone a chance to explore, participate, and enjoy a hands-on museum experience. Our offerings this year were divided into five categories, and since this celebration was held during our Oceans That Speak exhibition, we bridged this year’s theme with the importance of maritime routes. For years, the oceans have been important for transport, trade and sharing knowledge and Iqign heritage. The role goes beyond the economy, helping to connect different regions and societies.

### Lifelong Learning:

#### Songket Weaving and Object Interpretation

Visitors explored the intricate art of songket weaving, gaining insight into the traditional techniques and cultural significance behind it. Through object interpretation

sessions led by our curators, visitors engaged in thoughtful discussions, uncovering the historical context behind these weaves..

#### Mystery Box Challenge

The Mystery Box Challenge led by our skilled conservators is an engaging, sensory-based activity in which participants can their sense of touch to guess the shapes and textures of hidden artefacts. It proved to be a fun and educational experience that offered a glimpse into how conservators interact with objects to preserve their history and significance.

#### Jawi Corner: Hands-on guided Jawi writing and Making DIY Spice Pouch

At the **Jawi Corner**, visitors experienced hands-on guided Jawi writing, learning the beauty and significance of this traditional script. The **DIY Spice Pouch** activity allowed visitors to explore the role of various spices, where we guide them towards discovering their historical and cultural relevance, and how they shaped trade and daily life in the Islamic world.

### Gallery Trails: A guided path to explore key artefacts

**The Bingo Trail: Treasures from the World of Islamic Art** led visitors on a journey across all 12 galleries, encouraging them to learn about diverse artefacts and uncover fascinating stories behind each piece. The Oceans That Speak Gallery Trivia engaged visitors with fun facts and quick challenges that relate to our Oceans That Speak exhibition, sparking curiosity and conversation throughout the museum.

Additionally, the **Oceans That Speak Worksheet Walkthrough** offered a one-on-one session with our exhibition curator, providing visitors with a deeper understanding of the collection.

### Activities

#### Giant Canvas Painting & Octopus and Ladder:

The Giant Canvas Painting activity invited participants to contribute to a collaborative artwork, raising awareness about sea creatures and their vital role in the ecosystem. Through creativity and teamwork, visitors expressed the importance of marine life and the need to protect our oceans for future generations.





The Octopus and Ladder game offered a fun and educational twist on the traditional Snakes and Ladders activity, reimagined in a contemporary context to reflect marine life. Participants enjoyed this creative rendition, which not only entertained but also encouraged learning about sea creatures and their environment in an engaging way.

#### Collaborators

Our collaborators highlighted cultural heritage, environmental education, and sustainability. Among them, **Brooke Museum** opened with a session on the history of Keringkam under its ASPIRE Programme: Threading the Past to the Present for a Sustainable Future at our Children's Library, along with a talk entitled Bicara Buku Warisan Sastra Klasik by **Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka**. Meanwhile at the Inverted Dome area, Brooke Museum offered Keringkam demonstrations throughout the day. **The Remaja Purba Collection** showcased the museum's artworks in wood carvings and ornamentation, combining modern and traditional methods. On the environmental front, the **Reef Check Malaysia** booth played a key role in raising awareness of coral reefs and the ecosystem. We also invited the **Forest**



**Learning Centre**, with the focus more on forestry, fostering public appreciation of natural heritage and encouraging community involvement in conservation. **The Sea Monkey Project** addressed plastic pollution by upcycling ocean plastic, building recycling machines, and empowering communities through environmental action.

#### Live Performances

As part of our effort to promote traditional performances, we invited Caklempong performers from ASWARA, Tekpi performance (a martial-arts demonstration showcasing a trident-like weapon), Inang and Joget performances by the Tatih Pusaka Seni from SK USJ12 and Lenggang Si Anak Dara, Seri Inang Berhibur along with Joget Uda dan Dara by Kencana Sahnura from SMK Ideal Heights.

We received a great reception from visitors coming from all walks of life. The event recorded more than 800 visitors from its opening at 10am until the curtain call at 5pm. Stay tuned to our announcement on Instagram, X and our website for more upcoming programmes and activities at IAMM!





## More Than A Day As A Tiger: *The Legacy Of Haider Ali And Tipu Sultan Of Mysore (1761-1799)* 5 August 2025 – 11 January 2026

By Zulkifli Ishak

This August, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia will launch an exhibition that delves into the life of Tipu Sultan and his father, Haider Ali, the two rulers of the Muslim kingdom of Mysore in southern India. Throughout the eighteenth century, Mysore stood up against the formidable imperialist superpower of that era, the British East India Company. Mysore's response to the encroaching forces of the Company deep into its territories is the foundation of this exhibition. The strategies of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan, combined with their attempts to modernise their kingdom, will be represented by the diversity of artefacts and associated material on display, including personal belongings attributed to the rulers.

