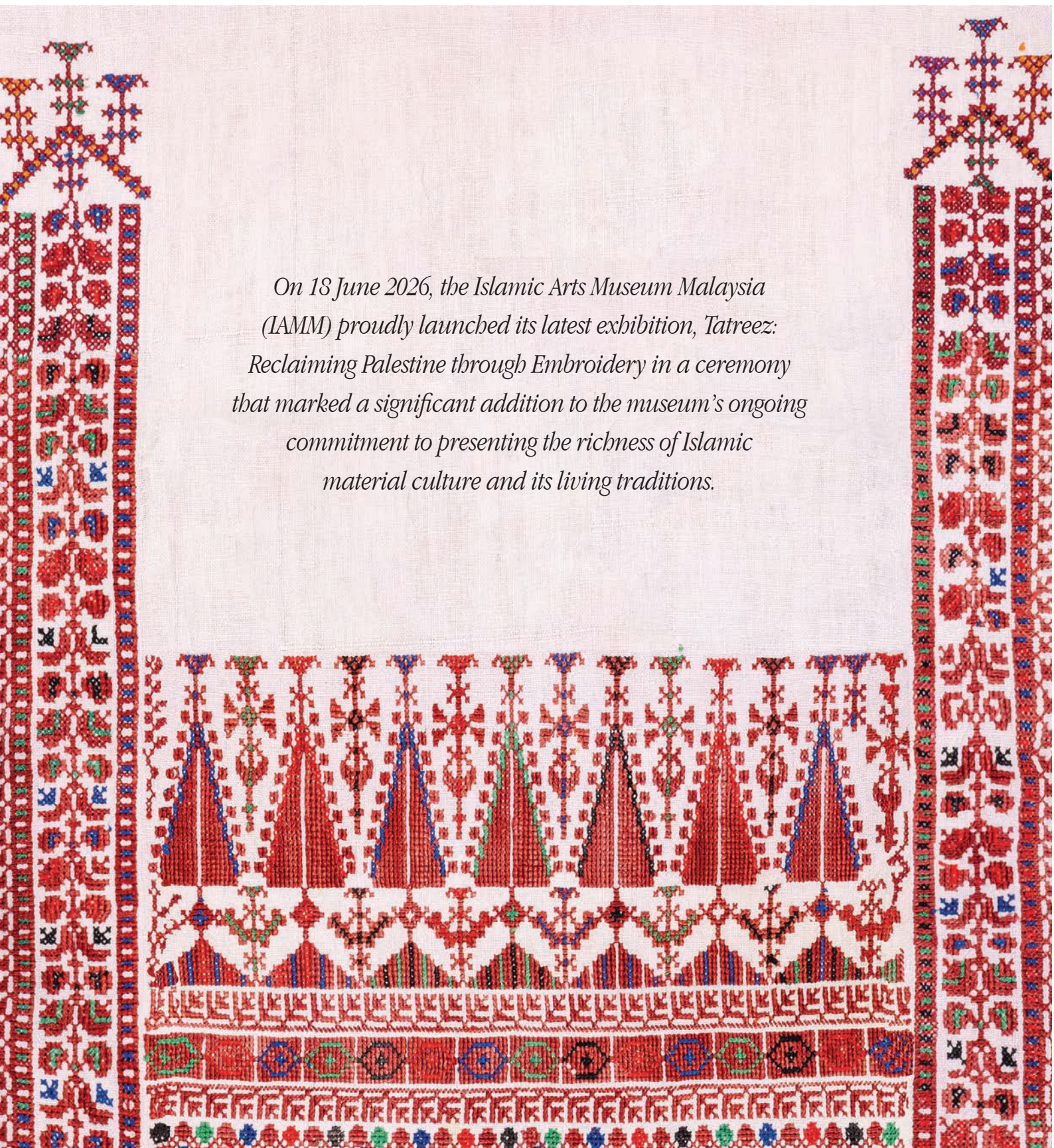


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*On 18 June 2026, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) proudly launched its latest exhibition, **Tatreez: Reclaiming Palestine through Embroidery** in a ceremony that marked a significant addition to the museum's ongoing commitment to presenting the richness of Islamic material culture and its living traditions.*

## Director's Message

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia launched its latest exhibition, *Tatreez: Reclaiming Palestine through Embroidery*, to much acclaim. The exhibition showcases vibrant Palestinian thobe dresses from the museum's collection. These remarkable examples of historical, traditional and contemporary attire have been carefully curated and displayed across two special galleries. The opening ceremony, held on 18 June 2026, was officiated by the spouse of the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Yang Amat Berbahagia Dato' Seri Dr Hajah Wan Azizah Wan Ismail. On behalf of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, we are grateful to have welcomed such distinguished guests to this very special occasion.

