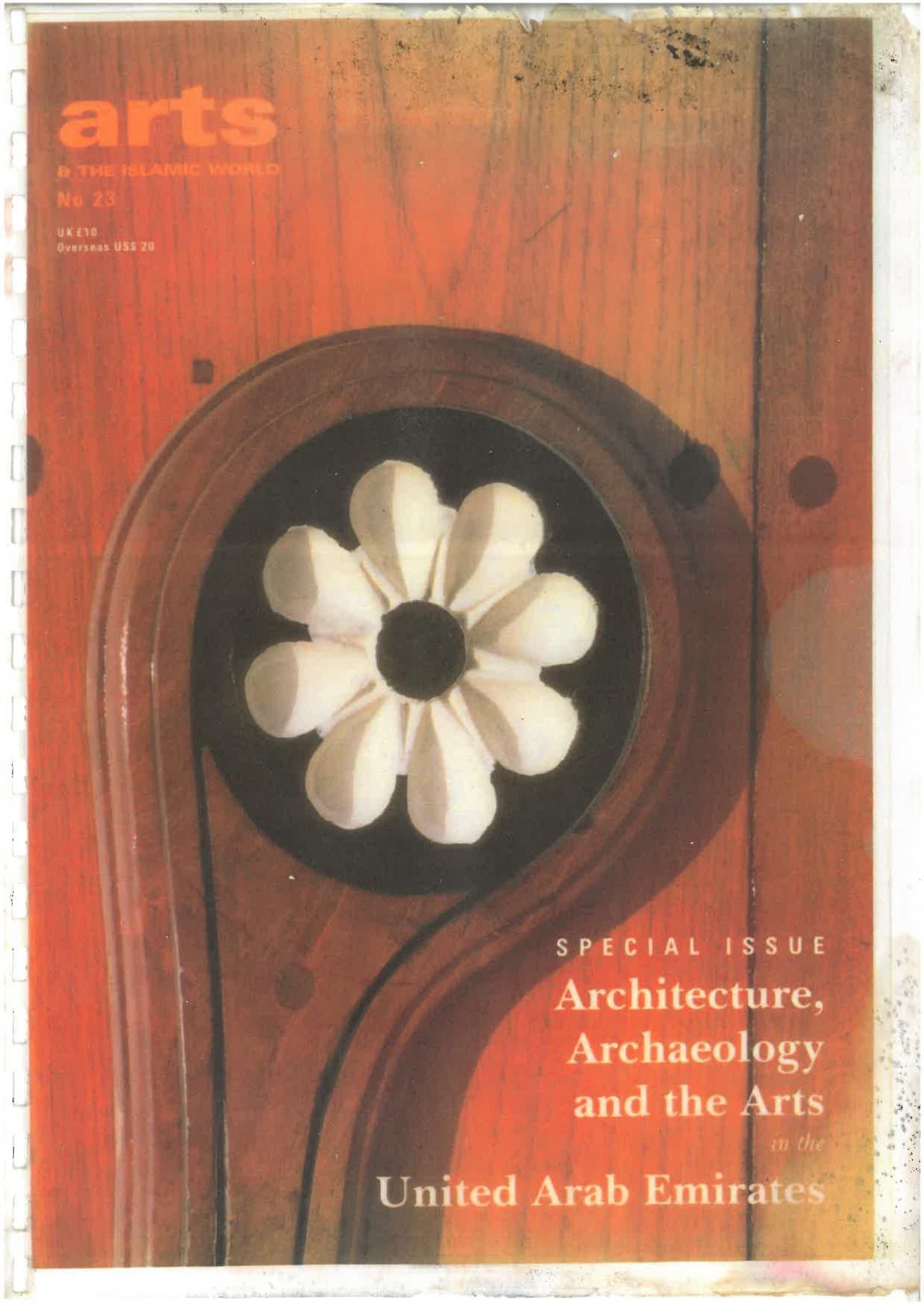
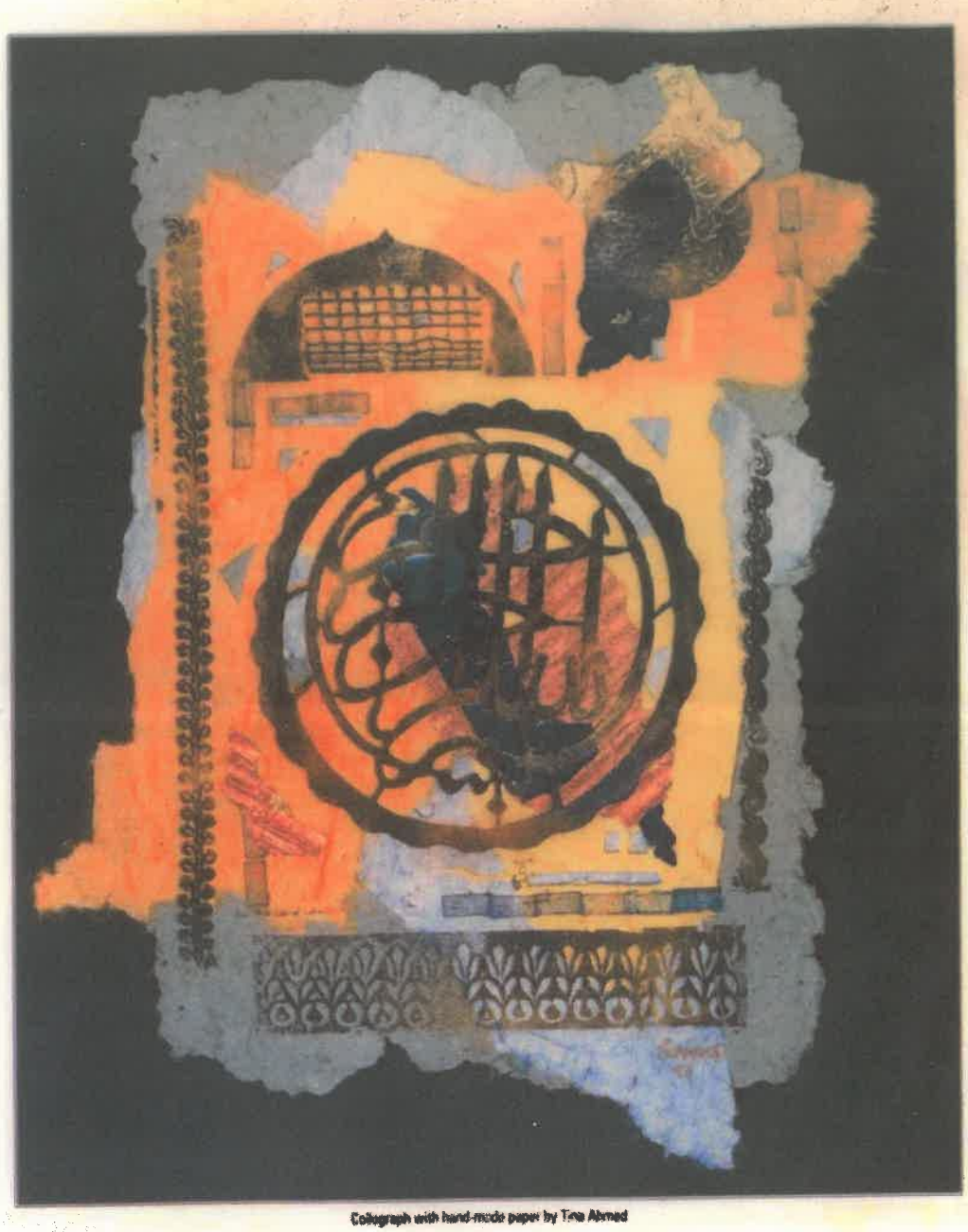

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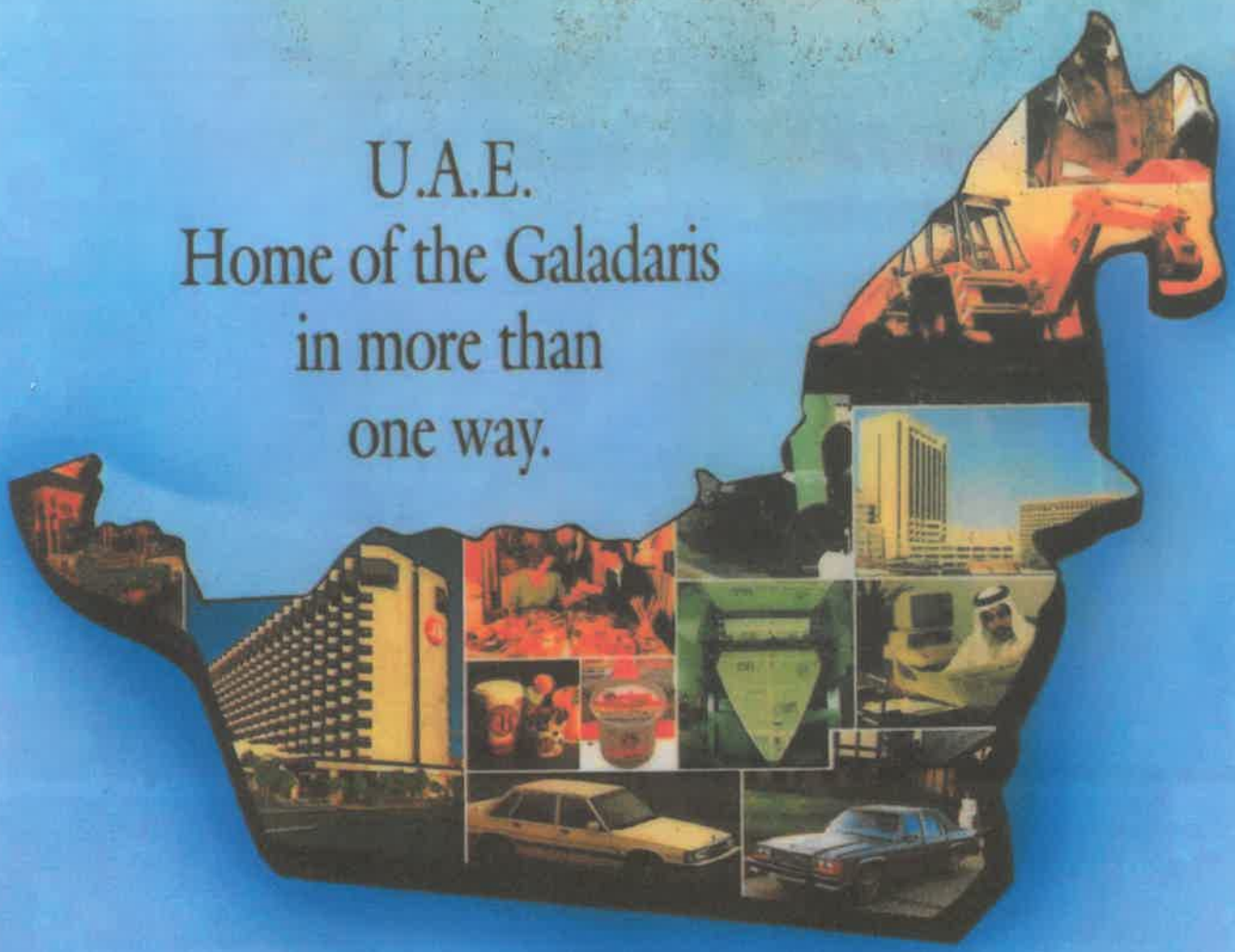
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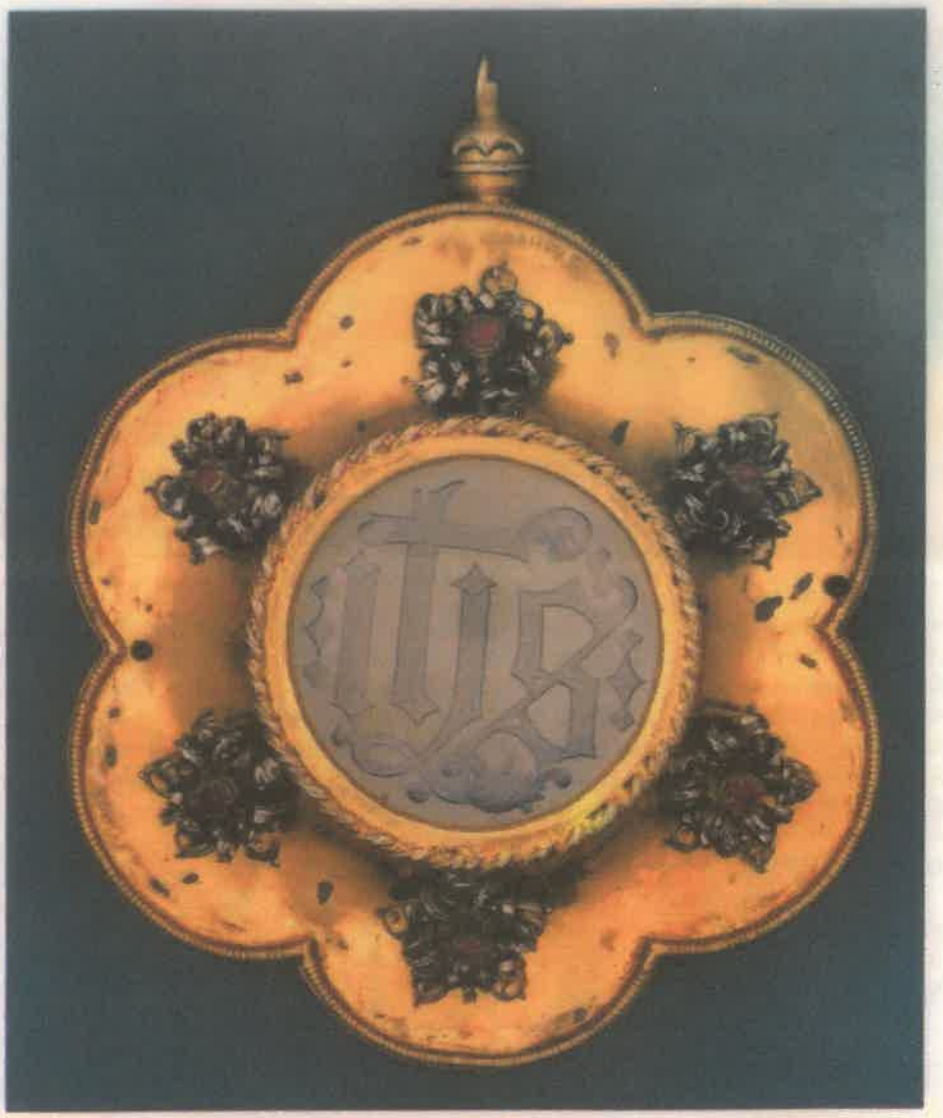
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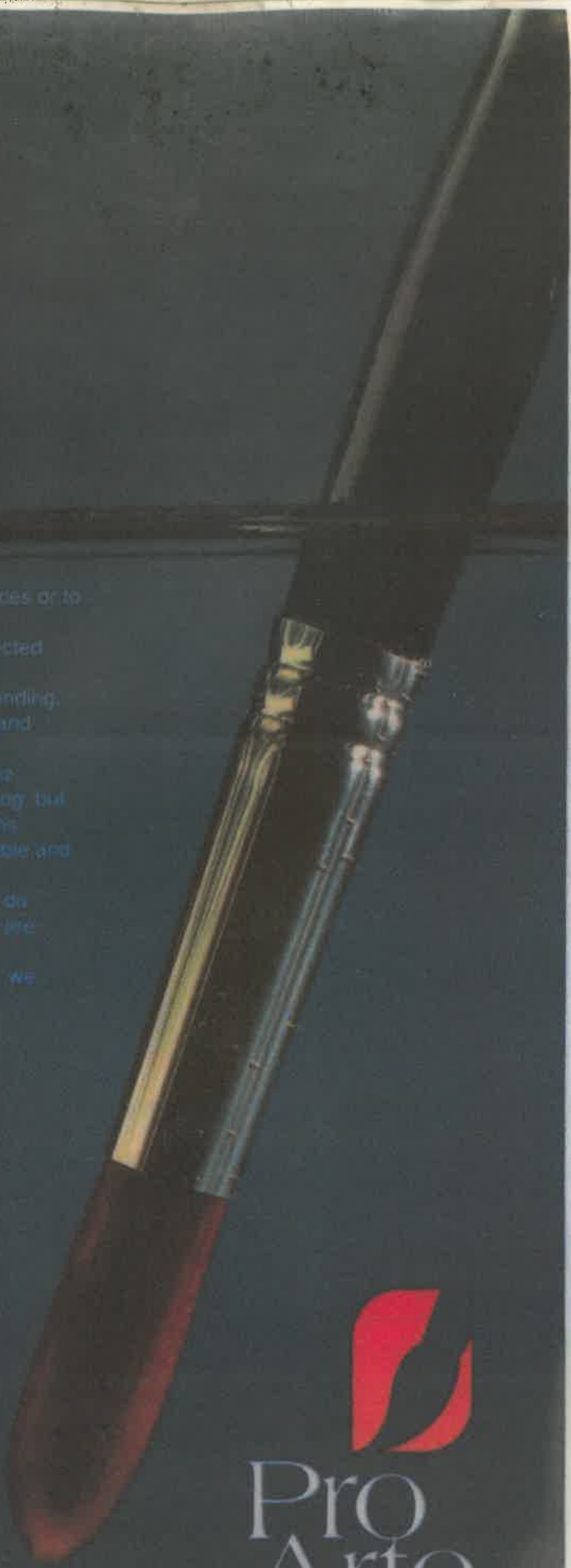
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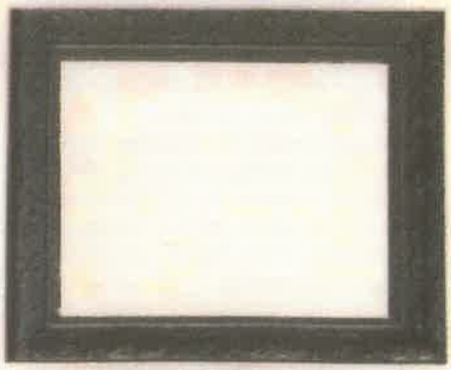


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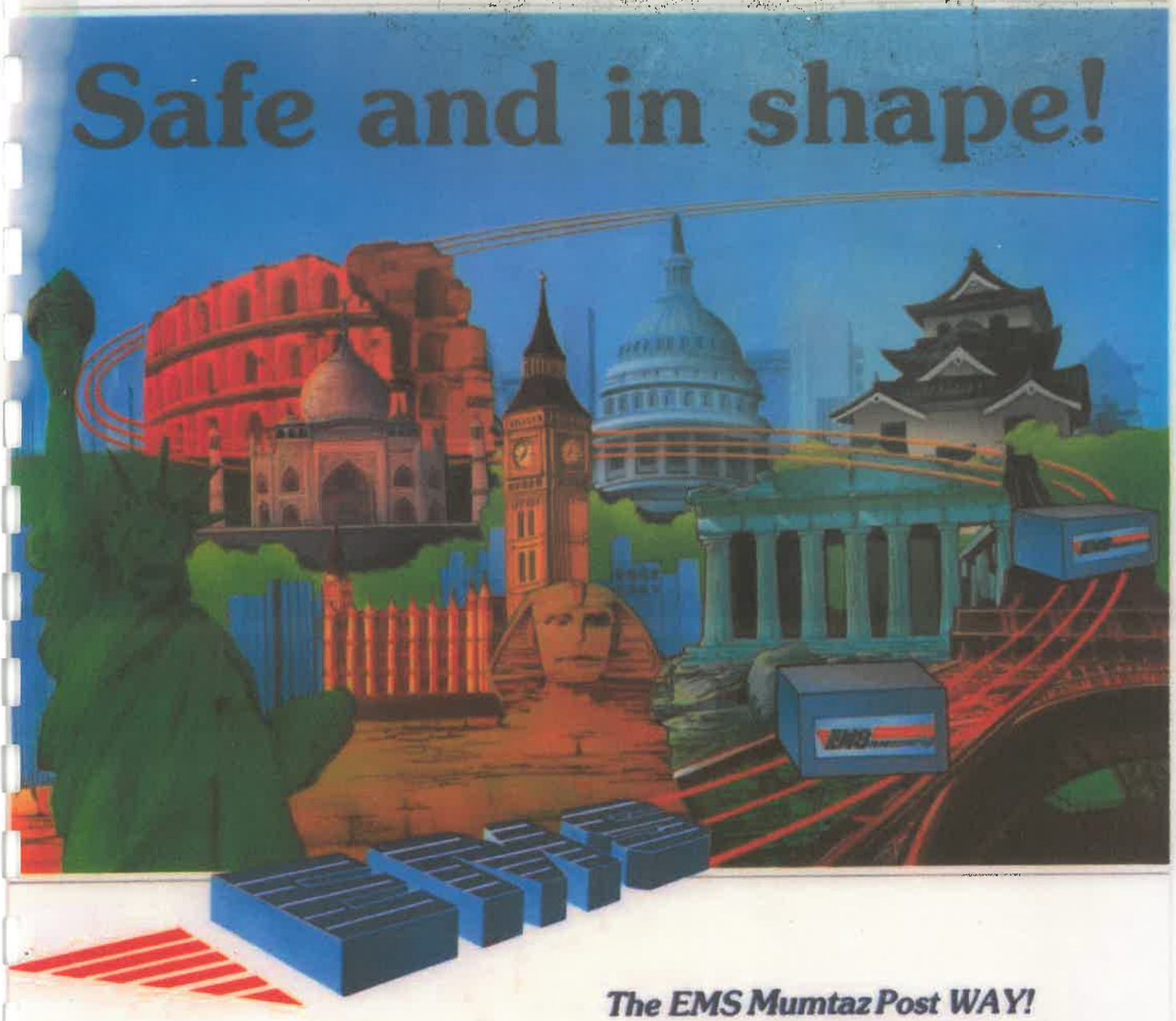
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Editorial

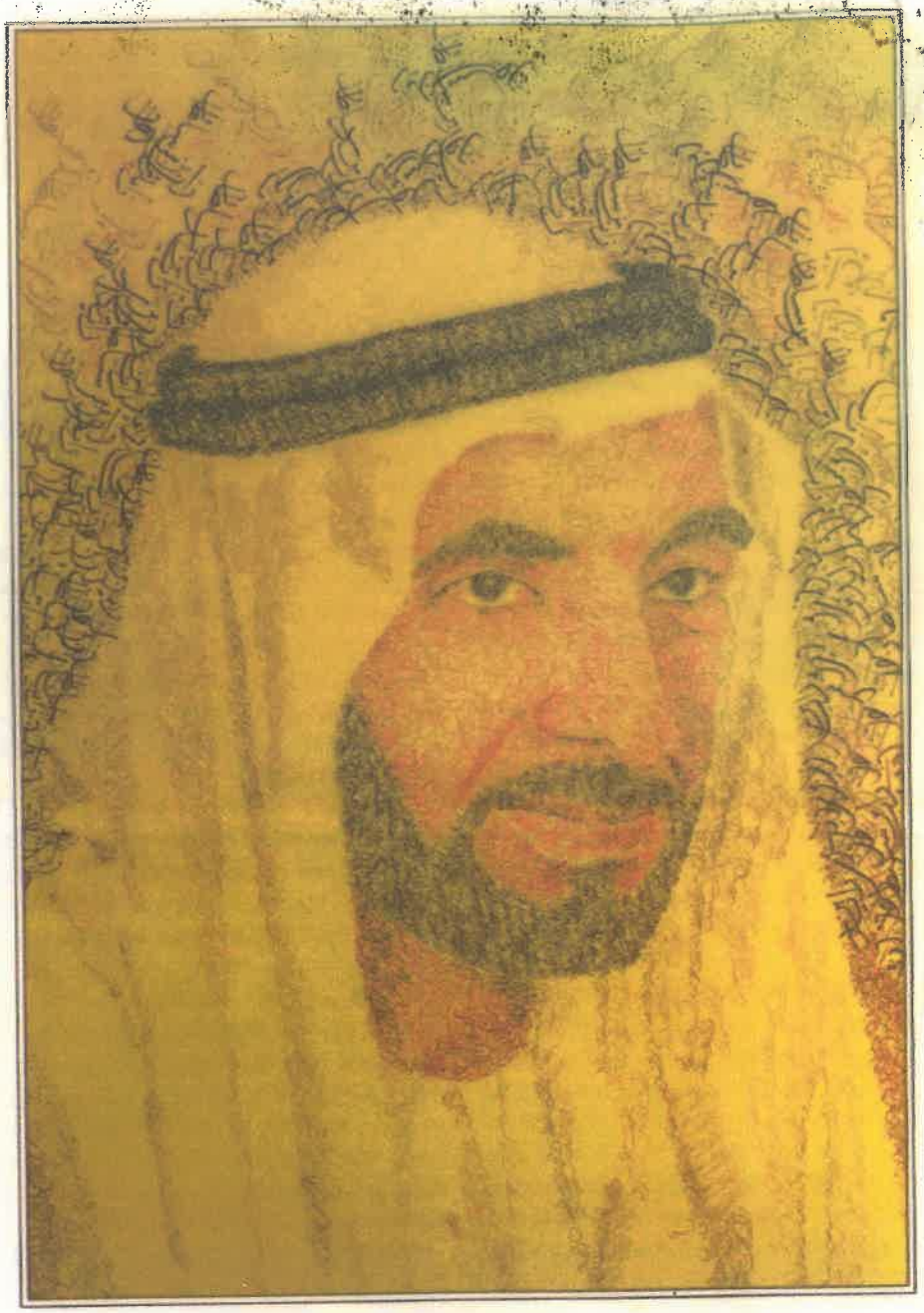
It was a little over 10 years ago that the Islamic Arts Foundation produced the first issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* magazine. As a publishing project it was perhaps a little unconventional. It began without any financial input, and with few pre-conceived notions. Those of us who volunteered to work on its honorary Board of Editors on that basis — and have seen our ranks grow in the years since — often recall with some satisfaction what the Chairman, Mr. Muazzam Ali, said at the launching of the first issue in 1983:

> The Editors of *Arts & The Islamic World*, drawn from various countries and varied disciplines, have vastly different views of the relative importance of tradition and change, of continuity and innovation, of technical skill and creative ingenuity, of classical values and modern trends.
>
> Above all, editorial nuances notwithstanding, the contributors themselves have their own independent and strongly argued points of view; and in attempting a so-called 'balancing act' and reflecting a broad spectrum of contemporary thinking on the subject, the journal may appear to lean a little on one side or the other. But the objective is indeed to build bridges of understanding and interpretation, not only between the Islamic arts of yesterday, today and tomorrow, but also between the arts of the Islamic and the Eastern and Western worlds.

His emphasis on the primacy of the contributors' own independent and strongly argued points of view has had a special significance for us, knowing as we do, that there are varying viewpoints on the arts as these have been practised, perceived and interpreted across the vast geographical and historical spread of the Arab and Islamic world, by those within and outside it. Indeed as the magazine's name implies, its focus has been on reflecting the whole range of argument and research on the subject, in as objective and academic a perspective as possible. At the same time it has been, and will continue to be our endeavour to keep the Islamic world itself abreast of international developments in various fields of performing and plastic arts, with special emphasis on the study and teaching of the arts and their application in allied disciplines.

This special issue on "Architecture, Archaeology and the Arts in the United Arab Emirates" is being introduced to our readers by the scholar-statesman, HE Dr Ezzeddin Ibrahim, Cultural Advisor to the President of the UAE. Dr Ibrahim chaired the First International Seminar on Islamic Arts in London in 1982, when participating scholars, artists and art administrators from 22 Arab and Islamic countries met with specialists of Islamic arts in the Western world, and it was unanimously decided to start the publication of *Arts & The Islamic World* magazine. His continuing interest in its progress is deeply cherished, generously reflecting the vision and munificence of the President of the United Arab Emirates, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan.

We are grateful to the scholars and specialists who have contributed on specific aspects of the art and cultural scene in the UAE, particularly as it has shaped in the years since its emergence as a sovereign independent State in 1971. We are specially indebted to the Chancellor of the UAE University, HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, its Secretary General, Mr. Shabib Al Marzooqi, and the Secretary General of the Cultural Foundation, HE Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa Al Suwaidi, for extending warm support and valuable advice to us at various stages of our work in the United Arab Emirates.



A calligraphic portrait of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan President of the United Arab Emirates by artist Mohammed Mundi

"A nation without a past has neither a present nor a future"

Introduction

Ezzeddin Ibrahim

I AM delighted that *Arts & The Islamic World* should mark its ten years of publication by producing a Special Issue devoted to "Architecture, Archaeology and the Arts in the United Arab Emirates." I have watched with interest the progress of what I consider to be a unique project. Started as an independent nonprofit making publication, it was produced following one of the recommendations of the 1st International Seminar on Islamic Arts in London which I had the honour of chairing in 1982. The first issue came out the following year, being written and edited by a group of scholars living in different parts of the world who were dedicated to the study and critical appreciation of the arts of the Islamic world, both traditional and contemporary. The magazine has continued to be produced on that basis ever since.

Among the eminent specialists who have contributed to this Special Issue on the Emirates are Dr Geoffrey King, of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, who has recently discovered one of the oldest human settlements (of an age of some 7000 years) on the island of Dalma. Dr Daniel Potts, of the University of Sydney in Australia, reports on the new ground he has broken in his excavations at Tell Abraq, one of the UAE's most important sites. The issue also includes remarkable insights into the mediaeval Islamic port-city of Julfar in Ras Al-Khaimah, with an account of five seasons of excavations there. In addition, there is an overall assessment of the UAE as a new frontier of archaeology by Peter Hellyer, who has acted as the co-ordinator of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Project. And two of the UAE's six museums - the oldest in Al - Ain and the youngest in Sharjah - are introduced by Dr Walid Yasin and Peter Hudson

As the President of the UAE, His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, has emphasised, "A nation without a past has neither a present nor a future". While the UAE's past is gradually being uncovered, its present is receiving the attention of its Ruler who, from the earliest years of its formation in 1971, has identified education and culture as being important pillars upon which to build the emerging national edifice. In the intervening years, therefore, great attention has been paid to all aspects of culture.

It is in this context that the contribution of the UAE University has been crucial, inspired in its ambitious thrust by the enlightened thinking of its Chancellor, HH Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, and clearly manifested in the article by its able Secretary General, Shabib al-Marzooqi, in this issue of the magazine. There is also a note on architecture courses at the University, and an analytical study by two distinguished members of the University's Department of Architecture, detailing the successful preservation of the local environmental character of the Al Ain desert community. Other aspects of the architectural renaissance in the Emirates are examined by eminent architects and researchers who contribute thought-provoking perspectives on past and present programmes of building.

In the cultural field, the pioneering concept of the Cultural Foundation as the core institution for the promotion of art and culture is underlined by its Secretary General, Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa Al Suwaidi, recognising as he does, the importance of the cultural dimension in achieving a better quality of life for the people of the UAE.

The developing arts scene in various Emirates is also covered, marked by the successful Sharjah First Arts Biennial earlier this year with enthusiastic Arab and international participation. The growing number of art galleries which have been established in the country, the opening of new museums and art centres in different Emirates, and the increasing emphasis on the promotion of cultural and artistic activities, have opened up new vistas and opportunities for creative endeavour. All this is reflected in the work of the artists reproduced in these pages – evidence of the fact that in the Arab and Islamic world the fine arts continue to be practised, including those of Islam's supreme contributions in the fields of architecture, calligraphy and decorative arts.

While it is true that Islam has had certain reservations about the pictorial arts, many artists in the past received generous encouragement and sponsorship from enlightened rulers. Now, too, it is evident that budding artistic talents in the Emirates will receive every encouragement from official and private sources. We Muslims owe a debt of gratitude to many non-Muslim scholars who have interested themselves in our artistic heritage. It is to be hoped that in the future more Muslim scholars will participate in this work and that Arab countries in particular will build up collections of artifacts from their heritage in both private hands and national museums.

Finally, our thanks are due to Jalal Uddin Ahmed, the Executive Editor of *Arts & The Islamic World*, and to HE Muazzam Ali, the chairman of the Board of Editors, who have so successfully steered this magazine since it began publication.

HE Dr Ezzeddin Ibrahim is Cultural Advisor to HH the President of the United Arab Emirates.

Al Ain Desert Community

Preserving the Local Environmental Character

Talat El Dali and Mahmoud A Abdel Latif

Compared to other desert development experiments in the Middle East region and other parts of the world, Al Ain City has its unique and special characteristics, both as a living urban environment and as a development experience. This analytical study attempts mainly to focus on answering a very important question confronting many designers, planners and policy-makers who deal with desert settlement and development: how to produce large-scale physical and social changes into a primitive, hostile and sensitive desert environment in a relatively short period of time, and yet keep these changes highly positive in nature and largely compatible with the character of the local environment.

Al-Ain is a planned new town located in an inner desert site in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) – a resource-rich developing country in the Arabian Gulf Region. Al Ain city lies at 180 to 240 m above sea level between 24° and 24°-20' north Latitude and 55°-15' and 55°-45' Longitudes. It is 165 kms from the capital Abu Dhabi and 135 kms from Dubai the second important city in the country.[1]

Up to 1969, Al Ain was merely an oasis inhabited by a few scattered nomadic tribes settling in isolated small villages. The residents used underground water to support traditional palm tree farming and grazing activities.[2] In 1967 Al-Ain's population was only 10,000 inhabitants: most of them were UAE citizens. After oil discovery and exploitation Al Ain's population increased drastically. It was doubled in 1972, reaching 82,000 inhabitants in 1977, and 140,000 in 1980.[3] Recently, Al Ain has emerged into a large urban community comprising about 175,000 inhabitants: more than 60% of them are expatriates.[4] It is expected that the city will continue to grow and attract more residents and economic activities in the future.[5]

Unique Characteristics: Compared to other desert development experiments in the region and in the world, Al Ain city has its unique and special characteristics both as a living urban environment and as a development experience. Al Ain has taken positive measures to become not only a livable and attractive environment but also a permanent and self-sustained community — a goal out of reach of many new towns especially under the adverse conditions of the hot-arid desert.

Consequently, it is the purpose of this paper to analyse and portray the characteristics of Al Ain City and various features of its development process. Given the complex and extended nature of the term "local character" which covers many aspects including the physical context of the desert environment as well as the cultural and human aspects of life in the city of Al Ain, it was decided to limit the meaning of the term to the area of aesthetic character. Therefore 'local character' in this analysis means a character blending the features of Islamic and local architecture of the desert environment of the UAE.

The paper uses published literature, direct observations, photographic surveys, and analytical descriptions to capture the various developmental features and the design and planning measures applied in the city of Al-Ain, contributing to its aesthetic sophistication in general and its commendable level of conformity with the local Islamic character of the desert environment of the UAE in particular.

The Al Ain experiment is presented here in two main parts. Identified first are some features of its development process so as to get a sense of the means used to overcome the profound adversities and to make use of the prevailing potential. Then the main design and planning characteristics of Al Ain are reviewed in the light of the measures undertaken to preserve the local Islamic character and help create the required aesthetic qualities.

Al Ain development process: It was a real challenge to decide and build Al-Ain City as a large-scale urban settlement given the physical adversity of the inner desert location and other social limitations at the time. The decision was taken in 1969 by Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, then the prince of Abu Dhabi Emirate and later the President of the UAE – a united country founded in 1971. Al Ain development process, however, has made good use of the rich potential and abundant energy resources of the country and the overwhelming ambition and determination of the political leadership to build the city.

Adversities and potential: Physical adversity facing the development of Al Ain included hot-arid climate, insufficient potable water, and lack of proper transportation, communication, and other infrastructure networks which had to be built from scratch. Social adversity included deterrents such as the small national population, shortage of qualified manpower, and the limited administrative structure. These were additional deterrents hindering the country's capability to deal effectively with multi-dimensional problems associated normally with large-scale development projects such as the new city of Al Ain.

Nevertheless, the development process of Al Ain enjoyed several potentials, most significant of which was the abundant financial resources the country accumulated from oil revenues. As a part of the nationwide development plan, the establishment of Al Ain and other related national and regional infrastructure networks was the best way towards internal investment instead of total dependence on investments abroad.

Clockwise from right, 1: Low rise houses in residential neighbourhoods. 2: Means fostering a unified local and Islamic character in Al Ain. 3: Architectural character of public buildings in Al Ain City. 4: Fostering a unified local Islamic character in Al Ain. 5: Architectural character of public areas in Al Ain City.

















Top: Palaces and their wall fences are an element of Al Ain visual experience. **Middle:** Luxurious houses and palaces are a dominant feature of Al Ain. **Above:** The wide boulevard works as a welcoming gate.

such a development process, however, required that sizable capital be spent to acquire technical knowledge, hire skilled, qualified labor, and to import modern building and industrial equipment. But, heavy and continuous expenditure on such activities was looked at as the only way to bring about developmental progress. Consequently, Al Ain became a valuable built environment suitable for various industrial, agricultural, and other types of developmental activities the country aimed at.

Another significant potential emerged from the fact that Al Ain was meant to be a symbol of national pride and determination to bring substantial positive changes into an otherwise hostile environment. Such a vision and determination, especially at the highest political level, works as a most precious potential for development. It was only through this powerful incentive that money could generously be allocated and spent to convert vast arid areas into highly productive and useful green and urban land.

Some features of Al Ain Development: Al Ain City has come into existence under a very innovative development approach which attempted to reduce large-scale environmental changes in a relatively short period of time using all available resources on the local, national, and international levels. In spite of their size, these changes, however, were kept to a great extent highly positive in nature and achieved a level of conformity with the local character of the environment.

Intensive and efficient use of available resources: To produce large scale positive changes in the hostile desert environment meant that a very effective resource utilization approach had to be applied. This approach would attempt to make up for the lack of some necessary resources by better usage of other resources in hand. Thus, the development of Al Ain has been considered an undertaking which can be achieved only and effectively through the intensive use of the country's abundant financial resources. Therefore, public funds were generously allocated to import most advanced technical knowledge, qualified labor, and advanced equipment. Consistent, strong and

far-sighted ambition and determination of the political leadership was instrumental in supporting the various activities of this development process.

An advanced approach to development:
Various activities of Al Ain development process have been carried out under an approach which is advanced by all means, especially when compared to other conventional development approaches known in other developing countries in the region for years. The approach applied most advanced techniques in planning, designing, implementing and monitoring the development of the city.

An international consulting firm was selected to prepare a highly scientific comprehensive development plan.[6] Upon approval of the impressive plan by the political leadership, execution procedures started. Many national and international firms have participated in implementing various infrastructure networks and projects. A local power plant was built to produce enough electricity for the city, yet, as time passed, additional electricity had to be brought from a gigantic power plant in Abu Dhabi. Potable water was produced first from the underground reservoir of Al Ain. Recently, a pipe line from a desalination plant in Abu Dhabi provides Al Ain with 75% of its needs of potable water. The city has also completed an up-to-date sewage and drain storming systems with an advanced treatment plant. The usage of recycled water in irrigating the city's ever expanding plantation is a concept which is being introduced and applied, too. Moreover, Al Ain City has a very advanced telecommunication network. Since 1990, Al Ain City Planning Department has adopted a very sophisticated geographic information system to be more effective in monitoring the various development activities of the city.[7]

A living urban environment:
Al Ain was intended from the beginning to become a most livable, attractive, and permanent urban environment – an environment which achieves high design and planning standards in terms of aesthetic quality, environmental suitability, and functional efficiency. All these three goals were to be achieved no matter how high the final cost of the development would be. Described below are some characteristics of Al Ain as a living urban community with special emphasis on the aesthetic qualities of the city.

These qualities are achieved in Al Ain City at all levels from the level of architectural design of a tiny detail up to the levels of urban design, landscape design, and urban planning. The beauty of Al Ain is attributed to several reasons among which are the city's rich and diverse visual experience, and the overall sense of unity, coherence, and order fostered by a strong local and Islamic architectural style and character. The final product is simply a highly maintained clean and aesthetically stimulating environment.

A rich and diverse visual experience:
Different measures are used to create a rich and diverse visual experience for Al Ain visitors and residents. Pleasant mental impressions are normally felt by a visitor during his first tour through the city. Visual sequences recorded by a visitor approaching the city driving through its various parts and reaching his final destinations support this observation. The first and abiding impression of Al Ain City is a feeling of natural quietness and intensive "greenness" in contrast to the flaring desert around the city.[8] This statement is true for both city entrances from the direction of Abu Dhabi and from Dubai.

The six-lane boulevard avenue works as a warm welcoming gate to the city. The four-meter median is planted with a visually unending line of palm trees and defined by two strips of fence type French style shrubs at its edges. At each side of the boulevard avenue there is a side walk with a linear green buffer of bulky trees.

From the first glance, the visitor knows that he is about to enter a garden city. This idea is insured by a relatively long driving time along the green boulevard street with almost no intersections or crossings. To the left and the right are luxurious palaces with their continuous wall fences perfectly integrated with the palace architecture behind them. On account of their unusual lengths and areas, the palaces and their walls comprise an important unifying architectural element in the overall visual experience of Al Ain City.