### The strength of the collection

For decades, IAMM has conscientiously acquiring objects related to the history of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan as part of its permanent collection. This collection is

not restricted to the materials produced within the kingdom – those produced in factories and ateliers, supported by skillful craftsmen across Mysore. The museum has also gathered considerable holdings of relevant material from the British side, such as archival documents, prints, engravings and paintings. The imperialist perspectives represented by these objects provide valuable information to understand in depth the history of the relationship between Mysore and Britain. The accumulation of these materials has opened the door for IAMM to fulfill its vision by creating an exceptional exhibition, backed up by what is now one of the world's great collections in the field.

### The rise, glory, and fall of the kingdom of Mysore

The exhibition is built upon the narratives of the formation, consolidation and then the end of the kingdom. It commenced with the establishment of the

Muslim kingdom by Haider Ali in 1761 – in territories that were previously ruled by the Hindu Wodeyar dynasty. The consolidation of Muslim rule over Mysore at this early stage was never easy, as they not only had to face multiple threats from the British and neighbouring kingdoms, but they also had to survive as a new polity within their region. Technological advances in military and defence provided Mysore with a level playing field on which to resist the British. Mysore's strategic collaboration with the French and its alliances with other native rulers overpowered the mighty British East India Company on many occasions and forced the intruders to take these two rulers seriously. As the successor of the kingdom created by his father, Tipu Sultan strove to protect his sovereignty until his last breath. The fall of his capital in 1799 and the end of Tipu Sultan impacted his supporters and adversaries.







### The long legacy of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan

With the fall of Mysore's capital, Srirangapatna, Tipu Sultan's material possessions were looted, and shipped out of the Indian Subcontinent. The uniqueness of these objects aroused the curiosity and greed of the looters. The plundered objects were then held in private ownership for generations. More than 200 years later, many of his precious possessions have been acquired by the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, and safely housed on the premises. These remnants of important historical objects will be exclusively showcased to the public in the special exhibition from August onwards.

### The exhibition

The exhibition **More than a Day as a Tiger: The Legacy of Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan of Mysore (1761-1799)** will be officially opened to the public on 6 August 2025. In conjunction with the opening day, IAMM will invite guest speakers for a special lecture session that is free for the public to attend. A lavishly illustrated exhibition catalogue featuring details of the Haider Ali and Tipu Sultan artefact collection will be available at the Museum Shop.





## Busana: *Traditional Costumes of the Malay World* By: Hariz Ahmad Kamal

Malay costumes, regionally known as *busana* (a term derive from Sanskrit), embody a world of elegance, symbolism and intricate artistry of textiles. Stunning traditional Malay costumes offer a glimpse into Malay expertise with songket, tenun, telepuk, limar and batik techniques, along with the decorative repertoires of tekat and kelingkan.

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia will open an exhibition titled, 'Busana: Traditional Costumes of the Malay World' in December 2025 to present the Malay world's most refined expressions of identity through its exquisite collection of textiles. From the stunning songket, hailed as "the cloth of gold" and "the queen of fabrics", to the beauty of batik through the art of wax and dye on textile, the exhibition highlights how the various textiles in the Malay world serve both everyday and ceremonial purposes.

Historically, Malay costumes were worn daily or ceremonially with distinct differences in style and opulence to observe notable distinctions between



members of the royal court and the commoners. This tradition gave rise to a distinct sartorial language, not just in the costume, but in meaning and status, seen most notably in commemorating special occasions, continued until today.

Costumes such as the baju kurung, baju kebaya and

the outstanding sampang show how form and function exist in harmony within the Malay couture. Each costume is designed with a refined modesty and symmetry that reflects not only cultural aesthetic ideals but also Islamic virtues of humility and balance. Throughout the exhibition visitors will encounter the intricate techniques of not only

the songket and limar, but also the tactile richness of tekat emas, raised gold couching embroidery on velvet, used to adorn royal garments and wedding regalia. Gaze upon the rare art of telepuk, where gold foil is meticulously pressed onto fabric to create floral motifs fit for the nobility.





These textile traditions are more than art; they are archives of culture. Through the motifs of pucuk rebung (bamboo shoots), stars, flowers and calligraphy, the visual language of Malay costume reflects an Islamic worldview grounded in harmony, humility, and divine order. The repetitive symmetry, the vegetal tendrils, and the radiating patterns reflect centuries of Islamic influence reimagined through local craftsmanship and aesthetics.

the legacy of Malay artistry has been passed from one generation to the next through distinctive motifs and patterns, defined by the harmonious use of colours representing this region's cultural diversity. This exhibition is not only a celebration of aesthetics but also a reflection on heritage and speaks to contemporary viewers with its timeless balance of adornment and meaning.