Our international collaboration this year has connected us with the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. An exceptional Orientalist-themed painting by Osman Hamdi Bey is among the objects currently on loan for a temporary exhibition in the United States. Another object that has made its way to the US is an important example of the cross-currents of influence that have always existed between the Islamic world and elsewhere. On view at the Met now is a large 19th-century European porcelain vase inspired by Turkish and Persian artistic traditions, produced by Edme Samson. It is always a pleasure to share selected parts of our masterpiece collection with a wider audience.

Closer to home, we have welcomed a new batch of volunteers who will begin their service at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia this month. In recent years we have managed to increase the number of volunteers ready to contribute their time and expertise in engaging with museum visitors. With this expansion, we hope to better serve our growing number of international visitors, particularly those from China and South Korea. Volunteers at the IAMM play an important and much appreciated role in connecting with visitors and enriching their museum experience.

On this occasion, I would also like to wish all our readers a very happy New Year 1448 AH, especially to Muslims around the world.

Thank you.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary  
Director  
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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## The Launching of *Tatreez*: *Reclaiming Palestine through Embroidery*

By Sharifah Shahanaz Syed Mohamed Redzuan

On 18 June 2026, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) launched its latest exhibition, *Tatreez: Reclaiming Palestine through Embroidery*, on an occasion that marked a significant addition to the museum's ongoing commitment to presenting the richness of Islamic material culture and its living traditions.

The opening ceremony was honoured by the presence of Yang Berbahagia Dato' Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail whose attendance highlighted the importance of cultural preservation and the continued appreciation of Palestinian's artistic heritage. This reflects the shared recognition of heritage as a vital bridge between history, identity and contemporary understanding.

Held at both the IAMM's Special Galleries, the exhibition presents an extensive exploration of Palestinian embroidery traditions tracing their evolution across generations and regions. A curatorial walkthrough gave insights into the exhibition's spatial narrative, providing context to the works on display and the preserved cultural stories.



In Special Gallery 1, traditional motifs and regional embroidery styles are reinterpreted with contemporary and technical sensibilities while remaining firmly anchored in identity and belonging. Through this curatorial approach, threads of the past are carefully woven into the present, reflecting the continuity of cultural expression across time and geography.

In contrast, Special Gallery 2 offers a more regional and topographical perspective, presenting embroidery styles, motifs and colour palettes that vary across Palestine's traditional districts while remaining visually and culturally connected. This diversity highlights the richness of Palestinian creative expression, where visual

language varies yet remains interconnected through shared cultural memory. The gallery is structured around ten key regions; Galilee, Nablus, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron, Jaffa, Ramlah-Lydd, Gaza and Naqab, with each contributing a distinct aesthetic identity. Taken together, the whole forms a cohesive cultural tapestry.



Across both galleries, the exhibition emphasises tatreez as more than decorative craft. It functions as a form of cultural documentation where patterns, stitches and compositions reflect lived experience, social identity and historical continuity. The exhibition also draws upon significant collecting and collaborative efforts that have helped shape the Museum's Palestinian textile collection. Alongside historical attire dating from the nineteenth century onwards, including pieces collected over twenty-seven years by Ian and Jenifer Rutherford, the display features commissioned tatreez

works crafted by Palestinian refugee women through collaborations with the Inaash Association.

The exhibition is further enriched by research contributions from Palestinian textile specialist Omar Joseph Nasser-Khoury, whose expertise provides valuable historical and cultural context. Together, through this combination of scholarship, collecting and contemporary practice, the exhibition demonstrates how tatreez continues to function as a living tradition that preserves identity and cultural belonging and remains relevant

to contemporary Palestinian cultural expression.

