



# DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Dear friends, colleagues, and followers,

This last issue of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) newsletter for the year 2018 marks the 20th anniversary of the museum. With this in mind, so much has been prepared, worked for, and achieved to commemorate this date and set the future of the IAMM. This 18th of October will be an important date to all of us, as it marks the launching of the British Museum new Albukhary Gallery of the Islamic World. Its inauguration culminates years of preparation, research, and supervision at the British Museum, but more importantly, it has built up closer ties and working experience between the two institutions, day-by-day.

The launch of the Albukhary Gallery of the Islamic World is a landmark event in the development of the IAMM through the generous contribution of the Albukhary Foundation. Within the premises of the new Albukhary Gallery of the Islamic World, we will now present a unique exhibition, The Arabesque: An Introduction, which draws on the rich collection of the IAMM, aiming at introducing the importance of a decorative ornament based on stylised leaves and tendrils, the arabesque, which through its regional variations, has acquired worldwide recognition.

At home, the past few months have been vivid, with our hosting the International Conference on Malay Medical Manuscripts 2018 (ICOMM) on 8th and 9th September, which has opened doors for future collaborations with the academia. This was followed by several workshops and programmes held in conjunction with Al-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic Medical Manuscripts exhibition.

14th December 2018 will be another important date for the museum, as we look forward to have The Most Honorable Prime Minister of Malaysia, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, officiating the impressive Scholar's Library. This will also take place in conjunction with the IAMM's 20th anniversary celebration, which we aim to celebrate throughout the coming year.

Over the past 20 years, we have gone from successfully publishing around 48 catalogues on various topics highlighting our growing collection, conducting 66 exhibitions ranging on the IAMM collection, to holding joint exhibitions with institutions locally and internationally, as well as hosting a variety of travelling exhibitions. So much has happened in the last twenty years, and we hope that together we can start building our legacy for the next twenty years to come.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary

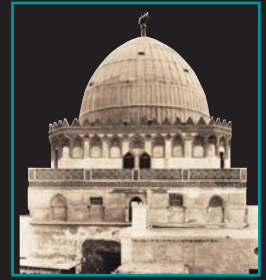


Front cover: A monumental Timurid cut tile mosaic mihrab panel  
14th/15th century AD  
Central Asia or Persia

## UPCOMING EVENTS 2018

8<sup>th</sup> JUNE – 1<sup>ST</sup> NOVEMBER 2018

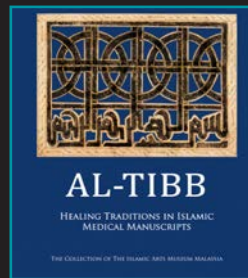
Exhibition:  
The Aesthetics of Commemoration:  
The Mausoleum of Imam Shafie over  
800 Years' Exhibition at IAMM



29 SEPTEMBER 2018  
Talk:  
"Framing Architecture: The Power Of  
Photography" by Rupajiwa Studio

29 NOVEMBER 2018  
Talk:  
"Framing Architecture" by Wan Fuad

19<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> DECEMBER 2018



Exhibition:  
'At-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic  
Medical Manuscripts'

6 OCTOBER 2018  
Aromatherapy Workshop  
"Art of Attar: Aromatherapy of the  
Muslim World"

13 OCTOBER 2018  
Workshop: Herbs Drawing &  
Watercolour Workshop (for adults)

10 NOVEMBER 2018  
Workshop: Botanical Watercolour  
Workshop (for children, 8-15 years  
old)

MARCH – DECEMBER 2018  
Children's Weekend Workshops:  
Teeth & Smile (October 2018)  
X-Ray (November 2018)  
Body Map (December 2018)

18<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER 2018

Special Project:  
British Council's Crafting Futures

18 OCTOBER 2018  
Textile Conservation Workshop:  
'Wear with Care'

27 OCTOBER 2018  
Art Workshop  
Natural Dye Basic Shibori  
"Colours from our backyard"



14<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018



IAMM 20th Anniversary Celebration  
Officiation of the Scholar's Library  
by Honourable Prime Minister,  
Tun Mahathir Mohamad

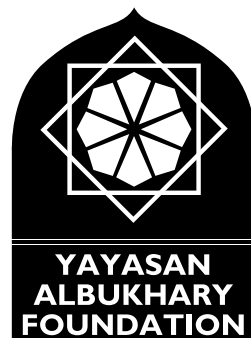
## THE OPENING OF THE ALBUKHARY GALLERY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM



The Albukhary Foundation's commitment towards preserving Islamic heritage has gone further than establishing the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, as the foundation now ventures overseas. The foundation's contribution towards the refurbishment of the British Museum's Islamic collection is unquestionably a milestone; the culmination of this historic cooperation is on 18th October 2018, as the new gallery officially opens its doors to the public. A highly diverse global audience in London will provide a unique opportunity for the Albukhary Foundation to stand together with the British Museum to present a realistic image of the Islamic art and to share the passion of art and culture with the world, especially at a time of increasing intolerance and lack of understanding.

