

NEWSLETTER  
*Special Edition*







Hugga base, probably Kutch, Gujarat, dated 1751 CE/ 1164 AH or 1851 CE/1267 AH, collection of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.



# ISLAMIC ARTS MUSEUM MALAYSIA GUIDE: A WINDOW ONTO THE MUSEUM'S COLLECTION

## MIRRORS *of* BEAUTY



ISLAMIC  
ARTS  
MUSEUM  
MALAYSIA  
*Guide*

Since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, museums around the world have faced complex challenges. Pre-eminent among these is protecting their collections and, above all, staying engaged with the public. The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) is no exception. We have had to ensure the public remains connected with us via social media during this unprecedented time. Since the reopening of the museum in June 2020, we have gone beyond that, taking all necessary safety and health measures to ensure that visitors can enjoy our museum.

After a long hiatus, visitors now have something new to look forward to – the IAMM's latest publication, *Mirrors of Beauty: The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia Guide*. The book contains an impressive selection of up to 150 outstanding objects from the IAMM collection. Explained across seven chapters, the accompanying narratives include new acquisitions and many that have never been published before.

## The Art of the Qur'an: Calligraphy and illumination of the Sacred Word

The guide opens with the art of writing as the pulse of the Qur'an's visual form. This chapter shows how the revealed Word of God is transmitted onto two-dimensional surfaces of the IAMM collection, be they vellum, stone or paper. The chapter also contains objects from the IAMM collection that highlight the interlinear texts, annotations and commentaries across various Islamic cultures. These supplementary texts were especially useful for the reader whose mother tongue was other than the Arabic language, including Persian, Turkish, Urdu, Hausa, Swahili and Malay. These cultures have long included expressions of art and have since been woven intricately into the rich tapestry of diversity within Islam.



Folio from a two-volume Qur'an  
India  
10th/16th century

## At the Heart of the Craft: Artist and design

The second chapter explores the place of the artist in light of the Islamic tradition and views of knowledge. This chapter displays the importance of imparting and producing knowledge for oneself and for others – a weighty matter in the sight of Islam. A common practice among artists in many Islamic societies was to cultivate this training within the close circle of an atelier; pupils or disciples would strive to prove their worth under the tutelage of one or several master artisans. Within this are the four underlying design elements that form the core of Islamic decorative art: calligraphy, geometry, floral and figural representations. These are accompanied by diverse objects in ceramic, metalwork and woodwork from the IAMM collection.

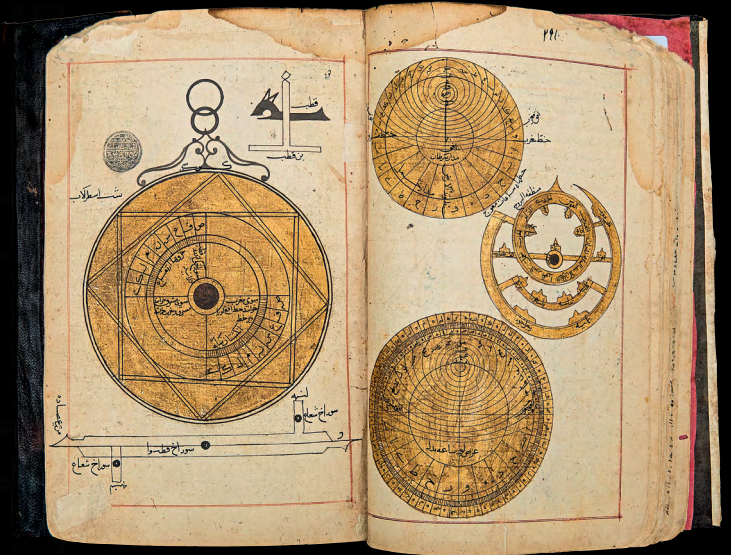


Baba Naqqash charger  
Iznik, Ottoman Turkey  
c. 885/1480



## Travel and Observe: Journeying in the Islamic world

The third chapter takes the reader on a journey of discovery into cultural exchange across the Islamic world. The quest to seek knowledge has led many Muslim travellers to cover great distances, be it for a land journey across mountains and deserts or maritime navigation across the open seas. These travels have led to many instruments being produced. These range from measuring routes and distances with accuracy to gauging the most advantageous time for setting out on a journey. Among the indispensable instruments in navigation is the astrolabe, with its computations in astronomy, particularly in determining altitudes, latitudes and time. Whole manuals were dedicated to explaining its use. This guidebook details the instrument's components and complex mechanics.



*Bifolio from a compendium on astronomy and astrology  
Signed Mufaddal ibn Haydar and Mas'us ibn As'ad  
Originally by Abu Ma'shar al-Balkhijuid Persia  
Dated 728/1327*

## Designs of Leisure: Beauty in everyday items

The fourth chapter approaches the artistic vocabulary and design methods primarily employed in Islamic art forms. Form in Islamic art is not to exist without function, and aspects of beauty and utility are seen as integrated even in objects of everyday life. Generally created for domestic and leisurely consumption in Islamic cultures, these works attest to the sentiments and sensibilities of their times, bearing the imprint of generations of artisans. This chapter highlights jewellery and bejewelled objects. These are ubiquitous expressions of beauty and luxury across the Islamic world. Just as many of the finest gemstones are mined in Islamic lands, so is much of the craftsmanship of the finest jewellery.



*Kanthi (necklace)  
Hyderabad, India  
13th/19th century*



*Helmet  
Ottoman Turkey  
11th/17th century*

## *Symbols of Power: The arts and crafts of war and diplomacy*

The fifth chapter showcases the aesthetics of war, as this as was a significant inspiration for the creation of objects across Islamic cultures. Outside warfare, much of the weaponry would be collected, repaired and stored for safekeeping in arsenals, and therefore survived in considerable numbers. This chapter is not on the art of war as Sun Tzu wrote it, but highlights the art on an array of objects. Finely crafted arms and military gear, while suited to their purpose in combat, were also designed to reflect ideals linked to majesty and power. The chapter elaborates the artistry of arms and armour that came under the direct patronage and use of ruling dynasties and powerful figures across the Islamic world.

