

Oct-Dec 2022

ISSUE 41



Contents

- 4 Foreword**
- 6 Focus I:**
Keris: Power and Identity exhibition
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia collaboration with
Yayasan Raja Muda Selangor
- 10 Focus II:**
14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of
the Muslim World
- 12 Focus III:**
6th International Congress of the World Society 2022:
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia collaboration with
the World Society for the Study, Preservation, and
Popularisation of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan
- 16 Curator's Section:**
Woodcarving in the Malay World
- 20 Education's Section:**
Reopening of Children Library
Be Inspired Modular Programme (BIMP)
Online Resources
Educational activity
- 24 IAMM Museum Shop**
Calendar 2023 'Contemporary Inspirations'
- 26 IAMM Publications**
Keris: Power and Identity
Orientalist paintings: Mirror or Mirage?

*Front Cover: A niche rug, Safavid Persia,
16th century, collection of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.*

Foreword

Twenty-five years ago, we planted a tree – a tree of knowledge. Naturally, a tree would need care and nourishment. This sapling was an aspiration: to give the Malaysian people and all of Southeast Asia a museum, a hub of knowledge that would touch the hearts and minds of the community. More than that, it was be something that was lacking. This would be a museum dedicated to collecting, preserving and displaying the magnificence of Muslim civilisations.

Today, we are in the middle of preparing for our silver anniversary. Silver reflects how the IAMM shines with knowledge and the brilliance of achieving an important milestone in the world of cultural engagement and education. The museum has evolved into an inclusive community that welcomes and encourages local visitors and those from around the world. For our silver anniversary celebration we are aiming for the next phase of accomplishment, taking a road paved with new ideas and approaches to heritage.

The next two years will be full of exciting and well-researched exhibitions, events and programmes. Starting with an outstanding display of the Malay world's incomparable dagger, the keris, there is a collaboration with HRH the Sultan of Selangor. Following this is a travelling photo exhibition of the Muslim heritage of Uzbekistan, and then a seminal exhibition of paintings of North Africa and the Middle East during the 19th and early 20th centuries, *Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage?* The second half of 2023 is equally enlightening, with a major exhibition of contemporary Muslim calligraphy, *Nun wal Qalam*, which reflects the status of calligraphy across the Islamic world, encouraging and discovering new talent.

Complementing our exhibition calendar are workshops and educational programmes, along with a conference, scholarly lectures and competitions. We hope that our silver anniversary will be a memorable occasion that culminates the first phase and reinvigorates the museum for another 25 years.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary
Director
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia



Focus 1

Keris: Power and Identity Exhibition

*Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia collaboration
with Yayasan Raja Muda Selangor*



The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) in its inaugural collaboration with the Yayasan Raja Muda Selangor (YRMS) will open an exhibition in December 2022 entitled, '*Keris: Power and Identity*'.

The exhibition highlights one of the most significant weapons of the Malay Archipelago, showcasing the masterpiece keris collections of HRH Sultan of Selangor Sharafuddin Idris Shah AlHaj and the IAMM. The exhibition consists of 94 keris, with additional artefacts significant to this quintessential part of the regional armoury. The aim is take the audience through the historical timeline of the keris, from its origins to its development as a symbol of power and identity in the Malay world.

From Sumatra to Borneo, the collection displayed features regional keris with their own distinctive styles and shapes. The variety should prompt greater admiration for the keris as visitors can observe the intricate woodcarving, filigree work and repoussé techniques on parts of the keris such as the scabbard and hilt, as well as the *pendongkok* (the hilt cup).

While admiring the exterior look of the keris, commonly referred to as the *pakaian* (clothing), visitors will also be able to learn about the anatomy and the metallurgical finesse of the keris blade. This can prompt greater appreciation of the contours and *pamor* (intricate patterns) on the blade together with its *ricikan* (detailing) and finishing.

Commonly known for its enigmatic wavy blade, the exhibition will feature the typology of keris including the straight-bladed, *sundang* type and unusual versions which will allow museum-goers to familiarise themselves with the different type of keris such as the *melela*, *pandai saras*, *alang*, *tokchu* and many more. Most importantly, it will also highlight the exclusive royal keris along with Islamic elements on historical weapons, the subjects that are rarely exposed in these fascinating works of art.





In addition to examining aesthetics, this exhibition should also appeal to followers of anthropology and ethnography, international keris collectors and enthusiasts, and most importantly the younger generation. The objective is to encourage a sense of pride and appreciation of the keris which will provide a deeper understanding of the culture and tradition of the Malay world.

The exhibition is a collaborative effort between IAMM and YRMS in conjunction with the *Talent of the World* programme, established to assist youths from all over the country to gain interest in learning the art of keris-making and ultimately sustaining the tradition.

A special publication with the same title will be published to commemorate this venture. It documents comprehensively the two collections, providing an essential addition to the available resources relating to these revered daggers.

We welcome you to Special Gallery 2, open from 1st December 2022 to 13th March 2023, 9.30 am to 6 pm daily.



