

ISLAMIC ARTS



MUSEUM MALAYSIA

NEWSLETTER
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14 DYNASTIES AND A REGION: THE HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE MUSLIM WORLD: *The launching of the exhibition at the Tokyo National Museum.*



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. The joint exhibition “14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World” was launched in Japan on 5th July 2021. This pioneering collaboration between the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) and Tokyo National Museum (TNM) was the culmination of many months of hard work. Beginning with the first visit by a TNM delegation to IAMM in November 2019, more than 200 artefacts from the collection of IAMM arrived safely at Tokyo airport and are now on display at one of Asia’s preeminent cultural institutions.

Despite the challenges presented by the global pandemic Covid-19, both museums worked hand in hand to ensure that the exhibition opened according to schedule and expectations. The IAMM collection is the largest loan ever in the museum’s history to travel abroad. The exhibition will be showcased for seven months at the Asian Gallery (Toyokan), Rooms 12 and 13, from July 2021 until February 2022.

Another first for IAMM was a virtual official launching ceremony. The IAMM board, director and staff were present online only, something that has never happened before in the museum’s 23-year history. The virtual launch was organised by TNM and took place on their premises. Honouring the occasion with their presence were



Mr Masami Zeniya, the Executive Director of the Tokyo National Museum, H.E. Dato’ Kennedy Jaman, Malaysia’s Ambassador to Japan and representatives from the exhibition sponsors, Mr Hyodo Masayuki, President and CEO of Sumitomo Corporation, Mr Onoi Yoshiki, Executive Vice President of J-Power and Mr Nishisaki Ryuuji, Senior Managing Executive Officer of Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Cooperation. The event was attended virtually by Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary, Trustee of the Albukhary Foundation, Syed Mohamad Albukhary, Director of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia and Dr Heba N. Barakat, Head of Curatorial Affairs, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. Also in attendance were over 80 of IAMM and TNM’s friends, colleagues and museum curators, art historians and dignitaries via Zoom invitation.



The exhibition launching commenced with welcoming remarks by Mr Masami Zeniya. These were followed by special remarks from Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary and speeches by other guests of honour. A short video featuring a tour of the galleries and brief explanation of the exhibition by Katsuki Gen'ichiro, Special Research Chair, Tokyo National Museum, was aired to the online audience. It provided an introduction to the exhibition and a glimpse of the beautiful display.

The event symbolises the successful collaboration between two countries and two institutions challenging and combating the obstacles faced during the pandemic. This was expressed by Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary:

"14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World" offers an exhibition that is ambitious in scale and wide in scope. Its aim is to present the stories of the material culture of Islamic civilisation, represented by 14 essential epochs. The exhibition is crafted to provide an overview of diverse histories and cultures, arts and crafts – all manifested through the artefacts on display. Beginning with the era of the Prophet Muhammad (570-632) in the Arabian Peninsula, the story proceeds towards the later dynasties of the Ottomans in Turkey and the Qajars in Persia, both of which lasted until the first half of the 20th century. In the exhibition, visitors will be exposed to other dynasties that flourished from the Iberian Peninsula in the West, stretching to China in the East. These include the Umayyad, Abbasid, Fatimid, Mamluk, Seljuk, Timurid, Mughal, Safavid and the Islamic civilisations of China and the Malay world.

"Three years ago, when the curatorial teams of Tokyo National Museum and Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia first met, no one could have foreseen, nor expected, the complete change in the direction of exhibitions and museum collaborations worldwide. We woke up to a lengthy standstill due to a pandemic that affected all our lives. Many museums around the globe dismissed or postponed collaborations and exhibitions. Yet through sheer determination, these two teams persevered despite multiple lockdowns, personal losses and sacrifices. This exhibition has been a beacon of hope, giving a sense of purpose and providing a positive step forward for all those involved."

*Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary,
Trustee of the Albukhary Foundation*



The objects on display are artfully arranged and presented inside the two galleries at TNM. Throughout the exhibition, visitors will find a wide range of artefacts that include Qur'anic folios made of vellum, large-scale European oil paintings, miniature paintings, maps, manuscripts, ceramics, metalwork, woodwork, arms and armour, textiles, scientific instruments and jewellery. Among the major highlights are a magnificent 19th century oil-painting portrait of Crown Prince 'Abbas Mirza of the Qajar dynasty; a 10th century marble capital from Umayyad Spain; a 14th century monumental mihrab panel from the Timurid dynasty; an 18th century embroidered silk robe from Ottoman Turkey; and a 12th century colourfully enamelled and painted bowl from Persia.



