

ISLAMIC ARTS
MUSEUM MALAYSIA

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Front cover: A monumental cast and engraved bronze oil lamp, Andalusia, Southern Spain, 11th century, collection of Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

Foreword

It is one world.

For the past 25 years, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) has been collecting, studying and exhibiting the arts produced as long ago as 1,400 years in the lands where Islam has predominated. At the same time we have been keeping an eye on the arts and sciences that were produced over the centuries in the 'West'. This is because we all live in and share one world.

During the 15th and 16th centuries, as with the 18th and 19th centuries, there was a great deal of curiosity shown between the most powerful societies of the time. Those in the West wanted to understand what was happening in the East, while those in the East wanted to know what the West was achieving. This spirit of inquiry led to several global movements, among them the 'Age of Discovery' and the 'Orientalist' phases.

The museum has embarked on a long journey to bring together both East and West in an exhibition, under one umbrella. *Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage?* is, in a nutshell, an exhibition that highlights the connectivity between people and discusses the curiosity of both East and West. The exhibition launch was a major success, officiated by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate foremost our community in Malaysia, who have been truly supportive of our exhibition topics and themes. Your inquisitiveness is what drives the museum teams to explore new and vibrant topics and share them with you via well-researched exhibitions.

Thank you to our community, which has entrusted IAMM with not only bringing new ideas to share but also with safeguarding and exhibiting our treasures for the world. We are also pleased to announce the acquisition of an old illuminated Malay Qur'an, donated to the museum to become a highly valued part of the collection.

For the past 25 years, IAMM has achieved considerable trust with our community, and this is something that makes me very proud. Thank you to all our community and we hope to live up to your expectations for decades to come.

Syed Mohamad Albukhary
Director
Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia



Focus I

The launching of 'Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage?' exhibition

Making history in Asia, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia presents an exceptional display of these paintings from the 19th and early 20th centuries



The Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) made history recently with the launch of the biggest exhibition of Orientalist paintings displayed in Asia. The exhibition, *Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage?* was officially launched by Malaysia's Prime Minister, Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim, on 2 June 2023. Also present were Communications and Digital Minister, Ahmad Fahmi bin Mohamed Fadzil, and the Mayor of



Kuala Lumpur, Dato' Kamarulzaman bin Mat Salleh, along with more than 100 dignitaries and members of the diplomatic corps to witness the momentous event.

This exhibition displays an exceptional collection of paintings from the 19th and early 20th centuries for the first time in Malaysia. The focus of the IAMM collection of Orientalist paintings is the works that are most relevant to re-examining the relationship between 'East' and 'West'.

Taking up two special galleries to exhibit one of the largest collections of Orientalist paintings anywhere in the world, the exhibition reiterates that Orientalist paintings are more than a work of art; they are also an insight into other people, places and products.

Special Gallery 1 offers visitors the opportunity to visualise how the places of the 'Orient' used to be. The paintings in this section depict known locations in the Maghreb, Egypt, Istanbul, Jerusalem and India. Meticulously executed and carefully composed, these works offer a glimpse into places that still mostly exist today. The paintings in Special Gallery 2 take, instead, a thematic look at the vast region and are divided into eight sections that follow the artists' different creative callings.

Settings of the paintings vary from coffee houses to mosques, from street markets to deserts. The emphasis of the exhibition is on what the artists saw, rather than what they wanted to see but never could. There are none of the conventional harem fantasies in this exhibition. Far

more valid than these is the work of Henriette Browne, a female French artist who is perhaps the only artist to have painted an Ottoman harem after actually visiting one.

Another French woman featured is Elisabeth Vigée-Le Brun, an 18th-century artist who painted subjects as renowned as Queen Marie-Antoinette. Visitors to the exhibition will have the pleasure of viewing her huge portrait of Muhammad Dervish Khan, an ambassador of Tipu Sultan, ruler of Mysore in southern India. This was the only such painting authorised by a diplomatic who was the most-admired man in Paris at the time of his visit.

In addition, there are male artists such as the legendary J.L. Gérôme. This prolific painter, sculptor and traveller



"Aku sama sekali tidak pernah terfikir untuk berhenti melukis, walau apa jua cabarannya. Lukisan tidak semudah dipelajari melalui buku, sangat perlu diteliti cara ia dihasilkan, perlu juga berguru dengan pakar yang berpengalaman dan moden Constantt langsung berpelua kesemua

was also the teacher of almost every Orientalist artist of his time, including the incomparable Ludwig Deutsch. The likes of Deutsch and Rudolf Ernst were artists with considerable travel experience in the Orient who captured the settings with respect and open-minded curiosity. This exhibition offers visitors the opportunity to view the sublime creations of these two artists; Deutsch's is the most delicate style, with serenity and touches of opulence, while Ernst had a freer and more vigorous approach.

American artists who set off for North Africa and further east include Frederick Bridgman and Edwin Lord Weeks, the most acclaimed American Orientalists in their day. Among the most remarkable artists on display is Osman Hamdi Bey, the leading Orientalist artist from the Orient as well as being a leader of Ottoman society.