The more we go inside, the more building intensity increases, yet in a very gradual way. More buildings appear penetrating the green buffers along the street sides. However, these buildings are mostly one-storey dwellings with their local character and styles, surrounded by modest wall fences. In some other sites one may see two-storey detached villas which are normally situated far enough from through traffic but with proper accessibility from the arterial boulevard network.

Once we arrive at the city center we feel the contrast between the city's green quiet entrance and the vivid shopping activities with their sounds, lights, and smells. With green palm trees and bushes in the middle and bulky trees on the sides, the standard boulevard street is still prevalent all around. Here, residential multi-storey buildings dominate, rather than public space. Heights, however, never exceed four storeys – a very firm measure to keep a sense of human scale.

In view of the chess board plan of the city and the prevalence of trees and greenery in its general character, the city has a specially designed system of landmarks which avoids monotony, while achieving a sense of direction and creating lovely visual change. Landmarks of various scales and designs are placed in the round-abouts providing logical visual messages received in intervals while driving or walking along the city boulevard street network. These landmarks are highly integrated with local character and style. They are symbols of the country's heritage. Water fountains, water falls, natural rocks, sculptures, and other symbolic elements are used to produce these landmarks. Other types of landmarks which are distributed in proper locations are public buildings, mosques, and community gardens.

The city has a reasonably planned traffic sign system which assists to a large extent in keeping a sense of direction. This system, however, is to be enhanced by a comprehensive system of naming streets and buildings now under preparation.

The Architectural character of Al Ain:
Another element of Al Ain's beauty emerges from the overall sense of unity, coherence, and order fostered by a very interesting attempt to apply and preserve local Islamic architectural style and character.

The municipality of Al Ain has laid down many conditions for issuing building licences, which was an important factor in keeping a distinguished and consistent architectural character for the city. Every architectural project must be reviewed by a special committee named "The Committee for the Preservation of Islamic Character". This committee has to confirm that the project complies with the principles of Islamic architecture: only then the project may be executed. Although, over the time the role of the committee has almost been limited to the examination of building facades to insure that they include elements and features conventionally known to be Islamic, such as arches, oriels, tiles, etc., the committee has largely succeeded in the realization of a degree of harmony along the city facades, most of which included the above mentioned elements in different forms.

Another measure which helps insuring conformity with the surrounding local character is the strict application of height limits. Building heights range from one storey in outer residential neighbourhoods to a maximum of four stories in the most dense city center.

Architecture of public buildings: Public buildings represent distinguished architectural nodes in the city of Al Ain. This is due to their clear architectural character and contrast with the surrounding environment, besides their difference from residential buildings. These architectural nodes have many and different functions.

The administrative zone: This visual node includes buildings for the city municipality, the city planning department, water and electricity directorates, the directorate of agriculture, and other administrative buildings. This zone is one of the main sights of the city. Its architecture seeks to confer a distinct Islamic character whether in the facades or in the interior. The site is rich and diverse in architectural elements with Islamic features, providing a progressive perspective over the exterior or the interior.

The Governor's Representative building: It is the highest building in the city, its external Islamic characteristics in total harmony with internal architectural solutions being designed as independent offices overlooking the inner court. This solution insures privacy and connection at the same time. It's height and continuous illumination overnight mark it out as another outstanding landmark in the city.

The United Arab Emirates University: The main administrative building of the university, and the complex of theoretical colleges comprise the symbol of the UAE University as there is at the site the main mosque of the university with its magnificent dome and two minarets, all surrounded with other university premises and facilities. Although the university has other colleges in other cities, this group presents a firm image of the university as a whole.

Hotels: One should not forget tourist hotels, located outside the present residential districts. The city has two large five-star hotels besides other small ones. Large hotels are less conforming with the local Islamic character. But since they are situated far from main traffic roads of the city, they produce very little impact on the city's outlook.

Traditional architecture of Al Ain: The city has many historical buildings displaying the traditional character of oasis architecture on which the modern city of Al Ain was established. These include the following:
Al Morabba Castle: This is a square-shaped clay building. Its four high projecting corners give an impression of military castles. This castle was the center of Al Ain, the old settlement in its very early formation time.

Al Ain Castle (now the Museum of Al Ain): Located at the eastern corner of Al Ain oasis, it was the stronghold of the old Al Ain settlement. Its design is almost military, consisting of an external wall encircling another wall for an architectural mass quasi-square, limited from three corners by round towers while in the fourth corner there is a low building.

Al Jahly Castle: Built in 1898, it consists of an outer high wall encircling a rectangular castle. On one of its sides, there is a gigantic round tower composed of many stratified cylinders. Inside the wall there are two areas, one as an internal castle with inner court, the corners of which are limited by round towers; the second are armament storage and guards dwellings. The castle was used as a residence and governing palace as well as for military and defence purposes.

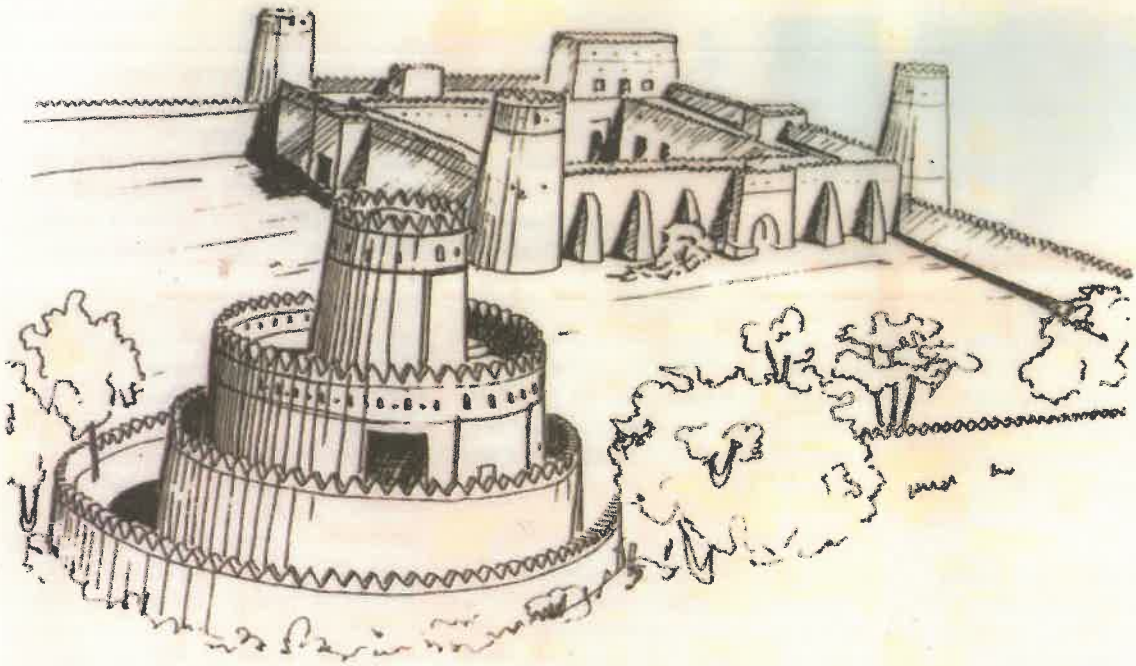
Architecture of residential buildings: Dwellings of the city are divided into five categories: palaces and grand villas, small houses, apartment buildings in the city center, low income popular housing, and labour housing.

Palaces and grand villas: The city of Al Ain is distinguished for its luxurious palaces and grand villas normally occupied by the more affluent citizens. These are for residential use and are built on large lots of land with areas of 60 x 60 m and 90 x 90 m for villas, and 270 x 270 m or even more for palaces. A palace or a villa of such type is usually surrounded with a wall and has a distinctive design in terms of patterns, shapes, colours, materials, etc. Gates are significant visual features in approaching or when passing by the palaces.

A palace site may be small, containing only the main palace building surrounded with proper open spaces, gardens, walk ways, play grounds, and parking lots all inside the palace walls. In some cases, sites for palaces may grow to a size equal to that of a small neighbourhood including many annexes and functions.

The main building in a palace site is basically a "Majlis" which is a guest's reception hall, to which is annexed a dining hall, the house itself comprising bedrooms, living rooms, bath rooms, and services including kitchen, store room, laundry, and servants rooms. In big palaces these sections exist in separate buildings where the "Majlis" is an independent building facing the main entrance of the external wall surrounding the palace and the services are located at an area in the rear from which they serve the "Majlis" and the house.

For big villas, the same order can be found, or alternatively, the distribution may be vertical. In such cases the Majlis is located at the ground floor and the dwelling house on the upper floor.





Opposite page, top: El Jahli Castle. **Bottom:** The wide boulevard avenue working as a welcoming gate. **Right, top:** Historical building and traditional architecture in Al Ain. **Middle:** Low rise houses in residential neighbourhoods. **Bottom:** Luxurious houses and palaces a dominant feature of Al Ain.







Small residential buildings: These are dwellings with heights not more than seven meters. They are built on lots of 24 x 24 m or 30 x 30 m, divided into one-storey, two apartments or two-storey four apartments, and often occupied by middle income non-UAE citizens.

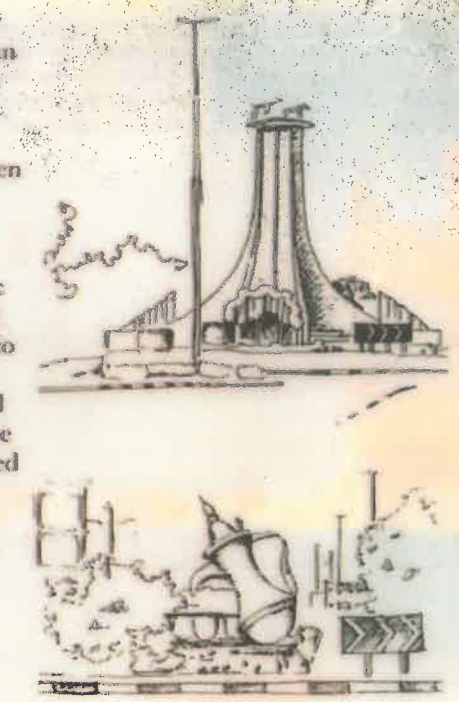
Residential apartments in the city center: These apartment buildings are built on lots of 24 x15 m. Their heights do not exceed four storeys. Ground floors are used as shops, commercial exhibitions, and restaurants, etc. The mezzanine and the first floor are used as private offices or clinics, while upper floors are used as residential apartments always occupied by non-UAE citizens.

Popular housing: Most of these buildings are private houses built at the beginning of the construction boom in early and mid-1970's. They were appropriate for the low income citizens. The lots for popular houses range from 15 x 15 m to 30 x 30 m, and their design rests on an interior front court for reception overlooked by men's Majlis. There may be another lateral or rear court overlooked by the house services or Harem (Ladies section).

When the citizens' income increased and they could get luxurious houses and villas, these popular houses were converted into dwelling for non-UAE citizens with low incomes. Nevertheless some citizens continued to live in these dwellings after improving them, thus benefiting from the material subsidies and loans provided by the government for such purposes. These houses are grouped around car parks in the form of a square which represents a perspective plan unit for these zones called Sha'biyat for low income people.

Labour housing: These are groups of random and unplanned settlements, and occur in the industrial or agricultural areas. They have no clear outlines, are not seen from the main streets, being frequently built by the owners of industrial or agricultural units.

It is generally difficult for any new city to have a distinct identity or personality in relation to the surrounding environment. Nevertheless, Al Ain has succeeded in imposing a clear personality by prohibiting excessive heights of buildings which may dominate the general impression of the city as a green horizontal garden city. Moreover, insistence on the realization of an Islamic architectural character for its buildings, particularly the facades, by strict administrative control has rendered Al Ain a well planned and architecturally distinguished city.



Drawings of some of the features used in Al Ain Architecture.

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7. The growing size and the complex nature of Al Ain infrastructure system necessitated the adoption of an advanced GIS system which will be operating in full capacity by the mid 1993.

8. It is essential to note that continuous and steady introduction of green areas has provided the city of Al Ain with an integrated network of highly designed and maintained public gardens in addition to citywide green areas in the medians and sides of the boulevards avenues.

9. Al Ain palaces and their walls are elements of the city of Al Ain which deserve further investigation

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The Changing Pattern

Nazzal Yousuf

ONLY HALF a century ago, most of the United Arab Emirates people lived in traditional dwellings, which were often mudbrick houses or huts made of palm fronds, or in desert tents. Now the UAE cities are full of scyscrapers, fine villas and apartment blocks, some of them fine specimens of modern architecture.

Few countries have ever gone through development at the pace that the UAE has experienced in just two decades. There have been great economic achievements and far-reaching changes in the way people live, in their view of the world, and the way the world now perceives them.

The country is now experiencing a further construction boom reminiscent of the early eighties. Today more than 500 residential and commercial buildings are in various stages of construction, resulting in increased commercial activity.

45-Storey Skyscraper

The UAE capital of Abu Dhabi is about to have a few architectural landmarks in the near future. Among these are a 45-storey skyscraper, a giant conference hall and an ultra-modern complex for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The $82 million conference hall when completed will become one of the ten largest meeting halls in the world with a pillarless dome. It will be occupying a total area of 58,000 square meters.

The 45-floor Baynouna Tower in Abu Dhabi corniche is expected to be ready by August next year, dwarfing other Abu Dhabi Corniche landmarks. The $52 million skyscraper is built over a gross area of 50,000 square meters with a 160-meter high tower and a dome comprising four blocks.

The tower would look so modern as to enhance the surrounding buildings. From outside, the skyscraper looks like it is made of separate blocks and towers, but from inside they are just one building.

Another landmark along the corniche which had been completed recently is a 119-meter-high tower which will accommodate the Grand Forte hotel in Abu Dhabi, with the first-ever Abu Dhabi revolving restaurant atop.

The $22 million 29-floor eye-shaped building will have most advanced communication facilities, including a card computer system for opening doors.

Abu Dhabi is also going to have shortly its Disneyland, which promises to rival others in the world. Five international engineering consulting companies are fiercely competing to win the $2 billion bid for the construction of the wonderland on Lulu Island near the Abu Dhabi corniche.

The 240-hectare Lulu Island, reclaimed from the sea, has been ordered by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan to become the wonderland of the UAE.

The project is expected to boost further tourism to UAE and would be completed in six years.

The other landmarks in the skies of Abu Dhabi and Dubai included twin towers in both cities for the country's telecommunications company, with an impressive dome 22-meter in diameter, which appeared like an egg shell over the buildings.

The main tourist attraction in the UAE capital, however, is Al-Sufun Floating Restaurant. It is a beautifully-carved three-level ship made of fine wood, with the UAE emblem, the Falcon, carved in every nook and corner, anchored off the breakwaters, where Sheikh Zayed would go to watch boat races.

Sheikh Zayed takes personal interest in the beautification of the breakwater area as it is one of the major tourist attractions in the capital.

Heritage Village:

The country also constructed a Heritage Village depicting the nature of life in the country 25 years ago, in order to keep memories of the past alive in the minds of young generations.

The Village, as in real life in the past, is divided into two parts, one symbolising the UAE's bedouin heritage and the other the country's seafaring tradition.

In the bedouin section, visitors get an idea of the hair tent which was the easiest and most practical shelter for the bedouin's nomadic existence. The bedouin use the hair of goats and sheep because it withstands rain, wind and high temperatures.

Visitors would find a group of bedouins getting together in groups, as they did in the past, exchanging the day's news. They sit in circles around a fire, as they did in the wild desert to warm themselves, make coffee and to announce their location to others if they needed help. Indeed highlighting the contrast between past and present as seen in other parts of the city, there are camels and falcons around, both intrinsic parts of the region's heritage.

In the sea section of the Village, there is an artificial lake and a traditional pearl diving ship brought there in a successful attempt to present a detailed picture of traditional sea life.

The sea was the main source of livelihood in the coastal areas, with boats coming from Africa and other Gulf areas for trade. In the village UAE nationals also demonstrate pearl diving they knew as a business since 1861: in 1905, the value of the pearl trade had reached about 15 billion Indian Rupees and was the life blood of economic activities here.

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Development of Architecture in the Gulf

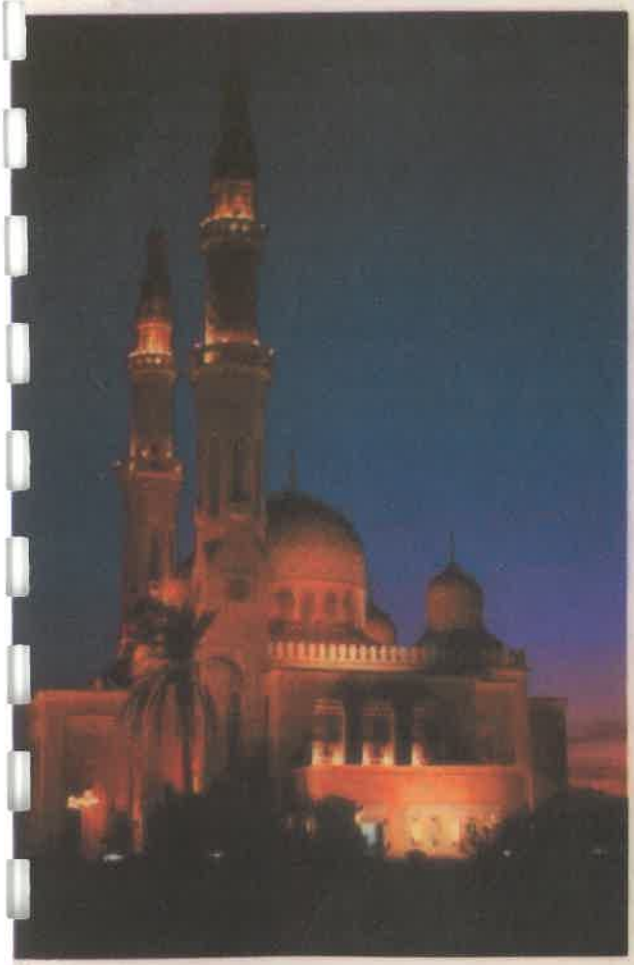
Dariush Zandy

INTRIGUING TRACES of buildings from the past still survive today throughout the Gulf region. They may be a collection of old houses, a mosque, a fortress or a watchtower: they all evoke an age gone by, a world which changed radically with the discovery of oil.

These buildings aimed to make life tolerable and secure in a region where summer temperatures soar to 45°C and high humidity causes clothing to stick to the wearer. Over thousands of years, ingenious forms of indigenous architecture have evolved, enabling people to live in as much comfort as could possibly be achieved in the days before air-conditioning. Traditional buildings throughout the Gulf were all built to contend with the same circumstances.

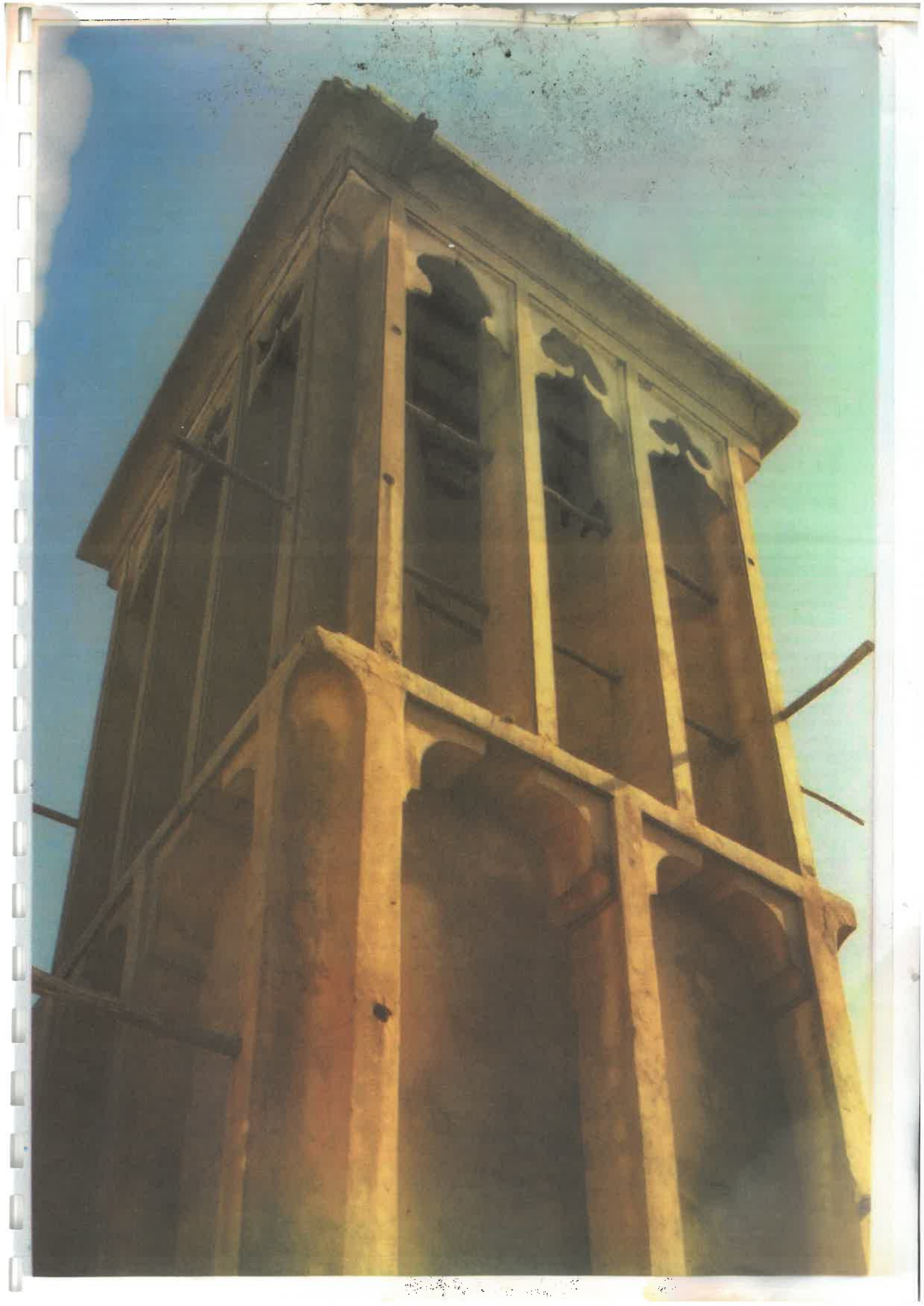
The advent of the oil wealth of the mid-20th







Top, Right: Use of strong colour and bright light in the new buildings of 90's. **Above:** Jumeirah Mosque Dubai, a replica of an Egyptian mosque. **Right:** Inside of Suror Mosque Shindagha Dubai, one of the few remaining traditional mosques. **Opposite page:** Windtower, unique feature in Dubai traditional architecture still standing.



century and the introduction of new building materials - cement, steel and glass - and of electricity to power air-conditioning units, completely revolutionised building. People were freed from all the old constraints and there was a rush to produce buildings of novel design and appearance.

Traditional homes were abandoned, more security removed the need for defence-towers and forts fell quickly into ruins. In many areas, virtually all traces of the past vanished in a mere couple of decades.

In the 1970s however, Governments became increasingly aware that this irretrievable loss of their heritage should be checked. Renovation projects were started on major old buildings still sufficiently intact to be restored. Some new breed of architects were outraged by the lack of identity. They strive for making a marriage between modern architecture and the traditional style.

Pre-1960

During the pre-1960's, buildings in this area were basically shelters fulfiling the need for man to have a roof over his head. There was no architect involved, not even a builder or mason, except in the centres of major trading cities like Dubai, Bahrain and Kuwait. As had become the form in the pre-sixties, shelters were created mainly by people for themselves. The material used was whatever was available locally. Mountain houses were made of stone. Houses near oases were built of palm fronds. The nomads in the desert lived in tents.

Architecture in this primitive era was very much dictated by the geographical location of the home and its surrounding natural resources, climatic conditions and the socio-economic situation. Necessity played an important role, as did defence, leading to the construction of several forts and watchtowers in the region.

Travelling inland from the seaside in the UAE up into the mountains one finds a cross-section of primitive architecture. Barasti dwellings existed near the coast for the fishermen and pearl divers. In the Hajar mountains houses were built of stone and often caves were used as dwellings. The palm tree played a vital role in the area and was one of the basic building materials used.

Today, with changes in bedouin life and housing, modern architecture has been used in the villages, creating contrast between the original primitive dwellings and modern forms. The construction style used today has unfortunately little bearing on the environment. It is often a design created in the city and transplanted to the desert or mountains with very little sympathy between the architecture and the environment. In many ways the modern buildings stick out like a sore thumb in these rustic surroundings.

Dubai: A Case Study

The 1960's saw the beginning of the modern movement in the development of cities throughout the Emirates; but it was at its strongest in Dubai.

Before the sixties the city was pure, uniform and wholesome in its form and appearance. It had a totality. The material used reflected its geographical location, culture and the people. Old photographs reflect this uniform texture - solid buildings made from coral stone and windtowers rising majestically above the buildings, which were built with no overall planning.

On the other hand, barasti houses were made of palm fronds and mingled with the crude construction, creating two different lifestyles in the city.

People who look back to those times comment on the overwhelming honesty of life, the slow pace, but complete contentment with what they had. The city had not yet started to develop and the little hamlets that existed were self-sufficient.

The sixties really saw the beginning of development in Dubai, starting with the Dubai Master Plan which was the first plan of the city and marked the birth of modern planning here. This coincided with the recent accession of the late Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum as the Ruler of Dubai. His foresight in the town planning made Dubai the forerunner in development in the Emirates.

The fortunes of Dubai turned when dredging work on the Dubai Creek, often termed the life-line of the Emirates, started. It opened the way for further development with the discovery of oil. The economy started to boom and trading activities in Dubai expanded at an energetic pace which has continued until today.

Road construction began from 1961, the sewage system laid, and with the infrastructure came the development of new buildings. Dubai, the small trading post with only traditional-style houses built with coral stone and barasti, burst into the modern era of building development.

With the availability of funds, modern technology started pouring into Dubai and with it came modern building materials. One and two-storied rough pre-sixties buildings changed with the use of concrete and steel, which took over from the traditional materials. The availability of water, electricity and sanitary ware came with the concrete facades. The quality of the buildings was not of the standards we are used to today, but they satisfied the need of the era. Houses and establishments were now taller, but still there was a strong marriage between the traditional and modern architecture and materials. The layout was still traditional, but the material different. In many sixties' houses the windtowers were abandoned, with electricity and airconditioning becoming the vogue.

The construction of the sixties copied the pre-sixty era but the decorations became more uniform and less playful and not having the same level of imagination because now they were machine-made. Today, there are many buildings of the sixties in Dubai that reflect this.

Abu Dhabi in 1970's

I arrived in Abu Dhabi in 1978 at the dead of night. When I alighted from the aircraft I felt I was dreaming. Almost 80% of the city was under construction. It was one of the most amazing sights I have seen, cranes, building material and half finished buildings were everywhere, and I felt as though the whole area had been ploughed ready for the construction of foundations of a whole new city.

The seventies saw the introduction of the modern building era in UAE. In the seventies there was a building boom in the Emirates that very few countries have ever experienced. Buildings sprouted out of the ground overnight and although the highest technology was used, the speed in construction led inevitably to carelessness and mistakes.

In Dubai the Hyatt Hotel Galleria building and the Trade Centre, together with several buildings along Dubai creek, became a symbol for



Inside Sheikh Saeed House, the first restored building in Dubai which dates back to 1800's.

future development. The unique Dubai Municipality building inaugurated in 1979 by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, and several bank buildings, started the trend of using steel and glass in their facades.

In Abu Dhabi the Cultural Foundation stood out amongst high-rise buildings as a modern yet traditional structure. In Dubai, the residents, especially affluent locals and expats, moved away from the city centre to new modern villas in the outskirts of the city. Blocks of flats became fashionable to house the less well-to-do, like the complexes of Karama and Al-Shaab.

Another architectural style incorporated in buildings of the seventies by architects was to create new styles of shopping, similar to those of the western world, like the Al Ghurair Centre, and the mall at the Inter-Continental Hotel.

The souk was traditionally the heart of the city in the culture of the Middle East, but modern shopping centres built during the seventies did not respect this characteristic. However places like these centres had the forethought of creating a huge shopping complex, where shoppers moved freely in air-conditioned comfort. The aim was to find an alternative to street shopping. Today street shopping co-exists with the modern air-conditioned shopping malls and complexes which are fast becoming a fad.

During the boom years of the late seventies in the UAE, and especially in Dubai, there was a sudden spurt in construction activities where a large number of houses were built for nationals by the Government, and by various companies for their employees.

These houses were usually similar in size and were placed in the centre of identical plots of land making a neat row of buildings – conforming to the concept of modern town planning.

1980's: A Settling Effect

In the 80's there was improvement in the quality of building, from every point of the layout, sub-divisions, and cost benefit. The utilisation of the building was better. Many buildings built during the seventies, the era of the construction boom, were razed and some specially in Abu Dhabi were demolished and reconstructed with much higher levels. In the eighties, there was less dependency and need for fast construction. Clients and architects had more time to improve their design and construction. Buildings were built not just for utilitarian purposes, but as a part of the cities' environment. There was sufficient time for Governmental authorities to learn more about architecture and generally become more aware of building quality. In some ways the reduction in oil revenue had a settling effect on the style and state of architecture. Builders chose architects and styles with thought, knowing that what they created would now take its place in time. Driving down one of the modern streets of Dubai, Abu Dhabi or Sharjah, you could be anywhere in downtown Manhattan, Boston or Singapore. There is modern use of glass and concrete which are impressive, but showing little link with tradition.

Unique New Vocabulary

Architectural trends in the large cities of the Emirates have undergone radical changes in line with the pattern in urban development around the world.

The striking contrast in the UAE is that in cities such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, this change has taken place in short, encapsulated periods of time in keeping with the economic development in the country. The development of cities like London and Paris has taken hundreds of years, but in the UAE, in Abu Dhabi for instance, the changes have taken barely fifteen years.

The 1990's are witnessing the introduction of a unique new vocabulary and style of architecture, sympathetic with the Gulf's natural and present economic, cultural and social trend without forgetting the past style of architecture.



Dariush Zandy, Architect and Town Planner, Dubai Municipality, is a keen photographer and author of several books.



Top: Dubai Golf Course late 80's introducing architecture along the traditional forms such as Arabian tent. **Middle:** Old and new Dubai skyline still visible. **Right:** Dubai Creek skyline. Photographs by Dariush Zandy.



Domestic Architecture

Shirley Kay

THE ADVENT of oil wealth, which accompanied the birth of the United Arab Emirates in 1971, brought with it a complete revolution in building styles and techniques. Throughout the country little model villages were constructed along the route of the rapidly expanding road network. They replaced the clusters of nomad tents in the sands, the groups of palm frond huts of the plains, and the hidden and defensive villages of stone and palm frond cottages in the mountain valleys.

At first the people were hesitant to leave their ancestral homes, but soon the advantages of running water and electricity, air conditioning, motor access and schools, were a sufficient attraction. Today only the crumbling remains of the old villages may be found in remote valleys or coastal sites. They have been abandoned for some twenty years now, enough to give them the patina of antiquity.

And indeed, these villages are very ancient, often built on sites which have been inhabited for thousands of years, and very much in the same style as the earliest villages on the sites. At Hili, near Al Ain, a 3,000-year-old mud-brick village of the Iron Age has been excavated; its houses hardly differ from mud-brick homes abandoned twenty years ago.

Traditional houses of the UAE made use of available local materials; they were designed to provide maximum comfort in a hot and a trying climate; there was never any need to change the well-tried designs, until air conditioning revolutionised all the architectural rules. Mud, stone and coral blocks all provided good insulation, preserving a cool, often dark interior, while palm frond houses were cooled by any passing breeze blowing through walls and lattice screens. The latter were comfortable in summer but less ideal during the occasional heavy winter rains.

Along the coasts the prevalent materials were coral blocks from the sea, or palm fronds, or a combination of the two (as on the east coast where coral cottages had thatched, palm frond roofs). On the west coast, however, the roofs were generally flat, of mud, stone and gypsum plaster supported on mangrove pole rafters. Two traditional villages have survived almost intact there, abandoned by their owners many years ago: one is Jazirat al Hamra near Ras al Khaimah, now a fascinating "ghost" village complete with old fort, mosque, fine houses facing the sea, and humbler homes behind. The other, amazingly, is the little village of Al Khan, preserved on an isolated sandspit, sandwiched in between Sharjah and Dubai.

In both, the style of traditional houses can be seen in detail. Homes consisted of one or more buildings, each with one or two rooms, and built around an enclosed courtyard, often shaded by a large desert tree. As the family expanded more and more units could be added round the courtyard, giving a most flexible pattern of accommodation.

In the oases of the interior, on the other hand, where stone and coral were not available, the people developed comfortable and sometimes quite decorative houses with mud bricks. Here the mud was mixed with chopped straw and cast in wooden moulds then left to dry in the sun. Such houses need maintenance after the rains and once abandoned melt quite soon back into the ground from which they had risen. Today some of the best of the mud buildings, mostly forts, have been extensively renovated in the oases of Al Ain and the Liwa.

In the mountains, the houses could be built of stone, again with flat roofs, and often incorporating in their walls small openings to allow the breeze to pass through. A more unusual mountain house may still be seen in many of the valleys, where the floor level of an oblong building with rounded corners was dug down perhaps half a metre into the ground and its walls lined with rounded wadi boulders. These were then built up a little above ground and supported a steeply pitched roof thatched with palm fronds.

Grander houses of days gone by were built in the same materials as the homes of the ordinary people (with the exception of palm fronds). Most of the surviving grand houses are along the coastline or in the oases, the homes of shaikhs or merchants. The shaikhs' houses often combined the dual purpose of a fort and a palace, a kind of fortified home whose origins have perhaps been found in the large fortified houses, with towers at the corners, excavated in the ancient site of Ad Dour near Umm al Quwain.

These fortified homes seem most often to have been built in succeeding sections, like the homes of their subjects, and again are usually grouped around a courtyard. They may incorporate a strong staggered entrance way, like the fort of Ras al Khaimah, a tower or two as in Ajman and even more notably in the forts of Al Ain, and perhaps a few windtowers as in Shaikh Saeed's house in Dubai, which offered, as it were, an early form of air conditioning.

Windtowers became popular in the UAE, as elsewhere throughout the Gulf, about a century ago. They consisted of a square tower rising some 15 metres above the ground and built with cross walls in the shape of an X, leaving an opening on all four sides. Wind would hit the tower and be channelled down through the appropriate opening to the room below. There is a very noticeable cooling effect at the bottom of one of these windtowers on all but the stillest of days.

Whole districts of windtower houses were built by merchant families in the coastal towns in the early decades of this century, and most especially in Dubai. These houses were again built around a

courtyard but often two storeys high and with more ornate interior facades than the village houses. Many had balconies running around the courtyard, supported by ornamental pillars and perhaps with decorative half screen walls. The life of the family, here as in the simpler homes, was lived in the courtyard, secluded from the view of neighbours and the outside world.



New materials, new designs

In the 1950s new materials became available, imported from abroad.





Above: Coloured tiles are often used to enliven modern villas, as here in Abu Dhabi. **Right, top:** Traditional old village of Jaziret al Hamra, built on beach. **Right:** Mud-built Muwaiji fort, former home of ruling family, Al Ain. **Photographs by Shirley Kay.**

Cement was to make the biggest difference of all for it was much easier and quicker to use; in the 1970s cement factories were built in every Emirate and production soared. Glass was also to change the style of domestic architecture. Traditionally windows were unglazed, open to the breeze, but closed by a series of small shutters against the sun or the cold. Now they could be sealed. Steel frames came into use for the larger buildings, and electricity became available in the 1970s and1980s to virtually every house in the land.

These new facilities meant that buildings could be much larger. They were sealed against the elements and cooled now by air conditioning instead of the vagaries of the wind. Family life would no longer be lived out of doors in the central courtyard, but instead in a large, air conditioned entrance hall.

While the first wave of modern domestic buildings may have lacked distinction of design and suffered eventually from crumbling concrete and plaster, by the late 1980s far more sophisticated styles of domestic architecture were evolving. The 1990s are proving to be the decade par excellence of the luxury villa.

Today's villas are almost the direct opposite of the traditional houses of the past. They no longer look inward to a central courtyard, but are built in a solid block in the middle of their plot of garden. Large windows let in the light without letting in the heat, and the walls can be painted brilliant white since the glare is no inconvenience. Modern horticulture has brought a wide range of exotic flowering shrubs and plants to fill the gardens surrounding the villa, and modern skills enable palm trees to be transplanted fully grown to the new gardens. Privacy is still ensured, however, by the construction of a high wall all around the property.

Indoors priorities have changed. The favourite living area, as mentioned above, is often an open hallway, and landing above, in the centre of the house. Rooms now are square, no longer limited by the length of available rafters to the long narrow oblongs of the past. And







Left, top: Doorway of renovated mud-brick Muwaiji fort, Al Ain. **Above:** Interior of traditional room, showing sets of small shutters. **Left:** Attractively coloured villa with high portico and engaged columns, Jumairah, Dubai.

out with white columns and details. A few complete estates of less grand villas have been built in neo-Tudor or neo-Georgian style, appearing unexpectedly among the scatter of palm trees and brilliant mauve bougainvilleas.

More appropriately, perhaps, a few architects have tried to incorporate classically Islamic elements such as the pointed arch for windows, or wooden screens and mashrubiyas to shade the windows from the sun. Arched windows have also been used with pleasing effect on some of the new large office blocks in the towns.

In Dubai, in particular, there has been an absolute explosion of modern villa building in the 1990s. A drive around the northern and southern suburbs is tantamount to leafing through the pages of an exotic modern villa design catalogue. It is a very far cry from the clusters of traditional houses still surviving beside the creek or in the villages further north. But one hopes that enthusiasm for the new will not completely demolish these remaining points of contact with a very long past.

today, with freely flowing desalinated water, the main selling point of any villa is magnificence of its bathroom, or bathrooms (for there is usually one for each bedroom).

Externally, the design of modern villas bears little relation to the past. While efforts are often made to incorporate Islamic elements, there is less enthusiasm for local traditional designs. New houses today are large, multi-faceted concrete buildings, painted brilliant white, and relieved by half roofs of coloured tiles laid over concrete slabs.

Perhaps the most popular design in the most recent wave of modern villas is the semi-classical one incorporating columns around the front door, or set in a two-storey entrance porch. Columns may also be used around an upper balcony or engaged against a front facade. Occasionally, and attractively, a villa is faced with coloured stone, or painted in some pastel colour picked

Shirley Kay is author of several books on the UAE's architecture and archaeology, including the volume *Architectural Heritage of the Gulf* (with Darmush Zandy).

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Innovation and Tradition:

New Design's Relevance to Cultural Heritage

Nader Ardalan

During the past quarter-century, Abu Dhabi has been transformed through several stages of heightened development. This rapid growth has been generated by its good fortune to possess vast natural resources, a vital geo-political position and astute leadership.

As a result, the decade of the 90's is witnessing the next cycle of development by a remarkable series of tall and technologically advanced buildings that will rival any in the contemporary world. In the creation of a quality and modern life environment, the great challenge will be their relevance to the cultural heritage of this place and its people over long spans of time.

One effect of the recent onslaught of tall office buildings is that the image of downtown Abu Dhabi and the Corniche has become overwhelmingly one of a city of commerce.Within this image there can also be placed the timeless sense of a gracious civilization. To a major extent, the best signs of the latter can be found today in the lush gardens of the Corniche Road and the many public gardens and landscaped entry roadways to the city. There remains, however, the challenge to establish this "timeless grace" in the new architectural environments being now generated.

It is to the primary institutions of Abu Dhabi that we must turn to seek this urban design leadership. Therefore, when the Projects Directorate of the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company was asked to build new headquarters for its Marine Operating Company and Gas Liquification Company, it was only fitting that the opportunity for the creation of a institutional landmark be recognized and manifested through good design. Fortunately, we were guided by such a vision by our client, who chose our entry in a recent international design competition as the winning design project.

A "higher" purpose has been sought in the construction of these headquarters, in addition to solving the problems of a functional office building. This purpose deals with the public and historic realm embodying those qualities of permanence, dignity, clarity and delight.

While the proposed building design, which is about to be constructed, is thoroughly modern in the sense of being up to date in all its facilities, it is not modern to a fault of turning its back to history.

The design proposals have artistically and authoritatively reinterpreted the traditions of this ancient land, drawing on its inexhaustible fountainheads of archetypal imagery metaphors and symbols to preserve a cumulative memory for the future. These have been the principal design mandates of the project that have motivated the Joint Venture Team of Jung/Brannen Associates of Boston, Massachusetts from the United States and Ove Arup & Partners International Limited of London and New York. Both firms now have offices registered in Abu Dhabi and are working in association with the local consulting firms of Khatib & Alami, D.G. Jones & Partners and Metcalf & Eddy International.