A riveting collection of Islamic artworks and treasures that underline global connections across a vast region of the world, from Nigeria to the Malay Archipelago, will be showcased in a palatial hall at the heart of the British Museum. The collection is not only limited to objects attributable to empires of the past, but also includes a combination of new approaches to Islamic art from the 19th and 20th centuries. The celebration will also be accompanied by public events and activities.

Through this effort, the new gallery endeavours to illuminate otherwise ambiguous perceptions of Islamic heritage, stressing instead the relationship and influences between the artistic practice in Islam and other religious traditions. The gallery also highlights the acceptance of knowledge imported from foreign sources that has influenced many aspects of art and science in Islam.



The British  
Museum

# THE ARABESQUE EXHIBITION AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM, LONDON, UNITED KINGDOM

Illumination of the Qur'an and Hadith marks one of the highest artistic approaches in Islamic art, a reflection of not only regal tastes, but an allocation of the high priority that Revelation has in a Muslim's faith. Following an Islamic prohibition of depicting living objects — people or animals — non-figurative, vegetal ornamentation provided visual relief. Muslim designers worked on a stylised plant motif of stretchable ferns and tendrils that could merge with geometrical shapes and grow to infinity.

'Arabesque' instigates the viewer's aesthetic taste as it analyses the role this decorative art has taken in embellishing Islamic architecture, Qur'anic manuscripts, books and objects of daily use. The exhibition and its catalogue serve as an introduction to the usage of the arabesque, widely used among Islamic communities.

It is thus a great opportunity to have the exhibition on such an extraordinary subject launched in conjunction with the inauguration of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World at the British Museum on 18th October 2018.



## IAMM 20<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



A n n i v e r s a r y

Since its opening in 1998, IAMM has successfully paved its way through international collaboration, hosting educational discourses, thought-provoking exhibitions and much more. Among our first international collaborations were with the Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah, Kuwait and the Stibbert Museum, Florence, Italy. Today, we are proudly looking forward to our upcoming exhibition at the British Museum.

As an educator and custodian of Islamic art and crafts for present and future generations, IAMM sees the conservation, restoration and preservation of artefacts as a central part of its mission. It provides preservation and conservation services for the artefacts through its Conservation Centre, which was opened on 10th March 2004. Through research and training, the centre works to develop preservation techniques and has become among the best Islamic art conservation centres in Malaysia.

This 14th December marks IAMM's 20th anniversary, celebrated throughout the year. We are also honoured to have the Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to officiate the impressive Scholar's Library in conjunction with the celebration



## DEVELOPMENT AND CONTINUITY: ISLAMIC ARTS OF THE MALAY WORLD

*Based on the presentation at the "Imagining Islamic Art from Indonesia" International Workshop at the Research Centre for Material Culture, Leiden, the Netherlands on 20th – 21st August 2018.*

By: Dr Heba Nayel Barakat  
Head of Curatorial,  
Curatorial Affairs Department,  
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is a relatively new museum. It officially opened its doors to visitors on December 1998, and we are celebrating the 20th anniversary of the museum this year. Our collection covers a geographical area from the Iberian Peninsula to Southeast Asia and China spanning over 1,300 years. Part of our collection are nearly 15,000 artefacts from the Malay world, inclusive of up to 3,500 Malay manuscripts, which are placed under our custody by the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (JAKIM).

Visiting the museum, our audience seeks to enrich themselves with the opulence of Islamic arts and architecture from around the world, but more so about Islamic art in Malaysia: a multicultural, multiethnic, and multireligious country. To cater to this, we have decided to re-curate the Malay World Permanent Gallery. Aiming to bring a new outlook and fresh perspectives of the Malay world, we intend to move away from merely grouping the artefacts according to their types or typology, or by the objects' category. This new approach will take visitors to a different experience in telling a story of Malay civilisation, which has always been connected with major Muslim civilisations in the main Islamic lands.