By following the exhibition's storyline, visitors are invited to engage with embroidery not only as an art form but also as a vessel of identity, resilience and continuity. The exhibition opening marks an important moment in IAMM's ongoing efforts to document and celebrate the traditions of the Islamic world and the different communities within it. It reinforces the museum's role as a space where cultural narratives are preserved and made accessible to diverse audiences.

Accompanying the exhibition is a catalogue featuring highlights from the Palestinian embroidery and dress collection, offering further insights into the historical and artistic dimensions of Palestinian embroidery. *Tatreez: Reclaiming Palestine through Embroidery* will be open to the public until 25 April 2027, welcoming visitors to experience the enduring significance of Palestinian textile heritage.



## Spice Journeys: *Taste and Trade in the Islamic World*

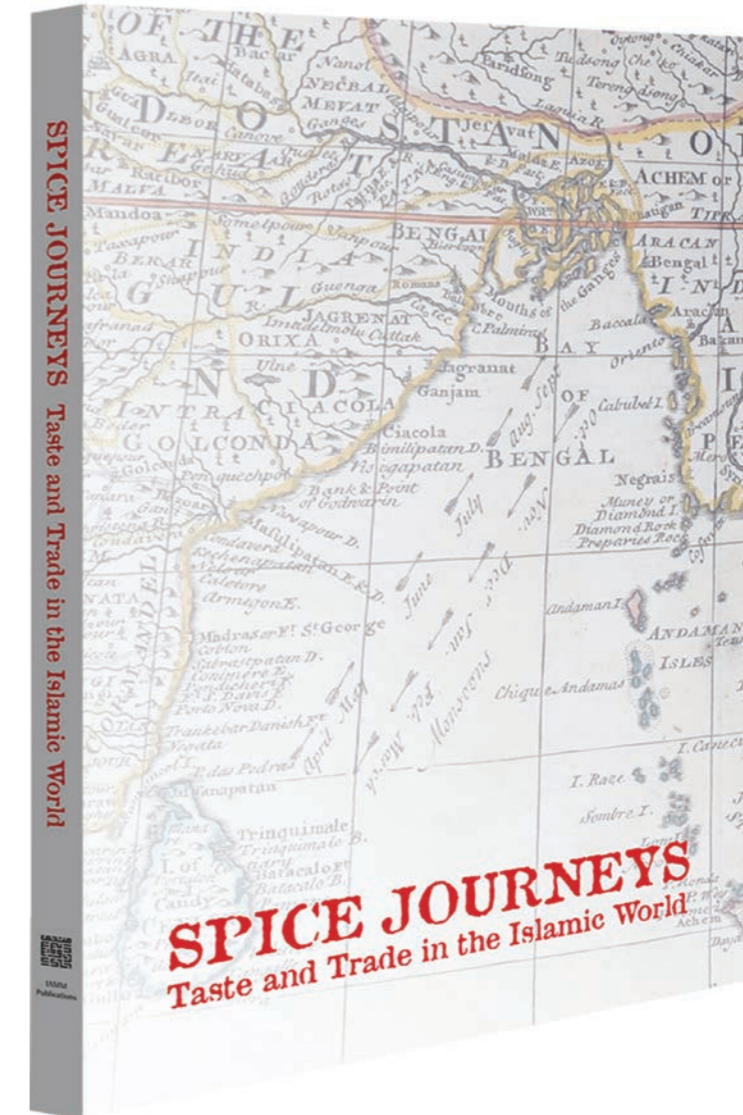
By Dalia Mohamed

Spices have done far more than season our food; they have actively shaped human history, driven global politics, and redrawn international borders. For centuries these precious commodities served as a cornerstone of economics, international trade, and traditional medicine, profoundly influencing the evolution of cultures, traditions and social rituals across the globe.

Beyond the kitchen, spices were, and remain, far more than mere flavour enhancers. They have historically been cherished for their therapeutic properties and used as exquisite ingredients in beauty rituals and cosmetic enhancements. The relentless pursuit of these aromatic treasures and commodities became a primary driving force for intrepid merchants and mariners who charted unknown

oceans across the centuries. From its very beginnings, the Islamic world has played a vital role in this endeavour. This book is a continuation of the first “Spice Journeys”, published by the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia twenty years ago. While the profound contributions of Muslim traders and cultivators are often overlooked, their legacy, much like the aromatic spices themselves, remain an indispensable element of a healthy and vibrant human culture.