The following observations document some of the salient design conceptions of this challenging project.

The Masterplan

The office design is generated by two interlocking squares, pivoted 45° on the site, with a central elevator core and atrium facing the Gulf view. The twenty-three story office volume of approximately 54,000 square meters has been placed on the easterly portion of the site united with a terraced parking garage. The entire "eastern wing" plus the lower half of the "western wing" will be dedicated to ADMA-OPCO, while the top half of the "western wing" will be designated to ADGAS.

ADMA-OPCO and ADGAS will each have separate entries at ground level. Access to the entries shall be by the access road from the Corniche. They will share common social facilities at the ground and mezzanine levels. These will include an auditorium, multi-purpose hall and cafeteria. Amenities such as banking, travel agency and medical services shall be available at the mezzanine level. Security offices will occur on the ground floor lobby of both companies.

Separate management suites for each company have been designed at the top of each wing and will be accessible by separate elevator lobbies.

Service access is from the southerly service road which will provide access to a central receiving, storage, mail room and building services space.

A 650 car garage of approximately 20,000 square meter area, rising seven parking levels above grade, has been sited to the western portion of the site. The garage is a cast-in-place concrete structure that is stepped back from the main tower, allowing for a harmonious integration of their two volumes. Each of the roof terraces of the garage will contain planters and a landscaped program of flowering shrubbery and trees has been planned. Following the terracing will be a cascading stairway serving each of the garage floors. These stairs are augmented by two other sets of stairs and a central elevator bank containing two elevators. The ornamental stairs also allow access to the trellised rooftop of the garage for periodic social gatherings. Access to the garage from the ADMA-OPCO mezzanine and the ADGAS ground floor lobby will be under cover.

The landscaped concept for the site is based upon the continuation of the associated memory with the existing gardens already on the site.

A "paradise garden" theme has been explored related to site landscaping, the rooftop gardens and internal landscaping of the main tower.

The site has been designed with both hard and soft landscapes. The hard landscaping commences with stepped planted terraces in front of the garage, continues in front of the tower on the Corniche and the triangular gardens off Bani-Yas Street and surrounds the site with paving patterns conceived as carpets.

The roof gardens commence on the parking garage stepped terraces, the trellised rooftop of the garage and reappear on the twenty second floor of the main tower.

The interior gardens begin at the base of the atrium with the Corniche Palm gardens moving into the building and rising the full height of the atrium in a vertical garden resembling a classic paradise garden carpet. Porches, niches and a transition garden on the twelfth floor at the level of the prayer hall, ("Mousalla"), allow the stress relieving quality of the garden to pervade the workplace. This garden mousalla is just one of the innovative integrations of tradition and technology in this project.

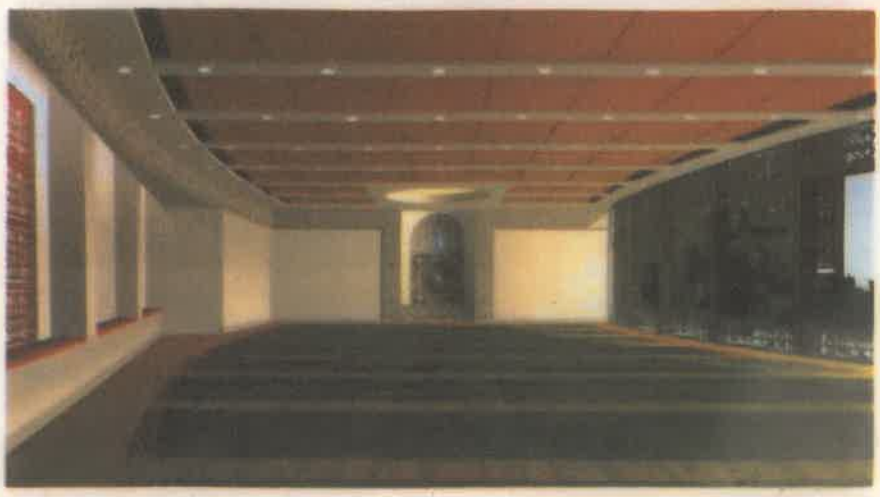
Architectural Concept

The tower building program readily divided itself into three inter-related components (the base, column and capital) corresponding to the programmed functions of the headquarters building. The garage was conceived as a harmonious complement to the office tower, which had its own specific and quite different functional design challenges. The following considerations structured the design response to these buildings.

The Base: Two separate recessed entrance porches located on opposite sides of the building base allow pedestrian entry to the headquarters building. On the easterly side is located the ADMA-OPCO entry and on the westerly side is placed the ADGAS entry. Each entrance will have a







Top: ADMA-OPCO & ADGAS headquarters in Abu Dhabi perspective view from the corniche showing golden granite-clad exoskeleton of the two office wings with a central atrium containing a vertical paradise garden and "mashrabiyah". **Middle:** One of the Executive floor boardrooms with actual interior finishes of materials scanned into a computer-generated perspective. **Right:** The Prayer Hall or "mousalla" can accommodate more than 100 worshippers.





Top: Computer generated perspective of atrium showing the triangular steel trusses with tension cables supporting vertical fins that hold butt-glazed glass panels. The atrium commences at a palm court with fountains and runs all the way up twenty-one storeys. Conceived as an environmental adaptation to the harsh climate and glare, the atrium and the "mashrabiyahs" act as filters through which one looks out to the Gulf. Note the crescent garden at the mid-height demarcating the Prayer Hall. **Above:** The site plan showing the office tower complex to the left, the terraced gardens of the garage to the right with the auditorium as a central link.

revolving door with side double doors that lead to an outer lobby open to visitors and staff alike. A central security desk permits controlled entry to the elevator lobbies and the great atrium garden. Interior access from the parking garage to the headquarters is provided at the ground level for ADGAS and on the mezzanine level for ADMA-OPCO.

The enclosed Paradise Garden theme pervades and inspires the most poignant metaphors in Islamic cultures and gestures towards man's harmonious relationship with nature. In the harsh climates of the Gulf region, the interior or "batin" garden allows a year round vegetative fertility and fragrance to fill the heart of the new headquarters.

Three elevator lobbies have been envisioned. Two are dedicated to ADMA-OPCO and are accessed from the ADMA-OPCO entry lobby. One is a high-rise set of four elevators containing an exclusive management floor lift. The second is a low-rise bank of six elevators serving the lower ADMA-OPCO floors.

The ADGAS high-rise elevator bank of four cabs is situated in proximity to the ADGAS entry lobby. It also contains an exclusive management lift. From the ADGAS lobby access is provided to the multi-purpose hall and the lower level of the auditorium.

A generous circular stair rises up from the atrium floor to the mezzanine level. Here is located the ADMA-OPCO staff club and dining room featuring an aquarium of tropical Gulf marine life by a bank, travel agency, medical clinic and a foyer serving the upper entry into the auditorium. The stepped theater seating arrangement of the semi-circular auditorium accommodates 250 people. It is an acoustically designed environment, vibrant for musical performance, yet suitable for a lecture or a small theatrical performance.

The Column: Floors 2 to 21 constitute the office floors of the building. The lower floors (2 to 12) are dedicated on both wings to ADMA-OPCO. Floors 12 to 21 are divided on either side of the atrium to ADGAS and ADMA-OPCO.

The square floor plans have been designed with a 1.80m x 1.80m planning grid related to international office planning modules. These modules accommodate room layouts, open workstations, lighting, air

conditioning and structural considerations.

Of the alternative concepts for the office floors considered related to the use of fiber optic cables in the project and to planning flexibility, the option related to the fiber optic cables in the ceiling connected by bus bars to fully-modularized workstations was selected.

The Capital: At the culmination of the office floors has been placed the management group for each company.

The ADMA-OPCO management floor commences on level 22, where a foyer leads to a curved galleria/waiting lounge surrounding the central roof garden. This garden has been designed primarily as a landscaped view garden, while also allowing outdoor receptions to be held in suitable weather conditions. The gracious galleria leads to the main ADMA-OPCO Boardroom, which has the possibility of opening up to the garden and the Gulf view.

The Boardroom will seat 30 people and will be provided with a rear projection screen where a full range of audio-visual presentations and telecommunication media can be made possible.

The primary ADGAS management floors is located on level 23 and contains the same basic program areas.

The General Management spaces for both companies command dramatic views in at least two directions and have been designed with internationally high standards of finishes and furnishings.

The Atrium: One of the outstanding features of the proposed design is the great atrium placed at the very heart of the building. The atrium contains the "hidden", vertical garden that brings light, view and symbolic regeneration to the center of the office tower.

The atrium is environmentally protected by a clear butt-glazed system of 12mm tempered glass supported by a light, tabular metal structural system that arches nearly thirty meters between the great granite clad piers of the tower and is secondarily supported by diagonal tension cables.

On the inside surface of the atrium is placed a glare reducing screen of the "mashrabiyah" tradition. It is conceived of wood mullions and cast aluminium screens that are locally made in the UAE. The "mashrabiyah" design is of a great hanging garden carpet. Behind the mashrabiyah is a simple, single glazed window wall.

At the top of the atrium is a window washing cradle that moves on a rail allowing flexible access for window washing and maintenance of the entire atrium surfaces.

The Concept of Light

The theme of light has been one of the central issues of the design of this project. We have asked "how can natural light be carefully brought into the building as a "useful friend" in this exceedingly high radiant energy place of the world, and how might it be diffused, filtered and reflected to add a transcendent dimension to the interiors of the building spaces?"

The answers to these questions has generated the building concept of the "container" and the "contained". An outer, granite clad exoskeleton has come into being that shades and protects from the harsh radiant light an "inner space" of human occupation.

Conversely, where the northerly facade allows, the light has been brought into the building atrium to allow a "green architecture" to be sustained, but at the transition between plant life and human use has been installed another filter of light – a delicate, almost lacey "mashrabiyah". This filters the glare from the Gulf waters, but allows the light to pervade the otherwise dark interior of the tower, creating a pleasant and comfortable work environment.

Natural light is also brought into the top management levels as well as through clear storeys in the roofs of the two executive wings. These clear storeys illuminate the central secretarial areas with natural light.

Artificial light has received an equally studied approach for both daytime and night time usage. The planning grid of 180m. x 180m. has been a generative basis for the modular down-lighting of florescent light fixtures. Here an office standard of illumination has been maintained, with the proposed fixtures allowing glare-free computer terminal screens conditions and flexible partitioning.

The tower completely transforms in the evening through the night illumination design. Lights placed vertically on each pier illuminate the interior of the atrium, making the wood and aluminum mashrabiyah glow in the splendor of light. Thus the inner, hidden garden by day, comes into the public realm at night and makes a stunning contribution to the Corniche gardenscape.

Additional exterior lighting illuminates the granite exoskeleton, while "torches of light" freestanding on the building plaza add sparkle to the building at ceremonial occasions during the year.

The Concept of Materials

A harmonious palette of materials and finishes has been conceived for the project.

The exterior of the office building will be clad in light, golden-hued granite panels. The 90 cm x 180 cm proposed modules of granite will be mechanically fastened to the concrete structure, thus providing for a long range secure attachment system, while allowing the clarity of each panel to be read by using an open joint system. A studied use of thermal and polished finishes of the granite panels has added a subtle, rich pattern to this noble exterior surface.

The pattern theme and system proposed is that of the "Tree of Life". Conceived at three metaphoric levels, the "tree of life" motif integrates the ancient historic roots of the Mesopotamian cultures of the Gulf, the Islamic "Paradise Garden" theme and the virtual fact that petroleum and gas products, which motivated the very need for the new building were once vegetative, organic growths.

Developed through the use of geometry, the "tree" and "vine of life" motifs commence at the base of the building, climb the columns and branch heavenward at the capital of the tower. All other patterns in the building and the garage follow this generative, fertile theme.

Other materials on the exterior have been selected to complement the granite cladding and be appropriate for the environmental constraints of Abu Dhabi. Clear, insulated, low-emissive glass will be used in the office window walls, which shall contain natural aluminum finish mullions. At the entry porch, the "silvery" aluminum mullions will support a screen of "golden, polished bronze" and "silvery" aluminum woven into a geometric pattern. The principal interior materials of

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The UAE: A New Frontier in Archaeology

Peter Hellyer

MIDDLE EASTERN archaeology, once a pastime, now a science, is almost as old as the sites it studies. In Egypt, succeeding Pharaohs looked with interest upon, and into, the pyramids of their forebears, and graffiti over 2,000 years old show that the great monuments of Upper Egypt attracted the curious sightseer as well as the grave-robber. Caesar, Anthony and later Napoleon were but late-comers upon the scene.

A similar picture can be traced in Mesopotamia, where succeeding Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, Babylonians and others first saw, and were then fascinated by, the monuments of their ancestors.

In the last couple of hundred years, of course, archaeology has become more of a science. The process began as explorers and servants of empire with something more than just an interest in collecting artefacts for homes and museums delved into the region's past. From the explorations of Bayard, Rawlinson and others in present-day Iraq, interest spread down into the Arabian Gulf, with the first proper excavations taking place in Bahrain nearly a hundred years ago. Now widely accepted as the location for ancient Dilmun, Bahrain was first suggested as such by Sir Henry Rawlinson as far back as 1866.

Further down the Gulf, however, and of less interest to servants and masters of Empire, the United Arab Emirates, known from the mid-nineteenth century as the Trucial States, remained untouched by scientists, and by wandering amateur archaeologists. Few outsiders visited them, except along the coast, while the harsh and inhospitable climate scarcely attracted visitors. Not until 1948 was the greatest of the UAE's desert oases, the Liwa, first visited by a Western traveller, explorer and author Wilfred Thesiger, who made a triumphant return a few years ago.

Even then, the interior remained largely uncharted, known only to the people of the Emirates themselves, who could find their way across the desert wastes and barren mountains.

The year of Thesiger's visit to Liwa coincided with the arrival of the first major oil survey teams. Since then, the development of the oil industry has changed the face of the country's present and future, and the discovery of the UAE's ancient history has matched with that development side by side. Today, a country with one of the fastest growing oil-based economies in the world, the United Arab Emirates is also one where the pace of archaeological discovery is almost equally dramatic - a veritable new frontier in Arabian archaeology.

It was not until 1958 that the first commercial oil discovery was made in what was to become the United Arab Emirates, in the largest Emirate, Abu Dhabi. It was also, coincidentally, in the same year that the first major archaeological discovery was made.

The finder was, by coincidence, a local oil man. At the time, Geoffrey Bibby, who uncovered the evidence that proved Rawlinson's thesis about the identification of Bahrain with Dilmun, was digging in Bahrain. Looking back a few years later, Bibby takes up the story:

> "It was Tim Hillyard, then representative of Abu Dhabi Marine Areas, (the offshore oil firm) at Abu Dhabi, who .... discovered the grave monuments on the island of Umm an Nar. Himself an amateur archaeologist of distinction, he was generous enough to share his discovery with the archaeological expedition from Denmark which was at the time working in Bahrain".

Bibby and the Danish team ventured down to follow up on Hillyard's findings, and, with what Bibby described as "the indispensable on-the-spot assistance of the oil companies," set to work.

Over the next few years, the Danish team uncovered the ancient port-city of Umm an Nar, with a settlement and some fifty burial cairns, some of considerable size. Recalled Bibby, "The first three seasons of excavations, which were devoted to clearing seven of these cairns, revealed a series of burial monuments of a unique and highly sophisticated type."

To the people of Abu Dhabi, the site was no secret. Indeed, the Ruler of the day, Sheikh Shakhbut bin Sultan al Nahyan, elder brother of today's Ruler and UAE President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan, recalled that graven images had been found there during the lifetime of his father, and had been destroyed. No one in the scientific world, however, had suspected the possible existence of what was clearly a new culture on a desert island off a desert coastline.

As the excavations went on, new evidence came to light that underlined the importance of the discovery. Copper implements, well-made pottery and jewellery suggested a settlement of some sophistication, provisionally dated from similarities in pottery to around 4,500 years ago, or the middle of the Third Millennium BC. Camel bones, suggesting that the 'ship of the desert' had been domesticated here 1,300 years earlier than evidence from any other known site. Signs of overseas trade, with Mesopotamia, Baluchistan, perhaps India.

From their finds, Bibby and his colleagues postulated the existence of an Umm an Nar culture – and subsequent excavations throughout the country have proved them right, with similar burials having been found over a wide area to the north east, east and south east.

Sheikh Zayed, then his brother's representative in the inland oasis-city of Al Ain, taking a look at the site one day, told Bibby and his colleagues that there were similar cairns near Al Ain. Perhaps, he suggested, they would like to come and take a look.

They did so, finding on the whaleback outcrop of Jebel Hafit near Al Ain literally hundreds of cairns, that proved eventually to be even older, dating back to the early Fourth Millennium BC, as well as more evidence of the Umm an Nar culture.

By the early nineteen sixties, just as Abu Dhabi was becoming a commercial oil producer, so too had it begun to make its mark on the historical map of Arabia.

Since then, the pace of discovery has stepped up, as more and more archaeologists have delved into more and more sites. Their task, it should be conceded, has been made substantially easier by the pace of development, which has made exploration of remote areas so much more practicable, and also by the generosity of the Governments of the Emirates and the oil companies themselves.

A mere thirty years ago, the archaeology of the Emirates, as then known, would have occupied a few paragraphs. Now it would stretch to a few books, and a full survey of the discoveries of the last three decades cannot be attempted here. There have, however, been major milestones.







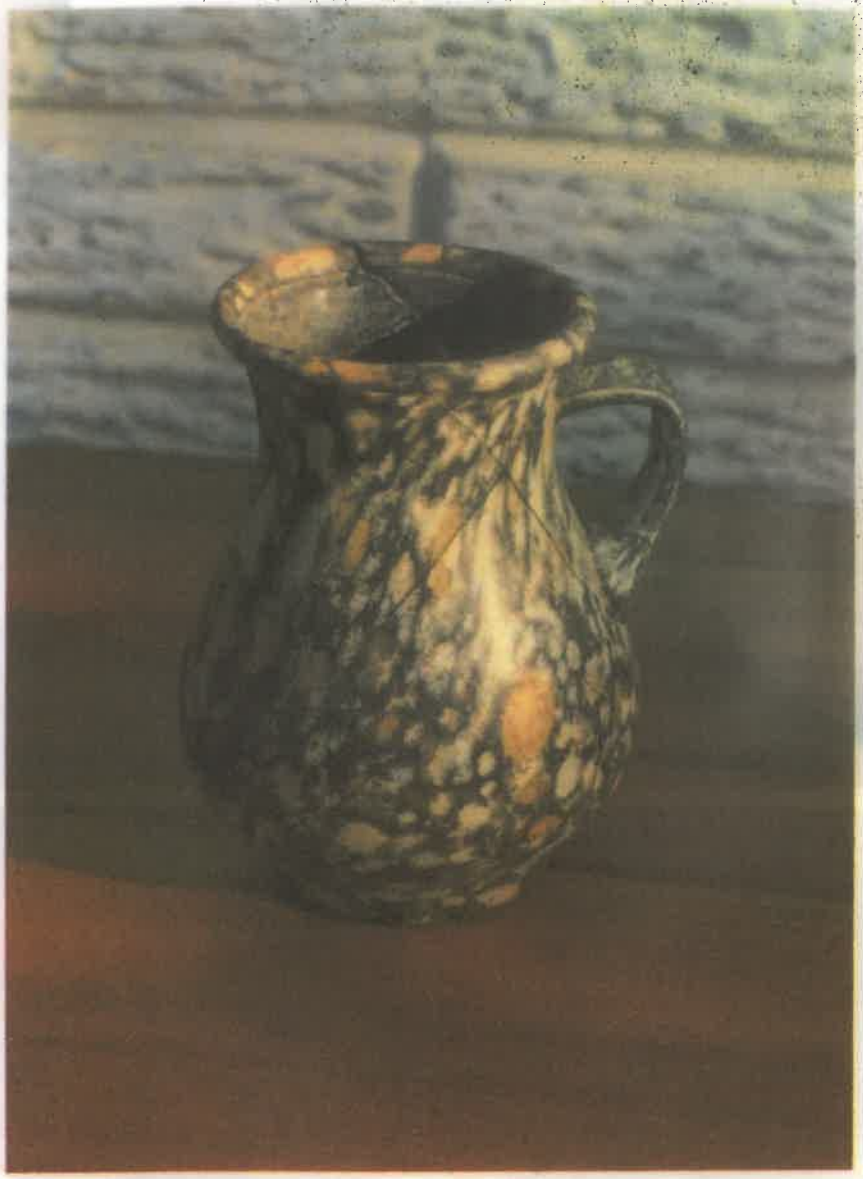




In the late nineteen sixties a first archaeological survey was done of much of the country, conducted by Beatrice de Cardi and Brian Doe. Their findings, of several hundred sites, proved that the country had very considerable archaeological potential, by no means confined to Abu Dhabi and Al Ain. Thanks to the efforts both of local teams and of foreign expeditions, much has now been done to realise that potential.

The Danish excavations at Umm an Nar and Al Ain were followed in the early nineteen seventies by a French archaeological mission, which discovered in the Al Ain area evidence of settlement from prehistoric times right through into the Islamic era.

Also in the early nineteen seventies, an Iraqi mission excavated and surveyed over much of the country, looking at, for example, sites at Tell Abraq and Ad Door in Umm al Qaiwain, Jumeirah in Dubai, Mileiha in Sharjah and Dalma and Jebal Dhanna in Abu Dhabi. Regrettably, however, not only did they fail to understand much of the significance of what they were digging, (missing, for example, the importance of the mound whose top they examined at





Opposite page, clockwise from top right: 1. A Belgian team at work on the excavation of the Parthian period temple at Ad Door, Um al Qawain. 2. Skeletal remains in a third Millennium BC Umm an Nar tomb at Shimal, Ras al Khaimah, excavated by a German team. 3. Walls of the Umm an Nar period tower at Bidiya, Fujairah, excavated by a team from the Al Ain Department of Antiquities and Tourism. 4. The 2,000 year old fort at Mileiha, Sharjah, excavated in 1993 by a French archaeological team. 5. A top view of the First Millennium house found on the island of Sir Bani Yas in April 1993. This page, left: A glass vessel of Roman manufacture, from the Parthian site at Ad Door. Above: Shreds and flints from the 'Ubaid site on Dalma island, excavated by a British team in April 1993. Photographs by Peter Hellyer.

Tell Abraq, now proved to be one of the UAE's most significant sites), but also failing to publish the greater amount of their work and taking with them finds that have yet to be returned.

Subsequently, Governmental authorities in the Emirates have made sure such mistakes have not been repeated.

Slowly, each of the seven Emirates created its own Department of Antiquities, and museums began to be established, first in Al Ain, (for Abu Dhabi Emirate), followed by Dubai, Ras al Khaimah, Fujairah, Ajman and Sharjah, while a seventh in Umm al Qaiwain is being planned.

The older departments, in Al Ain and Dubai, followed later by the others, have established their own teams of archaeologists, who have subsequently done much to examine newly discovered sites, many of which have been located during construction work. Rescue archaeology is just as much a feature of archaeology in the Emirates today as it is in many other countries.

The reports of early discoveries have attracted a number of foreign universities and institutes to seek permission to excavate in the Emirates. During the 1992-93 winter season, for example, quite apart from locally-organised excavations in Dubai and Al Ain, there were teams at work from Britain, Belgium, France, Japan, Germany, Switzerland and Australia, between them involved in a total of at least fifteen separate excavations, as well as surveying.

Only the Gulf war over Kuwait in 1990-1991 interrupted what has been a steady increase in the involvement of foreign teams in Emirates archaeology over the course of the past fifteen years.

Local and foreign teams together carried out over twenty separate excavations last winter, an impressive number for a country of little more than 80,000 square kilometres, and less than two million inhabitants.

Major sites located over the years have included the Islamic port-city of Julfar in Ras al Khaimah; the pre-Islamic town of Ad Door and the great mound at Tell Abraq, dating from the Third Millennium BC, in Umm al Qaiwain; an Iron Age fortress in Fujairah; a pre-Islamic settlement on the island of Sir Bani Yas and another 'Ubaid period settlement on the island of Dalma, dating to the Fifth Millennium BC, both in Abu Dhabi; another 'Ubaid site, a cemetery, again in Umm al Qaiwain; a Fourth Millennium BC site at Khatmat Milaha, in Sharjah's eastern enclave of Kalba; and the Hellenistic town at Mileiha, also in Sharjah.

Many other sites have been dug, from a vast array in Al Ain to discoveries in the mountains in the Wadi Qawr in Ras al Khaimah, or Bithna in Fujairah, or Hatta in Dubai, and to others along the coast, like Ras Ghanadha in Abu Dhabi, or in the towns of Ajman and Sharjah.

Building on the initial survey work of De Cardi and Doe in the late nineteen sixties, new surveys have

been carried out over the past few years, most intensively in Ras al Khaimah, Fujairah, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi. Many hundreds of new sites, small and large have been discovered, with much land yet to cover.

The reason for the explosion of interest in the Emirates by foreign archaeologists are several. Following the virtual closure of Iran and later Iraq to foreign teams over the last decade or more, specialists in aspects of Middle Eastern archaeology turned to the Emirates as virtually unexplored terrain nearby. As the discoveries increased, so did the foreign interest.

Moreover, the UAE itself was in a position to be able to welcome the foreign teams. Having only embarked on the development of its infrastructure with the coming of oil, many other tasks were higher up the list of priorities for Government, in practical terms, and in terms of seeking to train and develop the UAE's own archaeologists. That latter process has begun to get under way in recent years, with work experience being offered to, and accepted by, the various Departments of Archaeology and the Emirates University.

The seven Emirates, therefore, were able to welcome the interest of the foreign teams, and gradually to use their expertise not only to excavate, but also to help in the creation of the museums and, later, of local trained manpower. This welcome, in turn, has been reflected over the years in the facilities made available to the foreign teams, even by poorer Emirates like Umm al Qaiwain, such as the provision of free housing and subsistence, transport and a labour force.

There has, too, been a growing interest from local and foreign companies in the provision of direct assistance to some of the less well-funded foreign teams, ranging from the loan of equipment, from computers to dhows and helicopters, to airline tickets and even direct finance.

In that process, national firms are playing a prominent role, including, appropriately, not only Emirates Airline, but also the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, ADNOC, now the parent of Tim Hillyard's company, continuing the direct link between the oil industry and archaeology that first began with Hillyard's discovery of the Umm an Nar site back in 1958.

The combination of genuinely fascinating finds to be made and an all-pervasive welcome that owes much to traditional Arab hospitality has proved well-nigh irresistible, as the foreign archaeologists working in the United Arab Emirates can confirm. At the same time, the country is benefiting both from receiving outside help in the uncovering of its past and from the varied opportunities thus offered for the training of its own people in archaeology.

The result has been that the United Arab Emirates has emerged over the last few years as a new frontier in Arabian archaeology – and that, as any of those involved in the actual excavations can confirm, is no exaggeration.

Peter Hellyer, Managing Editor of the daily *Emirates News*, is also the Archaeology Recorder of the Abu Dhabi-based Emirates Natural History Group, and Co-ordinator of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey.

New Discoveries at Dalma and Sir Bani Yas

In April 1993, the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey Project announced that one of the oldest human settlements yet to be discovered in the Emirates has been uncovered on the island of Dalma, in Abu Dhabi's Western Region. It said that the discovery is also amongst the earliest evidence yet of the seafaring tradition of the peoples of UAE.

According to Dr Geoffrey King, of London University's School of Oriental and African Studies, the settlement dating to the 'Ubaid period shows that the island was occupied as much as 7,000 years ago.

Although collections of flint tools have been found elsewhere in the UAE that may be older, such as Merawah, the Dalma settlement is the oldest yet discovered anywhere in the country. Its location on an island nearly fifty kilometres offshore also suggests that the inhabitants were capable of undertaking sea voyages at least around the southern Gulf. The site of the settlement is in the town of Dalma, and was first identified during preliminary survey work in April 1992. This year's excavations are designed to show the site's extent and significance.

The site lies in and around the compound of the Womens' Association, and is at least 150 metres by 300 metres in size. A small test trench in the Womens' Association compound has shown that the archaeological deposits are over one metre deep. The archaeological team, digging with the assistance of Municipality workers, has made an intensive collection of surface finds, which will be mapped to show the distribution of the material across the site in order to assist interpretation of the nature of the activities of the early inhabitants of Dalma. It is already clear that certain areas have been more intensively used than others, and the results of this year's excavation will help to indicate the most promising areas of future work.

The finds so far include over one hundred and fifty pottery shreds, many of the typical painted 'Ubaid type known from southern Mesopotamia. From elsewhere in the UAE, a total of only eight painted 'Ubaid shreds have been found. Other finds have included two fine green stone amulets, which may be the first of their kind ever found in the Emirates, stone and pottery weights for fishing nets, a variety of beads and fragments of carved shell, large quantities of fish bone and shells and several thousand pieces of flint chippings. The most spectacular flint object to be found so far is a finely worked flint arrowhead.

Soil samples have been collected from the site which will be subjected to scientific analysis to see if any more information can be obtained about the people who lived there.

"Very little is known about the houses used by the people of this period, although we have hard surfaces and post-holes," says Dr King, the Survey Project's Director.

adding: "The evidence from Dalma suggests that the settlement was of a fishing and hunting community."

"There is no natural flint on the island, so the people must have imported their flint by sea, another indication of their seafaring skills and possibly of trade."

The major sites from the 'Ubaid period previously known are all concentrated further north, in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and further north. In recent years, the distinctive pottery from the 'Ubaid period has also been found in very small quantities in Ajman, Umm al Qaiwain and Ras al Khaimah, proving the existence of seaborne connections along the shores of the Arabian Gulf in the Fifth and Fourth Millennium BC, (5,000 BC to 3,000 BC).

"The newly found site at Dalma is on an entirely different scale from anything seen before for this period anywhere in the UAE and the Southern Gulf," says Dr King. "The excavations have proved the existence of an extensive settlement which imported flint to be worked into tools and weapons. The settlement lasted long enough to allow a considerable depth of archaeological deposit to build up over time."

One of the most remarkable aspects of the Dalma site is that its last phase lay less than five centimetres below the present ground surface.

"This has been a surprise for all those involved," says Dr King, "and the Dalma Municipality are co-operating closely with the team, and have begun erecting fences to protect this ancient and fragile site from damage."

The Dalma excavation is a major part of the second season of the Abu Dhabi Islands Archaeological Survey Project, which was established on the directives of His Highness President Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, and is under the patronage of Chief of Staff HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed al Nahyan. Sponsorship has been provided by the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company, ADNOC, and Emirates Airline.

The Project is directed by Dr Geoffrey King, while excavations on Dalma are being carried out by two archaeologists, Katelin Flavin and Elizabeth Shepherd and a draughtsman, David Connally, with logistic support from Eid Al Mazrui of the Dalma Municipality.

In a related development, Dr King's team has also proved the existence of previously unsuspected major Pre-Islamic settlements on Sir Bani Yas and Yasat islands in the Western Region of Abu Dhabi.

According to Dr King, "these settlements, dating to the period from around 100 AD to 500 AD, have opened a whole new chapter in knowledge of the region's history. Nothing else of the same date is known in the UAE from nearer than Jumeirah and Umm al Qaiwain, and these island sites represent a very substantial addition to our understanding of the patterns of trade and human settlement in the western part of the Southern Gulf in the pre-Islamic period."

On Sir Bani Yas, the team is excavating two sites. One is a building surrounded by a courtyard, which was constructed with fine plaster-faced walls. In antiquity, the walls all collapsed neatly outwards, and are lying on their sides, still showing the courses of stone of which they were built. Nearby are seven other similar structures, which will be examined in future seasons.

"The architecture is very well preserved", says Dr King, "and we will be able to reconstruct on computer an almost exact impression of what the building looked like around one thousand five hundred to two thousand years ago. The pottery found on the site has yet to be precisely dated, but it suggests that the local people of this side of the Gulf were trading with the Parthian or Sassanian empires centred on the opposite side of the Gulf. Palaces of the period have been found in Iran, but this is an extremely rare example of the domestic architecture of the time. It is a subject of which we know very little anywhere, which lends particular, perhaps even unique importance to this new Abu Dhabi discovery."

"We hope to find evidence too of trading links crossing Arabia," he adds. "This could have been an important focal point of trans-Arabian commerce." Near to the courtyard houses is a large area where test trenches have uncovered the remains of walls of buildings. "This must have been the main settlement site," says Dr King. "Covering an area of several thousand square metres, it must have held a substantial population, who could not have survived simply on local agriculture and fishing, which again suggests the possibility of extensive trade connections."

When the archaeologists first found traces of the sites during a preliminary survey last year, it was the first time that remains from this period had been found anywhere in the Emirates west of Dubai. Now, however, Sir Bani Yas looks as though it may just be one of several sites. "Our survey team has just found several other sites from the same period on the islands of Yasat, more than fifty kilometres west of Sir Bani Yas. Once again, they are completely unexpected. Nothing has previously been reported suggesting important island settlements anywhere in the Western region in pre-Islamic times, except on the well-known pearling centre of Dalma."

"There must have been substantial populations on the islands one thousand five hundred years ago. Future work, we hope, will answer questions like what they ate, with whom they traded, and where they got their water from because there is no natural supply of water on either Sir Bani Yas or Yasat today."

In the light of what is known as a result of this season's work there is an immense amount of work still to do: getting on for a hundred sites of different periods dating back to Stone Age times which have so far been identified by the survey team. "It's all quite staggering," he says. "Before we started our work last year, no-one had any idea that there was such a wealth of archaeology on the islands and along the coast in the Western Region. It was virtually a blank on the map of the history of the Gulf. As we begin to fill in those blanks, we can see that the people of the region have been playing an important role in the area for many thousands of years.

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Julfar: Medieval Islamic Port-City

Geoffrey King









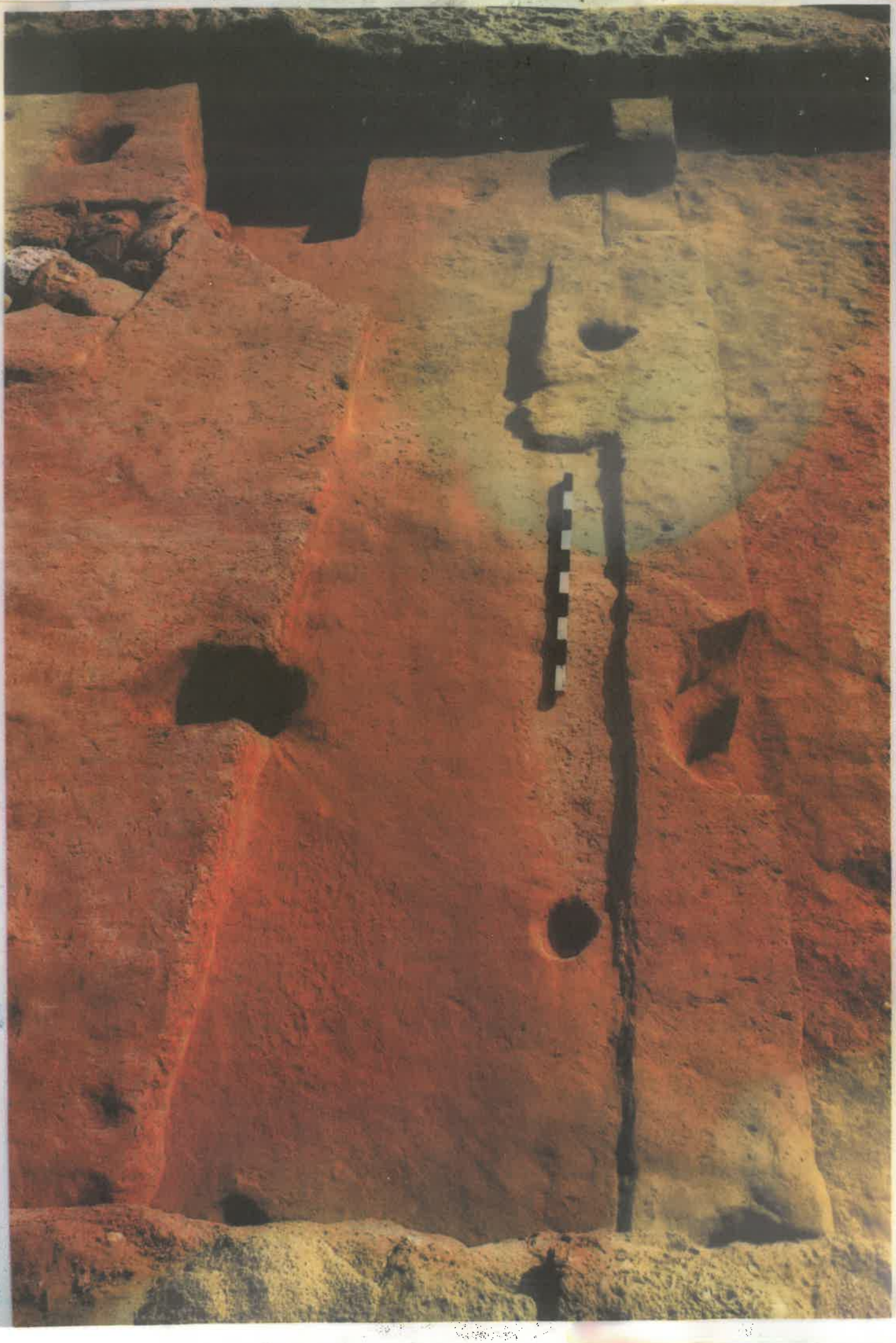




Top, left: Aerial view of the site of Julfar and the excavations looking towards Ra's al-Khaimah. **Middle, left:** *Qibla* wall of the fifth and latest Mosque at Julfar. **Above, left:** *Minaret* platform of Mosque 3 during excavation in 1991. **Above, top:** Vessel from the Mosque at Julfar. **Middle:** Chinese blue and white porcelain from the Mosque Area at Julfar. **Above:** Chinese blue and white porcelain from the Mosque Area at Julfar. **Opposite page:** Walls of Mosque 3 during excavation in 1991.

RA'S AL-KHAIMAH is the capital of the emirate of the same name, and a part of the United Arab Emirates. On the northern outskirts of the town are the low tells of an archaeological site identified as Julfar, the predecessor of Ra'ṣ al-Khaimah: Ra's al-Khaimah itself rose to prominence during the 18th century as Julfar declined.

Julfar is mentioned in context of the early Islamic conquest of Sassanian Iran, although recent archaeological research has shown that there was settlement at the site as early as the 3rd century AD. From these early origins, Julfar grew into a flourishing port, thanks to its secure harbour which was the best on the coast in the pre-modern period. By the 14th century, Julfar had trading connections reaching as far east as China. These continued after the Portuguese appeared in the region in the early years of the 16th century, and under Portuguese control, Julfar continued to participate in the Far Eastern trade.



Since 1989, teams of archaeologists from Britain, France, Germany and Japan have been engaged in excavations at the site of Julfar to investigate the remains of what was once the most important port of the Arabian shore of the lower Gulf. These excavations are now drawing to a close and provide an increasingly clear picture of the site, its history and its evolution over time.

Julfar as a place name is first mentioned in context of the Islamic invasion of Iran in about AD 637, when a Muslim fleet put out from Julfar. In subsequent centuries the place always emerges as a harbour: Umayyad and Abbasid fleets alike landed at Julfar when the Caliphate sought to exercise military control over SE Arabia. Commanders preferred to use the secure port at Julfar rather than make their way around the straits of Hurmuz to reach the Omani coast. Thus, from Julfar, Umayyad and later Abbasid forces would march along the Jabal Hajar highlands to enter the Omani interior from Buraymi or they would cross the mountains to the Batina coast of Oman.

In later times, Arab geographers make clear Julfar's role as a major commercial town. For the Palestinian geographer, al-Maqdisi, writing in the 10th century, Julfar was one of the principal citadels of Oman, on a par with Nizwa and Musqat. Al-Idrisi mentioned Julfar as a port lying on the mouth of a river (or more accurately a creek) in the 12th century, and there is some reason to think that he was referring to a long *khaur* which flowed inland in the past, but which has since silted up. In the following century, Yaqut also refers to the fertility of Julfar's hinterland and its pearl fisheries, comments which accurately reflect the local environment and the importance of pearling for the local economy up to the modern period.

It now seems possible that the earliest Julfar settlement was at Jazirat al-Hulayla, a sand-bar on the coast further to the north. Al-Hulayla preserves little in the way of ruins as most of its architectural remains have eroded away completely. The building material most generally available – coral – breaks down into its constituent materials over time, and eventually it may leave nothing of either standing walls or even of foundations. This is probably what happened at al-Hulayla, and past settlement there is now only identifiable through finds of ceramics. These range in date from the 3rd century AD through to a mediaeval Islamic date, the period that marks the heyday of early Julfar as it emerges in Arabic texts.