One of the obstacles encountered is that Southeast Asia was perceived by many as being on the periphery of the Islamic world, thus having little or no connection that could be established with the main Islamic art repertoire and historical tradition. With this



new, upcoming gallery refurbishment, we want to tell a story of Malay civilisation – the story of dominant sultanates and vibrant ports. Hence, our permanent display is to address the subject of the Islamic arts of the Malay world from a multiperspective standpoint so as to introduce many themes and present multilayered information to address various target groups.

To better deal with the information and to reorganise the gallery, we have divided its storyline into three main phases. Phase one, the coming of Islam to the Malay world up to the 14th century; phase two, the major sultanates and royal courts in the 15th to 17th centuries; and phase three; the premodern world, 18th and 19th centuries.

Phase one mainly deals with the story of the coming of Islam to the Malay Archipelago and early Malay contact with foreigners. Islam arrived to the Malay world by way of merchants coming to trade and awaiting the monsoon winds before sailing back to their home origins or furthering their trade to China. They brought with them coins, and when they died, their fellow traders would have performed an Islamic burial, leaving behind tombstones inscribed mainly in Arabic with Qur'anic verses, which are in many cases dated. The story of the travellers to this region will be among the main themes highlighted in this phase, such as accounts by Marco Polo in 1290 who arrived at the port city of Samudera Pasai, and Ibn Battuta in 1345 who encountered Sultan Malik al-Zahir of Samudera Pasai on his way further east to China.

Another interesting theme in this section is related to the Jawi script, which was born out of the introduction of Arabic characters and its adaptation into the Malay language in the archipelago. The Malay language written in Jawi script gradually became the lingua franca of the region, used in official and diplomatic documents, and a very important component of Islamic art in the region. The Jawi script had six letters added to the pre-existing ones in Arabic to facilitate correct pronunciation of Malay words. As such, the use of Jawi encouraged the rise in the production of

Malay manuscripts of religion and literature such as the Malay hikayat, or epic. Examples of the Malay hikayat from the collection of IAMM include a Hikayat Nur Muhammad, which was completed in 1797 AD / 1211 AH; Hikayat Nabi Yusuf by one famous Malay scholar, Daud ibn Abdullah al-Fatani; and Hikayat Damsyik, a story of Muslim romance; all of which offer visitors an interesting and engaging display.

Phase two will feature three major sultanates, namely Aceh, Malacca and Johor-Riau, in the period of the 15th to 17th centuries, to represent the story of rulers and sovereignty in the Malay Archipelago. This section highlights the influences or similarities found in objects associated with the Muslim rulers in the Malay Archipelago to the rulers in the main Islamic lands by way of coins, tombstones and other remains. Coins particularly will represent one of the main themes in this section. The sultanate coins in the Malay Archipelago were issued in Arabic script, inscribed with new Islamic names and titles, such as sultan and shah. The title sultan had been used in Egypt and Syria since the Ayyubid dynasty and all throughout the Mamluk era, as well as during Seljuk and Ottoman periods. The use of these titles by the rulers in the Malay Archipelago, found on the obverse and reverse of the coins, suggests the eagerness of the new sultanates to be part of the Muslim abode.

The final phase highlights the premodern period, which mainly refers to the 18th and 19th centuries. This last section will display the Museum's extensive collection of Malay manuscripts and documents, as well as representations of famous customs in the region, such as shadow puppetry. Known as wayang kulit in Malay, shadow puppetry or shadow play reflects in particular the content of Malay hikayats, consisting of stories taken from and inspired by different sources in Arabic, Persian and Hindu epic traditions. These would then be improvised by having Islamic elements added in by having the original characters replaced with ones based on Islamic historical figures, for example, as well as new contents which are obviously Islamic in nature.





IAMM

HIGHLIGHTS

## INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF LIBRARY ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS (IFLA)



*Fionnuala Croke (left), the Director of the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin and Elizabeth James, the Head of the National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London (right) in the Q&A session at the conference*

IAMM is honoured to have collaborated with the International Federation of Libraries Associations (IFLA) and Institutions, Arts Libraries Division Section 30, in conducting the IFLA Satellite Meeting with the theme “Global Arts and the Islamic World: Documenting Islamic Arts Worldwide” at IAMM on 23rd August 2018. Seven renowned speakers shared their knowledge and expertise with the participants on the issue of artwork documentation, especially regarding Islamic art.