Focus II

14 Dynasties and a Region

The History and Culture of the Muslim World

The exhibition '14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World' was first held at the Tokyo National Museum's Asian Gallery (Toyokan) from 5th July 2021 to 20th February 2022, in conjunction with the 2021 Tokyo Summer Olympics. This initiative was taken by the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia as a step to promote a deeper understanding of Muslim history and culture in Japan and to introduce 205 artefacts to share the beauty of Islamic art.

At a time when both Malaysia and Japan recorded such a high number of Covid-19 cases, the exhibition still managed to receive a very encouraging response, with a total of 130,000 visitors throughout the exhibition. The exhibition symbolises the successful collaboration between two museums of international importance amid challenges faced over the pandemic.

After two years of enduring Covid-19 in Malaysia, '14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World' was the first exhibition presented to restore museum-goers' desire to return and visit their favourite cultural institutions. Unlike the exhibition held in Tokyo, the exhibition held in Kuala Lumpur showcases a selection of 150 artefacts from the IAMM collection, ranging from the first centuries of Islam (7th–8th century) to the pre-modern era (18th–19th century). It covers 14 major dynasties from North Africa to western China and the Malay world, with a very similar storyline to that in Japan.

The dynasties in question played a pivotal role in the formation of Islamic artistic styles, leaving behind a



legacy much admired today through architectural remains, manuscripts, paintings, metalwork, textiles, jewellery and more. The exhibition aims to bring visitors back to appreciate the glory of Islamic cultures and civilisations over a period of more than a thousand years, with the formation of Muslim regions expanding from the Iberian Peninsula to Southeast Asia and China.

Both versions of the exhibition present visitors with the impression that they are being taken across time capsule of the Islamic world, tracing the course of history by following the story lines of the exhibition dating back to the time of the Umayyad Dynasty, the 'Abbasids, the Fatimids, Ayyubids and early dynasties of Persia (Iran) and Central Asia. While the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal dynasties represented 'The Gunpowder Empires' as important entities that reached a great level of success for their developed military power, arms and armour from the 16th and 17th centuries up to the 19th century. The history and culture of the Malay sultanates are also included in the exhibition as Islam was introduced into the



Malay Archipelago as long ago as the 13th century. A section on China is also part of the exhibition, with the highlight on a porcelain penbox produced in the 15th century for a royal atelier. Porcelain was the highest-quality export commodity produced during the Ming dynasty (1368-1644). China's contribution to the history and culture of the Muslim world is vast, especially as this enormous empire was the pioneer that first introduced the use of paper to the Muslim world.

This special exhibition will close this 16th October 2022, after its opening on 8th June 2022 in Special Gallery 2 (IAMM).



Focus III

6th International Congress of the World Society 2022:

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia collaboration with the World Society for the Study, Preservation, and Popularisation of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan

Samarkand, where the ancient site of Afrasiyab once flourished, was a major city located along the Great Silk Road and remains one of Uzbekistan's crown jewels. From the 22nd to 24th July 2022, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia participated in the 6th International Congress of the World Society titled



All sixty volumes of book-albums on display in the halls and auditoriums of the Palace of Youth Creativity during the three-day congress.

“Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan — the Foundation of a New Renaissance”, which took place in this beautiful city. The congress, hosted at the newly built Palace of Youth Creativity, drew over 350 people from 35 different countries. Among those present were museum directors, heads of organisations, professors



Palace of Youth Creativity, Samarkand.

and other academics along with museum professionals committed to studying and preserving the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan. The congress was organised by the World Society for the Study, Preservation and Popularisation of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan.

Earlier this year, IAMM was approached by the World Society to partake in a project — a publication series titled “Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan in World Collections” — dedicated to the documentation of



Dr. Heba Nayel Barakat, Head Curator, delivering the report on the Uzbek collection in IAMM.

unique Uzbek collections housed in museums and other institutions around the world. The mission of the publication, termed by the organisation as a ‘book-album’, is to make these artefacts, texts and images accessible to researchers and the general public. Sixty volumes of the book-albums have been published in the six years since its inception, with the



In blue leather finishing with gold decorations, the centre frame is set with a detail from the 8th-century Sogdian robe showing a confronting pair of horned deers enclosed by a pearl roundel.

most recent ten volumes released between 2021 and 2022. This recent release includes the 58th volume devoted to the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan in the IAMM collection.

In progress since March this year, the culmination of this five-month publication project is marked by the debut of the book-album's pilot copy at the conclusion of the presentation by Dr Heba Nayel Barakat, Head of Curatorial Affairs Department, on the first day of the congress. The presentation, titled “The Role of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia in Popularising and Preserving the Heritage of Uzbekistan”, highlights the cultural heritage of Uzbekistan in the IAMM collection. It also details various projects and publications related to the Uzbek collection which have been organised and published since its establishment.

The book-album, documenting almost 200 artefacts, is divided into nine sections that showcase a huge range of objects: glass and ceramics; Qur'ans, manuscripts, genealogies and miniatures; coins, jewellery and metalwork; embroidered textiles; dresses and robes which include a rare silk robe from Sogdiana dating back to the 7th or 8th century; ikat fabrics; hats and skullcaps; tribal textiles; as well as carpets. The



The 58th volume in open display at the Congress. The open pages show the rare 8th-century Sogdian robe — in its complete form — a masterpiece in the collection of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.