While admiring the artworks in the exhibition, visitors should not ignore the frames. They not only protect the paintings but also add another visual dimension to them. An example of a significant frame that complements and extends an exquisite painting is seen in Alphonse-Etienne Dinet's work, *La Prière*.

The paintings provide context to the artefacts on view, not only to the 55 artefacts on display accompanying the paintings in the two special galleries, but throughout the museum's 12 permanent galleries. The exhibition provides a bridge to allow visitors a more complete understanding of the artefacts' historical context. In addition, it an opportunity to appreciate and understand these paintings as a treasure that might not be seen again for a generation.

Focus II

Donation of a Malay Qur'an to the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia



This donation reflects the rising awareness among the public, particularly fellow Malaysians, of the need to protect their family heritage for posterity. It also demonstrates the trust towards museum and heritage institutions in the country to be responsible as the guardian and preserver of the artefacts of the Malay region.

For the IAMM, this artefact will enter the permanent collection and be properly handled, thoroughly inspected and preserved. This historic Malay Qur'an will add value to the museum's existing collection and will benefit society.

In May 2023, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia received a special donation of a copy of a Malay Qur'an. In generally good condition, the mushaf's intricate illuminated pages demonstrate characteristics of the Terengganu style, and it is probably from the 19th – 20th centuries.

The generous donor, Puan Sadiha Mohd Salleh, came to the museum with her representative Kamaruddin Mustafa, to deliver the Malay Qur'an herself to the IAMM officials. The handover took place in the Conservation Department of IAMM, and was witnessed by the Head of Conservation, Friedrich Farid Zink, and Senior Conservator (Paper Unit), Siti Yuhainizar Mohd Ismail. It was understood that the main intention of this donation is to ensure this historical mushaf will be preserved for future generations. The donor hoped that it would be useful for the public, professionals and other institutions to carry out their research related to the object. Most importantly, the donor also had strong trust that this old Qur'an, which she inherited from her great-grandfather, will have a new safe home and will be protected in the well-equipped facilities of IAMM.



Education's Section

Orientalist Paintings: Mirror and Mirage? - Educational Programme



EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMMES

July
1st July 2023
Totebag Painting workshop by ArtCore
15 July 2023
Sketching Trail by KL Sketch Nation (Adults)

August
26 August 2023
Sketching Trail by KL Sketch Nation (Kids)
31 August 2023
Glow in The Dark Workshop

September
2 September 2023
Sketching Trail by KL Sketch Nation (Adults & Kids)

*All items are subject to change without prior notice. Keep checking our website as we may add new activities from time to time throughout the period of exhibition!

Be the first to know when exciting new educational programmes are launched. For more information, kindly contact the Education Department at 03-2092 7031 or email to education@iamm.org.my

Look forward to the world of the Orient from our Orientalist painting collection; an art movement that is rarely seen outside Europe and North America. We welcome you with art-appreciation activities here in the museum!

Orientalist paintings have left us with travellers' observations of the Islamic world, giving us a glimpse of what the Orient used to look like. In conjunction with this, we are offering you activities that are very much relatable to the art of painting, in various mediums. Making the most out of the visible expressions that our visitors can relate, there are elements of Islamic art such as calligraphic inscriptions, geometric patterns, floral motifs and the figural representation through contemporary materials. We look forward to your participation!





**International Museum Day 2023:
"Museums, Sustainability and Wellbeing"**

The International Museum Day celebration is one of the highlights of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia's calendar. This is the day when the worldwide community of museums joins together on or around 18 May. This year, IAMM celebrated on the prescribed date itself. The theme for the occasion was "Museums, Sustainability and Wellbeing". With the means to uphold the museum's role in serving society and fostering its development, we strove to create an inclusive space that promotes wellbeing, supports climate action, fosters inclusivity, tackles social isolation and improves mental health. Complementing the theme, this year IAMM featured an installation of crates – being the representation of artefacts as the heart of the museum – along with a scene of nature and a DIY Flower Bar to promote togetherness within the community.

Various activities were prepared for visitors in a sustainable and hands-on style here in IAMM. These included a Floral Trail, where visitors were invited to set out on an adventure searching for all the flower motifs that we have in our 12 permanent galleries. At our Book

Binding Corner, visitors were given a selection of book covers and learned the art of bookbinding. At our DIY Flower Bar, visitors enjoyed creating their own bouquets. We also offered the art of painting terracotta pots and taking care of succulents at our All About Plants corner.

Another offering that sparked career interest among the youth was our Hands-on Excavation. Visitors were taught the standard procedures in excavating artefacts and how to value them. Other than that, we had Batik Painting, Iznik Plate Painting, Origami and Hand-painting. At our DIY Paper Beads Necklace and Large Tapestry Corner, visitors were taught the technique of weaving using recycled materials and they helped us made a large tapestry, along with making their own accessories from paper beads. We are proud to have reused and upcycled our materials!