Regional identities have long been established. From textiles to complete costumes,



## Kendi:

### *A water pot but more than that*

By: Yeoh Wen Fei

The term *kendi*, derived from the Sanskrit *kundi* or *kundika* meaning ‘water pot’, refers to a vessel traditionally used for drinking and pouring liquids. Distinctively, the kendi features three essential characteristics: a mouth, a spout and the absence of a handle. Over time, this utilitarian vessel evolved into various forms, serving both functional and ceremonial purposes across different cultures.

From the late sixteenth century, kendi made of ceramic were adapted within Muslim communities for smoking purposes, replacing coconut shells as water containers in hookahs. These vessels acquired regional names according to their usage: *kalian* in Persia, *nargileh* in Turkey and *huqqa* in Mughal India. Recognising the growing demand, Chinese artisans—especially during the Ming Dynasty—began mass-producing ceramic kendi for export, primarily from coastal

ports like Quanzhou. Among the most prominent were blue-and-white porcelains from Jingdezhen and Dehua, some of which were recovered from the *Wanli* shipwreck. This example in our collection (figure 1), dating from the Wanli period (1572–1620), is decorated with motifs such as lotus sprays and peonies. Although widely exported, such kendi were not enthusiastically embraced in the Chinese domestic market, as recreational smoking did not gain widespread popularity until the Qing Dynasty.

In contrast, Indo-Portuguese traders approached the global market differently by crafting kendi from luxurious materials. A notable example is a mother-of-pearl kendi produced in Gujarat and exported to Europe as shown below (figure 2). These vessels, far removed from their original religious and cultural context in South Asia, are no strangers to European collections. Archival records from the Green Vaults in

Dresden reference similar items in the Saxon Electors’ collection during the early sixteenth century. Similarly, a 1598 inventory from the Wittelsbach *kunstkammer* in Munich lists a silver-gilt mounted mother-of-pearl pouring vessel, indicating the object’s value and transcontinental appeal.



Figure 1 Blue and white kendi, Wanli period (1573-1619), Ming Dynasty, China. (IAMM 2004.12.23)