For reasons which are not yet entirely clear, the centre of the Julfar settlement shifted southwards from al-Hulayla to another low lying sand-bar, known locally as al-Matal: this shift occurred at some point in the 14th century. It is here that the international excavations of the past five years have been concentrated. The area in which the British archaeological team has excavated reveals a remarkable sequence of buildings with a succession of mosques and neighbouring houses now exposed, to reflect the prosperity of Julfar over about 300 to 400 years.

Initially, this settlement seems to have consisted of huts scattered over the sand-bar, but subsequently they gave way to sand-brick houses as the site gained in prosperity. Sand-brick is a building material peculiar to the region and it is hard enough to construct very solid walls. Like the coral used in these coastal regions, it tends to deteriorate over time and to erode badly. The earliest sand-brick houses excavated by the British team were twice replaced thereafter, with the most impressive of the construction phases represented by a large courtyard building. This was probably a house with rooms built around it. Similar courtyard buildings are found in many periods in Arabia and the wider Islamic world. They are commonly encountered in Umayyad architecture in the 8th century AD and they persist until recent times in central Arabia and in the Gulf region.

Similar evidence of the development of sand-brick houses comes from the southern part of the site. Here, the Japanese team, directed by Dr Tatsuo Sasaki, has exposed complexes of buildings with rooms constructed around courtyards and divided from one another by streets. This transformation of the hut settlement on the beach into a town of more solid structures thus seems to be a generalised development.

The finds from the courtyard building excavated by the British in the course of the 5th season of fieldwork in 1992 are still being studied and it would be premature to be conclusive about our interpretations, although it seems likely that the building is a large house. Its massive walls underwent repeated renovation with the original structure being much re-used and altered over time, and floors repeatedly relaid to extend the life of the building. At present, we are unsure as to what period this courtyard building encompasses, but it may go back to as early as the 14th/15th century. When the courtyard building finally went out of use, the nature of settlement in this part of Julfar changed completely: the abandoned sand-brick buildings were levelled, to be replaced once more by huts, marked by post-holes. Similarly, the Japanese archaeological team has found evidence of huts in the late period at Julfar, once again testified by post-holes. Thus, in the final stages of its occupation, Julfar was once again a hut settlement just as it had been before growing prosperity had transformed it into a town of sand-brick houses in the 14th and 15th century.

The houses excavated by the British team lie close to a series of mosques which, just like the residential area, reflect the rising prosperity of the town, and its eventual decline. Excavations in the Mosque area since 1989 have now revealed five successive mosques whose expansion over time must reflect the growing size of the community attending prayer. The earliest mosque was constructed on the original sand-bar and its foundations were excavated at a depth of nearly 3m below present ground level. This earliest mosque was a modest sand-brick structure which measured about 10m x 10m with wooden columns supporting the roof. This mosque served the early settlers in this area of Julfar. During this period, a large water tank was constructed outside the mosque, beside the qibla wall. This tank was built of stone, and although only the foundations survive, enough remains to show that it had rounded buttresses on the exterior to counter the weight of water in the tank. To prevent contamination by sea water, the tank was provided with a bitumen-like damp-proof course. Perhaps most remarkable was the hard cement-like lining that formed the floor of the tank, a flooring so strong that it still holds water after rain. To prevent evaporation, the

continued on page 62

Excavations at Tell Abraq

Daniel Potts

DESPITE THE fact that archaeological excavations in the area of what is today the UAE have been taking place since 1958, when a Danish team first set foot on Umm an-Nar island off the coast of Abu Dhabi, few scholars, let alone laymen, think of the UAE as an area with a rich artistic heritage. Yet archaeological investigations during the past decade, particularly in the Northern Emirates, have yielded an enormous quantity of material which makes it possible to speak justifiably of pre-Islamic Arabian art in this, one of the last corners of the Arabian peninsula to undergo intensive exploration.









Above: An adult female of the first century AD, excavated at Tell Abraq in 1993. **Right, top:** View of the western half of the Umm an Nar type tomb at the end of the 1993 season. **Middle:** The 'Bactrian' comb as it first appeared while still in the ground. The bone appears brown because of the consolidant applied to preserve it. **Right:** Pottery vessels from the tombs.

Without doubt one of the richest sites in the UAE is Tell Abraq in the emirate of Umm al-Qaiwain. Unlike many sites in the Emirates which

were occupied only for a matter of centuries. Tell Abraq was inhabited continuously for over 2000 years, from c.2500 to 400/300 BC. It was located close to what was then a natural harbour and, from the time of its foundation, was clearly of more than purely local importance. With an area extent of c. 4 ha., it is by the largest prehistoric site on the southern coast of the Arabian Gulf, and a wealth of imported pottery and small finds originating in the Indus Valley, southern Iran, Bactria (modern day northern Afghanistan), Bahrain, and Mesopotamia attest to the fact that Tell Abraq was very much in touch with the wider world throughout its history.

Since 1989 four seasons of excavation have taken place at Tell Abraq, the most recent of which was completed in February of this year. Certainly the most important standing architecture on the site is a massive, circular fortification with a diameter of 40 m. which is still preserved to a height of c. 8 m. Built of a combination of stone and mudbrick around 2500-2200 B.C., the fortress is an example of a building type which was widespread throughout the Oman peninsula during the Bronze Age. Previously excavated examples, ranging in size from 16 to 25 m., are known at Bat and Samad in Oman, and at Bidya (Fujairah) and Hili (Al Ain, Abu Dhabi) in the Emirates. Interestingly, a cuneiform text from Mesopotamia recording an attack on the Oman peninsula in the 23rd century B.C. by the Old Akkadian king Manishtusu tells us that he met a coalition consisting of the 'lords' of 32 cities. It is almost certain that the 'cities' referred to were precisely those late 3rd millennium BC. settlements mentioned above which are dominated by circular fortifications.

But who were the people of the UAE in the time of Manishtusu? Mesopotamian sources written in Sumerian and Akkadian identify the region by the name of Magan (Sumerian) or Makkan (Akkadian). At Tell Abraq we are in the unique position of being able to recover the very individuals who lived in and used the monumental fortification because of the fact that only 10 m. west of the structure is a circular, collective tomb built of stone which dates to the same period as the fortress. In 1993 the western half of the tomb was completely excavated. The chamber was found to contain the remains of at least 140 individuals and, judging by the associated material, dates to the very end of the 3rd millennium, c. 2100-200 B.C. Considering that the skeletal material in the tomb is 4000 years old, it is remarkably well-preserved and, after analysis has been completed by our physical anthropologists, stands to revolutionise our understanding of health, disease and nutrition in Bronze Age Arabia.

By far the most unusual object found in the tomb is a bone comb. The piece is 11 cm. long and measures 8.3 cm. at its widest point. The preservation of an object made of an organic material such as this from a 4000 year old context is extraordinary, and only a small portion of the comb's teeth are missing. The comb is decorated symmetrically and in identical fashion on both sides. In the center of the body is a set of three double-dotted circles arranged in the shape of a triangle. These are flanked on either side by a pair of tri-petaled flowers with long stem and serrated leaves. To date nothing like this has ever been found in Arabia, and the obvious place to look for parallels is

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in the Indus Valley where bone and ivory combs, decorated with dotted circles, have been found at sites such as Mohenjo-Daro, Chanhu-Daro, Kalibangan and Harappa. None of these, however, bears the distinct floral motif of our piece. The exact same type of paired flowers in precisely the same position is, however, found on a small group of soft-stone flasks found during illicit excavations in northern Afghanistan during the 1970's. These come from the area known in antiquity as Bactria, that part of Central Asia on either side of the great Oxus or Amu-Darya River. The preciseness of this parallel, combined with the fact that dotted circles also occur on Bactrian stone vessels, makes a Bactrian origin for the Tell Abraq comb highly probable. In recent years Bactrian pottery, stone vessels, metal weaponry and stamp seals have been found in increasing numbers at a whole host of sites extending from Pakistani Baluchistan (Mehrgarh, Sibri, Mehi, Khurab) to southern Iran (Shahdad, Tepe Yahya). The Tell Abraq comb undoubtedly represents a yet further, southerly extension of the Bactrian material which all seems to date to 2000 BC.

Other finds from the tomb confirm this date. The pottery recovered, for example, shows the black-on-red decoration of the late 3rd millennium, but already exhibits the string-cut bases and cruder temper which characterizes the early 2nd millennium. Thus, it appears to represent a transitional phase at the very end of what is known as the Umm an-Nar period (2500-2000 BC.) Likewise, the stone vessels from the tomb, with their dotted circle and incised decoration, are more hybrid than the 'classical' Umm an-Nar soft-stone traditionally found in tombs of this type.

During the early 2nd millennium BC. (so-called 'Wadi Suq period') the fortification continued in use when it was the scene of massive rebuilding. Pottery from this period exhibits different shapes and decoration to that of the preceding era, and one piece in particular from the 1993 season is noteworthy because of the fact that it shows, for the first time in the archaeology of this region, what is undoubtedly an ostrich. Interestingly enough, fragments of ostrich eggshell were recovered in the tomb and undoubtedly represent pieces of ostrich eggshell vessels of the sort known elsewhere in the Near East at a later date.

Whereas a well-developed glyptic tradition is attested on Failaka (Kuwait) and on Bahrain, the use of seals, whether of the cylinder or stamp variety, has rarely been documented in southeastern Arabia. In 1990 a unique soft-stone stamp seal was recovered in an early 2nd millennium context. The impression of the seal shows a striding male deity, identifiable thus by the horn crown he wears. Both arms are bent and he appears to be standing above a long-horned goat of some kind. While this seal gives every sign of being a local product, it seems to have been influenced by the better known glyptic tradition of Bahrain and Failaka (ancient Dilmun) with which it is contemporary.

During the Iron Age (c. 1200-400/300 BC.) Tell Abraq was surmounted by a massive mudbrick platform, the function of which remains enigmatic. From this period come four soft-stone pendants, the most interesting of which shows, on one side, a standing demonic figure with upraised arms bent at the elbow: hands and feet in the shape of claws; and a curved sword at the waist. Iconographically this figure recalls Babylonian and Assyrian representations of the so-called Lamashtu demoness, a being thought to bear disease. As a prophylactic measure small stone pendants were worn in antiquity to ward off the effects of this demoness, and it is possible that our pendant had a similar, amuletic function.

The opposite side of the pendant shows two diametrically opposed feet, a motif which is known on much earlier seals from southern Iran, Syria and Bahrain. The exact meaning of this motif is unknown, but the suggestion has been made that it echoes Mesopotamian religious texts which allude to the 'footsteps' of the Semitic solar deity Shamash.

The Iron Age was also a time in which massive amounts of soft-stone vessels were manufactured. While the stone itself was quarried in the mountains of the interior, one of the vessel lids from Tell Abraq is particularly unusual in that it has been carved in low relief in a manner which seems to imitate a sand dollar. Perhaps it was carved by a coastal artisan, familiar with marine life, from a raw block of stone brought from the interior?

Although the main occupation of Tell Abraq ends c.400/300 BC, the site was still used as a cemetery during the first centuries AD for approximately a dozen graves of this period have been found dotting the upper surface of the site. In 1993, approximately 50 m. north of the 3rd millennium tomb, a chance discovery was made during a test excavation. The skeleton of a young adult female was found, along with a ceramic vessel and a bronze bowl which had been placed close to her head. The woman had been buried wearing a considerable amount of jewellery, including a silver bracelet, several necklaces of stone, paste and silver beads, and a pair of gold earrings. The earrings are an eloquent testimony to the art of the goldsmith in the centuries prior to the coming of Islam, and show extremely fine granulation and open fretwork. These mark out the individual who wore them as a member of the local elite, but the circumstances of the burial, which seemed to lack a chamber of any kind, are puzzling, although the presence of grave goods confirms that it was an intentional internment, and not merely the clandestine disposal of a person of no consequence.

Four seasons of excavation at Tell Abraq have brought to light an immense quantity of material, only a fraction of which has been illustrated and discussed here. In addition to the visible signs of wealth and artistic and architectural achievement, it should be stressed that the site boasts the largest collection of animal and fish bones yet found on an archaeological site in the Arabian peninsula (over 35,000 mammalian and 15,000 fish bones as of the third season). It is also rich in charcoal which is now being studied with a view to identifying the various plant species which inhabited the area in antiquity. When combined with an analysis of the human skeletal remains, we shall be able to say a good deal more about the climate, vegetation, and general living standards of this important settlement.

The UAE has an archaeological heritage which deserves the attention of anyone interested in the antiquity of Western Asia. And while the traditional centers of Mesopotamia, the Fertile Crescent, and the Nile Valley continue to claim a greater share of scholarly and popular attention, southeastern Arabia has, during the past few decades, proven

itself to have a fascinating history, the study of which is contributing to our increased understanding of the complex mosaic of ancient cultures which inhabited this part of the world prior to the coming of Islam.

Dr Daniel T Potts is Professor of Middle Eastern Archaeology, University of Sydney, New South Wales, Australia.











Clockwise from above: 1. A soft-stone (steatite or chlorite) vessel with incised spiral and dotted-circle decoration from the tomb. 2. A circular soft-stone stamp seal of early 2nd millennium B.C. date, the impression of which shows a striding god (?) wearing a horn crown above a goat. 3. A fragment of pottery dating to the early 2nd millennium BC showing an ostrich. 4. A pair of red gold earrings with fine granulation. 5. The 'Bactrian' comb following conservation and cleaning.

Innovation and Tradition
From page 40

the main lobbies will be multi-colored warm hued marbles; cherry veneered panel doors and screens and polished brass hardware. Standard office interiors related to the different grades of management and staff will be provided on the office floors.

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Nader Ardalan is an architect, and the Principal-in-Charge of the Design of the above project.

Al Ain Museum:

Archaeology in the UAE since 1950's

Walid Yasin Al-Tikriti



The United Arab Emirates which was, from the archaeological point of view, terra incognita only three and a half decades ago, has six archaeological museums at the moment. The Al-Ain Museum, the first to have been founded, is still the largest and more comprehensive than the other museums. The establishment of these museums became possible only because of the continuous archaeological activities which have been going on since the late 1950's.

The first archaeological instigations in the UAE were started by the Danish archaeological expedition on the island of Umm an-Nar in 1958. In 1959 the actual excavations were started on this important island which contains a fairly large settlement site and a cemetery from the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium BC. After some seasons of explorations on Umm an-Nar, the Danes were invited by HH Sheikh Zayed, the Ruler's Representative by then, to visit Al-Ain and extend their work to cover the eastern province of Abu Dhabi. Subsequently several tombs from Jamdat Nasr period (3200-3000 BC) at Jebel Hafit were excavated. The most important was the excavation of a round 3rd millennium BC collective tomb with some carvings on the entrances. This tomb was reconstructed by an Iraqi team between 1973 and 1975, and is now standing in the middle of Hili Garden in the northern part of the city, attracting people from all over the world visiting the UAE. A nearly contemporary settlement site has also been excavated by the Danish team, discovering a round structure, but this time a tower-like building, not a collective burial.



Top: Bronze axe from the Iron Age discovered on the surface of Hili 8. **Above:** Painted pottery vessel from Jamdat Nasr period (3200-3000 BC) discovered at Hafit.

Remains of the 1st millennium

sites, a period which is very well represented in the UAE, have also been excavated. Among these are Bint Saud, north of Hili, and Rumailah in the Al-Ain city.

As a result of the discoveries made by the Danish team, HH Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, President of the UAE, instructed the establishment of a national museum to house the discovered material. At the same time Sheikh Zayed issued a decree establishing the Department of Antiquities & Tourism to look after the museum and to supervise the archaeological activities in the emirate of Abu Dhabi. Al-Ain was chosen to be a centre for the museum and the department. Soon after the establishment of the department, a surveying team from the Department of Antiquities in Baghdad was invited to explore other areas in the northern emirates. Two field archaeologists, Saeed ur-Rahman from Pakistan, and this writer were employed to run the local teams. The Iraqi team explored various regions in the country and managed to discover 72 archaeological sites. Among these were Mulaiha in the territory of Sharjah, ad-Dur and tell Abraq in the territory of Umm al Quwain, and Julfar in Ras al - Khaimah. The surveying Iraqi team was followed by an excavating expedition. The expedition (1973 - 1975) concentrated its activities on the northern emirates and examined several sites. The first and most important was the Hellenistic site at Mulaiha where they partly excavated a castle and a tomb. The castle looked to me as if it was only part of a much larger fort, now destroyed.

The Iraqi archaeological expedition also excavated part of the immense site of ad-Dur which is located on the road to Ras al - Khaimah, and another fort (1st century AD) was uncovered. Several sounding trenches were also opened by the same expedition at the site of Darbaniyah, Nudud and al Mataf, all suspected to be the ancient remains of the historical city of Julfar.

The Iraqi expedition also carried out some important excavations at the cemetery site of Al-Qusais in Dubai. Single as well as subterranian collective graves, from the 2nd and 1st millennia BC were discovered. Further excavations were also carried out by the Iraqis at Jumairah site in Dubai. This site was first excavated by a team from the American University in Beirut in the 1960's and described to be of Sassanian and early Islamic date.

The last season of excavations carried out by the Iraqis was that of 1975, and they published some interim reports of their excavations in the UAE in *Sumer*, the archaeological journal of the Department of Antiquities in Baghdad. In that year (1975), a collective tomb and part of the settlement on Umm an-Nar were excavated. During this season they also carried out some excavations at a recent Islamic settlement at the village of Qidfa, north of Fujairah, since destroyed. A 40-minute visit by the head of the Iraqi team and myself to the island of Dalma in 1975 made it just possible to find a recent Islamic structure which subsequently was partly excavated (now extinct).

The Iraqi excavations yielded valuable archaeological material, specially at Mulaiha, ad-Dur, Julfar and Qidfa. These materials all remained in the country but they had been divided between the Al-Ain Museum which sponsored the excavations, and the local authorities in the above-mentioned emirates. The activities of the Iraqi archaeological expedition halted in 1975. In the following year the Department of Antiquities and Tourism in Al-Ain signed a contract with a French archaeological team from the CNRS. More beehive tombs from the Jamdat Nasr period, two collective Umm an-Nar tombs and a settlement site (Hili 8) from the 3rd millennium BC were excavated. The excavations at Hili 8 contributed a great deal of information about life and society in Al-Ain more than 4000 years ago.

The French also carried out some excavations at the Iron Age site at Rumailah. New discoveries were added to those previously made at the same site by the Danes and the local team headed by this writer in 1975. The French excavations ceased in 1984 after they contributed much information about the remote past of Abu Dhabi. The French activities continued in the emirate of Sharjah where they did a successful survey, and several fruitful excavations at the Hellenistic site of Mulaiha.

Other foreign teams, mainly European, carried out more comprehensive explorations in the emirates of Ras al-Khaima and Umm al-Quwain. A German team conducted wide explorations at the 2nd millennium site at Shimal in Ras al-Khaima, a site which was previously explored by a British team in the 1970's. Subsequently a 2nd millennium settlement and several oblong collective burials were excavated. Other teams from Denmark, Belgium, Britain and France have been carrying out for some years a comprehensive programme to excavate the site at ad-Dur in the emirate of Umm al-Quwain. As mentioned before, this ancient harbour which was active in the 1st century AD was previously examined by the Iraqis in 1974.

The site of Abraq in Umm al-Quwain is being excavated by an archaeological team from the University of Sydney. Tell Abraq was also briefly checked by the Iraqis in 1974 but the work was halted because there was a plan to put a water tank on the summit of the tell. The Iraqis had to close their work and look for another site to excavate; the alternative was ad-Dur. Fortunately the water tank was put near the site, not on its summit. The recent excavations directed by Dr D. Potts from the University of Sydney, demonstrated that Abraq is the richest known settlement site in the UAE so far. Its chronology shows a continuous habitation from the early 3rd millennium BC to the 1st century AD.

Julfar, the previously examined site by the Iraqis, has been recently chosen by teams from Japan, Britain, France and Germany to carry out further excavations. The earliest occupation discovered so far goes back to the 13th-14th century AD. Early Julfar may have been on the island of Hulaila, a few kilometers to the north.

The east coast of the UAE, extending from Kalba in the south to Diba in the north witnessed actual archaeological excavations in the 1980's by a team from the Al-Ain Museum directed by this writer. Interesting sites, both settlement and tombs, ranging in date from the 3rd millennium BC to the 1st century AD were excavated at the emirate of Fujairah. These discoveries encouraged archaeologists from Lichtenstein to get involved in the archaeological research in the UAE for the first time. Dozens of sites were discovered by them in the emirate of Fujairah; one was excavated. In the past two years, the French also surveyed parts of the

east coast, specially those located within the territory of Sharjah. The east coast, however, witnessed a reconnaissance made by B. de Cardi, the British archaeologist in the late 1960's. She located some sites dating from different periods. Lately a British team from the Institute of Archaeology in London carried out new excavations at Kalba and Khor Fakkan. Prehistoric sites as well as Bronze Age sites have been examined.

More recently the emirate of Abu Dhabi witnessed a surveying programme covering some of the offshore islands. Prehistoric sites have been located on at least two of these surveys by a British team from the University of London. Most interesting is the al-Ubaid site on the island of Dalma which has been examined this year. A pre-Islamic site has also been excavated by the same team on the island of Sir Beni Yas. The western province of Abu Dhabi, however, was surveyed by the Al-Ain Museum through some German and local archaeologists in 1984. Some sites from the 3rd millennium, the 1st millennium BC, and recent Islamic period, were located.

As part of his PhD thesis, this writer conducted limited excavations at the settlement site of Umm an-Nar in 1979. Materials indicating a mainly fishing community were discovered. The Al-Ain Museum also carried out two short seasons of excavations on the island of Ghanadha (1982-1983), some 65 kilometers northeast of Umm an-Nar. The excavations there, directed by the writer, showed that the island was first inhabited in the 2nd half of the 3rd millennium BC. A seasonal site from the Umm an-Nar period was partly excavated and proved that the Umm an-Nar culture was not restricted to Abu Dhabi and Al-Ain only.

Although the Al-Ain Museum is a local institution, it spares no effort to assist in discovering the ancient past of the other emirates. In 1988, the museum sent a team directed by this writer to explore and excavate a 3rd millennium BC site in Ajman. Materials from this site are on display in both Al-Ain and Ajman. Because of its activities in the other emirates, as well as in the emirate of Abu Dhabi, materials from several sites in the northern emirates like Ajman, Qusais, Mulaiha, ad-Dur and Qidfa are on display. Due to the diversity of the materials and the several archaeological schemes since its foundation, the museum is considered to have the biggest collection. Objects from the Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Hellenistic and Islamic periods are displayed. Although this museum is mainly archaeological, it has a very interesting ethnographical collection as well. The story of the remote past of the United Arab Emirates as well as of its most recent past are both well told in this four-gallery museum, which is located in the centre of Al-Ain, next to one of the historical forts.

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New Archaeological Museum in Sharjah

Peter Hudson

In the 1980's the difficulties of access into Iran and Iraq caused archaeologists to look elsewhere for fields to explore and this led to a surge of interest in the archaeology of the United Arab Emirates. Desert Sheikhdoms which before had been perceived as timelessly barren were shown to have supported early communities, such as the third millennium BC Umm An Nar culture, which must have been vigorous and sophisticated for their period. These and later sites such as Mileiha and Ed-Dur proved to be rich in finds and while the architecture of these ancient sites was not monumental there were some pleasing surprises such as the 2000 year old temple at Ed-Dur in Umm Al Quwain.



The increasing accumulation of results soon began to impress on an hitherto unaware local community that their young nation had cultural roots which could perhaps be traced as far back as those of Mesopotamia, Egypt and China and further back than the European countries. It began to be clear that the image seen by outsiders of a tribal nomadic culture might have to be modified by the addition of a culture of merchants, agriculturalists and voyagers; at times almost lost in the sands of privation, growing or shrinking as a result of climatic changes and wars, economic and political developments beyond their borders, but always there. It was a culture which was ready to flower with the seeds of the desert which lie dormant for season after season, waiting for passing rains.

Museums were created in Al Ain and Ras Al Khaimah, these being the first areas of significant finds. Sharjah had to wait a little while longer until the French team under Prof. Remy Boucharlat of Lyons University had progressed with their work, but the finds were significant and deserved proper display.

The degree of His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah and Dependencies, in agriculture, his doctorate from Essex University, and his books in Arabic and English on the politics and history of the Gulf show that he is a man of learning, but he is at the same time a practical and a far-sighted man with a deep love and understanding of his country and his people and a desire to provide for their long term [illegible]

He has a [illegible] interest in education and [illegible] and, struggling against [illegible] earlier [illegible] perceived in developing [illegible] as [illegible] to the [illegible] to meet the [illegible] of his people. [illegible] house Sharjah's collection of archaeological artifacts was [illegible] quarter in which he took great personal interest. A building was already under construction at Sharjah's Cultural Square (now called the Holy Quran Square) and he ordered its conversion into the Archaeological Museum, significantly located beside his offices in the Majlis and with Sharjah's Cultural Centre facing it across the Square.



A French team worked with Nassir Hussain Al Abboudi, the Director of the Department of Antiquities and Heritage and his local team, sorted the finds, cataloguing them and getting them ready for display.

Nassir Al Abboudi studied archaeology at Baghdad University, being one of the first UAE nationals to take such a course. He is keenly interested in preserving the heritage of the UAE and previously

contributed to this magazine in the winter 1985 issue. Nassir Al Abboudi was a prime mover in the restoration of Sharjah's old buildings as part of the Emirates heritage programme. The buildings have received much praise for their sensitive and enlightened treatment making use of original materials and techniques and it is hoped that they will be the subject of a later article in *Arts and The Islamic World*.

While the objects were being sorted, word came to Sharjah that a valuable collection of artifacts which had been discovered by earlier collectors at Mileiha had surfaced in Europe. These included various significant items such as coins and bronze and silver objects of Roman and Greek origin or influence. A gold aureus of Tiberius and coinage and objects from Syria, Egypt, Parthia and Southern Arabia; all pointed to the special importance of this small Sharjah town in ancient times. The Ruler immediately took steps to acquire the collection and gave it to the Museum.

The Museum was opened by





HH The Ruler on January 5th 1993 at an occasion which was attended by various local dignitaries, members of the diplomatic corps and eminent archaeologists. The Ruler took a keen interest in every display and congratulated the French and UAE national archaeologists on their achievement.

The Sharjah Archaeological Museum stands as an impressive monument to the growth and aspirations of Sharjah but perhaps what is more impressive is the steady stream of UAE national visitors, of all ages and both sexes, who come to review their ancient wealth.





Opposite page, left: His Highness Dr Sheikh Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Ruler of Sharjah, after opening the Sharjah Archaeological Museum. **Right:** Steatite container with lid. Iron Age, 1200-600 BC from Muneilah. **This page, top:** Sharjah Archaeological Museum, photograph by Nasir Al Aboudi. **Left:** Inscribed coarse stone from Mileiha. **Extreme left:** Inscribed copper alloy plaque marking the tomb of Wahlabat. From Mileiha circa 150 BC. **Bottom:** Spout in the form of a silver gilt horse, found at Mileiha.

Peter Hudson is an architect and an "amateur" painter, living in the UAE since 1970. He is interested in art and archaeology, is Chairman of the Dubai Arts Centre, and serves on committees of the Dubai Society of Engineers and Dubai Men's College.

Forts & Fortifications of Abu Dhabi

Reem El Mutwalli

The United Arab Emirates occupies the southern shores of the Gulf, an area that has long been known as the Trucial Coast, due to the maritime truce between the tiny shaykhdoms scattered along the coast and the British; or as Trucial Oman, as it was from Oman - the territory occupying the south - eastern portion of the Arabian peninsula - that these treaties separated; or The Trucial States as they are called by Hawley[1] and Fenelon[2].

The UAE is thus bordered by Qatar to the west, the Hasa province of Saudi Arabia to the south west, the great sands of the Rub' al-Khali to the south, the Arabian Gulf and Oman to the north, and to the east by Oman and the Gulf of Oman.[3]

Abu Dhabi is by far the largest Emirate, occupying about 87% of the UAE territory. Indeed, it is divided into three geographical sections: the land lying along the coast of the Arabian gulf, characterised by numerous islands, reefs and shores; this land is for the most part low-lying and barren, in particular in the South around Abu Dhabi. However, around Ra's al-Khaimah, further north, there is sign of cultivation. Second are the inland plains, made up entirely of sandy desert, such as Liwa. These lands run into the Rub' al-Khali on the south and the Hilli area on to the north, neighbouring Ras al-Khaimah. Third are the mountains to the east running north from Oman, through to the Emirates for about 50 miles and then to the Musadam peninsula.

Most inhabitants tend to live along the coasts, even with scarcity of sweet water. Certain inland oases, such as Buraimi, Liwa and Dhayd, were also occupied and eventually became more important as agricultural centres.

One tends to accept that the area's inhospitable climate and geography contributed substantially to its long isolation. However, one cannot ignore the considerable commercial and local political role it held throughout the years. This must have, in effect, led to the building of forts and other military complexes, especially in Liwa and al-'Ayn, where the boundaries of many different tribes met and where constant feuds and disputes erupted[4].

Traces of buildings from the Islamic past survive today throughout the UAE a world which changed radically with the discovery of oil. These buildings have not been studied before. Many have been lost and most of those that remain have not been recorded. Recently some local publications have been issued both in English and Arabic, but unfortunately, in these publications forts are mentioned either as part of a general architectural overview of buildings in the Gulf[5], or as brief surveys with little depth[6].

My principal concern in this article is to introduce in brief the main simple structures from which forts and fortifications of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi have risen.

Local vocabulary in the UAE distinguishes between three types of buildings used, among other things, for defence purposes;

a) The round Tower, locally referred to as Burj or Bury by converting the J to Y, a common transformation used in the Gulf.

b) The square Tower/Fort referred to as Muraba'a.

c) The Fort, mainly using the term Qala'a, meaning citadel or Husn, meaning a fortified enclosure. While Qasr is another term used when the building has an additional function and serves as the residence of the ruler.

A. The Round Tower or Burj

The round tower or Burj is usually built to strengthen town walls, and on many occasions forms the nucleus of what later develops into a grand Fort[7]; although it is quite common to find them in the UAE built to stand by themselves. One can trace the history of the burj to a tradition of more or less identical towers first built 5000 years ago, on sites such as Bat near Ibri in Oman or Tell Abraq in Umm al-Qaiwain[8]. Buhais in Sharjah[9], as well as three other sites in Hili (Hili 1[10], Hili 8[11] & Hili 10[12]) near al-'Ain.

As free-standing watchtowers, they were built for a number of purposes of which the most common, perhaps, was to control either the approach to a settlement or the use of a route. The Maqta' tower, that survives on the tiny islet in the creek of Abu Dhabi, next to the present Maqta' Bridge, is a good example of such a function. Indeed it must have afforded outer protection to the settlements of the Abu Dhabi island. Similarly, two high watchtowers stand on the sand dunes just inland of the village of Jazirat al-Hamra in Ra's al-Khaimah, controlling the approach to the village, which once stood on an island, separated from the main land at high tide. While other watchtowers were set strategically to command narrow passes, such as those found along the foot of the great Jabal Akhdar in Oman, situated among the rocky outcrops and blocking road routes from approaching enemies. However, towers were also used to protect palm groves and water sources, or Aflaj; in the past the life of a town depended on its palm groves and on the watercourse or falaj, which fed them. Their defense was essential to the settlement. Finally, and above all, the settlements themselves needed to be defended and at times of trouble the population would retreat temporarily to their towers or forts.

Most of the watchtowers of the UAE are gradually crumbling away to mere piles of mud or stone[13]. Their architecture is simple; they are cylindrical and taper slightly towards the top. Built either of stones joined by a lime-based mortar - Juss, or as it is the case in al-'Ayn by Midar. But perhaps more commonly, it is a mixture of the two. At times they are

packed solid with sand or earth part of the way up for extra strength. This can be seen in the large gun tower of the Fahidi fort in Dubai; it is also visible in the grand tower of Nizwah fort in Oman[14], and even the more recently restored Burj al-Rumayla al-Sharqi in al-'Ayn.

They are usually higher than wide, and are composed of one or two storeys. An attacker would find access difficult, as the door is usually at least 2-3m above the ground with no stairs leading to it. Often wooden rungs would be embedded in the wall leading from the lower level, with its hard mud floor, to an open upper level with its crenellated walls and covering of mud spread on palm leaves and trunks. On the other hand, some towers can only be entered by climbing a rope placed either externally or on the interior.

Abraj (pl.) are built in many sizes and dimensions; ranging from 7-8m up to an exceptional size of 45m diameter[15]. They have thick walls, with interiors lit only by the narrow loop-holes through which the defenders would fire. When a burj is about 2-3m high, as is found at Hili in al-'Ayn[16], it is referred to as Sebah (pl. Seyab). Another term sira (pl. Sir), is used when referring to towers [17]. In fact it is thought to have come from Serra madova, a Portuguese term with the same meaning[18]. Towers are also referred to as al maftouwl, taken from the verb Fatalah to turn round, literally meaning the 'one that turns round'.

In the Emirate of Abu Dhabi there are twelve free-standing towers of the Burj type, excluding the large tower which forms part of Husn al-Jahili, or the one at Qala'at Murayjib.

B. Square Tower/Fort or Muraba'a. Besides building round cylindrical towers, square ones were also built, but more rarely. They are referred to as Muraba'a, which literally means a square enclosure, basically because of their shape[19]. There is another form of square enclosure called Ghurfa[20], which usuallly means room in Arabic, but here it means a more or less private reception hall. It is built by the ruler or any other prominent person as a majlis, and is used for informal meetings or entertainment. The majlis is usually built on two levels; the upper floor is used during the summer months, as it is cooler, while the ground level is occupied during the winter. They all had curtain walls and some even had corner towers on their outer walls, such as Ghurfat al Nuwasir, and another that existed in the Mu'tarid area[21]. None of these ghuraf (pl.) is extant now and one only hears of them through old poetry and local folk songs.

A muraba'a tends to be rectangular in structure. It does not rise to more than one or two storeys. Eventually as the muraba'a grew bigger it acquired curtain walls, and became closely related to forts.

There are six muraba'as in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi that can be further divided into two groups. The first includes those that are more or less a square burj, such as Muraba'at Murayjib, which is part of Murayjib Fort & Burj and Hili west, which stands on its own. The second, on the other hand, includes muraba'as that form a separate entity identified more closely with forts than to towers. These include Muraba'at al-'Ayn, Muraba'at al-Rumayla, Qala'at al-Anchah, and Qala'at Zafir.

One must note here that a third group exists in the UAE in areas such as Ra's al-Khaimah, where square towers rather than buildings are also referred to as Muraba'a. None of such constructions were found in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, except for what forms a part of a structure termed as Bayt. Which literally means home and is basically a large building that served as the residence of any prominent person.

C. Forts, Qila', Qusur or Husun: Various terms are used to refer to what is initially a square enclosure with a large central courtyard: Husn[22] literally means a fortified enclosure; Qala'a[23], a term used frequently, means castle; Qasr, used locally, is when the fortified enclosure is also used as a residence for the ruler and his family, such as Qasr al-Husn on Abu Dhabi island and Qasr al Muwayj'i in al-'Ayn.

Besides offering basically similar functions as the towers, forts over the ages were built by rulers as a physical manifestation of their authority, and these forts served both as their residence and also as a place of refuge for all when at war. Yet forts in this area have long been assumed to be a foreign legacy, apparently because of the parallels drawn with the famous twin forts Jalali and Mirani, built by the Portuguese to guard Muscat bay [24].

One cannot deny that some forts were built by the Portuguese. Besides Jalali and Mirani, some smaller forts have since been razed along the east coast of the U.A.E.; such as the one at Kalba, Khawr Fakkan, Diba and Julfar. Yet many others were built by the local inhabitants in Oman and Bahrain. On the other hand, some forts were further developed by the Portuguese, while others were merely occupied by them. Therefore, one must point out two important factors to help resolve a possible misconception. The first is the presence of an old tradition of fort building in the surrounding area with which one can draw similarities and identify prototypes. Though the age of most forts in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi is no more than a century or two [25], the building of Qusur, Qila'a or Husun in the whole of the Arabian Peninsula can be traced back to pre-Islamic times. Sections of Bahla Fort in Oman date to pre-Islamic Persian occupation [26]. Whereas the large restored fortress of the town of Rustaq stands on what may have been the site of a fort two millennia before the advent of Islam [27]. The plan of Qala'at Arad [28], on Muharaq island in Bahrain, generally agreed to be an Arab structure built by the Omanis when they occupied that area, and possibly built during the latter half of the 16th century [29], depicts a double-walled square-shaped fort, flanked by a tower on each corner of both walls, thus making the total number of towers eight. Qala'at al-Bahrain perhaps gives the most fascinating example of a fortress complex found in the area. Looking at the basic layout of the site one can clearly compare the square fort, first discovered by Geoffrey Bibby in the 1950s and since excavated by Dr. Monik Kervran and her French team, and the various other structures including the Portuguese addition, all on one site. The Islamic fort is square in shape with towers at each corner and half towers in the middle of each side, except on the west where two quarter-towers form the main gate, which appears to be very much linked with the style of Greco-Roman castles found on the corners, now spearhead shaped projections very much similar to what one finds at Fort Jesus [30] are found.

This leads to the second factor, the change in the building architecture of Portuguese forts that came about as a result of the

introduction of gunpower into warfare, first introduced to Europe from the East in 1325[32]. In the 1500s the Italian school of architecture began to influence the European defensive military architecture. By the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, radical changes in military technique and modifications in architectural forms took place, and earlier types of defensive buildings were completely abandoned[33]. Meanwhile, in areas such as Oman, close to the UAE and probably most influential, something new was developed. The pre-gunpowder forts had towers at all corners of the building as well as, on the larger ones at least, extra towers along the faces of the walls, such as in Bahla fort[34]. After the introduction of gunpowder, the multi-tower form of Qila'a was altered and the central square or rectangular nucleus retained just a pair of diagonally opposed corner towers[35]. An excellent example of such buildings is Qasr al-Husn in Abu Dhabi, with numerous prototypes found in Oman, such as Jabrin, Bidbid, Matrah, and Bayt Na'man in the Batinah[36].







Rashid has discussed briefly the Qila'a, Husun and Abraj, listing them according to their location (Abu Dhabi, Liwa and al-'Ayn)[37]. It is my belief that many of which are not forts but rather large houses or Buyut. To put it briefly, the main types of fort structures present in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi, include:

A) Square enclosures with two diagonally placed towers; only one example of this is found, which is Qasr Al-Husn on Abu Dhabi Island.

B) Square enclosures with a number of round corner towers, such as Husn al-Jahili which has 3 towers, not including the exterior free standing tower. Husn Sultan, Husn Mizyad, and Qala'at bin Rhama are other examples of this type.

C) Square enclosures without any towers include Qasr al Muwayj'i, Qala'at Ahmed bin Hilal al-Zahiri, and Qala'at Bin Hadi.

D) Free standing buildings, without an enclosure such as Qala'at Mrayjib.

To sum up, I will use the words of Ali bin Barak, an elderly tribesman of Al Zuwaher, who when describing the building of these forts, he said:

"Earlier on people were poor; they did not have the wealth that you see now. They built modest homes, each depending on his capabilities, with few rooms that grew as the need emanated. In times of war the Shaykh would order them and they would all gather around and build a fort for their protection. There were no special builders. Everyone had to help. You had no choice; you were ordered."

He then continued:
"We used midar[38] which was cool in the summer months and warm in winter. Not this cement that they use nowadays, which is hot in the summer and cold in winter. Now we have to use what they call air conditioners and do not breath God's natural air."

This only emphasises the simplicity of the architecture of this region and its emphasis on functionality, as well as need, a phenomenon typical to most Islamic architecture. Towns resembled each other, and gradually were formed on the basis of a similar pattern: a square stone fort with towers around it was the symbol of the ruler's power; the houses of the ruler and his leading men were made of clay and the rest were made of date-leaf stalks or palm

fronds matting better known as Barasti. H.E. Sa'id bin Hilal al-Zahiri, Shaykh of Al Zuwaher, puts it in straight forward terms:

"The wealthier the shaykh the bigger was his Qasr and more towers were added. It is just as simple as that."

The majority of what today is being called Qila'a are no more than simple homes or 'buyut' that once might have had a tower attached to one corner and served as a lookout point to protect the village or its waterway. The forts in this area do not come close in either the grandeur or complexity to those found in neighbouring Oman. Nor do they have the elaborate decorative elements found in the larger Omani 'buyut'.