The Observatory of Ulugh Beg, built by the Timurid sultan himself, whose love and genius for science were unparalleled at the time. Despite the unfortunate destruction of the observatory in the 1420s not long after his death, participants could still view what's left of the site, particularly the trench that shows the lower section of the meridian arc, which was rediscovered by Russian excavators in 1908.

essays and object information in the book-album are presented in three languages (English, Russian and Uzbek) to cater to diverse local and international readers.

In addition to the academic component of the congress, other cultural and entertainment programmes were also arranged for the participants. These included visits to cultural and tourist sites as well as the newly established Silk Road International University of Tourism and Cultural Heritage in Samarkand. Some of the sites include Ulughbek Observatory, Gur-i Amir



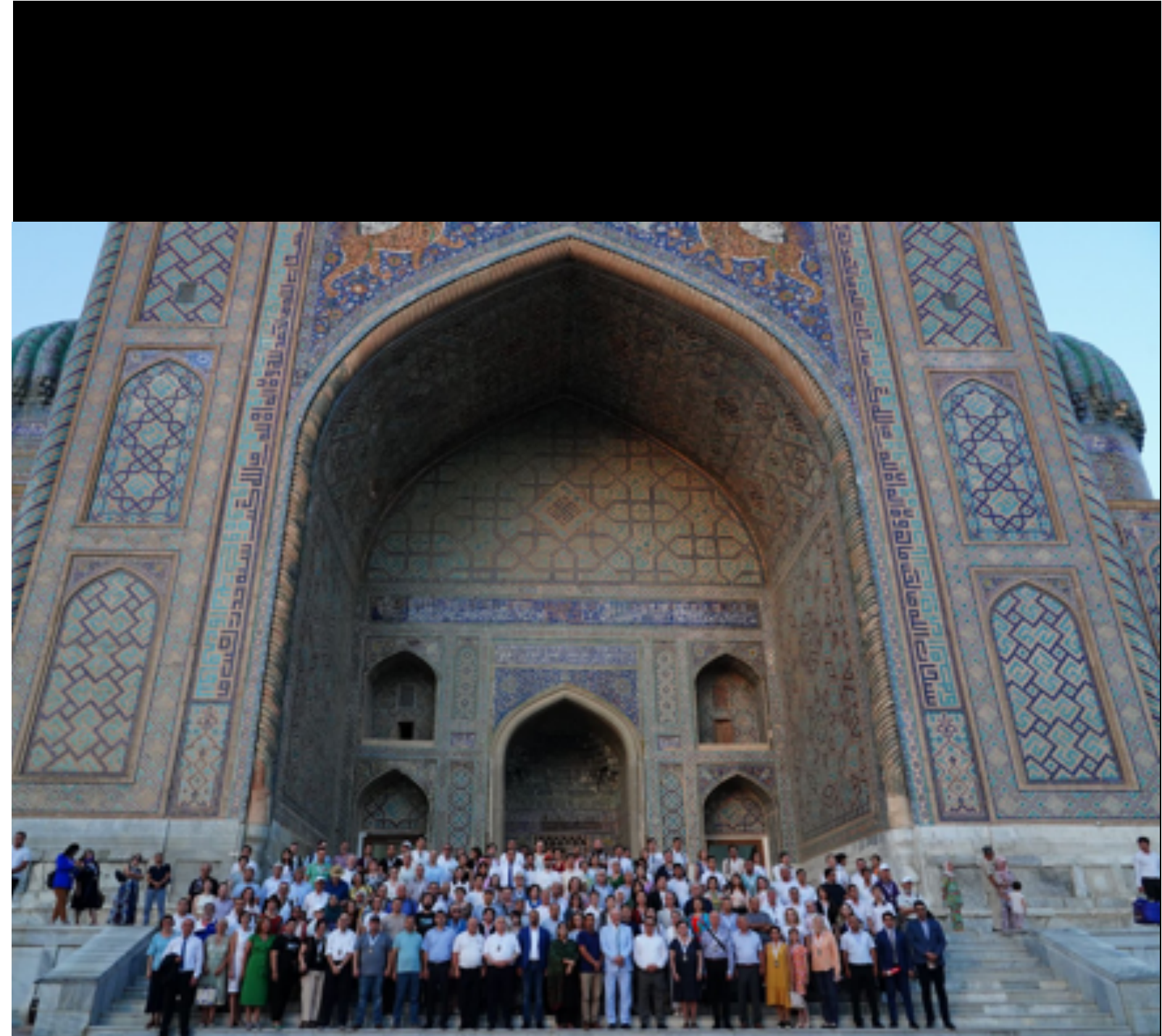
Column of rolled carpets in a variety of designs resting against the suzani-covered wall at the Samarkand-Bukhara Silk Carpets factory.



Portal to the Gur-i Amir showing richly decorated bricks and mosaics of the Timurid architecture.



A worker at the paper mill in Konigil cultural village separates the bark of the mulberry branch from the flesh before processing them into pulps.