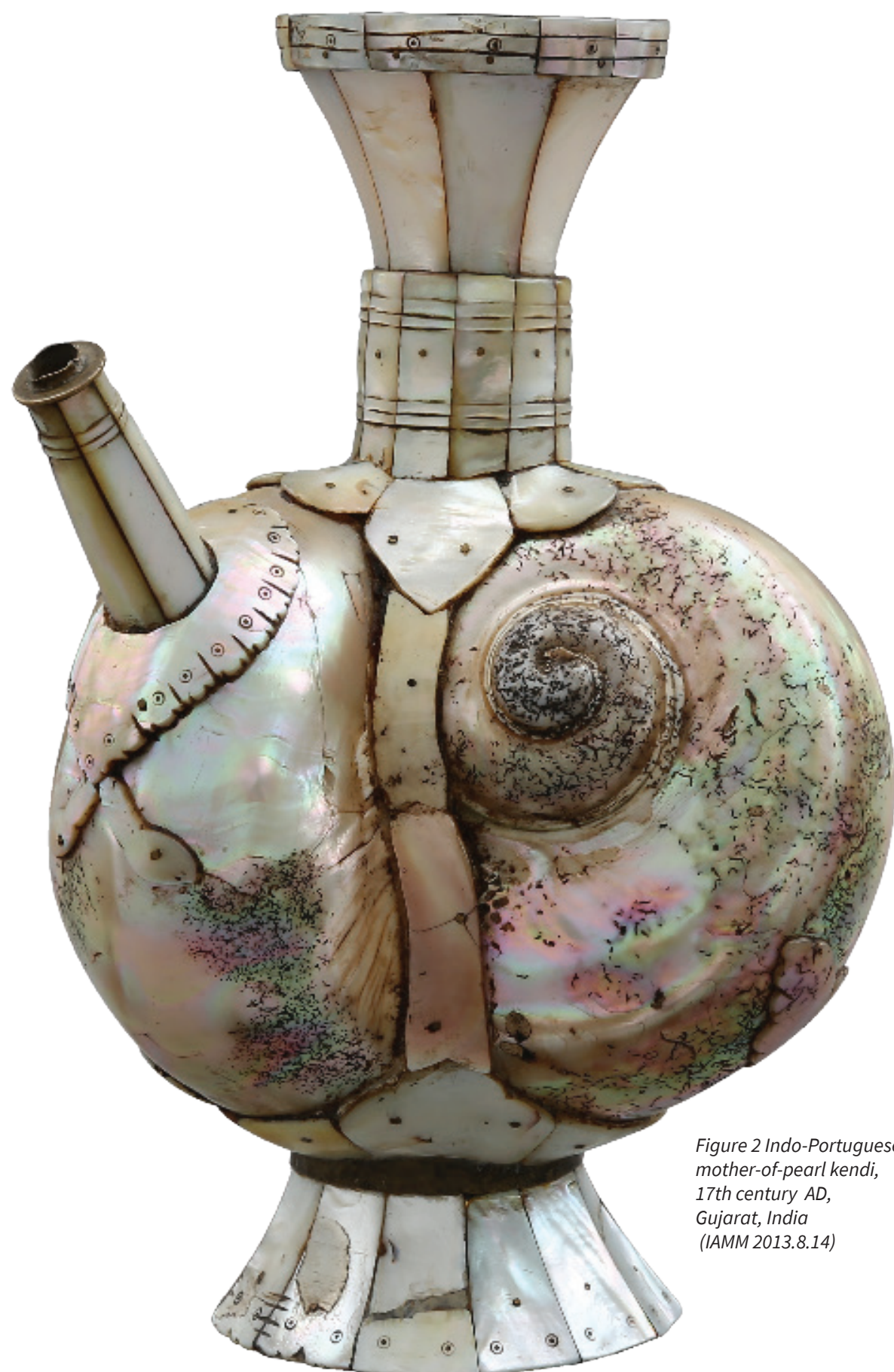


Figure 2 Indo-Portuguese mother-of-pearl kendi, 17th century AD, Gujarat, India (IAMM 2013.8.14)

In Southeast Asia, the ceremonial significance of the kendi is especially pronounced. It was used to store holy water for rites of passage and was integral to various religious and cultural ceremonies. In funerary rituals, for example, a Brahman priest would sprinkle water over the deceased using a kendi, mirroring the function of its ancient prototype, the *kundika*. In Bali and certain parts of Java, the kendi plays a symbolic role in marriage ceremonies, where the bride washes the groom's feet as an act of devotion and an offering to the Goddess of Rice, representing fertility and prosperity following the Hindu ritual. A notable example in the IAMM collection (figure 3) is a Javanese brass kendi featuring five 'cooling fins' on its body. This adaptation, likely developed to address tropical climates, presents a flattened body rather than the traditional globular form. It has two tall, tubular necks and a handle, reflecting modern functionality.

The use of brass indicates its origin from Tegal, northern Java — an historic bronze casting centre renowned for its metalwork craftsmanship.

Across Asia and beyond, the kendi evolved into a cultural artefact, deeply embedded in ritual practices, religious symbolism and social ceremonies. Its adaptability in form and material also made it highly desirable among diverse consumer bases — from the courts of Europe to the households of Southeast Asia. The kendi not only represents artistic and spiritual expression but also serves as a testament to early global commerce and cultural exchange.



Figure 3 Javanese kendi, c. 1900, Tegal, Central Java, Indonesia. (IAMM 2008.1.6)



## Of Gold and Devotion: *secrets a historical textile can hold*

By Nur Alifah Ajlaa Jaafar, Aishah Abd  
Rahim and Anuar Ridzuan Arshad

For two-dimensional objects, textiles can be deep resources of cultural significance. Narrating stories of art, faith and trade, this example is the ideal embodiment of those qualities. Crafted in India during early nineteenth century for the Iranian and Armenian markets, it was intended for religious practice. The textile is elegantly decorated with intricate Mughal-style floral patterns replicating a *mihrab*. At a glance, the detailed hand-block print work resembles the architectural facade seen in Indian miniature paintings, with a golden dome and a landscape background.

Though visually stunning to the beholder, the textile posed a complex case for textile conservators. What was expected to be a routine treatment turned into a considerable challenge. Unseen damages were revealed when the cloth was taken out of its frame. We discovered that past repairs had misplaced a dislocated portion of the top of the fabric. Years of poor framing, substandard repairs by previous owners, corroded nails and the acidic MDF board



Before and after treatment of the prayer cloth



Top section of the fabric showing previous repairs that caused further damage to this area.



Folds caused by previous framing were carefully flattened. The edges of the textile had numerous holes, tears and fraying due to corroded nails and insect damage.