Nevertheless, these buildings do exist and once they served important functions. But recent internal security (combined with the introduction of contemporary defensive methods) dismissed the need for defensive buildings: towers and forts quickly fell into ruins. They were deserted, just as traditional homes were abandoned in favour of new buildings of novel design and appearance. Unfortunately, records were not made and many have gone through several stages of alterations. Qala'at al-Ma'il and Mizayr'a are both new buildings whose construction is based on the imagination of one particular person. Sibat al-Hili has been entirely reconstructed and has lost its past shape and name and become Burj al-Rumayla al-Sharqi. Through thoughtless renovation and foreign elements, Qasr al-Husn along with a few others, has been turned into decorative buildings, housing national museums and government institutions.

The subject is worthy of a more detailed study. These buildings must be recorded before they are lost or turned into different structures. Their history needs to be investigated before they acquire a new one. They form a vital link with our past, and for those of us who seek to keep in touch with the roots of our society, these buildings are a strong expression of our origins.

Reem El Mutwalli is Co-ordinator, Future Projects, Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi. The article is a selection from her MA Dissertation (SOAS, 1992).

Notes

1 See Hawley, D., *The Trucial States*, London (1970).

2 Fenelon, K.J., *The Trucial States; A Brief Economic Survey*, 2nd Rev. edn., Beirut (1969).

3 Dr. F. Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, London(1982).

4 Kelly, J.B., *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*, London (1964).

5 Kay, S., & Zandi, D., *Architectural heritage of the Gulf*, Dubai (1992) Aboudi, H.H., *Dirasat fi Athar wa Turath Dawlat al-Amarat al-Arabiya al-Mutahida*, Abu Dhabi (192).

7 The Fahidi Fort in Dubai, where the SW tower was once a free-standing tower. Kay, op.cit., 71.

8 Dan Potts, "Tell Abraq near Umm al-Quwain", unpublished report. Courtesy of The Department of Antiquities & Tourism, al'Ayn.

9 Al Tikriti, W.Y., "The Excavations at Bidya, Fujairah: the 3rd & 2nd Millennia BC. culture", Archaeology In the United Arab Emirates, vol.5 (1989), 101-111.

10 The first settlement site excavated by the Danes, in 1968. Karen Frifelt, "Jamdat Nasr graves in the Oman", KUML (1970), 376-377.

11 Cleuziou, S., "The Excavations in Hill 8; a preliminary report on the 4th to 7th campaigns", Archaeology in the United Arab Emirates, vol.5 (1989), 61-89.

12 Unpublished report, supervised by Dr al Tikriti, and Majid Mohsen.

13 The building materials used play an important role in the life of these structures.

14 D'errico,E., "Introduction to Omani Military Architecture of the 16th, 17th and 18th Centuries", Journal of Oman Studies, vol.6, part 2 (1984), 291-307.

15 This is the case in the great tower of Nizwa Fort in Oman, built by Imam Sultan bin Sayf, the second Ya'ariba ruler. The tower is said to have taken 12 years to build, and its gun-ports command a 360 degree field of fire (Fig.112a).

16 Presently referred as Abraj al Hili

17 This terminology is not known in the al'Ayn region, so probably it was used in areas closer to the coast. Dr Handal, author of *Al Mujmal Fi Tarikh Dawlat al-Imarat al-Arabiya al-Mutahida*, Abu Dhabi (1978), in an interview stressed on the use of such a term.

18 An Interview with Dr Handal, op.cit.

19 Square towers with rounded corners are, yet, another variation, such as the one found at Fanja in Oman.

20 Heard of this through Naser al-Zahiri, who assisted in arranging an interview with Sa'id bin Hilal al-Zahiri (who is now in his 90s), the present shaikh of al Zuwahir, grandson of Ahmed bin Hilal al-Zahiri.

21 Op.cit.

22 Hisn, EI2

23 Kala'a, EI2

24 D 'errico, op. cit., 291-305.

25 The oldest being Qasr al-Husn dated to 1793, see page 41

26 Simarski, L.T., "Fortified Oman", Aramco World, vol. 42, no.1 (1991), 10-17.

27 Op. cit.,

28 The first known illustration of the fortress, a copy of which is in the Bibliotheque Nationale de Paris, shows Arad under siege by the Portuguese.

29 Walls, A.G., Arad Fort, Bahrain (1987)

30 Marowb in Qatar is yet another example of such architecture. Look at; Directorate of Tourism & Archaeology, Athar Al Zabarah Wa Marowb, vol. 1, Qatar (1987).

31 Kirkman, J., Fort Jesus, Oxford (1974).

32 D'errico, op. cit., 298-299.

33 D'errico, op. cit., 297.

34 For a good example of such early Islamic type which influenced later Crusader military buildings as well as the Moorish architecture of southern Italy and the Iberian peninsula, one should consider The Rabat at Susa.

35 D'errico, op. cit., 303.

36 Costa, P.M., "Bayt Na'man, a seventeenth century Mansion of the Batinah", Journal of Oman Studies, vol. 8, part 2 (1986), 195-210.

37 Rashid, op. cit.

38 Midar is the local term used to mean clay or mud.

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From page 48

tank would probably have been covered with a wooden roofing. This tank fell out of use before Mosque I collapsed and the masonry of the tank's sides was carried off to be used elsewhere. The remains of the tank were gradually concealed as rainfall formed a gulley that gradually washed soil over the abandoned tank, eventually burying it under some three metres of fill. On the site of mosque I, a new, larger mosque was built in sand brick, and when this building in turn deteriorated, it was rebuilt for yet a third time, once again on a larger scale, with a courtyard. This third mosque was quite substantial and it seems to correspond in date to the period of the large courtyard house which the British team excavated nearby. Both the house and Mosque appear to belong to the high point of Julfar's prosperity, probably in about the 15th century.

This mosque in its turn was replaced by a still larger building, Mosque IV, which had a courtyard on its east side. This building marked a significant change in building material, for it was constructed entirely in stone, probably because of the unsatisfactory nature of sand-brick when faced with erosion during winter rains. This must have seriously threatened these structures and we have ample evidence of water run-off in the neighbourhood of the Mosque area after heavy rain. The reconstructed stone Mosque IV was finally replaced by Mosque V, reconstructed once more in stone and it seems that the masonry was that of Mosque IV, re-used because it was far easier to do this than to carry new stone to the site. The new mosque measured 20 m. x 20 m. and it was the last mosque on the site.

Mosque V was building in a quite different configuration to all earlier mosques with a series of parallel walls serving as supports for square piers that carried the roof. This final mosque eventually fell out of use for reasons that are not immediately clear. Dr J Hansman who excavated at Julfar in 1977-78 suggested that this final Mosque may have been destroyed during fighting between the Portuguese and the local people in 1621. The Portuguese forces are reported to have placed their artillery in a mosque to bombard the rebellious Julfaris. If Hansman is right and Mosque V is the mosque used by the Portuguese artillery, this would suggest the building's terminus date. However, there is no internal evidence from our excavation that the Mosque was indeed used by the Portuguese battery. Once Mosque V had fallen into disuse its walls eroded or the masonry was carried away for re-use elsewhere, and the site lay abandoned: in later times, it was covered by huts of the type that characterise the late settlement around the Mosque Area.

With the decline of Julfar, it was replaced in the course of the 18th century by Ra's al-Khaimah, immediately to the south. Under its Al Qasimi rulers it was the main town and harbour of the district. The eclipse of Julfar is probably associated with the silting of the creeks that made the Julfar site harder for boats to reach.

The dating of the various parts of the Julfar site so far has been provided by ceramics, although a broad chronological framework is given by Arabic and Portuguese texts. The main dating artefacts from the excavations are imported oriental ceramics, with Chinese celadons and blue and white porcelains giving a general dating range extending from the 11th to about the 16th century at the site. Considerable amounts of pottery were imported from China and south-east Asia during this period. The trade with the east was already well established by the Arabs of SE Arabia before the Portuguese arrived in the early 16th century and it continued as the Portuguese came to dominate the Indian Ocean trade routes. Other ceramic imports include large quantities of Iranian glazed and unglazed wares which will eventually help towards the chronology and typology of the relatively poorly-known ceramics of Iran. However, by far the greatest amount of pottery is local, produced in the kilns at Wadi Haqil, just inland from the site. This includes a distinctive unglazed, red on white slip-painted ware which was made over a period of several hundred years down to the 1970s.

Other dating information is provided by coins, of which over 300 have been found in the Mosque Area. Many of these copper coins were struck at Hormuz across the straits and bear the mint-mark Jarun. However, this coin series is not well known and requires much more research before it can be exploited as a precise archaeological dating tool. Apart from ceramics and coins, there are considerable quantities of late Indian glass at Julfar. All of this material provides evidence of the vigorous commercial economy of Julfar, and it offers striking antecedents for the modern trading ports up and down the Gulf and their links to the world-wide mercantile economy.

Dr Geoffrey King is Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art and Archaeology, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

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Books Speak Volumes on Arabian Heritage

James Balmer

IN THE autumn of 1990, an elderly and weather-worn English gentleman stepped off a jet at Abu Dhabi's ultra-modern airport. He was no stranger to the United Arab Emirates — only to the country's modern and progressive facade — but his return to a place he had known and loved before development was historic.

The man was Wilfred Thesiger, legendary Arabian explorer, writer, photographer and enigma, and in the two short weeks of his visit he helped turn a spotlight on the country's heritage like no-one before him.

The purpose of Thesiger's visit was to open the first-ever exhibition of photographs he had taken on expeditions in Arabia in the late 1940s and '50s. From its conception, the show was destined to be a success, but when staged it went beyond all expectations, with its impact felt throughout the UAE.

Writing in *Thesiger's Return*, the book brought out by UAE-based Motivate Publishing to commemorate the event, author and exhibition organiser Peter Clark observed: "Thesiger's remarkable pictures struck a common chord with all who saw them; a superb historical record of places whose names are familiar but whose appearance has been transformed, they also show people as they were at the end of an era that had lasted for centuries. The natives of the Emirates were fascinated by the minutiae of the photos... in total, the contrast between the life frozen in black and white and that of today could hardly be greater. They looked, understood and accepted."

Through his books, wrote Clark, Thesiger more than anyone else helped Arabia appreciate its own unique social history, putting into context the scale of achievement throughout the region in bridging centuries of development in the space of one generation.

His Middle East publisher, Motivate's managing partner Ian Fairservice, agreed. "Thesiger was the catalyst — the focus of a growing interest in the heritage and history of the UAE", he said. "We had been highlighting aspects of Arabian heritage for years, publishing books dealing with everything from archaeology to diving. But it took someone of his stature to drive home the message that here was something of great and lasting importance."

It has not always been so. In 1986, when Motivate published what was to become the first book in its successful Arabian Heritage Series — now numbering over 20 volumes — the emphasis was very much on the UAE's development. Pictures of progress and modern achievements took pride of place, with hardly a look-in for historic photos, such as those by Ronald Codrai just published by Motivate in the new, high-quality hardbacks of the Arabian Album series.

In the UAE, as in every country, the debate then was between those who would tarmac over all trace of the past and those who would preserve every crumbling brick of it. In the headlong rush of development during the initial oil boom the former camp unquestionably held sway; now in a steadier, more mature economic phase, the preservers are addressing a more receptive audience.

Observed Ian Fairservice: "Over the last couple of years, we have seen a groundswell of interest in practically every aspect of life in the Gulf. It's as though most people have only now opened their eyes to what is around them, and begun to appreciate the wealth of history and culture of the UAE."

Happily for them, there exists a growing bank of printed and recorded knowledge to turn to, much of it produced by Motivate Publishing. The publisher's impressive array of titles encompasses countries, cities and emirates of the region, natural history, history and culture, guide-books, Arabian memoirs and biographies, and audio/visual sets.

It was a chess tournament that put Motivate, then exclusively a publisher of quality magazines, on the road to establishing its thriving book-publishing division. In 1986, Dubai staged the prestigious World Chess Olympiad, and to help promote the event, Motivate published a glossy book about Dubai, donating a share of the advertising proceeds to the organising committee.

Recalls Ian Fairservice: "Such was the response that six months later, we decided to redesign and update the book and re-issue it — the first time we had published anything without advertising. The book was re-named *Dubai — Gateway to the Gulf*, and demand was immediate and strong."

Demand also came from a totally unexpected quarter. We found ourselves inundated by requests from authors to publish their books too", said Fairservice. "By publishing one book, we had tapped a rich vein of previously unknown resources, a small but talented group of people who wielded pen and Pentax in their areas of special interest."

Manuscripts started flowing in, and within a few months Motivate had published a book based on a new Dubai television documentary series, Emirates Archaeological Heritage, written and photographed by the programme's presenter, Shirley Kay, who has since written and contributed to eight other titles in the series. By December 1987, the first two natural history titles, *The Living Desert* and *Mammals of the Southern Gulf*, had been published, and the Arabian Heritage Series was born.

Since then, Motivate has published on average one new book every four months. Included have been a volume on the countries of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council, separate books on the UAE, Oman, Bahrain, Kuwait, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah and Sharjah, plus architecture, flora and fauna of the desert and sea, seashells, Gulf seafarers and an artist's impressions of Arabia. Most have gone into reprint; many have been revised and updated.

"This series has now become a

veritable encyclopaedia of Arabia, certainly the most comprehensive collection on the Gulf," said Fairservice. And it continues to grow.

Best-seller to date is *Dubai, Gateway to the Gulf*. It has so far gone to four reprints and revisions with more than 40,000 copies in print.

A key feature of the series has always been the accessibility of the books to the widest possible audience. Motivate originally opted for high-quality softback production to avoid what was considered the prohibitive expense of casebound books then on the market.

With the popularity of the books ensured, the company embarked on limited production of hardback editions, the Arabian Heritage Premier Editions. Six of these volumes have so far been published, including the acclaimed *A Day Above Oman*, whose aerial photography led to discovery of previously-unknown prehistoric tombs. The latest in the series is *Forts in Oman*, a stylish introduction to the more magnificent and imposing fortresses and castles to be found throughout the Sultanate.

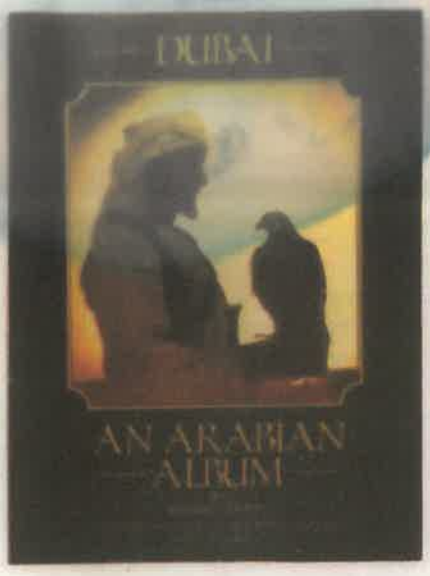
A collection of spiral-bound guides was launched in 1991. Numbering four volumes, they deal with the popular pastime of off-road driving, little-known beauty spots and diving designed as the essential companions to anyone going on field trips. Two more volumes will be published later this year.

Heartened by encouraging response, in 1991 Motivate departed from the formula of good colour photography accompanying the text and published the first of a planned series of biographies and tales of Arabia. One, *Juha — Last of the Errant Knights*, was the English translation of a classic Arabic story. A second, *Mother Without a Mask*, was the extraordinary story of life with an Arab sheikh's family in the UAE.

A major coup, however, was the acquisition of Middle East rights to the celebrated *Storm Command*, memoirs of the Gulf War by General Sir Peter de La Billiere, commander of British forces. The Middle East edition, containing 15 extra pages and photographs, was published in November 1992. At its launch, Ian Fairservice told reporters: "The subject is so close to one's heart. Everyone lived through the Gulf War and they are curious to know more about what really happened."

Just published also are the first two volumes in a planned four-book series of *Arabian Albums* featuring the magnificent photography of Ronald Codrai. Separate high-quality hardbacks on Dubai and Abu Dhabi, already published, will be joined by volumes on Oman and the Northern Emirates later this year.





Described as probably the most complete single pictorial record and portrayal of life in the region before its overwhelming development, the Arabian Album Series combines Codrai's photographs, taken around mid-century, with fascinating extracts from his diaries as well as personal recollections of his years as an oil company representative in the region.

Publication of these books was particularly satisfying for both Codrai and Fairservice, who had worked on the project for three years. Since they had met, Fairservice recalled, "we both had an ambition to see Codrai's pictures in book form." Codrai came back to Dubai in April 93 to receive the 1992 Sultan Al Owais Prize for Literature for the first two Albums; it was first time the prize was awarded to a non-Arab. The prize was a mark of acceptance of the Arabian Album series as an accurate portrayal of the past of this region, and it led to the decision by Motivate Publishing to produce an Arabic edition of the Albums within the next few months.

Another long-held publishing ambition of the publisher was to be realised by publication in English and Arabic of Thesiger's *Arabian Sands* found a welcome and influential patron in the Ruler of the UAE, HH Sheikh Zayed. With Sheikh Zayed's generous sponsorship, Motivate was able to proceed with Arabic translation and publication, and Thesiger himself presented the first copy to his old friend, Sheikh Zayed.

1993 will see two more Thesiger titles added to Motivate's list: *Visions of a Nomad* and *Desert, Marsh and Mountain*, a highly photographic account of Thesiger's travels across several continents, which had been out of print for ten years.

Any uncertainties about the long-term future of book-publishing in the UAE have long since evaporated. "Quality at a popular price has worked well," said Fairservice. Ever since that first venture into books, there have been surprises, too — most recently surrounding the overwhelming demand for *Mother*

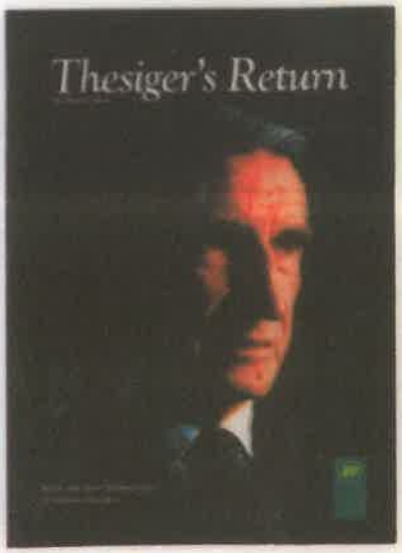
Without a Mask.

"The success of this book went beyond all our expectations. We sold out in three weeks and had to reprint," Fairservice said.

"I believe the reason was that it was perhaps the first time a book was available here, in the UAE, about the real life of its nationals, enabling people to judge for themselves, instead of having to rely on hearsay and prejudices."

By any standards, 1992 was a busy year for Motivate with important additions across the breadth of its catalogue. Most notable, perhaps, was the publication of the first two of Ronald Codrai's *Arabian Albums* (on Dubai and Abu Dhabi), though there were also important additions to the







Arabian Heritage Series list, among them *Sharjah: Heritage and Progress*, *Birds of the Southern Gulf* and *Seafarers of the Gulf*.

This year looks like being just as important for the expansion of the company's list. Two more of Codrai's Arabian Albums (on Oman and the Northern Emirates) are set for publication, as well as Arabian Heritage Series books on Falconry, Kuwait, Al Ain and Oman's historic forts.

Also due for release in 1993 is *The Door in the Wall*, pioneer woman diplomat Mariam Behnam's account of how she overcame the force of tradition against a woman, having a career in Iran of the Shah, only to face inevitable repercussions during the subsequent revolution.

Returning to the Arab world, a special book/video set of *Dubai — Gateway to the Gulf*, the book that started it all, has been released earlier this year. Motivate has also embarked on its first venture into the educational market, with veteran Arabist John Kirkbright's *Spoken Arabic Step-by-Step*, a book and cassette course that aims to take beginners to the point at which they can hold basic conversations with nationals of the Gulf states and Saudi Arabia.

In many ways, however, the release of an overtly educational product is in keeping with the philosophy behind the Motivate catalogue: that of presenting the region's culture and heritage, both past and present, natural and man-made, in a way that is serious as well as accessible to a readership previously offered only cursory glosses or impenetrable tomes. That so many have responded to this formula, and have thus allowed the list to expand, can only be good news for us all.

Opposite page, extreme left: A selection of Motivate's growing collection. Left and above left: Two book-covers, *Dubai - An Arabian Album* and *Thesiger's Return*. Above top: The author and Publisher of the Arabian Album series: Ronald Codrai OBE and Ian Fairservice. Above: Ronald Codrai presenting *An Arabian Album* to HE Khalfan bin Mohammed Al Roomi, UAE Minister of Information - December 1992.

James Balmer is a freelance journalist based in Dubai.

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The Cultural Foundation

Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa Al Suwaidi

THE ESTABLISHMENT of the Cultural Foundation truly reflects the President, HH Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan's perception of how essential the cultural development process is in forming the country's future and its past.

Culture in general and cultural activities should no longer be considered merely as a means to satisfy only the individual's emotional and intellectual demands; they are seen as essential ingredients for building a modern state and are important catalysts to forge human relationships worldwide.

The recognition of the cultural dimension in the strife for betterment makes it all the more important to have an outstanding cultural activity: above all, it must be creative. First and foremost, the cultural activities must make the citizen aware of his own interests, his country and his nation, and it should guide him to his talents and encourage those in all fields to make him a creative, innovative, thoughtful and patriotic citizen.

The Cultural Foundation is a public institution which concerns itself with the various aspects of culture: its sources, development and promotion of activities relating to it.

The Cultural Foundation fosters all forms of intellectual and creative activity with the constant intent to positively and actively contribute to the enhancement of talents and intellectual capabilities. The Foundation comprises the following specialized institutions: Documentation and Research Centre, National Library, Institution of Culture and Art and National Archives.

The premises are located in the city of Abu Dhabi and consist of three buildings. The first building is considered the main complex and houses the office of the Secretary General, National Library and Art and Culture Institution. The second is a historical building named "The Fort Palace" where the Documentation and Research Centre is located. The building dates back to 1793. The third building houses the National Archives.

HE Mr Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa Al Suwaidi is Secretary General of the Cultural Foundation, Abu Dhabi.

The Institute of Culture and Arts

Khalfan Musabbeh Al Mohairy

As ONE of the specialised institutions of the Cultural Foundation, the Institute of Culture and Arts is the main instrument for planning, promotion and implementation of art and cultural activities. It aims at creating aesthetic and cultural awareness at all levels of society among the people of the Emirates, and to strengthen art and cultural links between the UAE and other friendly countries. It also seeks to provide opportunities and extend facilities to the expatriate communities to share their creative endeavours with a wider national and international audience, and its doors are open to a variety of cultural and intellectual pursuits in the fields of plastic and performing arts, poetry and literature, folklore and handicrafts, design and photography, book fairs and manuscript exhibitions etc.

The Institute is housed in the new purpose-built structure which was completed in 1981 and is part of the complex of buildings spread over an area of 14 hectares in the city centre of Abu Dhabi. Alongside it is the 18th century palace, Qasr Al Hisn, with three smaller structures attached to the old palace, in addition to a historic mosque with elaborate ornamentation and a majestic dome. Thus the new and the old here exist side by side, as sources of knowledge and innovation, a rich heritage beckoning to a challenging future !

The building itself is equipped with multi-purpose services and facilities. These include a 1000-seat auditorium acoustically designed to eliminate the use of microphones on the stage; a large exhibition hall and several medium-sized spaces for lectures and seminars; a Children's Centre and an open-air stage; a 680,000-volume National Library and reading rooms, with additional shelf space for another 1.5 million volumes, and generous lobbies for a variety of educational and cultural purposes.

In that happy ambience, most of the Institute's projects and programmes are inspired by the thirst for knowledge and yearning for cultural regeneration in the wake of massive strides in almost every sphere of our national life, and by a deeper consciousness of our Arab and Islamic heritage in the larger perspective of contemporary needs and challenges.



Qasr Al Husun in the 1940's.

By being open to a wide variety of cultural and artistic ideas inside and outside the country, it has been possible to offer interesting and innovative programmes in cooperation with various groups and establishments, and judging from the large number of visitors that are attracted to its various functions all round the year, the Institute is succeeding very well in its strategy to entertain as well as educate, and to stimulate both the appreciation and the practice of the arts.

Over the years since the inception of the Foundation in 1981, the Institute of Culture and the Arts has offered a rich variety of carefully planned and meticulously organised events including film festivals, art classes, calligraphy demonstrations, paintings exhibitions, theatre

The Exhibition Section: The Institute attaches great importance to the arts, firmly believing that the artistic activities enhance the quality of life and create an awareness of beauty at the individual as well as social level. The activities of this section help the Institute in organising a wide range of exhibitions on its own as well as in association with other groups and institutions in the fields of painting, sculpture, graphics, calligraphy, interior decoration, crafts, patrimony, books etc. Assistance is also extended to national and foreign artists in arranging individual and group shows at the premises of the Institute.

Arts Workshop & Studio: The Institute lays great stress on the exposure of

young talented amateurs to experienced professional artists, and often organises such meetings to help fulfil the potential of young aspiring artists. A number of such programmes have been organised over the years and the response to these has been overwhelming.

The Children's Centre: Aware that the children of today will shape and build the future, the Institute seeks to provide them with the much-needed patronage to secure a balanced and healthy intellectual growth. Children are guided and encouraged to participate in various activities such as reading, painting, music, theatre, chess and calligraphy. A well-equipped library specialising in children's literature is available, with an attractive display of new titles, and discreet counselling is on offer to children on how best to use the library facilities.

Cinema: The Institute organises regular film shows, offering a selection of high quality films from









many countries, to provide an insight into international trends in the art of cinematography, including those in the Arab and Islamic world. It also coordinates with various Embassies to screen outstanding films, and invites celebrities in this field for special film events, and to highlight important developments in the cinematographic art. The Institute also produces a monthly magazine introducing the forthcoming films, besides publishing articles and reviews by international film specialists and scholars.

Music & Theatre: This section is responsible for coordination between the Institute and the cultural departments of Arab and foreign embassies in the United Arab Emirates, for various musical and theatrical events. Professional as well as amateur theatre and musical groups are invited for performances to create and enhance the aesthetic taste and expose the local enthusiasts to international trends and to keep them abreast with major developments in these fields.

Future Projects: Quest for excellence in all its activities marks the blueprint of the future projects of the Institute at





all the stages of their implementation. A number of these projects are already on the anvil. Among these is the plan to establish a planetarium to serve the many visitors including students and researchers as well as the general public keen on acquiring knowledge and information in an area which is both popularly stimulating and highly educational.

Thus over the last 10 years since the Institute became fully operational it has sought to fulfil its objectives in

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Opposite page, top: *Untitled*, **Abdul Qader Al Reis, UAE artist. Middle left:** Aerial view of Cultural Foundation. **Middle right:** *Untitled*, **Abdula Al Moharrqi, Bahraini artist. Bottom:** Exhibition at the Cultural Foundation. **This page, clockwise from left: 1.** *Islamic inspiration*, **Roberto, Italian artist. 2. Part of Orientalist collection. 3.** *Untitled*, **Obaid Surur, UAE artist. 4. Lobby, Cultural Foundation.**



Centre for Documentation and Research

M Morsy Abdullah



THE CENTRE for Documentation and Research which today is equipped to hold and process five million documents, began modestly 25 years ago in a small room in the garden of the Old Fort which housed the Emiri Court, and has since been painstakingly restored as a splendid remnant of the past in the now completely modern city of Abu Dhabi.

It is one of the specialised institutions of the Cultural Foundation, and is concerned with accumulating, researching, storing and retrieval of a wide variety of data on the United Arab Emirates and Gulf affairs, specially the records that are scattered over many countries which played a role in the Gulf over the last five centuries. The Portuguese documents, for example, come from Lisbon and Goa over the years between 1500 and 1680. The British documents have been obtained from the India Office



Top: Abu Dhabi in 1960 (Population 12,000) **Above**: Aerial view of Qasr Al-Husn, 1940's

Library and Public Records in London, and cover the period 1622-1971 (presently available only upto 1962). The documents from the French Archive at Quai d'Orsay in Paris deal with intermittent periods; and those from the Dutch Archive in The Hague cover the years 1622-1765 and are specially important as the Dutch had the island of Kharg as their seat of activities.

There are also the Ottoman, Russian, Iranian and American documents; and as the Centre is working on an academic basis there are scholars and specialists from various Eastern and Western countries engaged in reading these documents in their different languages and making indexes in order to facilitate further researches in these fields.

One of the most important tasks of the Centre is to document the modern renaissance, and every year it publishes two volumes recording significant State documents and proceedings.

Recording Oral History

There is also a special section responsible for recording the oral history by the local elders as one of the authentic and most valuable primary sources of information which, if not carefully sought and documented first-hand now while memories are still fresh, is likely to be lost for ever.

Indeed the Arabs of the Gulf were used to transmitting their history and traditions orally, and even the few Arab manuscripts that were written by local historians were not available in the region, but well preserved in some of the Western libraries. As a consequence, very nearly upto the 1960's, academic writing on the Gulf region mostly came from Western scholars who had easy access to important documents and historical data in the main European capitals.

With the recent awakening in the Gulf region, indigenous historians felt the need for access to the abundant material about their countries available in the West in various languages, and the Centre in Abu Dhabi has the distinction to be the first such institution set up as early as 1968, to gather these documents and manuscripts in its library, drawn from the Western sources as well as from the old Palace in Abu Dhabi itself. And due to its

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The National Library

Jumaa Al Qubaisi

The National Library in the Cultural Foundation aims at collecting, organising and facilitating the use of information resources for the benefit of the local community in accordance with its aspirations.

Established in 1981, the Library was fully operational by 1985, with separate sections for Books, Manuscripts, Periodicals and Audio-visual materials. The Technical Department oversees Acquisition and Cataloguing as well as Readers Service Administration including Reading Halls, Circulation, Photocopying and Documentation. There is an Exchange Department which offers several publications for exchange, and there are a number of carrels available for use by researchers.

The Library has shelf space for two million books on its three floors in the Foundation's purpose-built premises in Abu Dhabi, and its present collection comprises 150,000 titles (8,000 volumes) of books, and 1,500 titles (25,000 volumes) of periodicals. In addition, there are 8,000 items (audio-video-slides) and 9,100 manuscripts (originals and photocopies).

There is a specialised Gulf Section, another section for MA and PhD theses, and basic references along with a reasonable supply of current technical, academic and professional publications from a number of Eastern and Western countries. Readers and scholars may also avail themselves of the services of the section on Arabic and foreign periodicals which includes items of special historical value and a substantial collection of periodicals specialising in the humanities.

Visited by 300-500 readers and researchers every day, the National Library is fully equipped with modern facilities for storage and retrieval. Apart from constantly updated catalogues (Author, Title, Subject, Shelf List) the Library also publishes suitable referencing material from time to time. These include an index of periodicals in the UAE, a guide to cultural establishments in the country and an external publications unit on the UAE which includes indexes of all books written about the UAE, both the English and Arabic ones separately, including religion, social sciences, languages, pure science, technology, the arts, biography, geography and history. These are arranged according to Dewey Decimal classification along with indexes.

The manuscripts department of the Library is presently working on the first abbreviated index of manuscripts.

To facilitate better data control, the Library has set up a database to support the existing data bank, and work has been started on preparing a "Scientific Research Guidebook in the UAE". Plans are also on to further expand the Library's subscription of Arabic and foreign periodicals and publications.

The publications of the Library include the following;

"Risalaat Al Maktabah" Library Newsletter (Arabic)
"Emirates in Al Arabi" magazine (Arabic)
"Directory of Periodicals in UAE" (Arabic and English)
"Directory of Scientific and Cultural Centres in UAE (Arabic)
"Union Catalogue of Periodicals" (Arabic)
"List of Audio-Visual Materials" (Arabic and English)
"Index of Official Gazette of Abu Dhabi (Arabic)
"National Bibliography" (Arabic and English).

Jumaa Al Qubaisi is Director of the National Library, Cultural Foundation.

Centre for Documentation and Research
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sustained efforts over the last two and a half decades, scholars from the region as well as from all over the world doing their Masters and Ph.D, find the data for their academic researches in this Centre.

The Fort itself, which houses the Centre, is historic: its foundations were laid in 1793, when Sheikh Shakbut bin Dyad transferred the seat of government from the interior in the Liwa Oasis to the newly populated and growing city of Abu Dhabi. Successive Rulers of Abu Dhabi lived in this Fort, notably Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa, grandfather of the present Ruler of Abu Dhabi, who governed from 1855-1909. It served as a residence for the ruling family and as a fortress defending the city and, in times of need, as a place of refuge for the citizens of Abu Dhabi. It also served as a guest house, and in its elegant Reception the elders met with the Rulers to discuss their affairs. His Highness Sheikh Zayed, his son Khalifa, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and his son Sultan, Deputy Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates, were all born here in this Fort.

In 1936, when Sheikh Shakbut bin Sultan (1928-1966) received his first income from the oil concessions, he added two new wings to the Fort, and in 1966, when Sheikh Zayed became Ruler, he used this Fort as the Emiri Court right up until the completion of the new and modern Presidential Court in 1973.

In 1979, the Fort was renovated, and air-conditioning was installed in order to preserve the documents, and it is now undergoing further refurbishing in a style which will suit the 'historical' atmosphere of the Fort.

Indeed this Fort has been witness to the miracle which has transformed the city of Abu Dhabi in the years since 1960 - when its population was just 12,000 - into the burgeoning metropolitan capital of today with a population of 300,000 living in one of the most modern and beautiful cities of the world.

Dr M Morsy Abdullah is Director, Centre for Documentation and Research, Cultural Foundation.

The National Archives

Abdullah Abu Izzah

The National Archives in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, is an institution which aims at collecting and preserving the archival heritage of the country and maintaining them in a state for ready use by scholars, researchers and the public at general. Achieving this goal requires a great deal of academic and technical work.



Arcade, National Archives building

Background and Development

United Arab Emirates is a very young country. It was born very recently, just in December 1971. Before independence the present member emirates (states) of the federation remained under British control since 1820 AD. till the second day of December 1971. During this period of colonization the representatives of Great Britain had two main objectives to safeguard:

a - In the earlier period the routes leading to India, the most precious gem in the British Crown had to be under full and strict control of the British authorities. This also applied to the countries neighbouring the Indian sub-continent.

b - After the turn of the century the Arabian Gulf region gained a new intrinsic importance due to the discovery of petroleum. And the keenness of the British to fight any possibility of danger here cannot be exaggerated.

To justify the above two objectives the British authorities did not consider it necessary to be involved , at any level, in the internal affairs or the local administration of the former small shaikhdoms. Thus they refrained from interfering, claiming that their attitude stems from their respect for the freedom of the local people to be governed and to live, according to their own customs and traditions. In fact this policy saved the British bearing costs of all basic services. As a result of this policy there was neither education nor modern administration within the country. The British representatives, mostly marine officers, exchanged correspondence with their superiors in Bombay, New Delhi, or in London. No records were left behind in UAE after the official departure of the British in the wake of independence. In this respect the United Arab Emirates is different from most of the other former colonies which had developed at least a minimum structure of modern administration,together with varying quantities of accumulated historical records or archival material.

The Initial Steps

The need for paying attention to the preservation of archives was felt very



A general view of the National Archives building.

early after independence. It even predated independence in some of the would-be member emirates of the UAE Federation. The year 1973 witnessed the first steps of the UAE towards joining the International Council on Archives and its Arab Regional Branch. In 1975 two Presidential Decrees were issued in Abu Dhabi to confirm this interest and to legalize the membership of UAE's the international organization. In the meantime efforts were made to get hold of the migrated documents, that is British documents originating in the Arab Gulf or sent to the British authorities therein during the pre- independence period. This process has been undertaken and carried out by the Centre for Documentation and Research, since the National Archives did not exist in those early days. Only copies of the originals could be obtained.

Other priorities delayed the founding of a National Archives until 1991. In september 1987 a decision was taken to institute a National Archives. The Contract for the construction of a purpose - built premises was signed on 28. 01. 1989. We tried to benefit from the standards set by the International Council on Archives, and a copy of the book published by the ICI was handed to the consultant of the project. Construction work was completed late in 1991.

General Features

The building stands on a plot of land 10,575.48 square meters in area. The structure itself is 3289.75 square meters. The strongrooms are three floors, each having an area of 757.56 m^2. However, the foundation of this section of the building was constructed to support seven vertical floors each having the same area. Each square meter on each of the seven floors should be capable of supporting a weight of 1500 kgs. The other parts of the building include such familiar sections as administration area, workshops, a small laboratory, a reading hall and an exhibition room, etc.

Equipment and Furnitures

So far we managed to get about 60% of the furnitures and equipment needed for our premises. We chose a compact shelving system in order to use as much of the space available as possible. The present three floors of storage area can house about twenty thousand running meters of shelving. We made some cleaning equipment locally; the most important one machine in expectation that it would be more efficient than the method we adopted and employed locally. In fact it was not. Our lab is ready now although we hope to add a few more apparatus. The equipment for fumigation posed a problem. Recent research in the field sponsored by UNESCO and ICI confirmed that using chemical fumigants, such as ethylene Oxide, is hazardous to health and is banned in the environment. We sought technical advice from the Public Records Office UK, the National Archives of France, Germany, USA and discovered that many of the archival institutions have ceased using chemicals for fumigation. Of these methods employed in the developed countries we thought freezing would be more convenient to us.

Training

For training purposes we have plans for sending a few young graduates to Canada, the USA or UK in order to have advanced training in archaeology. In fact we sent a young man to Washington State University last year.

Methods and Practices

As far as methods and practices of work are concerned we shall follow those adopted in the developed countries. Our membership in the International Council of Archives makes it easy for us to obtain knowledge and technical expertise, bilaterally or through the General Secretariat of the ICI and its various technical and specialized committees and bodies.

Dr Abdullah Abu Ezzah is Director of the National Archives, Cultural Foundation.

The Institute of Culture and Arts
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the fields of art and culture by providing a forum for the presentation and evaluation of a broad range of creative contributions, national as well as international. Its emphasis has been on education through entertainment, on extending intellectual and aesthetic horizons, and on building bridges of understanding and appreciation between diverse communities and culture.

The Institute has also been acquiring from time to time the works of a number of artists, local as well as from other countries whose exhibitions were organised by it. This has enabled the Cultural Foundation to possess a substantial number of paintings and other works of art as a nucleus of an art collection which is steadily developing. Some of these works are reproduced in these pages, and hopefully these will form part of a national collection as and when plans materialise for setting up a national art gallery.

Khalfan Musabbeh Al Mohairy is Director, Institute of Culture and Arts, Cultural Foundation.

The UAE University: Establishment and Development

Shabib M Al Marzooqi

Now 15 years old, the United Arab Emirates University (UAEU) testifies to the wisdom of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the President of the UAE. It is an edifice that reflects His Highness' insight and pioneering leadership. The UAEU takes pride in having been founded by His Highness, and the fact that it continues to receive his support. It is striving to be what he had wanted it to be - a Federal Islamic, Arab, Gulf University; a source of cultural and scientific radiation seeking to foster knowledge and harness technologies; and be an effective component in the structure of the Federation, contributing to the building of a modern state whose strength lies in its own people, its heritage and values, and its economy and system.

Arabic is the official language of study at the UAEU. The University Council may, whenever necessary, decide to use other languages for teaching purposes. Accordingly, English language is now being extensively used at the University, especially in teaching scientific subjects.

When the UAEU was first inaugurated in 1977, it consisted of 4 Faculties, namely Arts, Science, Education and Economics & Administrative Sciences. In 1978, the Faculty of Sharia and Law was established, and in 1980 two other Faculties, namely Agricultural Sciences and Engineering were added. In 1981, the Deanship of Higher Studies, Scientific Research and Publication, as well as the Deanship of External Tutorial Studies were created. This was followed by the establishment of the Deanship of Student Affairs in 1984 and the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences in 1986.

Total enrolment in the various Faculties of the University has increased from 502 in the academic year 1977/78 to more than 9,000 men and women students in the beginning of the academic year 1991/92.

The UAEU campus is located in Al Ain City in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. Al Ain was chosen to accommodate the University due to certain advantages facilitating University life therein, especially its warm, dry climate and its clear atmosphere that prevails for a long time throughout the year. This city is also characterized by its modern, urbanised facilities, extensive greenery, crowd-free areas and its midway position among the main cities of the UAE.

The mission of the UAEU is commensurate with the society's expectations and the hopes it pins thereon. It is a message that requires constant endeavours to establish a creative integration between the educational process and scientific research at the University. The University has the twin function of disseminating existing knowledge and culture, and the continual search for fresh knowledge and sciences, which must be related to their roots. Such an integration enriches the educational process, contributes to the comprehensive development bid undertaken by the society, and helps in achieving progress and prosperity for mankind everywhere.

The University develops policies and sets the procedures necessary for fulfiling its mission as a center for concerted action in both teaching and research areas. This includes provision of appropriate fields of specialization, adoption of a rationalized policy for admission and retention to ensure enthusiasm and motivation, and recruitment of faculty with interest in and capacity for research. It also includes employment of committed and productive administrative staff, development of programs and curricula, adoption of effective instructional methods, encouragement of scientific research, together with securing its requirements and tuning it to societal needs, updating facilities and equipment, developing appropriate organizational framework, determining operations and developing rational principles and regulations that make such operations efficient and effective.