Participants gathered in front of the Sher-Dor Madrasah entrance at the Registan complex which marks the end of the Congress.

Masouleum, a paper mill in Konigil cultural village, and the Samarkand-Bukhara Silk Carpets factory. Participants were also entertained by traditional musical performances by artists from Uzbekistan during the stay. The participants' visit to the Gur-i Amir (Tomb of the King) enabled them to see the tombs of Timur, his sons Shah Rukh and Miran Shah, as well as his grandsons Ulugh Beg and Muhammad Sultan.

heart of the city of Samarkand. The participants, now members of the World Society for the Preservation, Study and Popularisation of the Cultural Heritage of Uzbekistan, gathered at the Registan complex, the heart of the city of Samarkand, for the closing ceremony.

After the three-day programme filled with knowledge exchange, professional networking and cultural learning, the congress came to an end. The closing ceremony was held in the Registan complex, the

Curator's Section

Woodcarving in the Malay World

The Malay world has always been famed among traders and explorers for its rich natural resources. Wood and forest products, in particular, were among the most sought-after commodities. As early as the 3rd century AD, an historical record of active trade between the various Malay kingdoms and China proves the uniqueness of the region's hardwoods. This timber was among the key materials of choice for constructing palaces and boats, as well as for crafting daily utensils in the Malay world. The *Sulalatus Salatin* (Malay Annals) of the 15th century describes the palace of Sultan Mansur Shah (r. 1459–1477) in Melaka as being built in wood and lavishly decorated with intricate carvings.

The Malay sultans and nobility invested in skilled carpenters, raising their status to that of royal artisans. Soon, the exquisite woodcarvings on palace doorways and their interior partitions became a reflection of the wealth and status of their owners.

In the traditional Malay house, wood was not only used for decorative facades and partitions but also as functional ventilation bars, known as *jerejak tingkap* and *jerejak serambi*. These bars help the circulation of air while allowing the penetration of reduced sunlight within the house. In time, the ventilation panels especially the *kepala tingkap* (window panel) were designed to enhance the visual aesthetics of the architectural space. The most exquisite design patterns would be visible above the *kepala pintu* (doors and entrance walls), predominantly placed in the dining hall, reception hall, prayer hall and bedroom walls.

Design compositions inspired by the local flora and fauna, epigraphy and geometry, as well as elements from the cosmic realm, were soon incorporated into the design vocabulary. The depiction of living creatures was reduced, with Islamic guidelines encouraging calligraphy and vegetal motifs to become more elaborate. Most of the earlier animistic



Figure 1
A set of richly decorated doors and walls, such as this Javanese gebyok, reflects the wealth and social status of the owner of the building (IAMM 1998.14368)



Figure 2
Traditionally in Malay architecture, ventilation panels occupied the upper level of the walls and this type of carved motif can either be used as a standalone ventilation panel or be arranged in columns or rows as part of an architectural wall decoration. This panel depicts a continuous undulating stem and leaf motif with the 99 names of Allah carved on the leaves. (IAMM 1998.1.4327)

designs were transformed into flora after the arrival of Islam. Floral motifs were almost always applied by craftsmen as the principal feature as they were inspired and fascinated by the elements of flowers and leaves. While calligraphic carvings on wood were often inspired by verses of the Qur'an, other teachings to emphasise the oneness of God, such as the 99 names of Allah and the *Sifat Dua Puluh* (20 attributes of Allah), also became a source of inspiration.



Figure 4
This 20th-century chest on wheels, from Java, is often referred to as gerobok. It features hand-painted calligraphy of Sifat Dua Puluh (20 Attributes of Allah) carved in relief and painted in gold. (IAMM 2020.15.4)



Figure 3
Wooden prayer screen from Jambi is carved with verses from Surah Yaasin (chapter 36) and Surah Al-Imran (chapter 3) in thuluth script. (IAMM 1998.1.4357)



Figure 5
This trunk is adorned with gold-lacquered floral and foliate designs and a motif of birds in high relief, indicating that figural imagery of animals did not disappear entirely despite the arrival of Islam in the Malay World. (IAMM 1998.1.4361)

Wooden objects with finely carved motifs were common in the Malay world, yet the best artisans were those dedicated to the carving of keris hilts. These had a special status among royalty and noblemen. Many hilts were made of different types of ivory and horns, encrusted with gold and silver, yet the most common material used for the hilts was wood. It is light in weight and exhibits the beauty of the various colours and waves of the selected wooden block. Inevitably, the hilts' elegance would be the most visible aesthetic feature of the keris, since this weapon is traditionally worn tucked into the left of the wearer's waist, revealing only its hilt and the scabbard's sampir (crosspiece).