This book enriches the experience with twelve recipes from across the Islamic world. From Southeast Asia to the shores of the Atlantic, these dishes celebrate the richness and diversity of the regions brought together by a culture that continues to cherish the flavours of God’s bounty.



Size: 17cmx24 cmx1.1cm  
Pages: 168  
Price: RM 35.00

## Inspired by the Southeast

By: Curatorial Department

Ever since the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia held a joint exhibition with an Orientalist-art theme at the British Museum six years ago, interest in the subject has been growing beyond expectations. *Inspired by the East: how the Islamic world influenced Western art* in London was followed by *Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage at the IAMM in 2023*. It was the largest display of these works that had been seen for decades. In the meantime, other museums have taken up the cause.

Since the IAMM's pioneering show, the worldwide quest has been to examine the question of reality in these paintings from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Their popularity had been in decline for much of the past hundred years, mainly because of the attitude of art critics who dismissed the whole genre because of a few improbable settings. The IAMM has made a mission of collecting only those works that reflect at least some of the reality of the Middle East and North Africa at a time when

there was great enthusiasm in the West for images of the Islamic world.

The latest museum to take this analytical approach is the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Titled *Orientalism: Between Fact and Fantasy*, this exhibition combines paintings with the decorative arts that were so popular during the heyday of Orientalist art. The IAMM's close association with the Met enabled us to play a significant part in the exhibition, launched

in June 2026. Among the star attractions on display is a definitive work from the IAMM collection. Nothing explains the ambiguities of the genre better than Osman Hamdi Bey. This pillar of the Ottoman cultural establishment, and director of a pioneering museum in Turkey, was also an avid painter.

Crossing all the perceived barriers at the time, Osman Hamdi Bey's work is not only revealing about real life in the 'Orient', it is also exquisite to look at. The supreme example of his oeuvre is 'Young Woman Reading', which has a place of honour at the Met exhibition. Painted with serenity and considerable attention to detail, it depicts the truth of the harem. Quite unlike the imaginings of those artists who could never have seen a real place of seclusion for women, this vision is as staid and well-dressed as would have been equally appropriate for ladies of any society in the Victorian era.

The New York exhibition also explores the work of those artists more inclined to fantasy than fact. Starting

with Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798, it assesses the unconvincing depictions of Jean Auguste Dominique Ingres; the romance of Eugène Delacroix; and the compulsive vision of the most productive and well-travelled of all the Orientalists – Jean-Léon Gérôme. Many of the painters were also collectors of Islamic objects, which were useful for their work as well their homes. The exhibition features approximately 180 objects from the Met collection, including illustrated books, arms and armour, textiles, garments, glassware and metalwork. There was still space for objects from other institutions. Ceramics is among the most important areas to be influenced by Islamic art, and another category in which the IAMM has sent a loan to New York.



'Young Woman Reading'  
Osman Hamdi Bey (1842-1910)  
Oil on canvas



Porcelain vase produced  
by Edme Samson  
France  
19th century

## Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia's Volunteer Programme 2026

By Zulkifli Ishak

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is pleased to announce the selection of its latest intake of volunteers for 2026. Following the assessment process, 24 volunteers were chosen from a pool of applicants to join the museum's growing volunteer community. Representing a diverse range of backgrounds, expertise

and nationalities, the new volunteers were welcomed at a special appreciation gathering held on 5 June 2026 at MOZA Restaurant. The event provided an opportunity for both new and returning volunteers to meet, share experiences, and strengthen the sense of community that is at the heart of the programme.

The 2026 intake joins the dedicated group of volunteers who began their service in previous years. During the gathering, new volunteers received their official IAMM volunteer identification badges, while returning volunteers were presented with certificates of appreciation in recognition of their valuable contributions to

the museum. A sharing session by senior volunteers offered first-hand insights into their experiences at the museum. IAMM volunteers play an important role in supporting the museum's educational and public engagement initiatives. They are trained to assist visitors and conduct guided tours in multiple languages,

including English, Bahasa Malaysia, Korean, French and Chinese.

The museum deeply appreciates the time, commitment, and enthusiasm contributed by its volunteers. The programme is managed by the Marketing Department, with training and supervision

provided by the Curatorial Department.

The initiative continues to receive strong support from the Director of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, reflecting the museum's commitment to fostering public engagement with the visitors from all walks of life.