The University is also an intimate social environment providing the campus with quality graduates, who contribute useful knowledge and constructive will to the advancement of their society. The educational process at the University aims at providing the students with knowledge and acquainting them with facts, theories and fundamentals of their prospective fields of specialization, and within the framework of training in critical thinking.

All academic departments at the various faculties develop and implement ambitious and advanced programs and curricula that seek to upgrade the graduates. The University realizes that its function is not merely to provide manpower for the various fields of specialization, but that such manpower should be able to cope with the realities of the society, and to effectively play their designed role in the process of comprehensive development.

Twelve batches of more than 11,800 men and women scholars have graduated from the UAEU until the end of the academic year 1991/92. They are now actively engaged in the management and implementation of socio-economic development plans in the UAE. Moreover, the University is showing increasing interest in scientific research, by virtue of its organic relationship with the creative teaching-learning process; and due to its role in asserting the prestige of the University as a center for concerted endeavor seeking the enhancement of integrated and comprehensive national development.

The University's policies in this connection are governed by well-established principles represented in fostering the teaching-research

relationship, rendering excellent research a basic criterion for faculty recruitment and retention; promotion of research related to environment and society, securing research requirements; updating and upgrading laboratories and other research facilities; acquiring reference books and periodicals; sponsoring and encouraging participation in conferences, seminars and other scientific gatherings.

The University's policies also provide for the issuance of specialized periodicals by the various Faculties, the preparation of annual research activity plans by the academic departments, and planning for offering graduate programs.

To further enhance the University's research role, and in order to utilize research to meet societal needs, six specialized research centers have been established with special emphasis on applied research. These centers are intended to augment research activities at the University with a view to expanding and deepening the use of scientific methods in dealing with environmental and societal problems. These centers are:

1- The Desert and Marine Environment Research Center
2- Center for Research, Development and Educational and Psychological Services
3- Administrative, Financial and Economic Research Center
4- Technology and Energy Research Center
5- Remote Sensing Center
6- Center for History and Folklore Research

Integration between the University and society is not confined to the conduct of research related to the realities and problems. It also provides for coordination with these agencies, offering consultancies and scientific and technical expertise as well as organizing training programs and public seminars. The University is a product of society, it therefore seeks to serve it and recognizes the need to constantly interact with the society's realities, its economic and social values, and its developmental ambitions. In this it seeks to be at the society's threshold, disseminating culture, contributing to the training and preparation of productive human energies and playing a positive role in harnessing and developing useful technologies.

The University policy requires each Faculty and each research center to develop clear-cut plans for integration with society and environment, so that the University may ultimately become a center for comprehensive study of society, identifying its status within an academic context, and forwarding proposals and recommendations for its advancement in such a way as would increase the momentum of comprehensive development. This concept is embodied in programs of cooperation and coordination between the University and several public institutions such as the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Development Bank, the Higher Colleges of Technology and some private companies, banks and industrial firms.

Nevertheless, the University has played a leading role in setting the [illegible] eventually [illegible] Cabinet Decree establishing the Supreme National Committee on Manpower Planning, under the chairmanship of HH Sheikh Nahyan Bin Mubarak Al Nahyan, Minister of Higher Education and Chancellor of the University. In collaboration with the University, this Committee conducts continual studies related to manpower development and higher education planning. The University furthermore contributed to planning for the creation of the Higher Technology Colleges, which are expected to produce the necessary diversification of higher education channels to create educational and vocational alternatives in line with

Architecture Courses at the UAE University

The Department of Architecture is the only institution in the United Arab Emirates from where the architects graduate. There are specialised departments such as Planning and Architecture, or Landscape Architecture. Graduates could specialise in Architectural Design only or in Planning. Thus a Designer would be fully capable of supervising the execution phase, and at the same time would be thoroughly acquainted with building technology so as to design and execute the work at all stages efficiently.

The degree programme requires the successful completion of a graduation project under the supervision of an advisor of the student's own choosing with the approval of the Department. The student is free to elect any project culminating in a solution to a current (or future) architectonic problem of national or local focus. The project, which may involve general architecture, landscape architecture, urban planning, or building technology, is carried out in two semesters.

The curriculum comprises 168 credit hours after which the student can gain the degree of Bachelor of Science in Architecture Engineering. The credit hours are divided as follows:

a. 78 hours of specialised subjects.

b. 12 hours in specialised elective subjects chosen by the student from within three groups, namely (i) Architectural subjects group; (ii) Landscape, Planning and Urban Design subjects group; (iii) Building Science and Technology subjects group. Thus the student could specialise in specific areas or spheres while fully benefiting from the comprehensive nature of the course.

c. Graduation project over two phases, to each of which certain number of hours are allocated.

d. 15 credit hours for structural subjects from the Department of Civil Engineering, such as reinforced concrete, steel and survey.

e. 54 hours out of specialised subjects allocated to educational skills: Basic Education, college requirements, general culture and free elective subjects.

The distribution ratios of the curriculum reflect the breakdown of specialised subjects into the following broad groups:

1. Architectural Design subjects and Graduation Project (without architectural drawings or basic design).

2. Building and Technology subjects including execution designs, building construction, professional practice etc.

3. Supporting Structural subjects, including reinforced concrete, steel structure, survey etc.

4. Planning and Urban Design subjects, including planning, urban design, housing and landscape.

5. Supporting Architectural Design and Planning subjects, including man and environment, basic design, and theory and history of architecture.

6. Elective subjects.

Employment opportunities for graduating Architects are available in the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Municipalities, Architectural consultancies, building contractorate, communications and exhibition installations etc.

students' interests and society's needs. These alternatives would also secure national human energies badly needed for the implementation of current and future development plans. The absence of such energies is causing a serious imbalance in the manpower structure of the State.

The University, therefore, is a cultural lighthouse seeking to preserve roots, develop reality and carry society to the vistas of renewable and useful contemporaneousness. It enlightens youth as to their obligations towards their nation and communities, and contributes to the advancement of science and knowledge for the good of mankind at large. It is thus incumbent on the UAEU to cooperate with various Arab, Islamic and international universities, and seek to become a distinct and leading center of knowledge, and a factor contributing to placing UAE among the advanced nations.

The University demonstrates its vitality and commitment to the achievement of its goals through its continual bid to develop its own operations and activities. Its general planning as a mode of thinking, and a style of action and behaviour in this connection, the University develops and implements comprehensive policies and plans with regard to admission and retention of students updating curricula and study plans, development of teaching methods and faculty recruitment and evaluation criteria. The policies include faculty nationalization; teaching assistant affairs; upgrading libraries and computer services; developing scientific research and creating its organizational framework; employment and personnel affairs; budgetary issues and expenditure rationalization; facilities and capital expansion; and completion of the University's legislative backup. Due attention is also given to the University publications, developing a system for continual evaluation of its operations and activities based on an external reviewing system which is intended to enhance self-confidence and foster the University's plans to promote its performance efficiency.

The University recognizes that the implementation of these plans requires its organizational structure to be capable of fulfilling the prescribed functions in an orchestrated and efficient manner. This structure should specify responsibilities and avoid overlap in powers. It should also provide for easy control, monitoring and evaluation of performance. Moreover, it should take into account the need for rationalizing expenditure, minimizing waste and ensuring optimum utilization of resources. In the meantime, the University's organizational structure should be governed by clear-cut and appropriate legislations. In this connection, the University has introduced significant amendments to the rules governing and organizing the University's relations with its academic staff, teaching assistant affairs, support staff, part-time University teachers and non-academic staff all of which fall within its Executive Office.

On the same token, the University follows the principle of comprehensive financial planning, wherein appropriate balance between capital and expenditure and betterment of the University's financial operations, is achieved. It also adopts a concept whereby equilibrium between programming and performance is maintained in drafting and implementing its budget. Accordingly, each faculty, center, or administrative unit has its own budget. This helps in achieving a decentralized management system and in underscoring the financial powers and responsibilities of individual units. It also tightens control and follow-up with the aim to raising expenditure efficiency.

In all its policies and programs, the University is guided by the directives of His Highness Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the President of the State. These directives are essentially meant to promote the University and transform it into a pioneering center for literary, cultural, social and technological excellence. In return, the University spares no effort to develop its programs in such a way as to utilize the dedication and creativity of its students and staff in compliance with the society's conditions, needs and ambitions. It also provides a forum for individuals and organizations to debate issues and find solutions for technical and environmental problems that may be presented or referred thereto.







Top: UAE University Mosque. Middle: Administration Building. Above: University Building

HE Shahib M Al Marzooqi is Secretary General of the United Arab Emirates University, Al Ain.

Art Today in the UAE

Malik A Omer



Abdul Rahim Salim

(i) Sharjah Arts Biennial

UNDER THE patronage of HH Dr Shaikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, the Sharjah 1st Arts Biennial was held from April 14 to 23, 1993, at the Sharjah Expo Centre.

Organised by the Department of Culture & Information, Sharjah, and the Emirates Fine Arts Society, it brought together 700 works of art by 132 artists from 22 countries.

including 200 entries in the competitive class. Spread out in the spacious pavilions, the event provided a feast for art lovers with a collection of contemporary Arab artists and others from friendly countries, working in canvas, in graphics, lithographs, ceramics, stone or other sculptural material.

HH Dr Shaikh Sultan inaugurated the Biennial on the morning of April 14, in the presence of a large number of Shaikhs, members of the diplomatic corps, artists and delegations comprising art scholars and critics from various countries, such as Algeria, Bahrain, Cyprus, China, Egypt, France, Italy, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Poland, Qatar, Romania, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, Yemen and the UAE. He also spent almost two hours visiting the different pavilions allocated to various countries. It may be mentioned that Shaikh Sultan's daughter Shaikha Bodour (15) and son Shaikh Khalid (13) were also exhibiting their paintings in the Biennial.

The ten-day festival of art also included a daily programme of personal presentations by the artists, and seminars in which art scholars, historians and art critics from the participating countries spoke on such diverse topics as "Arab Art - Search for an Identity", "Art of the Future", and a unique experiment titled "Music and Poetry", when artists painted their impressions of the words and melodies being recited and played. A section titled "An Architectural Revival", took the delegates on a visit to the Old Souk (Market) of Sharjah, which has now been revived and become active.

The Biennial, although the very first attempt by the authorities in Sharjah, surprised many visitors with its organisation and facilities and high standard of exhibits. A number of local art galleries were also provided with stalls to display and sell the works of local artists. It is planned to make the Biennial a regular feature of the exhibitions in Sharjah, which has now acquired the reputation of being the cultural centre of the Emirates, due to the personal interest taken by HH Dr Shaikh Sultan in these activities.

A number of prizes were awarded for the art works in the Biennial, selected by a panel of experts headed by UAE sculptor Mohammed Yousef. Dr Ahmed Nawar, Head of the National Council for Fine Arts, Egypt; Abrahim Salahi, Dean of Khartoum Fine Arts College in Sudan; Nicholas Alexi, President of the Plastic Arts Union in Romania; Tariq Sharif, Head of Fine Arts in the Ministry of Culture in Syria and Valentinos Karalambos, a Cypriot linked with Arab art and culture.

The exhibition was divided into two sections - one allocated for exhibits in the competitive class, the other for those selected by the jury for the competition. Each participating country was allowed to exhibit [illegible] paintings in the former section, with the UAE being the host country displaying the works of 12 UAE artists and nine Arabs residing in the UAE.

The Grand Biennial Award and Gold Medal was won by the renowned Egyptian ceramist Nabil Darwish whose jars in unusual forms and sober colours showed his exceptional talent. The Biennial First Prize and Gold Medal was awarded to UAE artist Abdul Rahim Salim who had five large paintings in oil and pastels. Bahrain artist Anes Al Shaikh, a graduate in architecture from Amman, Jordan, won the second Biennial Prize and a silver medal, while the Third Prize with a bronze medal was given to Nazeer Ismaeel, Syrian artist who experiments with shapes and forms.

The judges also awarded seven cash prizes along with gold medals to Abdul Qader Al Rais, pioneer of the art movement in the Emirates, Ms Naja'at Makki, UAE, one of the first woman artists who trained in Cairo, Hassan Al Sharif also of UAE, who studied art in Britain and has a conceptual non-figurative style, Ali Hassan from Qatar, a well known calligraphist who combines painting with the art of calligraphy in "alphabetism" style, Awad Abdulla Al Shami of Egypt, a professor and scholar with a PhD in fine arts, Abdulla Qadir from [illegible] studied at the Khartoum Fine Arts School and Fine Arts College, and [illegible] winner of several awards, including Tunisia's Medal and [illegible] Abdel Baki.

[illegible] a painting with [illegible] small sections got a Special Prize. Lastly five Honorary Prizes were given to Abdul Raoof Shaheen (Jordan), Lasa Al Ghanam (Qatar), Rabeha bint Mohammed (Oman), Rashid Ismaeel (Yemen), and Ali Mohammed Tukasi (Saudi Arabia).

In a statement at the closing ceremony held on April 23, 1993, Abdul Rahman Hasan Obaid, Director General of the Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, said that the Biennial had offered a good opportunity to UAE artists to exchange views and expertise with artists from other parts of the world. Prizes, certificates, medals and shields were given to prize winners by Shaikh Mohammed bin Khaled Al Qasimi, Head of the Department of Culture and Information, Sharjah, who commented on the tremendous success of the Biennial, which had received support from so many different countries.

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(ii) UAE Artists

THE MODERN art movement in the UAE, as in the other Gulf States, represents an accelerating artistic upsurge in a rich and developing part of the Arab world. Local artists have managed to reach an amazing degree of maturity and professionalism. They have had the opportunity later to exhibit their works both at home and abroad - in London, Paris, Rome, Madrid, Tokyo and many Arab capitals, where their work has gained recognition with awards. The first generation of artists, after the formation of the Federation in 1971, are now well-placed, mainly in the Ministry of Education, throughout the UAE in its art departments.

The Emirates Fine Arts Society, founded in 1980, with its headquarters in Sharjah, brings together many of the country's leading painters, sculptors, calligraphers and photographers, and is indeed a very active organisation. It was formed by many of the pioneer artists which include **Mohammed Yousuf Ali**, a keen sculptor, who has been the Society's president for many years. Other prominent artist members of the Emirates Fine Arts Society are listed here.

The Society has branches in Abu Dhabi, Ras Al Khaimah and Khor Fakkan and conducts classes in painting, calligraphy and photography to encourage local talent. It holds annual art exhibitions of its members' works and also enables them to participate in similar events in many Arab countries and further afield. It now functions from a magnificent old building which was once the residence of the late HH Shaikh Mohammed bin Saqr al Qasimi, father of HH the Ruler of Sharjah, who has donated the building. Located in the Old Souk (Market), which is being revitalised by an ongoing conservation project, the sprawling premises are a boon for local artists.

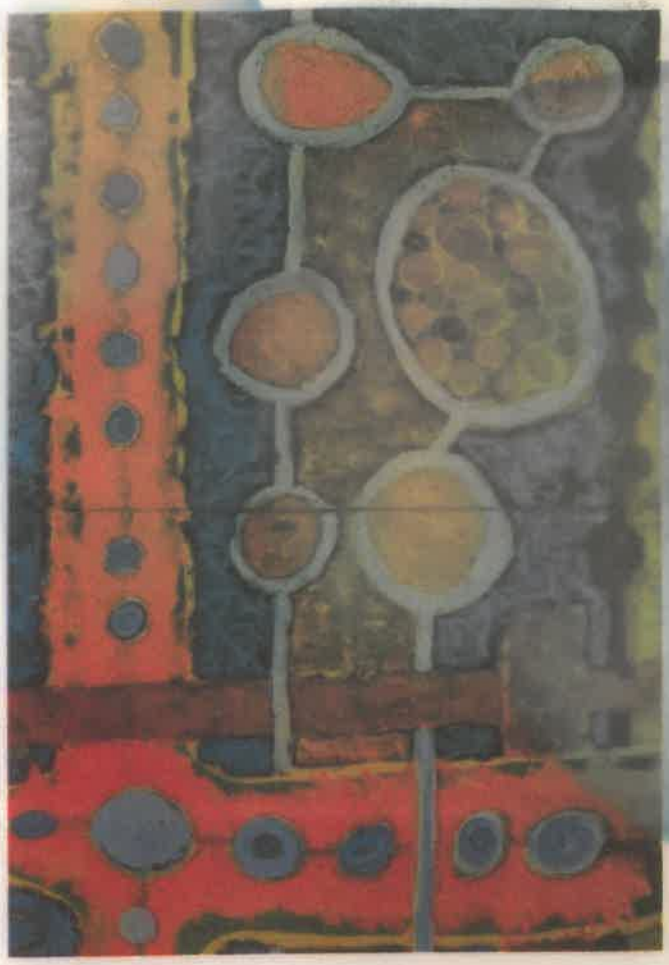
Abdar Rahim Salem, one of the enthusiastic members of the Society says, "We now have an ambitious programme. Besides our painting, calligraphic and photography classes, we will conduct courses in etching with a newly acquired press from Germany and an artist from that country. We will also invite leading artists from the Arab countries and Europe to conduct workshops." Abdar Rahim studied sculpture in Cairo and is now an experienced painter. His work in pastels, [illegible] with heritage themes, [illegible] paintings. He [illegible] Prize in the Cairo [illegible] Biennial, Malik Fahd [illegible] Dubai Centre of the Ministry of Education as an Art Advisor.

Among the pioneer artists, **Abdur Rahman Zainal** graduated in scenography from Cairo and went on a specialised course to Edinburgh, Scotland. He exhibited his paintings as far back as in 1972. He is an impressionist who stylises figures and forms in a mosaic-like structure with philosophic leanings in his paintings. **Abdar Rahman** is the Head of the Interior Design Section of the Dubai T.V. Station which he handles very ably.

Ibrahim Mustafa (b.1953), is an impressionist, trained in fine arts in Baghdad. A pioneer artist, he has kept to the same degree of accuracy and technique in his realistic works, mainly in oils and crayons. Ibrahim was the recipient of the prestigious Sultan al Owais Award this year given to two artists for 'Cultural Achievement.'

Abdul Qader Al Rais (b. 1951), the other artist to receive the Sultan al Owais Award, who is also one of the pioneers, studied art in the state-aided ateliers of Kuwait where he did his schooling. He returned to Dubai in 1973 creating quite a sensation with a solo exhibition of his works. Abdul Qader is an impressionist working in oils, watercolours and pastels, painting images that echo the vanishing architectural heritage and his environment. He won two other awards this year - the Golden Pearl Award at the GCC States Exhibition, and Special Prize at the Sharjah Biennial.

Abdul Qader says, "It is a pity there are no art schools here. However, I wish the authorities would give the same official patronage to the fine arts as they do to sports and the performing arts. We need state-aided [illegible] equipped [illegible] named [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]













Opposite page, top left: Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim. Right: Akil Al Najjar. **Bottom left:** Fayçal Mekki. Right: Obaid Sumar. **This page, top left:** Abdul Qader Al Rais. **Above:** Khalid Al Jalal. **Bottom left:** Abdur Rahman Zawad.



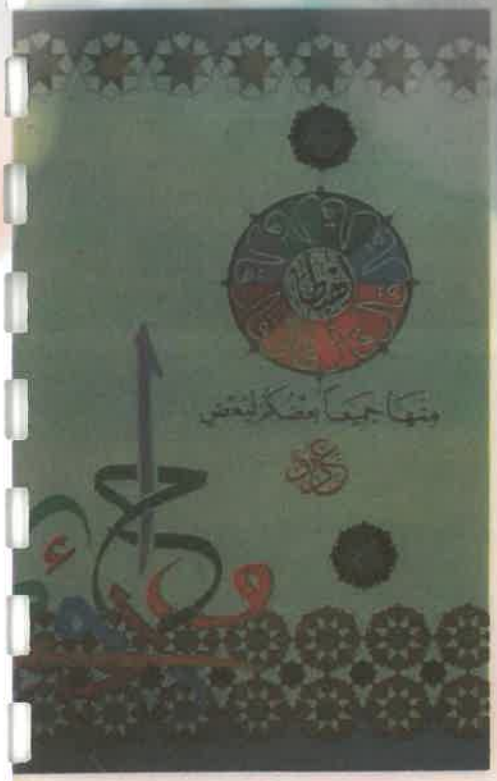
Department of Health in Dubai.

Mohammed Al Kassab is a dedicated artist, attending a number of courses to improve his work. He prefers painting with oil on canvas in soft muted colours. He is employed with the Central Military Command.

Mohammed Ahmed Ibrahim (b.1962) studied psychology and then took private courses in fine arts. A sensitive artist, he works with the Cultural Department of Khor Fakkan, where he is in charge of the Society's branch to teach fine arts to youngsters.

Akil Al Najjar (b.1959) studied Graphic Communication at the Columbus Technical Institute, Ohio, U.S.A. and then got his Bachelor's Degree in Fine Arts from the Columbus College of Arts and Design. [illegible] Dubai Police [illegible] painting [illegible]

Right: Ali Darwish. Bottom right: Mohammed Kazem. Below: Mohammed Murshi. Opposite page: Abdul Rahim Salem







Hussain Sharif (b.1961) graduated in scenography from Kuwait, and is now the Head of the Interior Design Department of Sharjah TV Station. A talented artist, Hussain works in multi-media. Besides being an expert interior designer, he is also a talented artist working in various media.

Hussain's elder brother, **Hassan Sharif**, did his fine arts course in the UK and is now an arts teacher and critic. He was awarded one of the Special Prizes at the Sharjah Biennial. Hassan is an exponent of 'Earth' or 'Land" art, in which artists work with different matter — rock, soil, turf and other material without making an object or work of art in the traditional sense. They reject the outlook that a work of art is a rare and commercial object, or mere decoration of life. Hassan exhibited a







Above: Mohammed Yoosuf Ali. **Right:**: Mohammed Al Kassab. **Opposite page, top**: Ibrahim Mustafa. **Middle**: Musa Al Halyan. **Bottom**: Hussain Sharif. Illustrations courtesy the Emirates Fine Arts Society, Sharjah.



A Pair of Mamluk Ivory-Inlaid Wood Panels, 15th Century, of rectangular form, decorated in green-stained and natural ivory and ebony with a geometric design of polygons surrounding six-pointed stars enclosing further geometric motifs, mounted as a pair of doors, together including mounts, 87.4 by 58 cm; (34 1/2 by 22 7/8 in.)

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Mohammed Kazim (b.1969) is being trained by Hassan Sharif. He is taking crash courses in drawing and painting, mastering a variety of techniques. Mohammed took a liking for art when he was 14 and has a bright future. **Musa Al Halyan** (b.1968) is another talented young artist who has taken private lessons in sculpture. His oil paintings on canvas show his mastery over his drawing work and a degree of maturity in his choice of colours.

(iii) Guest Artists

Artists, mainly from Europe, were first drawn to the Middle East in the 19th century, enamoured by the sharp contrast of light, bright colours, the intense hust and dust which gives out its own atmosphere, the souk and activities being carried on at each street corner, the architecture, the rich type of the interior, carpets, pottery, armour and weapons. These are all a very real part of a heritage which has changed very little in these countries.

Over the past decades following the oil boom, artists are now travelling to what was once considered 'an empty quarter' by them - to the Gulf countries, to witness the life there and reproduce it at first hand. Besides these professional artists there are other expatriates residing in these countries, who are also making valuable contribution to the local art scene.

Regardless of style, most paintings, whether city or landscape, still-life or portraits, realist or surrealist, abstract or calligraphic, the majority of them, unite in their choice of subjects taken from local everyday life and the indigenous culture.

It should be mentioned that many of the expat housewives here have taken to art seriously. Some of them already have a training in art, while others have become accomplished artists by dint of hard work and perseverance, by attending the art classes conducted by local art societies. The Dubai Arts Society and the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi deserve a special mention in catering to the expatriates, with their classes in painting, drawing, pottery, sculpture, photography, printmaking, ceramics and other arts. Sadly, many of the expat leave the country, at the end of their service contracts, along with their families. This feature aims to review the works of those expatriate artists who are still residing in the Emirates.



Collograph, Tina Ahmed.

Tina Ahmed, Bangladesh b.1950
Considered to be one of the leading artists, Tina has resided in the country since 1976. She obtained an Honours Degree and then her Masters from the Department of Fine Arts, Punjab University, Pakistan, securing First Class First in both. Her forte is working with pastels, although she is adept with oils, acrylic and watercolours, and her subjects range from portraits to landscapes. A versatile artist, she is now working on collages and calligraphy, making use of textured handmade paper and calligraphic motifs. She gives lessons in painting to adults and children, including classes at the Dubai Arts Centre and the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi and has participated in a number of group exhibitions in the Emirates. She was commissioned by the UAE Postal Authority to design three issues of postage stamps on topics which have included 'History of the Post', 'Desert and Garden Flowers' and 'Musical Instruments of the Gulf.

Patricia Al-Fakhri, England b.1945
In Dubai since the early 1970s, Patricia felt the urge to join the art world as late as in 1986, when she took lessons in watercolours from Margaret Henderson. After mastering the technique she went on to study pastels with Tina Ahmed. Patricia's forte is landscapes of the Emirates in a realistic style, and she has, within a short period, become a very successful artist. She has designed greeting cards for various organisations, including a calendar for 1990. Besides this she has been commissioned by some of the leading hotels to paint murals and oil canvases, as also renderings in acrylic. The World Trade Centre Club has









Top left: Leonie Moerkamp,Etching. **Left**. **Right**: Lynn Pederson,*Raku*, fired stoneware jar. **Top right**: Shahina Ajmal. **Above**: Cassandra Hendrie.

her large mural depicting pearl divers.

Ihsan Al-Khateeb, Iraq b.1949

Ihsan graduated from the Fine Arts Academy, Painting Section, Baghdad in 1973, and came to the Emirates two years later to work as a school teacher in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. An accomplished watercolourist, he runs his own art gallery called 'Intercraft' in Sharjah, where he exhibits for sale the works of local and expatriate artists. He has participated in a number of group exhibitions and held his first sole exhibition in Dubai in 1983. Ihsan has specialised in the landscapes and the architectural heritage of the Emirates, besides portraiture. He has produced many splendid drawing and watercolours in limited prints which are marketed in portfolios, and as greeting cards, posters and calendars.

Margaret Henderson, New Zealand b.1937

Below: Esme Nunes.Collograph. **Right, top**: 'Group of six' who held an exhibition in April 1993 at the Dubai Arts Centre, and were also invited to the Sharjah First Art Biennial '93. Seated-left to right: Martine Herrmann, Tina Ahmed, Patricia Al-Fakhri. Standing left to right: Margaret Henderson, Vandana Vahrani, Esme Nunes. Photograph by Rob Jol
Bottom: Vandana Vahrani, *Street Scene*. Acrylic





Margaret studied art in New Zealand after her college years, worked in London for two years as an illustrator, returning home thereafter. She came to Dubai in 1986, and made her mark with her 'Sketchbook Arabia', a very fine collection of sketches and paintings, in watercolours, gouache, pen and pencil, which capture the people and places of the Emirates in graphic detail, with her poetic notes on each work in her own calligraphy. Margaret had the 'good fortune' to meet Ino Hewart, an anthropologist who had lived with a bedouin tribe for three years. Through him she was able to visit and stay with the bedouin women, and experience their amazing warmth and hospitality. She made many trips into the desert thereafter. In September 1992 she studied Sculpture with Ann Flowers in the UK, and exhibited two very impressive castings in bronze at a recent exhibition. Margaret taught at the Dubai Arts Centre for sometime.



Martine Herrmann, France b.1946
Martine paints mostly in watercolours, enjoys experimenting with different materials and has recently discovered etching and calligraphy. She took up art after coming to Dubai in 1985, joined a number of courses at the Dubai Arts Centre, and has been an enthusiastic participant in the outdoor sketching trips of a group of ladies who do on-the-spot sketching in and around Dubai. A two-year job at Alison Collins' Majlis Gallery, some time ago, gave her an opportunity to meet experienced artists such as John Harris, Jenny Croxford and Majella Taylor, from whom she received a lot of encouragement in her newly acquired talent, including of course Alison Colins of the Majlis Gallery. Martine is also a good photographer and keeps her camera handy on her sketching outings.

Leonie Morekamp, Holland b.1941
Interested in art since her childhood days, Leonie took a course in the subject after finishing school, which was soon interrupted after her marriage. A self-taught artist, she acquired the techniques of etching, pottery and watercolours. Leonie spent ten years in South Africa, where she had her own studio and indulged in pottery and wall hangings. After that she has lived in Dubai for the past 16 years, and with two grown up daughters, finds time to devote to her art. She has never been enamoured by oil painting, and concentrates on watercolours, pottery and sculpture. Her forte however is etching, and she conducts classes in the subject at the

continued on page 90

(iv) Sharjah: State of Culture

The Emirate of Sharjah, with its territory on both the country's east and west coasts, has been an important cultural centre of the Gulf region for many years.

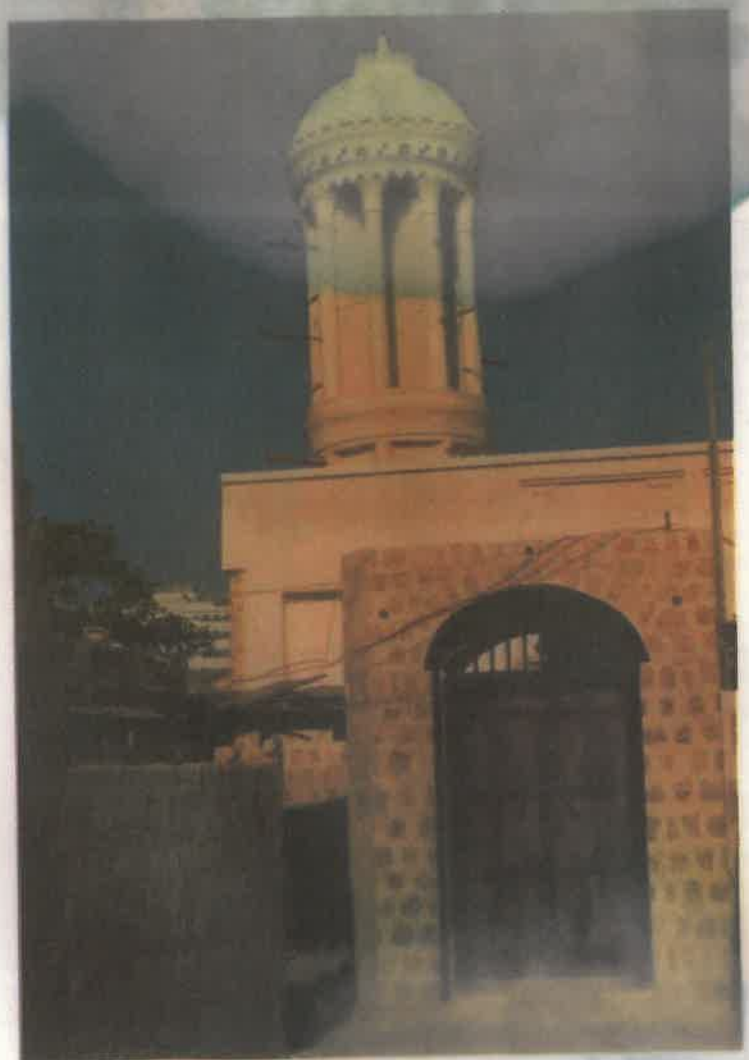
It has many 'firsts' in the field of education which has resulted in an educated and enlightened middle-aged generation that takes a keen interest in all the cultural activities provided by the State, which also involves school children. The earliest school based on traditional Islamic system opened in Sharjah in 1903. Named the 'Tammyyah School' it was built by a wealthy local merchant Ali Al Mahmood, who later built another school in 1911. The first school with modern teaching methods started functioning in 1953, and catered for the children of merchant families even from the neighbouring Emirate of Dubai. Technical education also began in Sharjah with the country's first Trade School in 1958. Until the late 1960s the only girls' secondary school was based in Sharjah. In 1980 a school was opened for deaf children providing the most modern methods of communication. Under the guidance of its dedicated director Shaikha Jamila al Qassemi, a member of the ruling family, the school today has over 350 children which also includes the mentally and physically handicapped.

The first newspaper in the land was the 'Umm al Qura', published in Sharjah in the year 1928, and an Islamic Debating Club was founded in 1934, where poets and literati from the region met. In 1934 the National Library was established by the late Ibrahim al Midfa which catered to a large section of the population.

In order to continue this pioneering role in the field of culture, HH the Ruler of Sharjah decreed the setting up of a Department of Culture in 1980. This is now named the Department of Culture and Information, and is headed by Shaikh Mohammed bin Khalid al Qassemi.

One of the earliest programmes undertaken by the Department was to organize a series of lectures, debates and literary evenings, when scholars from the Arab world were invited to promote an exchange of ideas. The venue of these activities was the Africa Hall, and the events have been carefully documented either on audio or visual systems.





Above: Sharjah Cultural Centre. Left: Midfa House with its unique wind-tower, donated to the Department of Culture.

The performing arts and fine arts have also received tremendous support from the Department. A number of local folklore and drama groups regularly perform in the Emirate. Similar groups from the Arab countries have been invited to give local talent an opportunity to observe and discuss the development of these arts. Seasonal dramas continue to take place along with other activities in the Emirate.

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The Dubai Arts Centre

Peter Hudson

The UAE, and Dubai in particular, is on the surface a razzmatazz society. It is a hard working place, but also for the better-off expatriate – and there are many of them here – it is nowadays a place of parties, of playing golf, dressing up, playing water sports, wearing jewellery, playing tennis, choosing lavish hotel meals, horse racing and making money.

The Dubai Arts Centre has grown with the UAE, and it shares the vitality of the place but it has skimmed off the surface glitter. What has remained is the essence of Dubai and the Emirates: a multi-cultural, talented society which is stable and somehow transcends nationalities, cultural differences and religions to produce results which emphasise the community of all people rather than their differences.

The Dubai Arts Centre creates and encourages art in its true form. It is an expression of the simple human pleasure of making recognisable marks. Its members are of all nationalities and of all professions; housewives and executives, teachers and engineers; a microcosm of the population of the UAE and therefore of the world. It is a joyful place; serving the community as it gives a few hours of relief from the stress of executive life which is so much a part of Dubai, as it provides some housewives with a welcome change from looking after the children or with some solace during the husband's busy time at work and as it gives the majority of people another dimension in their lives.

The Dubai Arts Centre began in 1976 with ten members in a garage in Jumeirah. Those few enthusiasts have grown into a membership of 840 persons. Fifty courses are held in each six-week term and the Arts Centre has become a focus for cultural life in Dubai.

The 50 or so courses are day classes and night classes. Typically they range from those teaching painting, sculpture and pottery through modern languages to classes in subjects such as cookery, mah-jong and bridge.





Top: Ingrid Van Noten. Above: Susan Walpole, *Arab Girls Dancing*. Opposite page, top: Eric Parton, *Dubai Creek*. Bottom: Susan Walpole, *Arab Doorway*.

Two exhibitions are held each year of members' work in the Centre's cramped premises and the hundreds of entries show an excellent standard which improves year by year.

Fine art prizes are given for the best entries and some are selected for the Centre's publications of greeting cards and calendars while others find their way to permanent exhibitions in hotels, clubs and business premises around the town.

The prolific output of the members of the Dubai Arts Centre and its many former students who have moved on to become full time artists has in its own way given rise to a number of small businesses serving the community of amateur and





professional artists. Framing centres, artists' material supply shops and small galleries all in turn help to raise the general level of expectation as they stock reproductions of other works and good quality materials.

Our activities have so far been limited to teaching for recreation rather than teaching for qualifications but there are few, if any, institutions in the UAE outside some day schools where formal art qualifications can be earned. We saw a need for classes which will lead to formal qualifications and we are therefore looking into ways in which we can work in cooperation with the registered teaching institutions to provide them with the facilities and support that they need to offer courses and qualifications to GCSE and other standards. Coupled with this is a need to improve our facilities, our workshops and our studios, and the need for more space as our membership grows.

Dubai has leaped forward in the past twenty years or so. It has seen a spectacular commercial growth and the cultural growth of the expatriate community has tended to be left behind. In the early days, the social and cultural activities of expatriates matched the size and nature of the community and its pace of life. The usual groups catering for singers, actors and artists grew on the strength of their members' enthusiasm. The enthusiastic amateur is still and always will be the backbone of our local societies but as the UAE refines its growth from coarse infrastructure to finer social modelling, so the quality of cultural activities must improve and refine as the level of expectation rises.

This development of attitudes is perceived by the Dubai Arts Centre. We see that the United Arab

Emirates has built golf courses, racetracks and sports stadia, that it has sponsored sporting all kinds, that there is a great emphasis on material and commercial matters, and that the UAE is building for itself a reputation as a tourist centre. We know, though, that the fame of a football team or a golfer lasts a season, that money is soon spent, and that a day on the beach produces only a tan whereas the fame and the reputation of an artist or a poet often outlasts him and remains to enrich the place where he was.

We think that the time is now for a surge of cultural developments in Dubai to match that elsewhere.

All of the great cities of the world are recognised for cultural achievements in opera, ballet, painting, sculpture and other art forms and we hope that the next phase in Dubai's growth will be dedicated to making an environment in which the arts will flourish and in which the Dubai Arts Centre can play a useful part.

In the first place we would like to see in Dubai a Festival of Arts perhaps in cooperation with Sharjah, whose initiative has produced its first Biennial and which has a thriving and active cultural centre and with Abu Dhabi, whose cultural centre is a fine and useful building.

Our aims would be to promote the image of the UAE thus raising its value as a tourist centre. We would want to raise the level of general awareness of traditional and modern art of all countries in its broadest sense and in the context of Arabian cultural values.

At the same time we foresee the need for an international cultural centre in Dubai which we would call the Dubai International Cultural Centre, or DICC. The DICC would be run in a manner which would allow separate societies to exist legally under its aegis; that is, specialist groups could meet at the centre, use its facilities and arrange their own affairs.

I would like to see [illegible] being run by an elected committee with the exception of one of the members who might be nominated as representatives of the Government of Dubai. A Principal with suitable educational experience would be appointed by the committee. His job would be to manage the Centre, employ the teaching staff, organise courses, arrange exhibitions, oversee the free-running of the various societies and promote Dubai and the UAE worldwide as a cultural entity.

The DICC would need facilities such as exhibition halls, studios and pottery kilns for painting and sculpture. It would need a theatre, and rehearsal rooms for the performing arts. It would need classrooms, libraries of books, periodicals, music and moving pictures. Classrooms, a lecture theatre, an outdoor exhibition area and other facilities would all be important.

Other activities such as natural history and archives could also be added and there is a great deal to be said for bringing lots of activities together. For example an archives section and a natural history museum would fit into the overall scheme and a Dubai Opera House should also be considered.

Allowing a year for discussion and developing the brief, a year for design and 2 years for construction, early 1998 seems to be an appropriate target for entry.

Both the Dubai International Cultural Centre and the proposed Festival of Arts are ambitious concepts but the UAE is a place where such concepts can be realised. The Arts step across divisions of culture, race and religion and there are few better purposes than that which brings people of all nations together in constructive peace and harmony.

Art Galleries:

Majlis

Mohammed Al Mutti

Right Jenny Cogbill Calligraphy, using monogram



top artists took part in an exhibition sponsored by the paint company, Jotun. Projects for the coming year include exhibitions for Canadian, Australian and Sri Lankan artists. "We must have held one man shows for at least ten different nationalities," said Alison, "that's the lovely aspect of running a gallery: art is a unifying ground for so many different cultures and personalities."

Some of these "personalities" include Julian Barrow (see box), the London based oil painter whose work over the last 15 years has become an historic documentation of the changing face of the city, Ali Darwish the prestigious water colour artist,

Julian Barrow on painting the Middle East

I came to [illegible] and was immediately captivated by the activity around the creek and the old souks. Many visits and five exhibitions later I am still fascinated by the place. Every year some things change, sometimes sadly for the worse, when old buildings are pulled down to be replaced by somewhat doubtful architectural examples. Other times, new buildings have provided fresh painting vantage points. I was fortunate to meet Alison Collins of the Majlis Gallery in Dubai on my very first visit, and this has resulted in a very happy business relationship for nearly fifteen years. The Majlis Gallery must be one of the most attractive galleries in the world, and long may it continue as the leading outlet for paintings and other works of art in this part of the globe.

Some of my happiest moments of painting have been spent in the Middle East, and I have been lucky enough to have visited that part of the world regularly for nearly thirty years. I have, of course, seen a number of changes in that time.