Figure 6
Carved keris sampir are a rarity (1998.1.3922)



Figure 7
With the introduction of Islam, stylisation and abstraction of human and animal forms was preferred, along with geometric and floral patterns. (IAMM 2017.2.14, 1998.1.3923 and 2003.9.2 and 1998.1.3922)

Written by Hariz Ahmad Kamal
Curator of the Woodwork Gallery
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

Education's Section

Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia:

A Lifelong Learning Space

Reopening of Children Library

The Children's Library has finally reopened, after almost a two years. We have been showcasing our programmes online through Instagram posts, and now we are back to having all of our programmes here in the Children's Library. We started off with a storytelling session on 6th August 2022 in conjunction with the current ongoing exhibition '14 Dynasties and A Region: The History and Culture of the Islamic world.' The books selected was about the great warrior Saladin of the Ayyubid Dynasty. The children were then invited for an art and crafts session after the storytelling. Our weekend activity includes more storytelling sessions followed by crafts on Saturdays, with viewings of recorded *wayang kulit* performances at our Sunday Screenings. These are all activities to enhance children's self-expression as well as boosting their confidence and creativity.

Be Inspired Modular Programme (BIMP)

The 'Be Inspired' Modular Programme titled 'Ikat Magic' captured the interest of many schools that came and wanted to explore the intricacies of the tie-dye world. On 15th June and 5th July we hosted our first 'Ikat Magic' workshop for the year, almost two years after being unable to organise one in the Education wet workshop. One such opportunity was taken by pupils from Mutiara International Grammar School and Sayfol International School. The students were then brought to the galleries to have a face-to-face session with the artefacts and learned more about the history of the Islamic art, focusing on the Textile Gallery. Tie-dyeing promotes creativity and intellectual stimulation through the intricacies of colour resistance and different styles of tying cloths. This activity also helps develop fine motor skills, retention and patience.

Online Resources:

Our Museum offers an extensive range of learning activities and resources specially catered for our family and school visitors. These resources, which are designed to support our young learners, draw inspiration from the wealth of IAMM's expansive collections. We welcome you to download and explore these online resources. We hope they can support you in understanding Islamic art better.

- 14 Dynasties and a Region: The History and Culture of the Muslim World- Gallery Trail & Twitter thread

The 14 Dynasties and a Region exhibition serves as a window onto the history and culture of the Muslim world. Explore the ongoing 14 Dynasties and A Region exhibition using the gallery trail which will allow you to take a closer look at certain artefacts on display. You may download it from our website! Do check out our Twitter thread for the exhibition where we showcased our most prominent artefacts that capture the grandeur and diversity of materials and techniques, as well as to the luxury of its design of the selected dynasties. The artefacts featured are the metal frame of twelve Mughal empresses' portrait on ivory, wooden panel carved with 99 attributes of God and the brass bottle from the Ayyubid dynasty. Do visit our twitter account IAMM_KL for more cross cultural learning experience.

- Hari Jawi

Hari Jawi is a collection of our Instagram stories about artefacts and lifestyles written in Jawi script and uploaded every Friday. Have a read and get ready to answer some questions on these amazing facts! Do visit our Instagram: @iamm.kl and get to know more artefacts and the roles they once played in our lives.





Arabic Calligraphy with Citi J. Yousoff

Classes are back in session! Students enrolled in this course learn Arabic calligraphy with Ms Citi J. Yousoff and perfect the art of writing Naskh, Thuluth and Riqaaah. Citi J. Yousoff is from Kelantan, Malaysia, qualified with an Ijaza from the venerated master Hassan Celebi in Turkey for Thuluth and Naskh scripts. Her works are centered on the traditional art of Islamic calligraphy with elements of Malay Islamic motifs and contemporary art. She has led workshops at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia for over five years. The new classes began on 4th September 2022 (Sunday) and are expected to last for ten weeks.

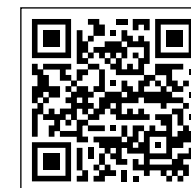
Arabic Calligraphy Course 2022 | Kursus Seni Khat 2022

IAMM is reaching its 22nd year of successfully organising its Arabic Calligraphy Course. This is in collaboration with Persatuan Seni Khat Kebangsaan Malaysia (PSKK) and is back this year with physical classes! These are held every Saturday, and students will be under the guidance of PSKK's professional calligraphers. With this course we look forward to providing a platform for calligraphy enthusiasts to practise their Arabic calligraphy effectively and systematically. Participants will be taught and exposed to the proper techniques of Arabic calligraphy scripts such as Naskh, Riq'ah, Thuluth, Kufic and Zukrufah, along with Arabic calligraphy on canvas.

Upcoming Education Programme line up for "Keris: Power and Identity" Exhibition

(1 December 2022- 13 March 2023)

In conjunction with the exhibition, the Education department will be offering programmes such as a woodcarving workshop, as well as some talks from academics on the topic of keris. Stay tuned for 'Keris Day' at IAMM in January, an open day where visitors will be able to meet keris collectors; watch a wayang kulit screening; join a curator's sharing session; and best of all witness demonstrations of a 'standing keris' and 'ikat sampin'. Besides that, IAMM's Conservation Department will also be hosting a talk and demonstration on how to preserve this quintessential weapon of the Malay world. Stay tuned to our Instagram page for more updates.