*Some of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia Volunteers for the 2026 intake, proudly wearing their official volunteer badges.*



*Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) volunteers receiving their Certificates of Recognition in appreciation of their contributions to the museum.*

## Tiraz, More than Attire

By Siti Nur Ain Kamaruzaman

In the Islamic world, garments served not merely as clothing, but also as a key symbol of political authority. The term *tiraz* is derived from a Persian word meaning ‘embroidery’. However, these textiles were produced using two distinct techniques, either through weaving or embroidery. The production of *tiraz* in palace workshops began during the Umayyad period and continued to flourish under Abbasid rule. The significance of *tiraz* in Islamic political culture is reflected in the establishment of designated weaving workshops known as *Dar al-Tiraz*, typically situated within palace complexes. To ensure quality, especially from palace workshops, an officer called *Sahib al-tiraz* was appointed to inspect the *tiraz* and the instruments used.

Although *tiraz* was traditionally associated with court production, it was also manufactured in public factories, giving rise to two types of workshops, known as *khassa* and *‘amma*. The *khassa* workshops were exclusive establishments dedicated to producing *tiraz* for the caliph, selected dignitaries and diplomatic gifts. In contrast, *‘amma* workshops were located outside the palace and produced *tiraz* for public

use as well as commercial trade. Nevertheless, *‘amma* workshops were occasionally commissioned to fulfil court orders when the palace workshops were unable to meet the demand. Linen was the primary fabric used in the production of *tiraz*, while inscriptions were typically executed in silk thread. The Prophet Muhammad’s prohibition on the wearing of silk by men, except in limited amounts, may have been one of the factors influencing the use of silk only for the inscription.

*Tiraz* commonly featured inscriptions with the names of caliphs, the year and the place of production. This *tiraz* in the IAMM collection bears an inscription woven in dark red silk thread that reads: “*The tiraz was made in Misr under the Abbasid Caliph al-Muktafi by Muhammad ... and is dated [2]93 (905–06).*” Inscribed in Kufic script, *tiraz* was primarily fashioned as an armband on the *jubba* or , the standard court attire worn by caliphs and high-ranking officials during formal proceedings. Among the most important ceremonies involving *tiraz* was the *khil’a* ceremony, where *tiraz* was bestowed upon dignitaries and high-ranking officials in recognition of their loyalty to the ruling authority.



A silk and linen tiraz textile fragment  
Dated 293 AH / 905-6 AD  
Egypt

Beyond its role in court garments, *tiraz* was also incorporated into turban wrappers, as well as horse and camel saddlecloths, and prominently displayed during significant state occasions. This wide-ranging application

highlights the importance of *tiraz* as a publicly visible emblem of authority and power. Beyond public display, the value placed upon *tiraz* is further reflected in their use as burial garments, showing the high esteem in which these

textiles were held. Much like coins bearing a ruler’s name asserted sovereignty, *tiraz* similarly inscribed political legitimacy onto the wearer’s body, transforming garments into visible extensions of authority, prestige and status.

## When Conservation Meets Modern Tech

By Camilla Bianchi

During the conservation of a remarkable Gebyok (a traditional carved wooden screen from Javanese Muslim homes) the museum team faced a familiar challenge: what do you do when the visual integrity of an artwork is compromised by the absence of a vital component.

This Gebyok is especially important because its delicate carvings include verses from the Qur'an, turning it into both a work of art and a meaningful expression of faith and craftsmanship. Over time, some decorative elements were lost,

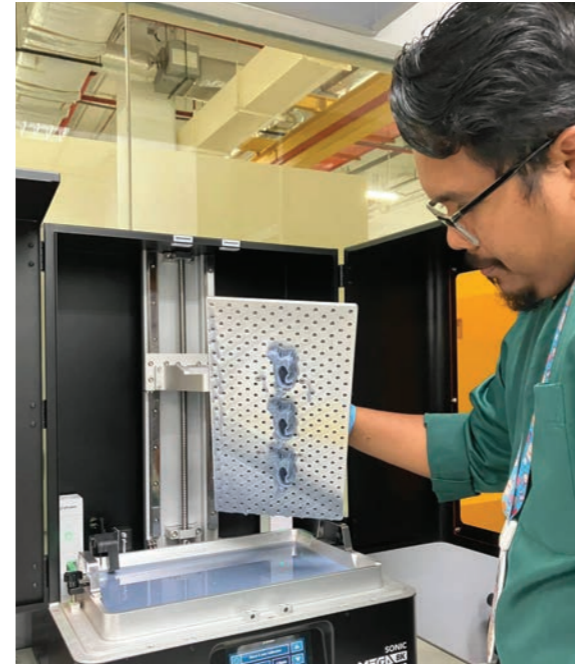
leaving gaps in the intricate design.