A textile conservator placed a custom-gilded fabric to the loss areas to visually match the original painted-gold surface

caused significant damage before it arrived at our museum. With a mission to conserve the textile, the IAMM's dedicated specialists undertook an intervention treatment in order to preserve and prolong not only its visual appeal but also its history and value. The process began with surface cleaning to remove the accumulated dust and dirt. Fragile areas were stabilised using a special textile-conservation stitching technique. To compensate for the areas of loss, a custom 'gilded' fabric was created, using a conservation-standard commercial dye.

After treatment, the textile was mounted on an archival-quality fabric, secured to a wooden stretcher in order to ensure its safe handling and long-term preservation. This not only preserved the object's physical structure but also revived its appearance. To prevent future deterioration, the textile is being closely monitored in a controlled environment. This prayer textile now stands out, not only as a testament to religious devotion, but also as an ode to artistic heritage. Professional dedication to modern-day conservation practice was employed to achieve this.



## Upcoming Course here in IAMM!

By Umi Amalin Zafirah Sakri



### Kursus Seni Khat 2025 5 July-20 December 2025

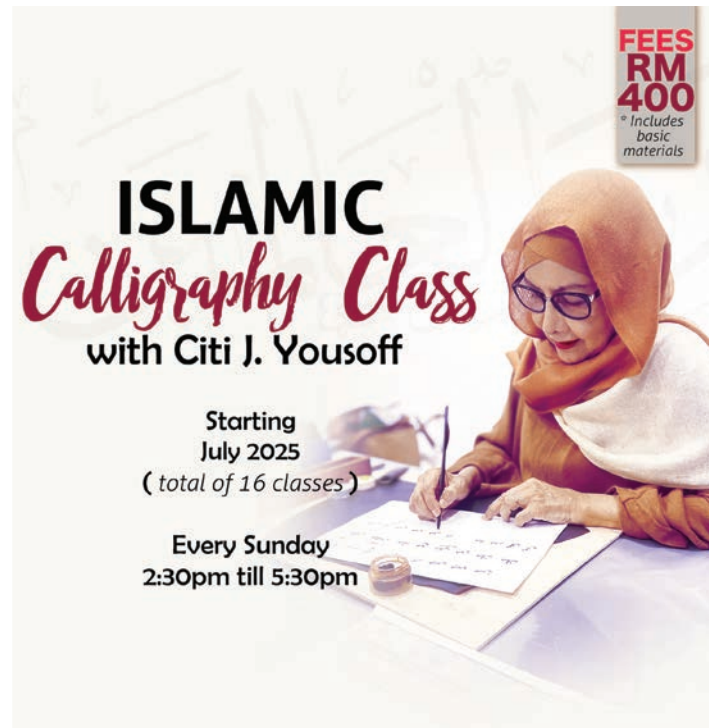
The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is reaching 25 years of organising its Islamic Calligraphy Course. This course is run in collaboration with Persatuan Seni Khat Kebangsaan Malaysia (PSKK) and will be conducted every Saturday under the guidance of PSKK's professional calligraphers. Participants will be exposed to Riq'ah, Nasakh, Thuluth, Zukhrufah scripts and calligraphy on canvas.

This course comprises three categories: a basic course for children; young adults; and the advanced course. The medium of instruction will be in Bahasa Melayu.

### Islamic Calligraphy Class with Citi J. Yousoff 6 July 2025 for 16 sessions, Sundays

Join this special course led by Citi J. Yousoff from Kelantan, Malaysia. She holds an Ijaza from the respected Master Hasan Çelebi in Turkey and

combines traditional Islamic calligraphy with Malay motifs and contemporary art. Her work blends the elegance of traditional Islamic calligraphy with rich Malay Islamic motifs and touches of contemporary art. With over five years of experience conducting workshops at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, Citi continues to share her deep passion and expertise in the classical art of Arabic calligraphy. The medium of instruction will be in English and Bahasa Melayu.



### Arabic Calligraphy Workshops with Fuad Kouichi Honda Scheduled for November 2025

This is a rare opportunity to learn from a global master. Fuad Kouichi Honda is a celebrated calligrapher from Japan who studied under some of the most respected figures in Arabic and Turkish calligraphy. His stunning work has been displayed in world-renowned institutions such as IAMM and the British Museum. He also leads the Japan Arabic Calligraphy Association. This workshop is open for two sessions. The beginner workshop will be on Day One and the advanced workshop on Day 2. Don't miss this special chance to learn from Fuad Kouichi Honda, a revered Arabic calligrapher visiting Kuala Lumpur! The medium of instruction will be in English and Japanese.

To join these courses, please send your details to [education@iamm.org.my](mailto:education@iamm.org.my) or give us a call at 03-2092 7031/7033.





#### 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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