*Taking a closer look at the Scholar’s Library special collection of rare books and manuscripts*

At IAMM, participants were given the opportunity to tour the permanent and special galleries, viewing the ‘Al-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic Arts Medical Manuscripts’ exhibition that was on display until 31st December 2018. They also accessed the Scholar’s Library and browsed through more than 20,000 books in the library collection. IAMM is looking into this event as an initial step to a more productive collaboration between IAMM and IFLA and the participants from all around the world who were willing to share their experience in handling artwork documentation in their institutions.

## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MALAY MEDICAL MANUSCRIPTS (ICOMMM) 2018

ICOMMM 2018 was held on the 8th-9th September in conjunction with the ‘Al-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic Medical Manuscripts’ exhibition, aiming to inculcate greater awareness of these Malay manuscripts to the public and academia. The two-day conference was successfully launched by the Rector of International Islamic University Malaysia, Prof. Tan Sri Dato’ Dzulkifli Abdul Razak and attended by 120 attentive participants.

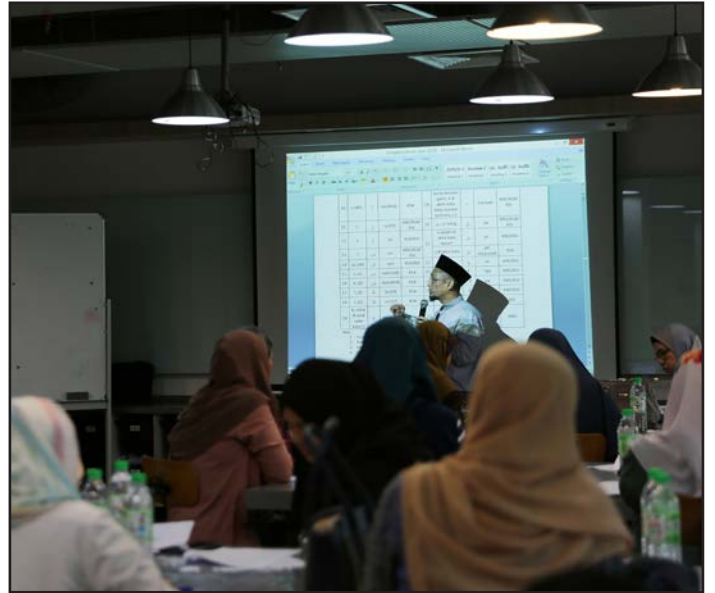
The conference focused on making the data in Malay medical manuscripts useful and relevant to contemporary society while addressing issues as wide as pseudoscientific activities masquerading as Malay medicine, bio-piracy, humanising science, and de-Westernising and Islamising knowledge. Siti Marina Mohd. Maidin, the curator of ‘Al-Tibb’ also delivered a brief lecture on the “Perspectives of the Dissemination of Malay Medical Knowledge in the light of Al-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic Medical Manuscripts Exhibition.”



*The Curator of Al-Tibb Siti Marina Mohd. Maidin sharing her research on yaws disease in the Malay medical manuscripts.*

## WORKSHOP: 'LITERASI JAWI KLASIK & MODEN'

Also in conjunction with the exhibition 'Al-Tibb: Healing Traditions in Islamic Medical Manuscripts', the Education department came up with an introductory manuscript-reading workshop, 'Literasi Jawi Klasik dan Moden' (Classical and Modern Jawi Literacy), which was held on 4th August 2018. The workshop was conducted by Dr Adi Yasran of IKIM's Klinik Jawi. Attended by more than 40 participants, Dr Adi focused on assisting beginners and intermediate Jawi readers to understand the differences in spelling and pronunciation between classical and modern Jawi. Once the participants were ready, they were briefly taught how to read a Jawi manuscript and transliterate it correctly.



## TALK: 'MUSIC OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD: AN INTRODUCTION'

A collaborative event between the IAMM and Seni Pusaka, the talk 'Music of the Islamic World: An Introduction' was part of a series of events on Persian music under the same name. The series went on for two days from 15th to 16th September 2018. Delivered by Eddin Khoo of Seni Pusaka, the talk served as the opening event for the series, followed by a Persian instrumental concert in the evening, and a Persian Musical Workshop on the following day. Eddin Khoo talked to an audience of 50 people about Persian music and the role it has had in the diverse cultures and arts found in Islam.



## WORKSHOP: 'ART OF ATTAR: AROMATHERAPY OF THE MUSLIM WORLD'

The workshop 'Art of Attar: Aromatherapy of the Muslim World' is a part of the 'Al-Tibb' series of educational programmes. The purpose of this workshop is to guide participants on how to produce attar or essential oil for personal use while at the same time reflecting on its usage as a therapeutic treatment in Islamic medicine.