The joint exhibition with TNM constitutes another achievement for the Albukhary Foundation and IAMM's programme of international collaboration. In the past, we have managed to work with different museums around the globe, including the British Museum, in the United Kingdom (2019-2020), Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation, United Arab Emirates (2018) and the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Australia (2016-2017). These shared endeavours provide our museum with opportunities to reach out to international audiences. Through our collection we hope to share the diversity of Islamic art, its history and culture with the world.

"The exhibition introduces the diverse aesthetics of these 14 dynasties, and presents an opportunity to understand their artistic novelties. Both TNM and IAMM teams co-designed this unique exhibition for the Japanese visitor, to promote a deeper understanding of Muslim history and culture in Japan... To honour the people of the past, we need to educate the people of the present in order to preserve our cultural heritage for the people of the future. This can be achieved through collaborative efforts such as the one we have with TNM."

*Puan Sri Sharifah Zarah Albukhary,
Trustee of the Albukhary Foundation*

"The special thematic exhibition does not limit its scope to a particular nation or region, but instead it features Islamic Arts from across the globe. Through their impressive collection"

*Masami Zeniya,
Executive Director of the Tokyo National Museum*

For full video of the launching 14 Dynasties and a Region:
The History and Culture of the Muslim World exhibition,
please visit: <https://youtu.be/nAPknEsfQQA>

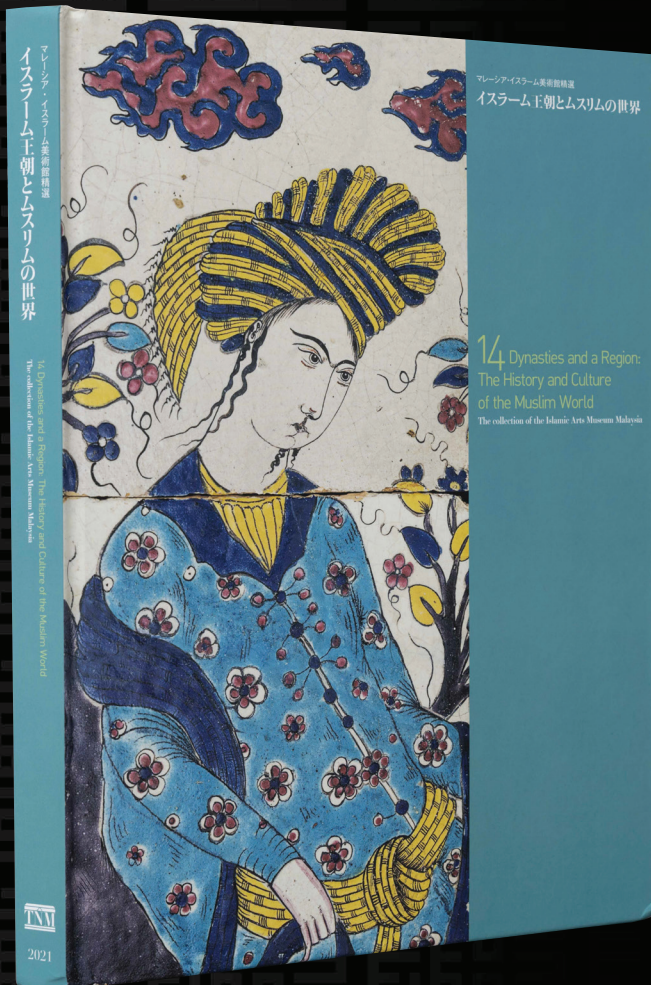
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14 Dynasties and A Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World from the Collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia



The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia's publication *14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World from the collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia* offers an overview of historical developments and artistic trends through the artefacts produced within the Islamic world, covering a vast geographical area from the Iberian Peninsula to Southeast Asia and China.

Accompanying the recently launched exhibition of the same title at the Tokyo National Museum, the catalogue features over 200 outstanding objects from the IAMM collection. The emphasis is on the role these objects have played in the design of both religious and everyday arts and crafts in developing a distinctive visual culture inspired within these Islamic dynasties.

The catalogue is divided into 16 chapters, according to dynasties and region, as well as thematic sections such as art of the mosque and art of calligraphy. These showcase the extent of the IAMM collection, covering the diverse and interconnected cultures of Islamic societies across time, place and media.

This upcoming publication will provide a valuable resource for newcomers to the field of Islamic history as well as for art historians. It should be especially useful for Japanese readers as this 228-page catalogue is written in both the Japanese and English languages.

Title: *14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World* The collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

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