It started first when I was commissioned to paint a portrait of the Archbishop in Jerusalem (then in Jordan) in 1965. Soon after arriving I started the portrait of the Archbishop but discovered that as a very busy man, he could only sit for his portrait for an hour or two every morning so the rest of the day I was free to travel round Jordan and paint landscapes for myself. This included trips to Petra and Wadi Rum, that spectacular country towards Aqaba, which at that time had barely started to develop as a resort.

My next visit to the Middle East was a few years later when an English acquaintance working in Kuwait, suggested it might be a good idea to come out and paint a series of pictures of the old city of Kuwait which was quickly being demolished to build the large, modern city of today. This idea resulted in several visits to Kuwait and two successful exhibitions.



Julian Barrow, *The Spice Souk.*

Saudi Arabia was the next country I visited and I found the old city of Jeddah, which has been so painstakingly restored by Mayor Farsi, a fascinating place to paint. Though only a small section of the old town has been retained, future generations will be able to see how people lived in earlier times, and other parts of the Middle East could follow his example with much benefit.

My years in the Middle East have also included two enthralling visits to North Yemen, where the buildings of Sanaa cannot fail to fascinate any artist. I hope one day soon to visit South Yemen, which I believe has equally interesting subjects.

The Sultanate of Oman has also provided me with endless painting opportunities. After three exhibitions in Muscat, I have explored many areas of northern Oman and found wonderful places to paint all over and hope to be back there again soon.

I am often asked why I like to return to the Middle East so often; is it the light, the colour, the people? In my case I think that I am following in the tradition of English artists who came to this part of the world in the 18th and 19th centuries, and like them I have been lured back again and again to put down on canvas a way of life so different from my own at home.



Left: Majlis Gallery
Bottom: Ali Darwish, *Dubai Creek*, watercolour



Jenny Croxford whose gloriously rich mono prints were initially inspired by her first visit to Dubai in 1980, Majella Taylor, a master of the art of glass engraving, Alan Halliday the official artist to The Royal Opera House and the National ballet in London to name just a few. An important aspect of their visits is their being able to stay in the special artists room at the gallery, often conducting workshops or just generally chatting about their work with fellow artists and gallery visitors. "It is wonderful to be part of an interchange of talents and ideas" said Alison, "be it finding the right artist for a particular commission or a discussion with a local connoisseur as to the accuracy of a piece of calligraphy.

Alison, with a degree in fine arts specialising in three dimensional design has always been a speed to [illegible] and [illegible] and [illegible] to [illegible] days, [illegible] [illegible] interest in visual things it stays with you, your awareness growing as you learn more, until finally it reaches an intuitive level that is neither intellectual or even analytical. How totally right is the phrase I know what I like".

She senses that The Majlis must play an educative role. "I hope that we have raised an awareness of art in the UAE. Until now it was not a subject of too great an importance, belonging to other cultures other cities, something you saw and bought in New York, Amsterdam, London. Our aim is for the public to be able to come to the gallery and wander freely, enjoy looking at what we have and if it strikes a chord with them to be able to afford to buy it."

Obviously artists have to live and so do gallery directors!! and Alison walks a fine line balancing the needs of the artist against the means of the buyer and the collector. Over the years she has grown into her role as one of the chief stimulators of the art movement in Dubai. As she says "The Majlis has brought together many threads of my life, my profession my love of art and a deep affection for the house itself, it's an emotional thing, you have to care." And that does say it all.

Mohammed Al Murr has published several volumes of his short stories and also writes on the art and cultural scene for UAE publications.

Aati

Michele Connor

There is a growing interest in Islamic arts in the United Arab Emirates and it was with this in mind that Aati Gallery was established in June 1991.

Aati Gallery is a sister company of Aati, an exclusive furniture, fabric, retail showroom and Interior Design Consultancy which has been operating in Dubai for the past eleven years. Aati has handled many prestigious palaces and villas within the region and during execution of the work several





Above: Alison Neville. **Right:** Iyad Al Mosawi.

of Aati's major clients requested artwork to complete their interiors. Initially artwork was sold from Aati's showroom but with the increasing demand for paintings etc, a decision was made to open the Aati Gallery with an in-house framing workshop.

Aati Gallery has traditional and contemporary Islamic artwork in all types of medium which is mainly imported from Europe. There is also a selection of Bedouin jewellery from the UAE and surrounding Gulf States which is very popular amongst the expatriate community living in the area.

The Framing Department was established in October 1991 and has six full time staff.

A great deal of research was done before deciding what type of service should be offered. It was discovered that there were many framing outlets in the United Arab Emirates but none produced custom made frames and that there was a market for something different such as staining and gilding. It was decided that this was the avenue to follow.

This service was promoted and advertised and the demand steadily increased so much so that a skilled person was employed to work full time just to stain the mouldings. In addition to staining and gilding the staff are able to hand-carve frames and can incorporate Islamic designs into the mouldings which are then finished as specified by the client.

Verre Eglomise (glass painting/decorating), gilding on glass and scratching in designs, dates back to 1750. This can be done by the framers at Aati Gallery who can produce Islamic designs to decorate the borders of the glass before framing is completed.

Aati Gallery has actively encouraged local artists to display their paintings within the gallery and has held exhibitions to promote their work. It has also held two Islamic exhibitions one in Dubai and one in Abu Dhabi.

The first exhibition which took place in Aati Gallery during November 1991 was of the work of a local artist, Abdul Qadar Al Rais, who was born in Dubai in 1951. He is a self-taught artist and is also an art teacher, lawyer and government official.

He works in oil, acrylic and watercolour and mainly focuses on the Arab landscape, windtowers, dhows and doorways. Many of the images such as date palms and dhows can be seen through a doorway. His "signature" are squares and circles which recur in his work.

Abdul Qadar Al Rais has exhibited his work in various parts of the Gulf as well as in Europe. He is also a leading member of the Emirates Fine Arts Society.

In January 1992, an Islamic Art Exhibition was held in Aati Gallery and included both contemporary and traditional works as well as calligraphy.

Around 50 pieces of artwork featuring original paintings, prints

and engravings were on display showing works by both Arab and European artists, including the following:

Other exhibitions included those of **Rachid Koraichi**, an Algerian artist who specialises in calligraphy and has exhibited in France, Greece, South America as well as in many Middle Eastern countries; **Ali Omar Ermes**, a calligraphic painter born in Libya who has exhibited in Europe and America; **Alison Saville**, who produces large architectural etchings of Middle Eastern and Indian buildings; **Hassan Massoudy**, a contemporary calligrapher who studied in Paris and uses bright vibrant colours; **Charles Newington**, an English painter and etcher who has been influenced by visits to Morocco, India and Egypt; **Rimah Farah**, who works with Kevin Jackson and produces prints mainly in colours of blues, reds, browns and oranges depicting subject matters such as carpets, mashrabiyahs and archways; and **Robert Hoglund**, an English artist who graduated from the Edinburgh University of Pennsylvania and has studied drawing, painting, printmaking and sculpture. He was specially commissioned to produce monoprints for Aati Gallery, and has created original monoprints from architectural images of the buildings of the United Arab Emirates mainly using windtowers and mosques.

In October 1992, a second Islamic exhibition was held at Aati. Abu Dhabi in collaboration with Art Gallery, Dubai. Works of the above mentioned artists were also on display at this exhibition.

Among recent exhibitions which took place in Aati Gallery was of the work of the artist Ismail al Mosawi, a Canadian of Arab origin. This artist has studied in Morocco, Iran and Canada and has held exhibitions over the past twenty years in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Canada. In

screens and lithographic prints. He also produces calligraphic work and those based on Arab architecture in oil pastels.

As mentioned at the beginning of this article, Aati Gallery has been established for both two years and intends to continue to develop further by sponsoring new artists and holding regular exhibitions promoting Islamic Art within the United Arab Emirates.



Left: Aati Gallery
Below: Al Qasr Times
Below middle: Robert Hoglund
Below extreme left: Rachid Koraichi





Kuwait he worked as an art critic for two of the country's major newspapers.

His work is mainly contemporary using vibrant colours and includes etchings, silk



Michele Connor has been associated with interior design projects in the Middle East for several years and is presently working with Aati Gallery.

Bamboo

Frank Southern

Bamboo Gallery in Dubai has been among the earliest to be established in the United Arab Emirates, and I remember very well how we began by catering for the small but growing community of artists, as well as expatriate people living in Dubai itself, Sharjah in the 1970's.

We have come along way since, and have grown with the increasing demand for art materials and equipment by the artists and art institutions themselves, as well as for prints and posters of well known artists by individuals setting up new homes and villas and corporate entities looking for boardroom decoration and adornment with an artistic accent.

Bamboo Gallery have also been the main stockists and suppliers of high quality prints, specially by Orientalists like David Roberts, and 19th and 20th century Masters like Degas, Turner, Hockney, Kline, Matisse and many others. At the same time talented local and expatriate artists are also well represented, mainly in the medium of watercolours, pastels and drawings.

As for framing accessories, from the very beginning Bamboo Gallery has set and observed the highest standards, importing an extensive range of mouldings and finest quality acid-free mount cards from major British, Continental and American suppliers.

The Gallery has a talented team of framers from Sri Lanka and the Philippines, most of whom started with the business and continue to produce outstanding work under the overall management of Neri Benaso, himself from the Philippines. Thus over the years, Bamboo Gallery has been servicing the needs of hotels, banks and major business establishments not only in the United Arab Emirates and the Gulf countries like Oman and Bahrain, but also some of the clients in North and South America and the Far East.



Above and opposite page: Two works by Salem

Frank Southern has lived in the UAE for nearly two decades. He began his gallery as a framing and printshop and has also been promoting art sales.

Profile

Robynne Noble

Profile Gallery first opened its doors to the public in November 1989, offering a wide range of decorative accessories for the home. These included handblown glass and crystal, bronze and marble sculpture, as well as original paintings, silkscreens, lithographs, prints and posters.

The aim of Profile at that time was to introduce aesthetically appealing items to the prospective collectors whose ranks are steadily growing.

Married to a German architect – designer of the shopping centre where Profile is located – the owner, Patricia Noris, had lived in Germany for many years and acquired the taste for excellence in design which is apparent in the interiors of many German homes. "Visiting galleries in many of the larger cities in Germany, I also became very interested in abstract art, studying and admiring the colours and shapes on the large canvases", as she puts it.

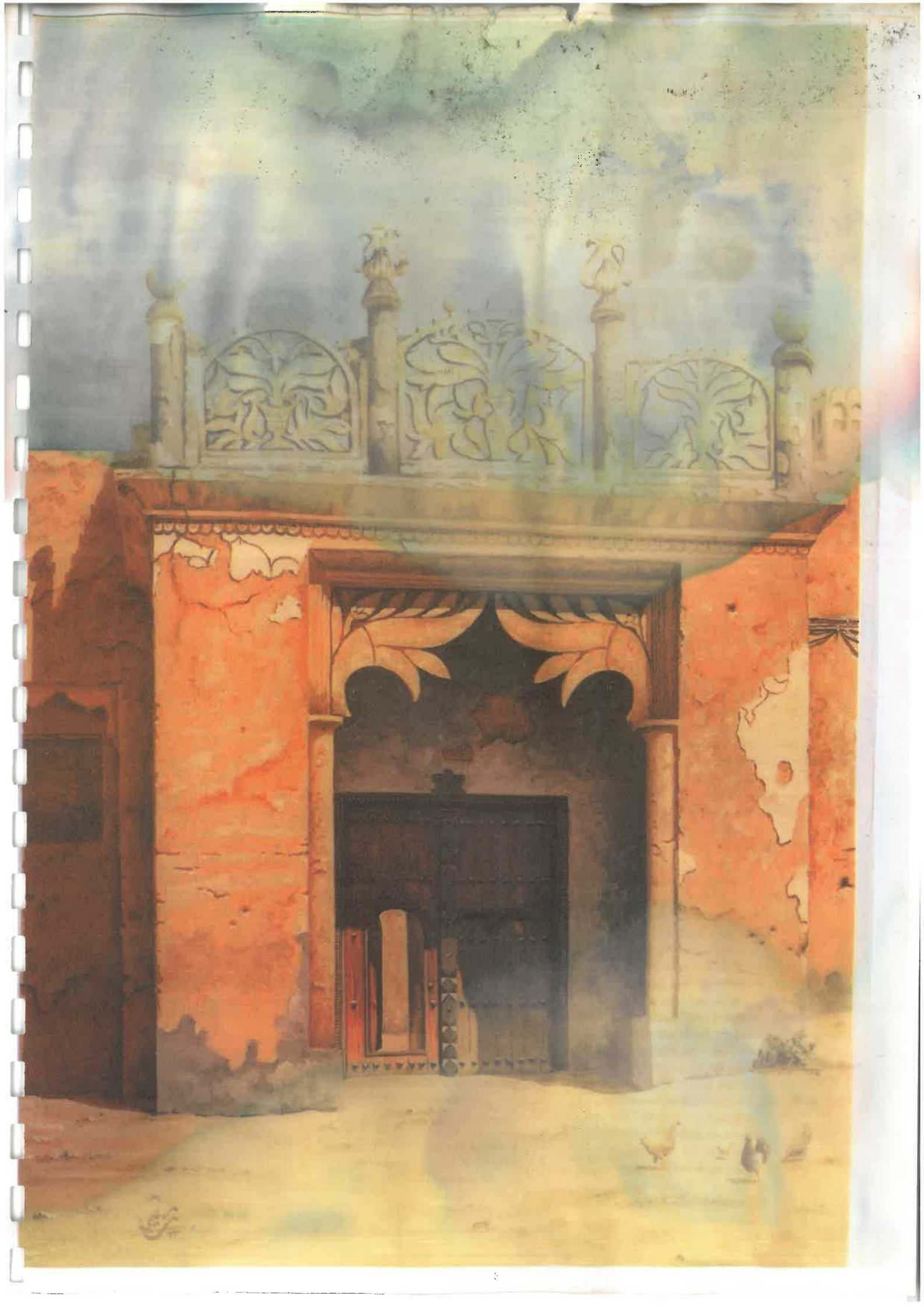
She was determined to introduce abstract art to Dubai and did this in a wide variety of graphics; and many homes as well as hotels, restaurants and offices in Dubai have benefited from the wealth of colour and shapes that this genre of art offers.

Paintings related to local settings are also a prominent feature at Profile. Dubai itself has a number of bright, talented artists, and works by some of the best known of these can always be found at Profile.

Noticing a demand for locally made products, Profile recently introduced decorative pottery. The clay pots are thrown by traditional potters in the villages of the Northern Emirates, and are painted or embossed and gilded by local artists. Antique chests and Arab jewellery are also on offer at Profile, lovingly restored to their original splendour.

Profile feels very privileged to be the sole agent for the bronze sculptures of the American sculptress Anne Rooney. Having resided in Dubai for more than 15 years, Anne began her bronze work while here. She returned to Houston five years ago, but her sculptures – all related to life in the Gulf – remain most sought-after works of art here.

Robynne Noble has been associated with arts promotion in Australia for several years, and is presently working for Profile Gallery.



Dubai Arts Centre, teaching etching and calligraphy which utilises various textured materials in the plate. Lynne has printed greeting cards in these various techniques.

Esme Sinnes, born b.1939
Moving with her husband's postings which have taken her to Taiwan, Germany, Singapore, Oman, back to Germany and then to Dubai, Esme has lived abroad for many years. She took a [illegible] classes at the Nanyang Academy of Art in Singapore during the [illegible] simultaneously studying Chinese brush painting from the late Chinese artist Chan Wan Hai. Upposting to Neuss, Germany gave her an opportunity to study printmaking, in which she now excels. She brought an etching press with her to Dubai in 1989, and teaches the art at Dubai Arts Centre. Esme is a fine watercolourist and her realistic works revolve around landscapes, in which she considers the 'mood' to be of importance, and etchings of local Arab artefacts.

Eric Parton, England b.1943
Headmaster of the Dubai College, Eric studied at the University of Wales in Cardiff. He obtained his National Diploma in Design, and the Art Teachers' Diploma. He preferred to work on ceramics and sculpture, finding these three-dimensional art forms more exciting and satisfying. Eric also teaches design and technology in the college, which prepares the students to live and work in a technological world and develops their capability and confidence to solve problems - with a range of information technology facilities. Eric started to paint after coming to Dubai 12 years ago, 'finding the light here irresistable'. His favourite subjects are landscapes which he renders in pastels in a mature and refined style.

Lynn Pearson, USA b.1946
Bubbling with enthusiasm, Lynn is involved in teaching pottery at the Dubai Arts Centre, finding it difficult to accommodate all the keen expatriates anxious to join the course. In Dubai since 1980, she is a self-taught artist, and her interest was aroused in pottery after attending the Camelia Art Workshops organised by the expert potter Anne Rooney, also from the U.S. who had made her mark in the local art scene some years ago, and who has since left the country. Later Lynne recruited Anne's fully equipped garage workshop along with a group of ladies to perfect the art. Lynn now specialises in 'Raku' fired stoneware, a Japanese technique of using low-firing glazes, which result in some dramatic and unusual finishes.

Shakeel Siddiqui, Pakistan
Probably the only artist who practises photo-realism - a painstaking method of painting which portrays subjects mostly still-life in a super-real style. Shakeel works on an average for 50 hours on each painting. He was a student of the Karachi School of Art and the Central Institute of Arts and Crafts also in Karachi. He also taught there before coming to Sharjah ten years ago. He now paints at home and teaches oil painting, mostly portraiture, still-life and figurative painting at the Dubai Arts Centre. Between 1970 and 1973 Shakeel attended art classes in Maine and New York in the U.S. irresistably drawn to the down-to-earth realism of Andrew Wyth, and Ken Davie whose book on sharp focus realism influenced him. Shakeel has also mastered the technique of restoration of oil masters and making copies.

Vandana Valrani, India
Born in Bombay, brought up in Hong Kong and settled in London after her marriage, Vandana came to Dubai with her husband. She 'never thought' of taking up art until she went to an introductory lecture by a visiting American artist Don Paulsen, at a local club, which inspired her. After a five-day workshop Vandana took to painting seriously, with lessons in pastels, watercolours and acrylics. Her preferance is for landscapes and impressionist as also abstract figurative compositions. After attending a course in porcelain painting at the Dubai Arts Centre, she has gained enough confidence to teach this subject as well. She is working on a dinner set for 12 persons, painting each piece with delicate floral designs, and hopes to complete the ensemble in two or three years from now.

Consuelo Hendrie, Britsh
Spanish-born Consuelo is a sensitive artist and an accomplished ceramist who successfully explores an innovative combination of textures, glazes and forms in her work. She began her training in ceramics at Morley College, London in the early 1970s. A posting in Iran then gave her the opportunity to study the highly developed ceramic wares of the country, particularly the early works from Sesk, Saalk and Gavan. It was during a brief visit to Lima, Peru, that Consuelo was first impressed by her art, which was greatly influenced by the highly developed ceramics and exquisite textiles of the ancient Chimu, Moche and Nazca civilizations, these communicate to a great influence in her work. On her return to London in 1980, she studied at London's Croydon College Art School of Art and Design for a [illegible] course in ceramics, working under renowned ceramicists such as Peter Layton, Ian Auers, Jackie Pongelet and Judy Trim. Before leaving London she exhibited her work, first at the Seven Dials Gallery and later at the Craft Potters Association (C.P.A), both in Central London. In Dubai for the past two years, Consuelo teaches ceramics at the Dubai Arts Centre.

Shahina Ajmal, Pakistan b.1958
Shahina, a fine watercolourist, works in a realistic impressionistic style using minimum space with maximum effect. With a Masters (gold medal) in fine arts from the Punjab University, Lahore, she came to Abu Dhabi in 1978. She first taught adult students at the American School, followed by the Research Centre at the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi, where she is now the Head of the popular Arts Workshops. She organises teaching courses by various visiting artists, teaches painting and sculpture and gives lectures on the history of art. The workshops cater to beginners, amateurs and professionals, and besides painting include courses in calligraphy, photography, ikebana, which are a boon for both the UAE nationals who are becoming increasingly art conscious and the expatriates. Shahina participated in the Sharjah Biennial and gave lectures on various topics including Art of the Future, in which she predicted the [illegible] international scene in arts as a result of growing cultural exchanges, expansion of global electronic media and spectacular advancements in science and technology.

An Art Consultant Looks Back

Dale Egee



Dale Egee at Egee Art Consultancy, London.

I LIVED in Dubai from 1977 to 1979. When I first arrived, the only newspaper was a mimeographed sheet. By the time I left, there was an excellent broadsheet daily. It was an exciting if frustrating time to be in Dubai.

I first attempted to continue my work as a tapestry designer. The war in Lebanon had closed down the three ateliers I had established there. Dubai seemed a good place to set up a weaving workshop. Dubai was a forest of scaffolding and cranes in its initial dizzy building phase. That gave me the idea of constructing a four-sided scaffolding structure which allowed four tapestries to be woven at the same time. Each of the [illegible] loom. They were included in a series of exhibitions and seminars on weaving in eighteen Middle Eastern and African countries which I gave under the sponsorship of the U.S. Information Service. The tapestries were sent from embassy to embassy, ending in Libya. That embassy was sacked and burned, the tapestries with it. That helped me to conclude that it was time for a career move.

[illegible] weaver [illegible] Sheikha Fatmah, wife of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, was setting up a women's handicraft centre in Abu Dhabi. The loom and half a container load of wool I had brought from Lebanon went to her project. Before it did, a few tapestries were woven by me on the scaffolding

In Dubai three 5-star hotels were under construction including the Hyatt. This hotel was designed to accommodate an important collection of art. Art consultants from three continents were competing for the privilege of supplying it. The project [illegible] manager [illegible] on the art proposal [illegible] to Dubai. The consultancy [illegible] Proposal for Art [illegible] Saudi Arabia.

[illegible] commission and purchase the art. The specification called for twenty-six tapestries. I designed the large [illegible] using an Islamic 8-pointed [illegible] from the marble floor [illegible] piece 50 meters square. It was woven in France. I bought hand-crafted objects from all over the Middle East for the Folk Art panels in each guest room. There were also Bedouin weavings and objects and a tile mural of the Dubai waterfront. A beautiful old local carved door was hung on one concrete wall as an art object. I commissioned four lithographs of Dubai scenes to hang in the corridors.

This project has led to work in Dubai and the other Emirates on other hotels, banks and Emirate airlines. Egee Art Consultancy has grown and includes a gallery in London now. But I've never forgotten that Dubai gave me my start in Art Consultancy. I travel to the Emirates twice a year and take satisfaction seeing the very good galleries which have appeared since then: Aati, Majlis, Bamboo and more every time I visit. I have had the pleasure of introducing through these galleries Arab contemporary artists of international standing: Ali Omar Ermes, Hassan Massoudy, Houria Niati, Mohammed Bennaim, Rimah Farah among others. I hope it reminds everyone of the beauty of Arab art and architecture and of the fact that it is still relevant and inspiring to the West as well as in the United Arab Emirates.

Dale Egee is Director of Egee Art Consultancy, London.

Exhibition of Orientalist Paintings in UAE

Brian MacDermot



Top, right: Exhibition catalogue. Above: HE Khalfan Al Roum, Minister of Information and Culture (centre) after inaugurating the exhibition with Khalfan Al Mansoori, Director of Art and Culture and Brian MacDermot, Chairman Mathaf Gallery.

of its own with a huge central exhibition hall, conference rooms, theatre, numerous offices, its own press department, etc, it must represent an enormous cultural effort on behalf of Abu Dhabi.

Our exhibition consisted of some 60 paintings and lithographs from the 19th Century schools of "Orientalist Artists" valued at over £1 million. Prices ranged from 1000 Dhs for half plate David Roberts

the Secretary General of the Cultural Foundation, H.E. Mohammed Ahmed Khalifa al Suwaidi, who issued the kind invitation to the Mathaf Gallery in the first place and extended us a warm welcome. In appreciation for all the assistance given, the Mathaf Gallery presented to the Foundation a large and splendid watercolour of a desert scene by the British artist, A.O. Lamplough in a beautifully carved gold leaf frame.

Attendance at the exhibition was phenomenal with the enormous Exhibition Hall sometimes becoming overcrowded. Of course not all viewers were buyers, indeed the whole object of the exhibition was

The Mathaf Gallery



that it was only at the end of the exhibition that anyone who was particularly keen to have an example of 19th Century Orientalism, (ie paintings of the Arab world produced by Europeans 100 years ago), was able to acquire them. Lighting and hanging at exhibitions is always a problem for us in any country since Mathaf Gallery's handcarved gold leaf frames and paintings are very heavy and tend to tip over most screens. Nor is it realised normally how much lighting is required for an exhibition to look its best and the necessity for say 500 watt bulbs to be at a distance. Once again, however, the carpenters and electricians at the Cultural Foundation did an excellent job with what was immediately available.

To add another aspect to this event a series of lectures were organised, explaining how to examine paintings for fakes and copies, advising on how to begin collecting works of art and making available a number of text books on the subject. We at the Mathaf were delighted to be invited to put on an exhibition in Abu Dhabi at the Cultural Foundation and we hope that the people of Abu Dhabi enjoyed viewing the works of art of the 19th Century masters. Certainly Abu Dhabi is taking its appreciation of art and culture very seriously.

Brian MacDermot is Chairman of Mathaf Gallery, London.

Folk Heritage: Music, Poetry and Dance

Maha Al Gargash and Khalid Badr





Top: The *Tamboora* player. Above: A Shihi in front of his dwelling

FOLKLORIC ARTS are a reflection of an individual's experiences and thoughts giving a special identity to the people of various regions. In the Emirates, one discovers songs, poems, and dances which are unique to this area.

Human ingenuity is influenced by nature. Both geography and topography play an essential role towards the understanding of the

Desert

The desert being a bleak and harsh environment caused the bedouin to live a life of uncertainty. The bedouin composed songs and poems to express his ability to face nature, and his fears of the unknown. In his empty arena, he recited poems related to the movement of sand and wind and verses that served to comfort him in his vacant surroundings.

One art form called the Tarij is directly related to the shape of the dunes and the movements of the camel. It is performed by one or more individuals when travelling on the back of a camel. The sound and beat of the tune is designed to follow that of the camel's motions. Furthermore, it serves to make the going easier for both man and beast.

and passions and, when completed, experience a sense of release from their emotional outpourings.

The Radha is yet another form of poetry which has a different rhythm and method of presentation. Each individual receives it in his own special way. The Radha is often full of metaphors and symbols disguising the feelings of the composer and his true feelings. Listening to a Radha session is a fascinating experience. The poet recites a verse and the group responds with the refrain. Poetry is a thread that runs through Bedouin life and in every family there will be at least one poet. Those members who cannot recite poetry make very good listeners. Yet the importance in the development of poetry among the bedouins is not simply a mode of expression or entertainment. The bedouin is compelled to memorise his poems, often in the form of a song, in order to retain his culture.

This oral culture is essential since the desert bears no trace. The caravans are constantly moving and the desert winds would erase any records left behind. The bedouin's only method of preservation is through the handing down of poems from one generation to the next.

The desert with its endless masses of sand is a harsh and difficult environment to live in. In order to survive, the individual was obliged to search for areas in which water and grass were available. The scarcity of such areas resulted in conflict between tribes, and war became an inevitable daily occurrence.

Arabs used drums as signals for war and a call for mobilisation. As they marched toward the battlefield, the armies would beat their drums and call out to their fighters to confront the enemy.

Throughout the years, war experiences, with their related enthusiastic anthems, developed to produce a large group of war dances and songs forming a major part of Arab culture. Examples include the Harbia, the Razfa, the Razha, and the most famous dance in the UAE, the 'Ayala.

In the past, the 'Ayala was performed in preparation for a war, in celebrating a victory or in receiving rulers and guests. The word 'Ayala means assailant and within the dance, the two rows defend themselves from the group in the middle who represent the adversaries. The 'Ayala is a performance that is rich with symbols and meanings.

The dance consists of two rows in which each person holds the waist of the men next to him with his left arm linking the line, and signifying that the men of the tribe are firmly bound together. When the central war drum nears each line, the excitement builds up as it is hit harder and the people in the line sway rhythmically, which represents spirit of the battle.

The men in the line sometimes start to unison to the left and right. This motion is thought to represent complex tricks and manoeuvres. The adversaries must not attack in a straight line to avoid being hit. These movements also allow one to search for a familiar spot in the opponent's body. A man called the munhaligh, (communicator), plays an important role. He runs from one line to the other reminding them of the beginning of the next verse, or correcting mistakes in the words. It is typical in wars to have such a person whose job is to alert the tribe of any invaders.

The dancers move slowly in harmony with the music. For this reason it is difficult to perceive the concept of war within the dance. The 'Ayala has been evolving for hundreds of years, changing from a war dance to one that represents war through symbols.

Mountain

The northern and eastern part of the Emirates are similar geographically; from the isolated mountain tops, to the low-lying wadis and agricultural fields, to the seas surrounding the area. This topographic mixture allowed each area to produce its own special songs, dances and poetry.

The most famous dances in Fujeirah, Dibba, Kalba and Khor Fakkan (on the eastern coast of the Emirates) are the Dan and Mardan dances. They are performed at every wedding in those areas, usually in the evening in front of the house of the bride. The striking feature in these two dances is the full participation of women. The performers are all related to each other and within the lines the men and women hold each other in familiar units.

Yet with the spreading affluence in the Gulf and the growing conservatism the participation of women is now limited to those over thirty since younger women refuse to join in the dance. Women no longer share the same social lives with the men. In the past, however, despite isolation from the outside world, the woman played an important role for the survival of these societies and worked alongside the men in meeting the demands of daily life. Today it is ironic that even with the ever-expanding exposure to other societies and broad educational opportunities, the woman's role has become more restrictive and her contribution to the community is limited to certain defined roles such as teaching in all-girls' schools and some administrative jobs which limit her contact with men.

In these societies, it is the Munhaligh who brings out the best in poets. It is a competition of wits providing a challenge between poets. Within the dance famous poets of the region approach the manadi, or caller, and feed him their verses. He calls out their verses in a loud clear voice for the line of men in front of him to hear. When he gets to the last verse of the poem, he waves the drummers back. The drummers turn and strike their drums loudly signalling the men to repeat the last verse. The group walks away some ten meters or so before returning to repeat the sequence, but with another poet.

The last section of each poem is the most important, stressing the full meaning of the poem. Similarly, the poet, at this time, encourages the enthusiasm of the group and that of the next poet who has to produce wittier and more powerful verses.

A dance that is famous and unique to Ras Al Khaimah is the Wahabi dance, which is performed as part of wedding celebrations. There are two lines facing each other and in the middle are the drummers and the other members of the group who display their skills in swordsmanship by throwing their swords high up and catching them, or by entering into a sham battle.

On the mountain tops in the Emirates one can observe green patches in the barren surrounding. These are the settlements of the Shuhuh tribes of the mountains. In the past, large areas of these mountains were cultivated by the Shuhuh producing corn, wheat and vegetables, and providing fodder for their livestock.

Their traditional homes are most

The Riwah has a unique rhythm. The sharp hollow sound of the drums and the echoing sounds of the words used in it reflect the emptiness of this barren mountainous region.

Sea

The relationship between man and sea is an old one. The waters of the Gulf have shaped the lives of the inhabitants for thousands of years, forming a rich artistic language made clear in their songs and music.

During the winter months, after the rains when the ground turns green, the people of Um Al Quwain would cross over to the other side of the creek.

They sing what they call Shalat Al Bar, an extemporaneous art song, usually about love. The group on the boat are all related to each other and they sing in order to express their joy: "I sang and said; In the name of God, the one I love is a special pearl I picked, heavier than the rest... Her beauty is such that if a sick person sees her veiled face, he recovers... But they hid her face from me, that adorned face."

The sea has shaped much of man's existence and taught him many things essential for his survival. Pearl diving is perhaps one of the most fascinating activities in the Gulf. This industry, which suffered from the development of the cultured pearl, disappeared completely in the early sixties with the spreading oil wealth.

The diver faced difficulties on his journeys, which started in the summer and lasted for 2 - 3 months. He was fed very little. He got sick due to a lack of vitamins, and his eyes, hearing and lungs suffered from the continuous diving. As a result divers lived short lives. In addition, the small size of the boat and cruel treatment by their masters made life

Pulling the long rope, or hablah, the anchor was one such chore. Before nightfall it had to be pulled in, and in this lengthy and difficult task, the crew would recite a song called the Tagseera which is related to this activity. The song starts with two nahams, or lead singers, who signal the commencement of the task. Through their voices they would lead the group into a tune necessary for the pulling in of the rope with words that served to lift their spirits. The crew complemented the Nahams with a humm called Haneen, mimicking the sound and feel of the waves.

The tune was created impromptu, giving a sense of freedom of expression, rarely available for the divers. The Naham may lead with words of praise to God, or complaints of a difficult life, or love. Special chants called the Dawari were sung by the group upon calling the troupe. They had to move around the mast with this rope and in the process store it within the boat.

Probably the most energetic song sung by the crew was the Khatfa, which accompanied the hoisting of the heavy sail. As the sail symbolises the power of the boat, there was an enthusiastic build-up in raising it, culminating in a joyous celebration in which everyone participated.

Tempos from Afar

In Arabia, persons of different origins have moved and settled in this area, forming a new society in which their ways blended with those of the Arabs. This human diversity brought with it a cultural diversity. In the Emirates,

dances such as the Laiwa, Ardeeina, Nuban and Habban originated in other cultures but interacted with the UAE culture resulting in unique arts, blending a fantastic mixture of colours and faces.

The Laiwa is a very popular dance because of its close building up and danceable rhythm. It has managed to find its perfect environment in the Emirates, ranking second in the Arabic popularity and importance. The Laiwa is always shared with the audience, inviting them to step forward, participate and compete to the fullest, all leading up to a climax of frantic expression.

An offshoot of the Laiwa is the Ardeeina. At first glance, it may look like a version of the Laiwa, but it is very different. It is of a much slower tempo, requiring the participants to exert less physical effort.

The dance starts when a member of the group takes the initiative by jumping into the centre. He performs a combination of moves and then returns to rejoin the members of the circle, in the process choosing the next performer to join in the game.

Another dance from Africa is the Nuban which originates from the area where the northern border of Sudan meets the southern border of Egypt. Twenty years ago, the Nuban was performed only on Thursdays and Fridays, privately, behind closed doors and was not recognised as a local art form. It was executed by close-knit clan members for their own entertainment or natural healing.

The home for the performances or, as it is known to the performers 'the house of instruments', is a respected place. The instruments, as well as herbal medicines and grasses, incense and rose water, are all stored in this important home.

Heading the group is the 'mother' or 'father'. This person is considered the expert in the healing process, and is also responsible for the payments to the performers. This individual has to have a strong personality to be able to guide the group and is believed to possess mystic powers. In turn, the group will obey his or her instructions without question.

The musicians sit on one side, and in front of them are two lines facing each other. Each line takes turns in the performance. One line will repeat certain movements and then advance towards the other line and then move back. Each person in the lines

continued on page 112

Theatre in the UAE

Farouk Olum



Sawheni for the Theatre Group of the Dubai Youth Sports Club.

With the independence of the United Arab Emirates in 1971, theatrical activities found new impetus, and the Ministry of Sports and Youth itself established the Dubai National Youth Theatre Troupe. Later a Theatre Department was created in the Cultural Directorate of the Ministry of Culture and Information, and over the years this Department has played a key role in catalysing the development of theatre.

In 1982, the First Theatre Training Course was organised by the Ministry of Information and Culture (21 March - 5 August) in Sharjah city. There were 52 trainees, divided into two groups, 'Sultanal-Sha'er', and 'Saqr El-Rushood', and each of them put up one play. One of these, *The Heir & The Pearl*, was adapted - and directed - by Farouk Olum from a play by George Chihade, *'The Brahmin Emigrant'*. The other, *The Jeb Council*, was adapted from a short story of the same title, by Dr Hussam Mo'nes, it was directed by El Munsif El Sa'adi from Tunis, and was produced by the UAE National Theatre.

During 1984, 1985 and 1986, the Culture & Information Department of the Sharjah Government organised the Sharjah Theatre Festival which brought to the fore year after year, considerable acting talent. At the same time UAE's participation in Arab Theatre Festivals, and various national and regional performance contests and theatre symposia was also encouraged, and the exposure gave national theatre talent challenging opportunities in many countries of the world.

Mention may be made here of some of the performances at the Qartaj Theatre Festival in Tunis which included the Sharjah National Theatre's production of *Maqbah Bu Hamdah*, created and directed by Jawad El Assadi (1985), and the Fujairah National Theatre's production of *Ghalati & Ghalati*, by Suleiman El Jasim, directed by Abdullah Al Obaidly in 1987.

Similarly, at the Damascus Theatre Festival in Syria, Sharjah National Theatre Troupe produced *Banqeto* by Lyuba Dragoeva in 1984; it was directed by Abdulnabi Abdulqader. Two other UAE contributions in 1986 and 1988 respectively were *M'Ak La'bat El Kamar*, written and directed Yousif



Opposite page: National Theatre. **Above:** A scene from *Kidnapper Prince*. This play won First prize in Dubai Children's Drama in Dubai.

National Theatre producing a play entitled *A Tale Not Narrated by Shaherazad*, written by Abdulrehman El-Saleh, and directed by Ismail Abdullah. UAE's entry in the 2nd GCC Theatre Festival, held in Qatar in 1990, was the play *Attas-Fattas*, adapted and directed by Yousif Khalil. And at the 3rd Festival, held in UAE itself earlier this year as mentioned above, there were three plays from the Emirates including the Contest play *Yam Abber El-Boom Abberni* by Ismail Abdullah, directed by Jamal Mattar. UAE also made substantial contributions in the GCC States Documentary Exhibition, production of the daily newspaper Festival 3, and the Theatre Symposium "The Gulf Theatre in the Changing World".

At the Cairo International Experimentational Theatre in 1989, Jamal Mattar.

It may be noted that the UAE Theatre generally treats and deals with local themes, and sometimes with wider Arab themes too, but rarely touching on international subjects. This would be obvious if we look at the repertory of the various independent, semi-independent and government troupes, the more important of which are listed here.

First, the Governmental, or the UAE National Troupe, established by the Ministry of Information and Culture in 1978. Apart from its plays already mentioned above, its repertory has *Al-Sindbad* by Mahfooz Abdulrehman (1978) directed by Saqar El Roshod; *Al-Awal Tahawal* by Abdulaziz Al-Sare's (1978); *Al-Fakk* by Mahfooz Abdulrehman, directed by Ibrahim Jalal (1979); and *Edi Malih Awal Malah Tali*, adapted by Sultan

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Sharjah: State of Culture
From page 88

Musical evenings and plays organised in collaboration with local and foreign institutions at the Sharjah Cultural Centre are extremely popular, be they western musical performances, ballet or Shakespearian drama.

In the field of the arts, the Department is giving a leading role to improving the standard of local talent in painting, calligraphy, music, theatre and literature. Sharjah Arts Festival, organised by the Department in collaboration with the Emirates Writers' Union in April 1982, was a remarkable success. The Department plans also to establish a Sharjah Cine Club and will show selected foreign films.

The care and guidance of children has been uppermost with the Department which has held an annual Child Festival in Sharjah since 1985, selecting a theme on each occasion to suit the country and its future. Its main objective is to promote and develop the talents and capabilities of the younger generation. The activities during the festivals comprise painting competitions, dramas, games, debates and lectures which educate and entertain the young minds. Schools make sure that their pupils also get the chance to experience the broad range of cultural events the Department offers.

Organising Book Fairs is another important cultural activity undertaken by the Department which is limited not only to the Emirates and the UAE but to the entire Gulf region and the Arab world. Its aim is to spread knowledge through all sectors of society. When the 1st Book Fair was held in 1982, only 27 publishers participated with 10,000 books and the number of visitors totalled 25,000. The 10th Book Fair drew 510 publishers with 100,000 books and more than 100,000 visitors. Along with these fairs, lectures by selected Arab and foreign scholars are also organised.

The Directorate of Archaeology and Heritage under the Department has undertaken the preservation and conservation of the Emirates' heritage. Together with foreign participation it has discovered and restored a number of old towns, forts and mosques. The joint Sharjah-French archaeological expedition started in 1981 under the patronage of the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs, has yielded an amazing store, very important and valuable information about the past. From objects found at the three sites excavated so far, it has been possible to draw a panorama of these areas dating back from the Neolithic period, through different civilizations such as the 3rd millennium and Hellenistic period. The discovery of the Mleiha settlement (Hellenistic period), provides a great deal of information about the inhabitants of that period, their way of life, their crafts and their relations with nearby regions like 'Al faw' of Saudi Arabia, and as far as Greece.

The Sharjah Cultural Centre, housed in a magnificent building, is the venue of a number of the Department's activities. It has an auditorium to seat 700 people, with the latest sound and light, computerised-equipment. It also houses a Central Library with seats for 100 visitors, two large halls for exhibitions, and two others for cultural meetings, along with offices and other amenities. The plays held there by Sharjah's four amateur dramatic groups are well patronised by the young and old, as are the other programmes in the Centre.