## *Traces of Space: Architectural culture in Islamic art*

Architectural components as part of Islamic architecture make up the theme for Chapter seven. Islamic history is inextricably linked to the urban, and strands of Islamic cultures have been radiating in and around urban nodes that continue to pulsate throughout the Islamic world. Highlights range from artistic motifs and symbols to building skills and technology across different societies and regions. In different periods and places, these architectural features have all been translated differently, created and embellished according to local and vernacular tastes and needs. This chapter should help readers to understand better that the design of mosques from one culture to another varies remarkably in size, shape and material, although several layouts have been widely replicated through time.



*Capital  
Medina Azahara, Córdoba, Spain  
4th/10th century*



## Closer to Home: Islamic art of the Malay world

The guide culminates with a view of Islamic art of the Malay world as the final chapter. What is referred to as the 'Malay world' encompasses chiefly the larger islands of Sumatra, Java, coastal Borneo, southern Philippines, Sulawesi, Nusa Tenggara and the Maluku Archipelago as well as the Malay Peninsula. Home to vibrant maritime hubs, such as Aceh and Melaka, the learning centres of Patani and the Minangkabau highlands, as well as the royal palaces of Java, Brunei and Sulu, the arts of Islam in the Malay world bring together a variety of cultural threads. The chapter showcases the wide repertoire of artistic expressions among Muslim societies in the archipelago, such as the Malay manuscripts in which the Jawi script became the principal language of the court as well as of trade. In time, the Malay language has become the primary vehicle of Islamic tradition among the peoples of the region, with letters, poems and works of literature written in it.

Accompanying these seven chapters, the guide also provides informative appendices to further enhance readers' experience of the history of Islam and Islamic art. Appendices in this publication include map, timeline of Islamic art, timeline of the Malay world, Arabic alphabet, the Hijri calendar, calligraphic scripts, map of museum's galleries and glossary. *Mirrors of Beauty: The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia Guide* is now available for purchase at the Museum Shop.

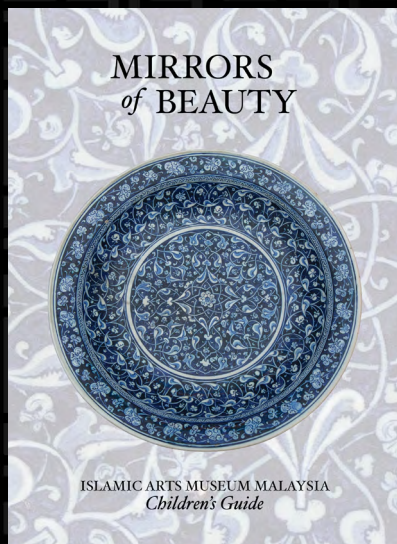


*Bifolio from a Qur'an  
Terengganu  
13th/19th century*





## 'Mirrors of Beauty: A Children's Guide'



The idea of creating a children's version of *Mirrors of Beauty: The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia Guide* developed from understanding the perspectives of family audiences at the museum. Museum visits are one of the ways to foster better communication between family members as the artefacts can be used as prompts to engage in dialogues and initiate meaning-making activities, which are important for children's learning and development.

Most of us are familiar with the matching items concept of 'his and hers', hence, this publication adapts the same concept by having matching items for 'adult and child'. Adults and children of the family can carry their own guidebook as they explore the museum. As this publication is meant for a younger audience, the book only highlights several prominent artefacts that reflect the spirit of the chapters, unlike the original book version that features a more comprehensive selection.

There are three special features in the children's version:

1. The artefacts are colour-coded according to help readers navigate their way around the museum.
2. There is an activity section at the end of each chapter, acting as a prompt to create dialogue between family members.
3. Readers can have in-depth information about selected artefacts by scanning the QR codes that are linked to the artefact videos, prepared by the Curatorial Affairs department of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

## Arabic Calligraphy Workshop with Citi J. Yousoff – 2020/2021 session

Day: Saturday

Date: 17 Oct 2020 - 6 Feb 2021

Time: 2:30pm - 5:30pm

Venue: Education Wet Workshop

Fee: RM100

The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia welcomes Arabic calligraphy enthusiasts who are keen to advance their skills in the arts of *Thuluth* and *Nasakh* scripts. Under the tutelage of Citi J. Yousoff, an *ijaza* holder from the honourable Hasan Celebi of Turkey, the intermediate and expert level calligraphers will partake in the 16-week programme to enrich their calligraphy writing techniques.

With the new standard operating procedure (SOP) in practice, the number of participants for the workshop is now limited to 30. Due to health and safety concerns, the venue will be properly sanitised before each session and seats are being distanced at least a metre apart. SOP guidelines will be given prior to the first workshop.



### ARABIC

## *Calligraphy Workshop*

with Citi J. Yousoff

Starting  
**17<sup>th</sup> Oct 2020**  
till **6<sup>th</sup> Feb 2021**

Every  
**Saturday**  
**2:30pm till 5:30pm**

**RM100\***  
**FEES**

\* Materials sold separately

**Limited to 30**  
**Participants Only.**  
First Come, First Served!

**www.iamm.org.my**

**f** Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

**@IAMM\_KL**

**@islamicartsmuseummalaysia**

To register:

Email your details (1) name, (2) address, (3) phone no to **education@iamm.org.my**

For inquiry, please call **03-2092 7031 / 7032 / 7033 / 7038**





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