In conservation, we usually don't 'fill in' missing parts of the decoration unless they affect stability or make inscriptions hard to read. The principle is simple: respect the object's history, even its scars. On this occasion, however, something new came into play — a high-resolution 3D printer recently bought by the museum. Curiosity led to the question of whether modern technology could help us re-create a missing carved element in a

way that is fully reversible and safe for the object?

Panel No. 22 became our test case. It still showed clear traces of where the missing piece once existed, making it the perfect candidate. Working closely with an IAMM curator and Arabic researcher, we carefully studied the surrounding patterns and reconstructed the missing design digitally.

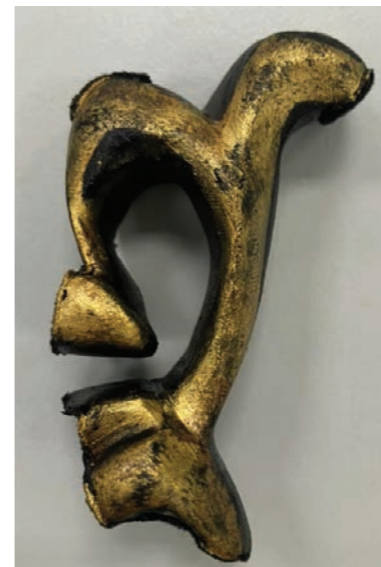
The piece was first shaped in modelling clay, then brought to life using 3D printing.



After printing, it was refined, painted and finished to blend visually with the original wood. A soft felt barrier was added so the insert never actually touches the historic surface. The result is a removable piece that slips into place like a

puzzle, with no glue, no drilling and no permanent changes. The outcome is words that can be read more clearly, allowing visitors to better appreciate the original rhythm of the carvings and writing, while the Gebyok keeps its authenticity intact.

A small missing piece, a bit of digital magic, and a lot of careful hands — showing how heritage conservation can be both respectful and a little bit inventive.



## What's On at IAMM: Education Highlights

By Umi Amalin Zafirah Sakri  
& Muhammad Hazieq Hafiey

### World Book Day Celebration @ Children's Library | 23 April 2026

IAMM celebrated its first-ever participation in World Book Day, the annual global celebration established by UNESCO, on 23 April 2026 at the Children's Library. The programme offered children fun and interactive opportunities to explore the joy of reading through activities such as a storytelling competition, quizzes and craft-making sessions. Participants were also invited to dress up as their favourite storybook characters, encouraging them to express their creativity and bring their favourite stories to life.

Through these activities the programme aimed to inspire a love for reading, spark curiosity, and encourage children to see books as gateways to knowledge and imagination. The event attracted a strong turnout of children and families, creating a lively and engaging atmosphere throughout the day. Participants left with memorable experiences, exciting prizes and new books that encouraged continued reading, while families enjoyed valuable quality time together.



### International Museum Day Celebration @ IAMM | 18 May 2026

IAMM marked International Museum Day on 18 May 2026 by offering a range of activities that encouraged visitors to explore and appreciate the role of museums in society. There were guided tours, an artefact hunt, our series of *Be Inspired Modular Programme* activities, stamp collection sessions, and other interactive experiences that encouraged exploration and learning.

The programme aimed to make the museum accessible to visitors from diverse backgrounds while introducing new ways of appreciating museums beyond traditional visits. More than 500 local and international visitors attended the celebration, demonstrating enthusiastic participation throughout the day. As a result, visitors gained a deeper understanding and appreciation of Islamic art, history and culture while creating meaningful memories and discovering new perspectives on heritage.