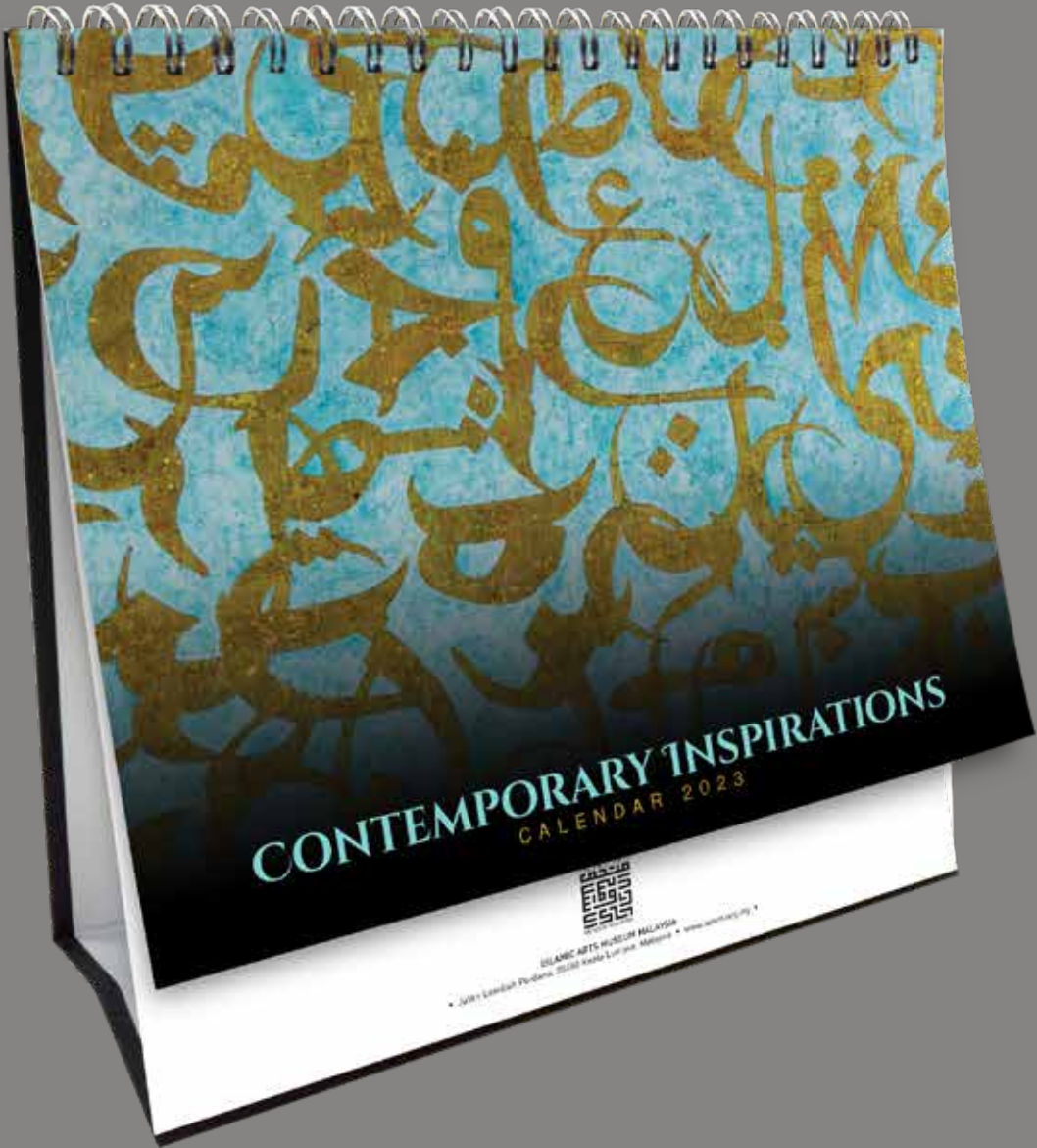
Scan the QR code to explore our range of educational resources.

IAMM Museum Shop

Calendar 2023 *‘Contemporary Inspirations’*

The 2023 calendar features the works of 12 distinguished artists from around the world. Each has taken creativity to new levels of expression through this time-honoured art. Their calligraphy is a reflection of the power of the word and how it is formed. The key to this is a deep understanding of the intrinsic quality of each letter. Each painting exudes inspiration that touches the soul of viewers and guides them to contemplation. It is the power of each stroke, letter and word that reveals its true message, absorbed by the mind and senses. Each mind will perceive a different message, and yet all lead to the final conclusion; admiring their visual inspirational beauty and their hidden meditative quality. This selection highlights contemporary Islamic calligraphy and shares a glimpse of the breadth of new trends innovated by experienced exponents.

The IAMM Museum Shop is open from 10 am to 6 pm, Monday to Sunday, including most public holidays, and entrance is free. Follow our Instagram page [@islamicartsmuseumshop](#) for the latest updates and ordering. Alternatively, you can contact us at: museumshop@iamm.org.my
Tel: 603 2092 7140 / 7142 Fax: 603 2274 0084



Calendar 2023
Price MYR 22.00

IAMM Publications

KERIS

Power and Identity

The keris is among the most recognisable but least researched cultural manifestations of the Malay world. *Keris: Power and Identity* is an innovative examination of a weapon that embodies the history and creativity of Southeast Asia while being little known beyond this region. The curators of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia have provided the most comprehensive examination of the keris ever published. This catalogue accompanies an exhibition that explores a dagger with mystical attributes that are matched by its aesthetics. From the dawn of its development to the legendary reputation it has acquired over the centuries, the extraordinary variety of shapes, materials and decorative elements is shown in 94 noteworthy examples.