At our Persatuan Seni Khat Kebangsaan Corner, visitors were offered to have their name written in stylised calligraphy as key chains or bookmarks in Jawi script and Arabic. Simultaneously, the participation with creating the final look for our Mural Panel was uplifting and inspiring, changing strangers into friends. Needless to say, this event managed to bring togetherness within the community.

Our celebration was accompanied by amazing performances as well, bridging contemporary art with traditional music and martial arts. We had a flute performance by Mr Asri from Alam Busker, a *Randai* (a folk theatre that incorporates singing, dancing, acting and silat) and *Caklempong* (a traditional Malay music performance using instruments belonging to a small family of gongs) by the ASWARA team, and a Silat performance by Persatuan Silat Cula Sakti Malaysia.

Schools, universities and members of the public, especially those staying around the Klang Valley, participated in the event as it was a free admission day. The museum received a very encouraging welcome from visitors towards the celebration. The event recorded an astounding number of visitors from its opening at 10 a.m. until the curtain call at 5.30 pm.



Reopening of the Children's Library (1 July 2023)

Stay tuned to the newly reopened Children's Library, now with a different look! We look forward to providing you with only the best children's books collections from all over the globe. Not forgetting our storytelling sessions, wayang kulit (shadow puppetry) and art and crafts sessions. We will be back with more activities for you, your family, and others to bond together in the community. There will be new achievement indicators and encouragement for your children to read more!

Islamic Calligraphy Course 2023 (10 June 2023-28 October 2023)

We are proud to note that we have reached our 23rd year of organising this course. It is run in collaboration with Persatuan Seni Khat Kebangsaan Malaysia (PSKK) and will be conducted every Saturday under the guidance of PSKK's renowned calligraphers. The details of the course are as follows:

Venue: Education Workshop, IAMM

Duration: Three hours per class for 20 weeks

Starting date: 10 June 2023 (Classes to take place every Saturday, excluding public holidays)

Fee: RM450 (excluding materials/materials to be purchased on the first day of the course)

Medium of Instruction: Bahasa Melayu

Categories: Adults and Children/Young Adults (7-16 years old)

Calligraphy styles that will be taught: Nasakh, Riq'ah, Thuluth, Zukrufah and Arabic calligraphy on canvas.

For more information please contact Hazrena of the Education Department at 03-20927033.



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

IAMM Museum Shop

The IAMM Museum Shop offers an exclusive collection of Orientalist-painting reproductions from the *Orientalist Paintings: Mirror or Mirage?* exhibition. Among the items from the collection offered are notepads of different sizes with assorted designs, 3D lenticular bookmarks-cum-rulers and an 80-piece jigsaw puzzle.

A variety of products and merchandise, gifts, and souvenirs exclusively developed by the museum is available. Visitors can also buy a selection of books on subjects ranging from art to history and the culture of the Islamic world. Many of these are in-house publications of the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia.

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

Code 32208a
Price: Rm 5.00

Code 32085
Price: Rm 15.00

Code 32208b
Price: Rm 9.90

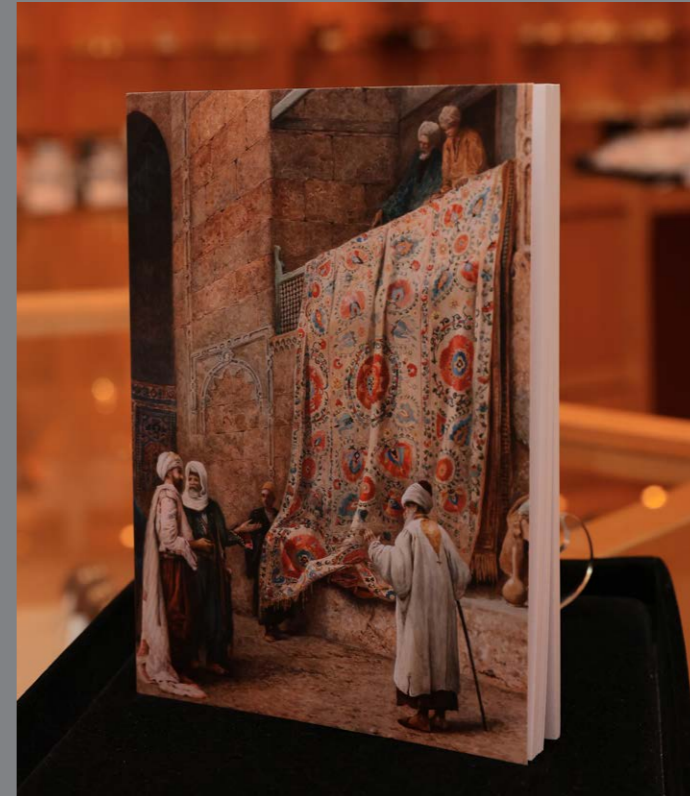
Code 14000
Price: Rm 25.00



Small Notepad Orientalist Painting Assorted Designs
Code: 32208a



3D Lenticular Bookmark Ruler Assorted Designs
Code: 32085



Notepad Orientalist Painting Assorted Designs
Code: 32208b



Jigsaw Puzzle Islamic Art (80 Pieces) Assorted Designs
Code: 14000



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