**Little Cultural Explorer | 31 May 2026**

The first edition of the Little Cultural Explorer series took place on 31 May 2026 at the Children’s Library with the theme “Hop on the Caravan!”, inspired by the historic Silk Road. The programme invited children to explore cultures from around the world by trying on traditional costumes and learning about the stories and heritage behind them. In addition to the costume experience, participants enjoyed sing-along sessions,

craft-making activities, and photoshoot opportunities. Designed as an engaging school holiday programme, the event encouraged children to learn about global cultures in a fun and interactive setting while expressing their creativity and imagination. “Hop on the Caravan!” also allowed the Children’s Library to showcase its educational offerings to a wider audience, while participants gained valuable cultural insights and created memorable experiences with their families.



**Little Librarian | 3 June 2026**

Held on 3 June 2026 as part of the school holiday schedule, Little Librarian offered children the opportunity to explore the role of a librarian for a day. IAMM was delighted to provide this meaningful experience, allowing children to discover the world of libraries and gain a better understanding of the important role librarians play in creating spaces for learning and exploration. Through this engaging programme,

participants learned about the functions and responsibilities of librarians while taking part in activities related to book arrangement, library operations, and storytelling. IAMM hopes to continue to nurture children’s interest in reading, encourage curiosity, and inspire a greater appreciation for books and knowledge.



**Beyond Sight with PERTIS | 11 June 2026**

With the support of IAMM’s conservators and in collaboration with PERTIS, IAMM conducted the Beyond Sight programme for four participants. Recognising that museums are spaces for learning, discovery and connection, IAMM believes that everyone should have the opportunity to experience and engage with history, culture and art in meaningful ways. Beyond

Sight was specially designed to provide an inclusive and multi-sensory experience, allowing participants to explore selected artefacts through touch, sound and storytelling. Through this initiative, IAMM aimed to create a more accessible museum experience while encouraging deeper appreciation and understanding of Islamic art and heritage.



**Catalogue to Conversation @ Scholars' Library | 25 June 2026**

The pilot session of *Catalogue to Conversation* introduced a new discussion series that explores museum publications and collections through conversations with the public. The first event was conducted with a group of 10 participants to encourage meaningful discussions and closer engagement with the topic. The session titled "Let's Look at Loot" was inspired by the Tipu Sultan catalogue and exhibition, inviting participants to discover the stories, research and historical insights behind museum collections. The series aims to

encourage deeper appreciation of IAMM's intellectual output while providing a space for knowledge-sharing and engagement with art and history.

**Lagu Rakyat Sing-Along & Craft Session @ Children's Library | 11 July 2026**

This *Lagu Rakyat Sing-Along & Craft Session* provided children with an opportunity to explore traditional songs through singing and creative activities. Participants took part in a singalong session featuring popular local folk songs, followed by a craft activity that encouraged creativity and imagination. The programme aimed to introduce



children to cultural heritage in a fun and engaging way while creating memories learning songs related to Malaysian's identity through music, art, and storytelling.

**Incoming Course**

**Kursus Seni Khat 2026 | 4 July - 5 December 2026**

In collaboration with Persatuan Seni Khat Kebangsaan (PSKK), IAMM is currently promoting the Kursus Asas Seni Khat (KASK), a programme designed to introduce participants to the artistry of Arabic calligraphy. Scheduled to run every Saturday from 4 July to 5 December 2026, the course will offer guided lessons in various calligraphic styles, including Naskh, Thuluth, Riq'ah, and Zukhrufah.

Through this initiative, IAMM aims to preserve and promote Islamic artistic traditions while strengthening community engagement through educational programmes. Participants will have the opportunity to develop foundational calligraphy skills, enhance their artistic abilities, and cultivate focus and patience within a supportive learning environment.

**Incoming Programme and Activities In conjunction with Tatreez: Reclaiming Palestine Through Embroidery Exhibition**

**1. Palestinian Traditional Dress Day Celebration & Tatreez Workshop | 25 July 2026**



- 2. **Special Guided Tour | July - September 2026**
- 3. **Drop In sessions @ IAMM Open Space | June 2026- April 2027**
- 4. **Curator's Book Talk | 27 August 2026**
- 5. **Voices Together: Community Read-Out-Loud at the Children's Library | 4 September 2026**
- 6. **Guided Worksheet Trail (School Holiday Special) | 5 September 2026 & 5 December 2026**
- 7. **Silkscreen Printing Workshop | 10 April 2027**

#### 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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