These are mostly from the exceptional collection of HRH Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj, Sultan of Selangor. Supplementing these rich and varied keris are examples from the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, many with highly sought-after calligraphic blades. All combine history and regal associations with the development of Islam in the region. The extent of the research makes this a landmark reference to the most enduring emblem of the Malay world. The superb, detailed photography provides a fitting accompaniment to analysis that sheds new light on a subject that is too often taken for granted.

Author: Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia

Price: RM 145.00

Size: 24cm X 29cm

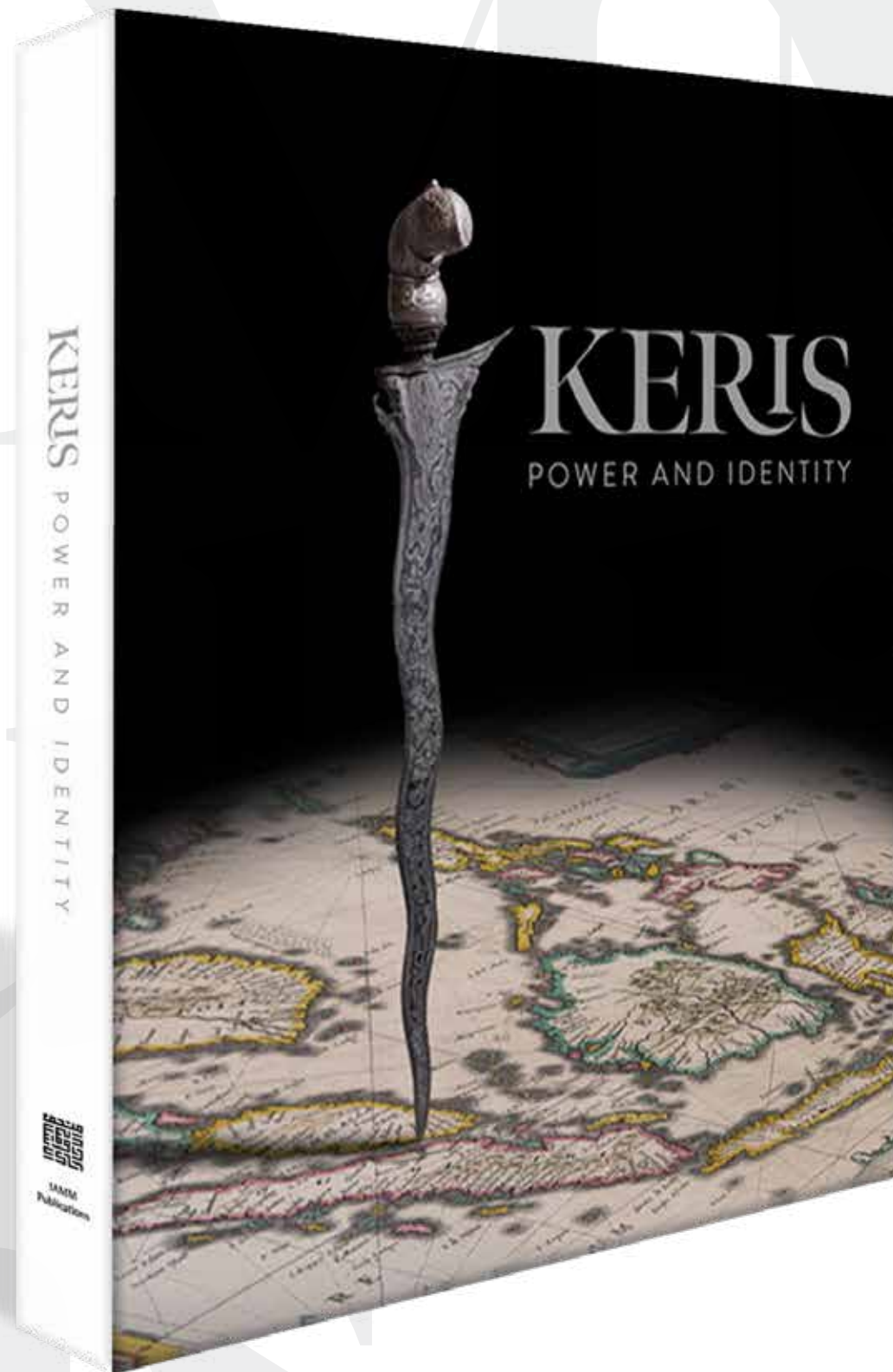
Year: 2022

ISBN No: 978-983-2591-23-8

Pages: 228

Availability: This publication is open for Pre-Order and it will be available for sale at the Museum Shop starting from 1st December 2022.