The workshop will be conducted by Hafsa Hasan on 6th October 2018. A RM100 participation fee is applicable per participant. For more information, please contact the Education Department.



## WORKSHOP: 'WEAR WITH CARE' & 'COLOURS FROM OUR BACKYARD'

IAMM will be organising two special workshops as part of our collaboration with the British Council on textiles, 'Crafting Futures'. The workshops 'Wear with Care' and 'Colours from Our Backyard' will be conducted on 18th and 27th of October respectively.

'Wear with Care' is a free workshop limited to 15 participants, aiming to share with participants simple, practical, and effective tips to care for one's family textiles and clothing. The participants will also learn how to distinguish characteristics of various textiles through a hands-on approach as well as by using some apparatus.

'Colours from Our Backyard' is open to the public with a RM120 participation fee. Participants will learn how to produce natural dyes by extracting them from local plants and goods. The participants will also be guided on how to dye in Shibori style and create beautiful textile designs.

For more info, contact the Education Department.



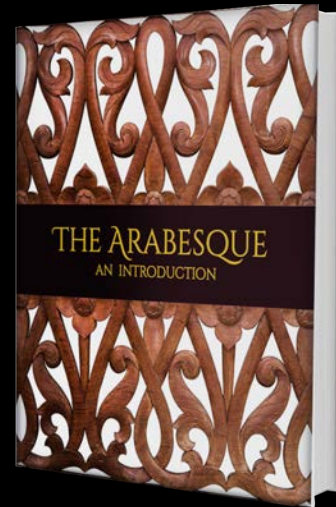


IAMM

PUBLICATION

## THE ARABESQUE: AN INTRODUCTION

The Arabesque, a form of decorative ornament based on stylised leaves and tendrils, is one of the most popular and emblematic elements in Islamic art. Supremely adaptable and versatile, it functions equally effectively in the foreground or as a space filler, whether in manuscripts and bindings, ceramics, stonework, woodwork, textiles or other media. In 'The Arabesque: An Introduction', the specialist curators of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia and an international group of experts explore the 1,200-year history of the Arabesque and its worldwide manifestations, from the central lands of Islam to the Malay world and Latin America. 'The Arabesque: An Introduction' also contains a fully illustrated descriptive catalogue of the exhibition 'The Arabesque', drawing on the rich collections of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia and staged from October 2018 to September 2019 on the occasion



Nett Price : RM 120.00

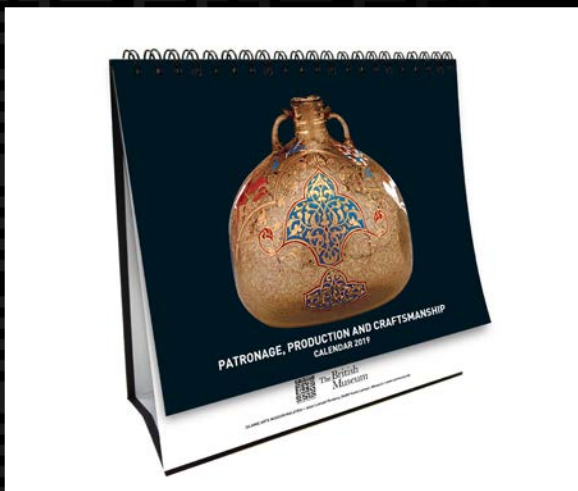
of the inauguration of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World at the British Museum.

## THE MAKING OF ALBUKHARY FOUNDATION GALLERY OF THE ISLAMIC WORLD

Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World at the British Museum is set to materialise on 18th October 2018. In conjunction with that historic milestone, there will be two new publications to accompany the opening in the same year: 'The Islamic World: A History in Objects' published in October, and 'The Making of Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World' will be published in November. The books consist of a series of articles exploring the nature of Islamic visual cultures, the consistency of the Islamic acquisitions at the British Museum and the challenges beyond creating a contemporary design gallery within a historic building is an innovation worth discovering.



MUSEUM  
SHOP



## IAMM CALENDAR 2019 *Patronage, Production And Craftsmanship*

Based on 12 selected artefacts produced in royal ateliers, these delicate objects emphasise the depth and skills of artisans across the Islamic world. This calendar represents the shared vision of IAMM and the British Museum, working together to highlight the richness of this creativity with the opening of the Albukhary Foundation Gallery of the Islamic World at the British Museum in October 2018.

Price: RM 17.00

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