To pre order, email us at museumshop@iamm.org.my



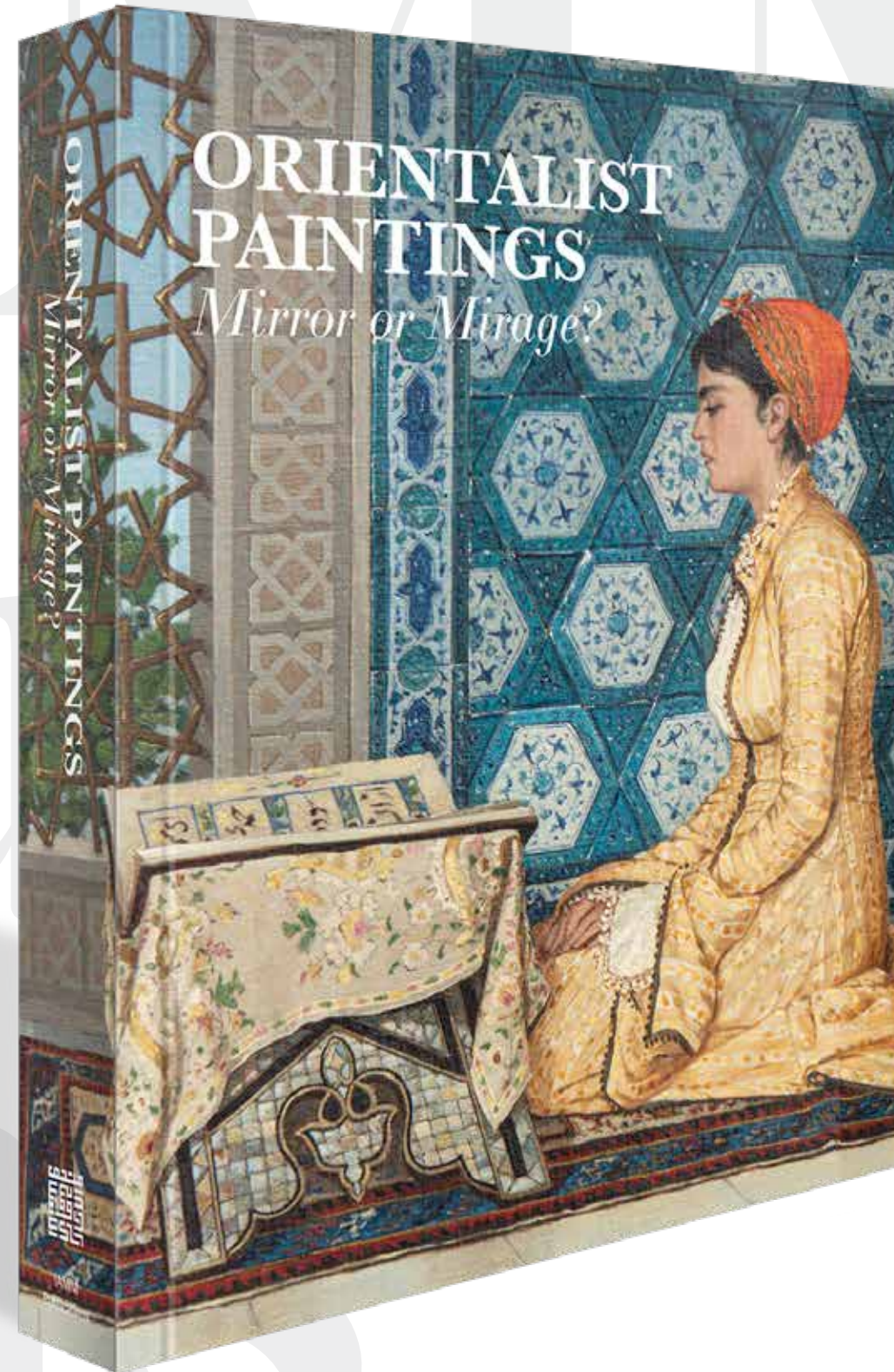
Orientalist Paintings

Mirror or Mirage?

The Orientalist-painting collection of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia is a previously unpublicised resource. It is also one of the world's largest holdings of an art movement that has regained much of its previous popularity. Something that has not changed over the years is the belief that an Orientalist painting is more than a work of art; it is also an insight into other people and places. It is the extent of the distortion that has created a divide between admirers and detractors of these works. For the IAMM, the collection is about what the artists might have seen, rather than what they never could. It is about their reactions to the Islamic world.

Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage? takes a thematic look at North Africa and the Middle East in a time of transition. The paintings are mainly from the 19th century, a time when it became possible for artists to travel to the 'Orient'. It was during this era that obstacles to creative expression were slowly broken down while non-artistic barriers were being put up. This book challenges preconceptions. It provides an alternative to the black-and-white thinking, in every sense, about Orientalism that has preoccupied Postcolonial commentators. It is an exploration of the grey area of representational authenticity – in full and glorious colour.

Author: Lucien de Guise, Edhem Eldem, Mary Kelly, Alia Nour
Price: RM385.00
Year: 2022
W: 10.2" x H: 13.4"
ISBN: 978-983-2591-22-1





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