The Africa Hall, with an auditorium to seat 600 people, has been the earliest centre for the activities of the Department in Sharjah. The city also has five children's cultural centres in its Khazana, Rolla, Talaa, Kalba and Samnan areas. Similar centres have been built in the eastern region at Khor Fakkan, Kalba and Dibba. Public Libraries in the towns and townships have each children's section.

The National House of Heritage in Sharjah provides a glimpse of the history of the Emirates. The purpose-built Sharjah Museum traces the history of the region through several thousand years through its collection of artefacts and displays. The museum is for professionals who want to study and expand their collection from the Islamic period. Mention must be made here of the Sharjah Expo Centre, whose large domed halls, roofed with a synthetic fabric and free from obstructing pillars, has proved to be an asset over many years for a variety of cultural activities.

Sharjah Television, opened in 1989, is the latest station in the UAE with the modern equipment manned by UAE nationals. It produces its own programmes, and broadcasts daily for eight hours in its Arabic service, plus two hours in Urdu, the latter catering to a large expatriate community from the subcontinent. It is very selective in its screening of English-language films which generally comprise documentaries, either dubbed in Arabic or subtitled.

Malik A Omar is a Chartered Architect practising in the Emirates since 1976, and writes regularly for local English language publications on art and architecture.



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Q News Volume 1, Number 20, 1992, Page 8

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Sons of Sindbad

Shirley Kay

This was all the more remarkable an achievement for desert dwellers since their land lacked suitable timber for boat building. With great ingenuity they made the best of what they had - palm trees. The trunks of the palm are porous, but the spines of the fronds are hard. These they bound together to produce small craft, a cross between a raft and a canoe, which in the Emirates may still be found today and are known as shashas. They have been in use for at least 4,000 years (if ancient models of small craft from Mesopotamia are anything to go by); but now their days are numbered. A few may still be seen in use on the east coast, at Kalba and between Fujairah and Bidiya, some of them cunningly adapted to take an outboard motor; but elsewhere shashas are only to be seen in museums.

Sited as the Emirates were close to the mouth of the key trade routes of the Gulf, her people played an important role in maritime trade from the earliest times of which traces have been found. The most ancient objects brought in by sea from abroad were pots made in Sumeria (southern Iraq) some 6,000 years ago; small fragments of these Al Ubaid pots have recently been found among scatters of shells and flint tools on many beaches of the west coast.

All along the shores close to the modern towns of today, the sites of ancient coastal settlements have been found. They were often situated on shallow lagoons, favourable places for fishing, for finding shell fish, for the mangroves which gave some usable

Such far-reaching trade was possible thanks to the existence of one exportable raw material: copper which was mined at a number of sites in the Hajar mountains. This vital metal, the first to be worked by man, brought sufficient wealth for the creation of luxury tombs such as those of Umm an Nar and Hili near Al Ain, decorated with fine relief carvings on their huge facing slabs.

By the times of the Greeks and Romans, seafarers from this region dominated the vital spice trade with India and new luxuries were imported. In the 2,000-year-old port of Ad Dour near Umm al Quwain, many fine Roman or Syrian glass goblets, flasks and vases have been found, as well as fine little Roman lamps, statuettes and other bronzes.

Arab sea farers had by now developed the lateen sail, a large, near triangular sail hanging from a lengthy spar along its upper edge. This enabled ships to sail closer into the wind than they had ever done before. With this sail, the men of the Gulf launched out onto the Indian Ocean and found that if they timed their journey well, the monsoon winds would carry them across to India, and when the monsoon changed it would bring them back again. This secret of the winds was one which Greeks and Romans long sought to discover, and finally in the

Now came the great centuries of Gulf maritime trading. The adventures and experiences of these times have come down to us in colourful form in the adventures of Sindbad the Sailor, who is believed to have hailed from Sohar, just across the peninsula from the UAE. More scientifically, master mariners compiled nautical manuals describing sea routes and conditions in great detail. One of the most famous of them, Ahmed ibn Majid, is thought to have been born around 1430 AD in Julfar, close to Ras al Khaimah. That port flourished for a thousand years, from about 700 AD, and became so famous for its pearls that by the 16th century seed pearls were commonly called "Julfar pearls".

The Portuguese liked the look of Julfar "where dwell persons of wealth, great navigators and wholesale dealers". Here was a great fishery as well of seed pearls and of large pearls, and the Moors of Julfar came further to buy from and trade with India, Indonesia, other Eastern countries and the place became a tribute to the King of Ormuz. [illegible] Portuguese [illegible] Barbosa in 1516. [illegible] needless to say, was soon under Portuguese hands. The mounds of Julfar were littered with fragments of Chinese blue-and-white and Celadon porcelain from those prosperous centuries.







Above and above right: Dhows with lateen sails. **Right:** Pearls were passed through fine sieves for grading. **Opposite page, top:** Fitting ribs into a dhow. **Bottom:** Prows of a pair of Booms in Sharjah creek.

The Europeans came and went over the ages, but some aspects of their boat-building skills have stayed on in the Gulf. Dhows built along the Emirates coast today almost all have the square stern of Portuguese galleons. The traditional Arab dhows, like the booms, which can still be seen with their long pointed prows in Dubai creek, have pointed sterns also. The planks of traditional Gulf craft were sewn together in the past, for there was no iron in the Gulf, but eventually the nailed planks of European boat-building prevailed.





Until the middle of this century, great fleets of dhows went out into the Gulf each summer, to the pearling banks. Packed on the dhows were the pearl divers who would live and work on their boats for the three or four hot months of summer. They lacked all creature comforts, crowded together, up to sixty men to a boat. The divers swam down to the oyster beds, staying under water for three minutes at a time in dives down to 20 metres deep. Each man filled his bag with shells which were poured on the deck. Next morning the shells were opened and any pearls found were collected by the captain and stored in his chest.

Pearls had been the major wealth of the Gulf since Roman times at least. Great merchant dynasties were founded on the pearling industry which developed a culture, tradition and expertise of its own. For the merchants it was the most stimulating and exciting of all trade, but for the divers it has been described as "suffering". Its end came quite suddenly in the 1930s with the arrival on the market of Japanese cultured pearls.

washing machines, television sets, air-conditioners, sacks of flour, sugar or rice, even the occasional pick-up truck or car. Their cargoes are piled onto the lands along the quays and are man-handled from dhow to dhow where several are moored abreast. Then destination depends on a piece of traditional knowledge of the many ports of Bandar Abbas, Aden, Somalia or the ports of India. The big ocean going dhows, with their masts and sails, are loaded by smaller coastal dhows and ferried out to them.

Despite the great modern changes which have led to rapid development of the coast, and which have made a couple of million people in more a year, the ancient skills of trade still flourishes. For instance the tradition of entrepot trade is as strong as ever. Goods come in from around the world in great containers which are opened and distributed in Dubai, to be sent on their way up the Gulf, on voyages around the Indian Ocean, in the smaller, more practical dhows.

Elsewhere in the Gulf the number of dhows has shrunk. In Kuwait (once the great centre of dhow trading), in Bahrain, in Oman, rather few dhows are to be seen today. But somehow Dubai and Ajman are keeping the tradition alive, the first as the hub of a vast international maritime trading network, the second as the home of still busy dhow yards. Long may they continue to flourish as a sea which has moved on to super tankers, and yet bigger, ultra-large super tankers.

Today the government of the U.A.E. is seeking to encourage the survival of traditional seafaring skills among its people. For a short time it looked as though fishing would prove unable to meet the demands of the modern consumer. Unfashionable species were offered to local people as they fished their nets. Then the fishermen began to realize the value of their seafaring skills and the need to preserve high quality fish. Only the best quality fish could command high prices, and dhows must be fast, economical and exacting (a little nylon may be surreptitiously mixed into the cotton sails for instance). The happy result of these initiatives can be seen in eager groups of sailors clustered around their freshly built racing dhows, the older men contentedly giving advice on skills they thought they had forgotten, their sons providing the brawn to set the masts and sails, and race their boats out over the ocean.

Folk Heritage, Music, Poetry and Dance
From page 105

expresses his or her individuality according to the rhythm of the dance.

The central instrument in the dance is the Tamboora which is a primitive harp decorated with charms. One of the strangest instruments of the Nuban is the Manyoor, which is a skirt of hollow sheep hooves. It is a necessary instrument because its function is to regulate the beat of the dance through its crackly sound.

The drums of the Nuban are set deep in the ground so as to make the immediate area reverberate as they are struck. These ground vibrations are an integral part of the healing process and are thought to chase away any evil spirits which may luck in the body of the sick individual.

On the other hand, the Habban originated in southern Iran. Although the dance was known through trade and contact between Persia and the Gulf countries, it was not established as a local art form until the beginning of this century when people from southern Persia immigrated to the UAE and Oman in search of a better life.

The dance takes its name from the Habban instrument which provides its unique sound. The instrument is made from the skin of a sheep, and when the player blows through the attached whistle, the Habban expands in size producing a sharp and powerful sound. The Habban player faces the line of drummers guiding and initiating their moves. He bends forward and backward hugging the instrument, at the same time, kicking back with the beat, one leg at a time.

Each of these communities have changed in accordance with their new environment, adapting their dances to their new environment, aiding the process, providing a colourful ingredient to life in the Emirates.

This brief article introduces a sketch of the folkloric dances and songs of the U.A.E. but it does not do justice to their rich texture or the dynamic performances of the participants. As mentioned earlier, much of this subject was gathered in preparation for a Dubai Television production. However, there is still much information on this subject that needs to be discovered and greater research is needed by experts in folkloric arts. I hope that, through this introduction, we have been able to stimulate the interest of the readers and provide a basic understanding of a traditional facet of life in the Emirates that goes beyond the typical perception of an oil state.

Maha M Gargash is a [illegible] Documentaries and series for Dubai Television. She directed the six part series *Ashaar al-Bahr* based on research by **Khalid Badr**, a U.A.E. poet who works as a Programme Coordinator for Dubai Radio.



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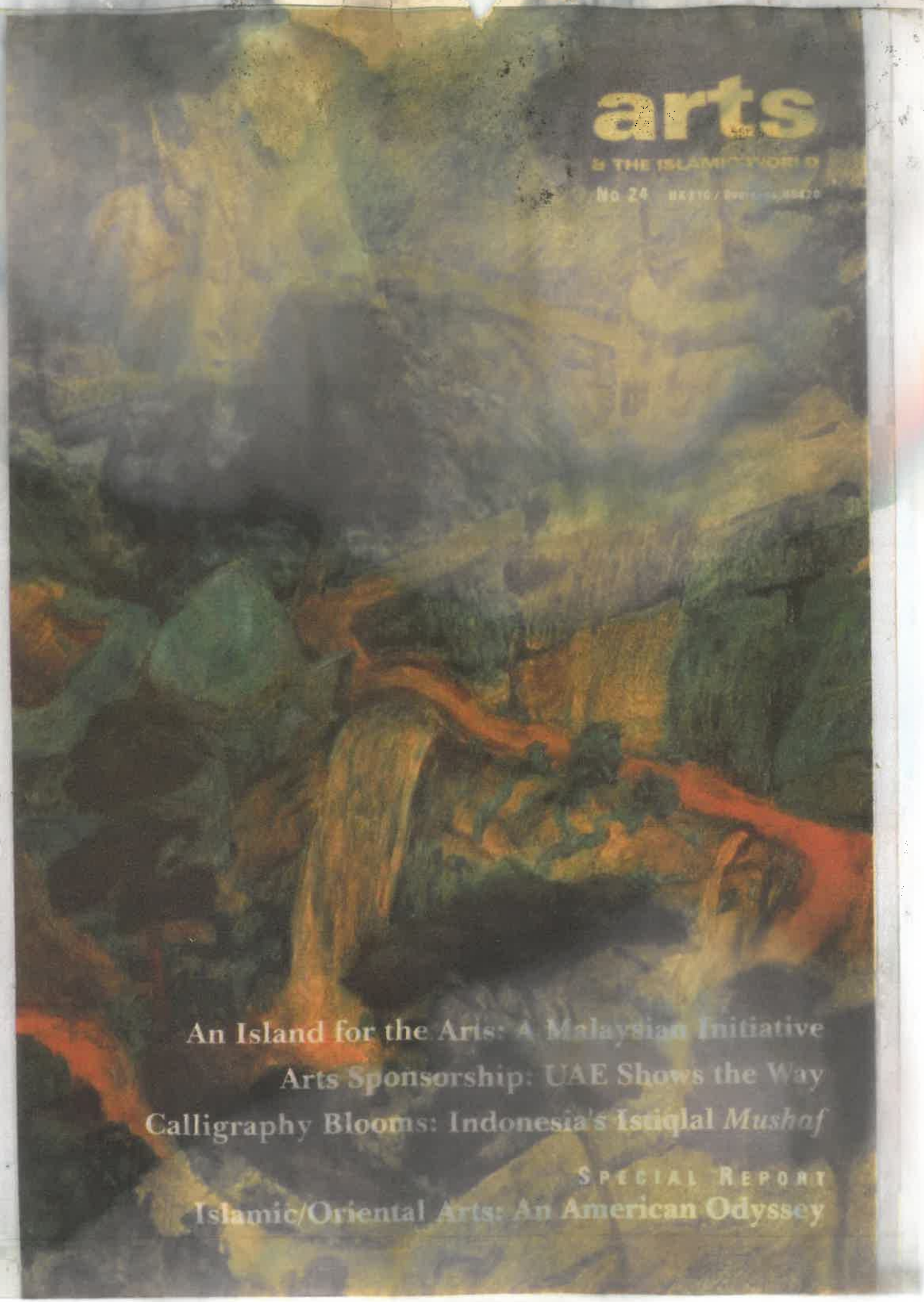


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An Island for the Arts: A Malaysian Initiative

Arts Sponsorship: UAE Shows the Way

Calligraphy Blooms: Indonesia's Istiqlal *Mushaf*

SPECIAL REPORT

Islamic/Oriental Arts: An American Odyssey

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Cover: A painting by John Reed-Rees, MA graduate in 1990, recipient of the Royal College of Art's most prestigious prize, The Flour Gooles Award for Excellence. Photograph courtesy Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts at the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture.



Traditional Arab dhow in pastels by Abdul Rahim Salim 37, UAE artist

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Editorial

and time constraints limited the number of participants and the size of the audience. The 1994 is being replaced by the publication of a review volume highlighting the work of Islamic scholars in various Eastern and western countries. The volume will also bring together as much *information* as possible about the Islamic arts scene generally, including detailed listing of arts and cultural institutions and their key personnel; recent and forthcoming art events and projects; arts courses and training opportunities; and new art and cultural publications of special interest to the Arab and Islamic world. The review volume is planned for publication towards the end of 1994, and it is proposed to update it suitably every year.

****

Those who attended the 1991 seminar – devoted to a review of the state of arts funding in the Islamic countries – will recall the consensus at its concluding session that the question needed to be looked at in a wider perspective of the developing world generally, with its need for additional funding of the arts by the private sector to supplement the understandably limited support that the governments were able to offer. The Foundation has therefore extended support for the recent setting up of an independent study group in London, *Arts Sponsorship in the Developing Countries* (ASDEC), aimed at monitoring and promoting sponsorship and funding of the arts by businesses and commercial institutions in the private sector. There are already several remarkable initiatives in the Islamic countries, and in this issue we look at two of these. One is from Malaysia where the dream of an artist for an international arts centre has come much nearer its fulfilment, thanks to the vision of an enlightened Prime Minister and the generosity of the business community there pledging an initial M$5 million to help the artist create "an island for the arts". And from the United Arab Emirates comes the story of arts sponsorship by a number of banking and financial institutions and other businesses, apart from the State support for the arts there which was already reviewed in our last issue of the magazine. There is also an account of the work of Britain's *Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts* (ABSA), in an article by its Director General, Colin Tweedy. ABSA has been campaigning for more than fifteen years to promote this cause, and in 1992-93 alone it succeeded in raising more than £57 million for the arts in Britain.

This issue also includes an update on the coverage of Islamic arts in the 34-volume publication, *The Dictionary of Art*, which was introduced to our readers in an earlier feature in 1991. It provides further details of the chapters in this monumental work of art scholarship that seek to document and evaluate "the contribution of Muslim artists to the development of foremost art found in many cultures around the world".

Islamic Art in *The Dictionary of Art*

Jonathan Bloom, Sheila Blair, John Villiers and Michael Willis

In January 1991 this journal reported on the preparation of *The Dictionary of Art*, an ambitious project that will include the most comprehensive account of Islamic art ever published. The coverage will consist of extensive entries on Islamic art in which leading scholars have compiled their expertise to provide a survey of the Islamic artistic achievement of unprecedented thoroughness. In addition there are several hundred articles on individual aspects of Islamic art scattered throughout the *Dictionary's* 34 volumes, including biographies of artists and patrons, entries on forms of art and articles on all the modern Islamic countries.

Since we last reported on the coverage of Islamic art in *The Dictionary of Art*, we have made significant strides towards completing what the noted historian Oleg Grabar has described as "the most complete survey of the arts created by and for Muslims over fourteen centuries from the Atlantic Ocean to the Philippines". As we received and edited the articles it became clear that more entries were needed to cover the subject in all its aspects. Now over 200 scholars from 27 countries have contributed to the *Dictionary* and publication is two years away. This seems an appropriate time to bring readers up-to-date with our Islamic coverage.

In the central areas of Islamic art, we have been able to add biographies of a number of 18th and 19th century artists, some of whom will be relatively unknown to many readers. These include such names as Baqir, one of the foremost enamellers of 19th-century Iran; the Isfahani family of artists, producers of painted and varnished objects and the Persian tilemaker `Ali Muhammad Isfahani who revived the art of lustre ceramics in Iran. From Turkey the 19th century painters Ahmet Ali, SÂleyman Seyyit and Osman Hamdi have been included, along with a number of other artists such as the Ottoman calligrapher Mustafa Rakim.

One particularly important aspect of our coverage of Islamic art is our material on Central Asia where we have been fortunate to work with many leading scholars from the former Soviet Union who have been responsible for much new research in Western Central Asia. Our substantial survey of Western Central Asian art covers all the major forms of art in the area, with a particular emphasis on the continuities and traditions from pre-Islamic to Islamic times.

The substantial number of entries on individual archaeological sites provides another valuable part of our coverage. Many of these articles, often written by the excavators, present unfamiliar or even unknown material in a consistent and accessible form. An example that springs to mind is that of Bundzhikat, written by N. N. Negmatov, who excavated the site, which shows the transition from pre-Islamic to Islamic art. Among the finds are a mural depicting a Sogdian version of Romulus and Remus suckled by a she-wolf and carved wooden panels; mosques and mausolea were also found.

The Dictionary provides the first comprehensive coverage of Islamic art in the Indian subcontinent. Compared with the central Islamic lands , South Asia has been little studied and there have been no encyclopaedic surveys such as A.U. Pope's groundbreaking but now somewhat dated *Survey of Persian Art*. The *Dictionary* provides a well organized introduction to everything from architecture to painting and the decorative arts. As with the coverage of Islamic art in other areas of the world, sites, artists' biographies, media and building types are included.

The coverage of architecture begins with the earliest Islamic buildings in western India, erected before the conquest, and continues through the Sultanate and Mughal periods. This portion of the survey is particularly useful because it includes many buildings in the provinces that are either unpublished or which have received light treatment in the existing literature. An equally important fact is that the examination of architecture extends beyond the border of Mughal power to include Hyderabad, Bijapur, Murshidabad and the various styles of regional architecture that appeared in the princely states. Colonial building and influences are also described. Long dismissed as 'decadent', this later architecture has emerged as important now that fragmentation and devolution seem to be the dominant political themes of the late 20th century. The remarkable inventiveness and at times baffling variety of 18th-century India provides a fascinating foil to the contemporary world; coverage of later India in an up-to-date manner will be found only in the *Dictionary*. In this light, the discussion of non-imperial architecture, such as that found in Rajasthan and the Deccan, is of special interest. The *Dictionary* will also be useful to readers interested in those forms which have been traditionally marginalized by art-historical scholarship. The large section on Indian textiles, for example, is rich in detail and deals with the full range of periods and techniques. South Asian ceramics, notably tiles, have received little attention because the tradition is relatively modest compared with neighbouring Iran. Indian tiles receive their first comprehensive treatment in the *Dictionary*.

The arts of the book and painting, now properly recognized as central in Islamic art, are also covered in an encyclopaedic manner. While there have been valuable text-books on Indian painting, some of them published very recently, the *Dictionary* will be the first place where all styles are treated side-by-side, be they indigenous, Indo-Islamic or Mughal. Points of contact and influences in the Rajput schools are also explored

The Dicti



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Similarly, articles on jade, ivory, dress, furniture and coins are included. Articles on specific sites in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh deal with their full history so that the Islamic contribution can be seen in a larger context; many site articles, some written by specialists with very focused research interests, contain information about Islamic manifestations that is simply not available elsewhere. Another unique feature of the *Dictionary* are the biographies of Indian painters, calligraphers and other artists. As the editors have noted in this subject, still more than in other areas, there is an urgent need for research and publication on the Islamic arts of the Indian subcontinent.

In Southeast Asia, Islam has become the religion of the majority of the people of Malaysia, Indonesia and Brunei since the 13th century, while substantial Muslim minorities are to be found in most of the other countries of the region from Burma to the Philippines, and Islam has consequently had a significant influence on the arts in the region.

The *Dictionary* discusses the effect that these influences have had on the artistic life of the sultans' courts and the Islamic cities of Peninsular Malaysia, Sumatra and Java, Borneo, Sulawesi, the Moluccas and elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, and in particular on such traditional decorative arts as the puppets of the shadow play (*wayang*), metalwork (*kris*) and batik and *ikat* textiles.

Islamic elements in the art of Muslim minorities, such as the Chams of southern Vietnam and the people of Mindanao and Sulu in the southern Philippines, are also discussed. However, these peripheral manifestations of Islamic culture have made their own distinctive contributions to the Islamic arts, from the colourful Islamic-style boatcrafts and triple-roofed mosques in Java, which clearly derive both in form and decoration from Hindu-Javanese models, to the modern mosques and religious buildings of such cities as Jakarta, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Bandar Seri Begawan, which no less clearly belong to the mainstream of international Islamic architecture.

The *Dictionary* provides an important service in documenting the contribution of Muslim artists to the development of forms of art found in many cultures around the world. Examples of such entries are blue and white, brick, bridge, column, door, kiosk, market, military architecture and fortification, pen, shrine, stairway, stucco, tomb. The influence of Islamic art was felt particularly in locations where Islam met other religions and cultures. In this connection, Professor Robert Hillenbrand has elegantly summarized the cultural creativeness [illegible] religious [illegible] the achievement [illegible] centuries in [illegible] can be appreciated by all men, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

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Graham Jones writing in the *Gulf Weekly*, 23-29 September 1993

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An Island for the Arts: A Malaysian Initiative

Lin Cheong Keat







studios and galleries on a difficult site in Bukit Panau. They were in many ways ideal clients, leaving a free hand to their architect, and more unusual, continuing to be appreciative while making the environment their very own in a total and integrated way of artistic and social life, both enjoying their creative output and family ambience. They were superb home-makers.

Because of powerful impulses and persuasions, the fulfilment of his dream project became an imminent possibility in Langkawi and Ibrahim suddenly urged me to make a trip to the island to help him select a site. We made separate surveys before comparing thoughts. Quite coincidentally, I had been re-acquainting myself with Langkawi just before this event, although out of compelling botanical rather than development interests, and I had renewed a familiarity previously gained as early as 1947, and could see the vast environmental changes since.

Despite other possible sites, Ibrahim immediately accepted my suggestion to look at Pasir Tengkorak in the Gunung Machinchang area, and on first sight we were decided on the isolated hill on the north-western coast that had been separated from the rest of the Forest Reserve by the new road to Tg. Datai. On the western side was a fine sandy cove that is a quiet public recreational beach, and on the east an interesting swampy bay with its natural ecological attractions.

The hill we'd had the characteristic vegetation of the rest of the forest reserve, which we surveyed botanically with special interest in palm [illegible] setting the [illegible] and [illegible] the other [illegible] to enhance the [illegible] environment. Ibrahim enthusiastically accepted the idea of the natural and enhanced forest as an important aspect of the project, which would inevitably require some trees to be removed or pruned for the building site, although most of the mature trees, some over 100 feet in height, would be maintained.

On subsequent visits it became clear that continuing inspiration and efforts would be needed to achieve a symbiosis between the forest and the buildings and approach roads. The Art Museum buildings (and future sites for a subsequent artists colony) would seem to require most of the hill, an area of 12.62 hectares.

Ibrahim's enthusiasm was not only for a private Foundation that would create a permanent gallery for the substantive collection of his works, but also as a vibrant international artistic "hive". He would harness his energies and vast network to attract cultural visitors and his friends in the art world, thereby identifying and enhancing Langkawi as a significant cultural destination, that would be contributive to ongoing development plans. In asking us to design the project, he also entrusted the onus of divining his needs, and we agreed on a contemporary design concept, unfettered by traditionalism, to achieve a pure form and space for the artistic functions.

Right

Bottom

Terrace Island. **Below**







The elements for the building became obvious – main gallery spaces and sculpture gardens, administration and working studio areas, accommodation for artists-in-residence and for the founder director, and facilities for visitors including a fine restaurant. The total building area proposed is 4,310 sq m. To cope with the rocky and contoured terrain, our concept was to devise building structures and modules that could step up and adjust to the site. We chose modules of 40' x 40' with core structures at its corners, and the total scheme was made up of this system, with pyramidal roof forms over special spaces such as the entrance and party of the gallery, and over the restaurant.

The modular simplicity and discipline aim to maintain a clear building form within the context of the natural and enhanced forest ambience. In reality we might hardly see the building for the trees. Yet the spatial experiences within and the outdoor and garden areas will be special and distinctive for the artistic

purposes and functions.

The entrance porch is a greenhouse within the residual forest, approached by a winding driveway. An exhibition foyer leads to a triple-height main gallery from which two other exhibition levels can be seen and reached by stairs in the central lift core. The tiered galleries allow for different and changing exhibits, with the uppermost intended for Ibrahim's permanent collection. On this level are special studios designed as greenhouse belvederes perched literally within the existing forest



canopy. The lift also gives discreet access to the roof deck level which adjoins the residential accommodation.

The entrance foyer leads to the visitors' lounge, and to a public restaurant, which command glimpses through the trees of the northern view. The view and profile of the Thai island of Taratao in the distance are a magical experience, especially when seen during evening hours. It is perhaps this view that makes the site so special, and one feels "geomantic" inspirations that are difficult to describe but would have to be fulfilled by considerable care and energies in design, building and landscaping, and within the balances of innovation and conservation.

Pondering over the vista of Taratao, it seems to have a reflective fascination and an enigmatic relationship with Langkawi – so near and yet so far. It would add to the romance of our island and go beyond touristic legends to search for atavistic memories that seem to go back to the epic origins of the Ramayana over the Bay of Bengal and the Andaman Seas. More recent history of Langkawi also relates with Thailand – the burned fields of burnt rice, Mahsuri splendidly commemorated by a fine folk museum (surely one of the best in Malaysia), etc. There is then the heritage of the forests and seas. Gunung Machinchang is typical and as yet to be explored and appreciated fully. The islands and coastal waters are so appealing and yet vulnerable. At Pasir Tengkorak (Beach of Souls) – the name redolent of piracy and high-daring – a new challenge is to be faced in making an





University, UK, where he was awarded the Hayward Medal. He was a Finalist in the RIBA Rome Scholarship in 1956. He received his Masters in Architecture at MIT where he was a Harkness (CFF) Fellow in 1956/7. In Singapore, Datuk Lim helped establish the first School of Architecture. The Singapore Government appointed him to the Housing and Development Board and on the United Nations Review Panel for State and City Planning. He has planned and built major urban projects in Malaysia, Singapore and Sri Lanka, such as the Singapore Conference Hall, the Jurong Town Hall, the Seremban State Mosque, Bank Negara Malaysia building in Penang, Petaling Jaya Town Hall, the Shah Alam Town Centre in Selangor, United Overseas Bank & DBS Buildings in Singapore, Bank of Ceylon in Sri Lanka and the Penang Urban Centre known as KOMTAR which is one of the tallest buildings in Asia. Datuk Lim was the President of the Singapore Institute of Architects (1966-1969). He has also been the Founder Chairman of Architects Regional Council of Asia, and Chairman of Commonwealth Board of Architectural Education. Since 1983 he has been Honorary Project Director on Habitat within the Southeast Asian Cultural Research Programme at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, Singapore and is keenly interested in the Built Architecture of South East Asia. He is the author of *Penang Past & Present 1786-1941*, *Traditional Malay Houses*, *Tropical Asian Architecture*, *Tropical Asian Cities*, *Tropical Asian Housing*, *Tropical Asian Urbanism*, *Tropical Asian Villages*, *Tropical Asian Vernacular*, *Tropical Asian Settlements*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Architecture*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Settlements*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Villages*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Vernacular*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Urbanism*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Housing*, *Tropical Asian Traditional Cities

Arts Sponsorship : UAE Shows the Way

Malik A Omer

Artists have often had a problem communicating with their societies. Art and artists are generally alienated from the public which regards art as no more than a hobby for the idle and a luxury for the rich to enjoy.

Most artists around the world find it difficult to make ends meet, particularly in the developing countries. Many of them can afford the paints and brushes and canvas to practice their art, leave about find an audience. The cost of framing the work, hiring a gallery and transporting the frames is in itself a daunting task for those who wish to embark on solo exhibitions. Of course, reaching out to an international audience is beyond the means of the majority of them.

The article in the United Arab Emirates can consider themselves privileged in this regard as more and more individuals and business houses are sponsoring their art. Over the years there has been a growing awareness of the rich artistic potential in the country and the need to support the endeavours. The members of the ruling families were the first to take the lead in patronising the UAE artists, whose works now adorn the interiors of the palaces and luxury villas around the Emirates.

A number of five-star and other hotels, banks, business houses and clubs have also assisted in creating an atmosphere of much appreciation and patronage. These sponsorships are playing an important role in enabling the creative artist to produce outstanding work in an atmosphere of economic and cultural freedom. A recent survey of the art scene in the UAE has brought to light an incredibly large number of sponsors which the artists here, both local and guest artists have found over the years.

Sulaiman H S Al Mazroui, Chief Manager, Marketing, of the Emirates Bank International Ltd, one of the fastest growing banks in the Gulf, says, "We have been conscious of our role in the community and sponsored cultural, social and sporting events as an integral part of the Bank's public relations activities. I may venture to say that no other bank can match our record.

The Bank's *Annual Report* itself is a frequent publication, many of its pages embellished at the margins with superb prints of decorative elements from UAE's traditional architecture, emphasising the Bank's commitment to nurture a heightened awareness of Cultural heritage. The Bank has also recently sponsored two leading UAE artists to contribute to the Bank's advertising visuals. The paintings rendered in pastels, such as Abdul Rahim Salem titled "Al-Boom" (The Dhow) and "Al-Mandoos" (The Chest), and two others by artist Abdulla Jaber titled "Al-Kal'ah" (The Fort) and "Al-Babb" (The Door), were used in the Bank's advertising campaign this year. These paintings were also printed on desk and wall calendars for distribution among the Bank's customers. These works have now been printed on canvas and framed to be hung in the offices of executives at the Bank's head-quarters in Dubai.

Some years ago, the bank had sponsored an exhibition of paintings by six UAE artists in the banking hall of the Middle East Bank's branch in Deira, Dubai - Emirates Bank now holds 98.89% shares of MEB. A competition to select the "Most Beautiful stamp of the year", which is organised annually by the postal authority was sponsored by Emirates Bank in the year 1991. In April this year the Bank sponsored the famous Indian artist M F Hussain's work in Dubai and two months later co-sponsored a concert of the popular Lebanese singer Ms Feroouz. The Bank takes a positive attitude over its contribution to the needs and development of the community. It has sponsored a number of sporting events, such as chess in particular, basketball, cricket matches, snooker, bowling and tennis, besides aiding the institutes for handicapped children. The performing arts have also received the Bank's attention with sponsorships of performances in Urdu, Hindi and Sinhala in the Emirates.

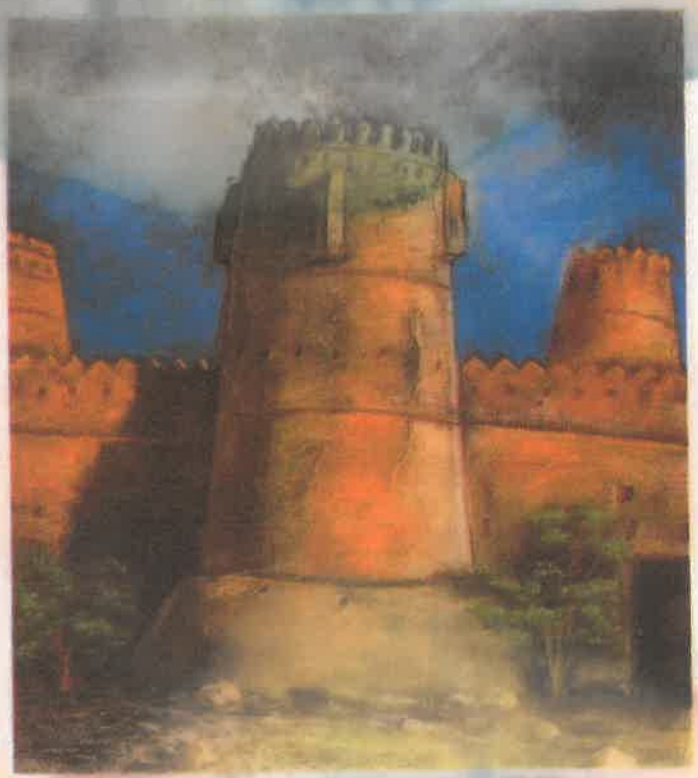
Among the five-star hotels, Gerhard Mandscheff, General Manager of Sheraton Dubai Hotel, has taken a keen interest in the art scene. He has initiated several sponsorship arrangements at the Hotel. As of September this year, three artists - Ms Tina Ahmed, Ms Sangita Khalid and Shakeel Siddiqui, will be displaying their works for sale in the Lobby Gallery for a period of six weeks, and other artists will be given an opportunity at regular intervals. The artists will also give demonstrations of their technique for art lovers.

Ms Anne Burns, the PRO of Sheraton says, "We intend to take our exhibitions a step further, when around the festive season in December this year we will exhibit the paintings of some more artists on the occassion of a cocktail party when we invite the members of our recently launched "Sheraton Style Club", comprising administrative, executives and senior assistants of firms in Dubai who have patronised us regularly. This Club is our way of saying "thank you" to our customers. This display will give a good exposure to these works and hopefully boost their sales."

Sheraton Dubai had earlier sponsored an opera in aid of the Al Noor Training Centre for Handicapped Children which was started in 1981 and is run by raising funds. Ms Asha Bhatia, its Director says, "The Sheraton had also purchased the paintings of one of our students, Roshan Perera, a deaf boy, who joined us six years ago and has blossomed into a budding artist. His paintings have been bought by the Granada Fort Hotel and used on greeting cards by the British Bank of the Middle East and British Petroleum. We also have an ongoing annual "Appointment Calendar" to







design three stamp issues so far. The first one commemorated "80 Years of the Post" in the Emirates, followed by "Desert and Garden flowers" and finally "Musical Instruments of the Gulf".

Among the artists who have found sponsors for their works, Ms Margaret Henderson, who came to Dubai in 1986 is well-known for her publication "Sketch book Arabia", a collection of Sketches in pen and pencil, gouache and watercolours, of her impression of the traditional life in the Emirates. This Publication was sponsored by Al Futtaim Motors and published by Motivate Publishing, the leaders in the Gulf with their Arabian Heritage books. The Jabel Ali Hotel has over 60 paintings of Ms Henderson displayed in their Presidential Suites, the Union National Banks has a number of them in the sketches on its greeting cards and brochures.

Another successful artist is Dubai-based Abdal Wahab Al Mas'Lawi from Qatar who appears to have lost count of his patrons'. To name a few, the Granada Forts Hotel in Abu Dhabi, which opened a few months ago, has







Opposite page, extreme left: *Al Oud* by Tina Ahmed. One of the six paintings used on postage stamps by the General Postal Authority, UAE depicting traditional musical instruments of the Gulf. **Top:** *Old Generals* by Margaret Henderson. **Below, right:** The Fort (*Al-Kall'ah*) by Abdulla Jaber. One of the paintings used by the Emirates Bank for its 1993 calendar. **This page, top:** *Still Life* by Shakeel Siddiqui. **Above:** The Chest (*al-Mandaal*) by Abdul Rahim Salim. One of the paintings used by the Emirates Bank for its 1993 calendar. **Above right:** *Mixing Perfumes*, by Abdul Wahab Al Mayhoo.

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No 23

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Graham Jones writing in the *GulfWeekly*, 25-29 September 1993

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A Western Model: The Work of ABSA

Colin Tweedy

Belief in the feasibility and desirability of strong arts business relationships is the key to the Association's business and arts services.

ABSA administers a wide range of schemes and initiatives, all designed to increase the amount of private sector finance coming into the arts and the professionalism of the practitioners. Activities such as the Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme, the Business in the Arts initiative, ABSA Development Forum and the Media Crediting Campaign have become staple features of the art-business world in the UK. Increasingly ABSA is seeking to play a role in the creation and dissemination of research and ideas in the field and an ongoing policy of research and publication is underway.

The Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts has been the midwife, if not the parent of a vital and exciting range of collaboration between arts and business all across the UK. These co-operative ventures are taking place at every level in arts and business. ABSA is not, and cannot be an organisation that caters for the biggest companies and premium arts organisations alone. Access to the Association's services and advice at all levels is a central plank in our philosophy. The arts, after all, are in the fabric of daily life everywhere in the UK, from the amateur to the professional, community and educational to flagship and innovative. Businesses of all kinds are discovering the value of the relationship with the arts and ABSA has been the guide for many of them. Our commitment to holding and joining hands is as great as ever.

Membership

Membership of ABSA offers the benefits of association with a diverse group of business organisations active in sponsorship across the country. ABSA has unrivalled knowledge of the arts world and its relationship to business. We can provide access to decision makers and opinion formers in the arts, business and government at all levels. In addition ABSA lobbies for tax reform and for greater media acknowledgement of sponsors. ABSA represents the business community in the debate on arts funding in the United Kingdom.

ABSA membership brings direct value for money benefits to business. Patrons and members can take full advantage of the services and advice offered while sustaining ABSA's work through a donation element integral to their subscriptions. These services include:

- a full range of technical publications in the area including "Principles for good practice in Arts Sponsorship", the ABSA/WH Smith Sponsorship Manual and the ABSA/Arthur Anderson Tax Guide to Business Support for the Arts.
- research and study papers
- invitations to conferences and seminars
- invitations to at least 8 arts events per year and a series of working lunches and networking events
- personal advice and support in the creation of and support for arts sponsorship programmes.

An important service to members which deserves more elaboration is the Media Crediting Campaign. Set up in 1990, it involves the collection of information on sponsored activities from member companies which is circulated to press weekly. This has resulted in a crediting success rate of over 64%. The effect of the Media Crediting Campaign is positive for all those involved in sponsorship but particularly useful for ABSA member companies.

The Business Sponsorship Incentive Scheme

Since 1984 ABSA has administered the Business Sponsorship Incentive

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THE CENTRE OF ISLAMIC CULTURE



A new foundation, The Centre of Islamic Culture, has been set up to promote knowledge and appreciation of Islamic art and culture in the Netherlands. Its aim is to stimulate cultural activities related to Islam. The first exhibition "Dreaming of Paradise" in conjunction with the Museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam will open 18th December 1993 and will continue until 7 January 1995. "Dreaming of Paradise" gives a fascinating insight into Islamic art and folk art from 650 AD to the present day. The richness of the Islamic Heritage is illustrated by a large number of exhibitions ranging from architectural elements to miniatures, manuscripts, costumes and jewellery.

A series of further exhibitions is planned, including one on contemporary North African Art, opening late 1994. these exhibitions will take place at the Museum of Ethnology, Rotterdam. The Centre of Islamic Culture will also organize talks, performances, conferences and workshops.

The Centre of Islamic Culture is a non-profit organization without political objectives. For further information contact:

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A Western Model:
The Work of ABSA
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organisation, but which is used to increase the benefits of the sponsorship for the sponsor. The Scheme is both a major tool for arts organisations to use to attract new business money and an incentive to companies to enter into arts sponsorship for the first time. The Scheme was launched in October 1984 and the budget has increased from £1m in its first full year to £4.5m in 1993/94. The Scheme is now entering its ninth year and £39.7m of new money from business has been generated by Government incentives of £19.3m. Over 2,800 businesses have sponsored for the first time through the Scheme and over 600 existing sponsors have increased their contributions.

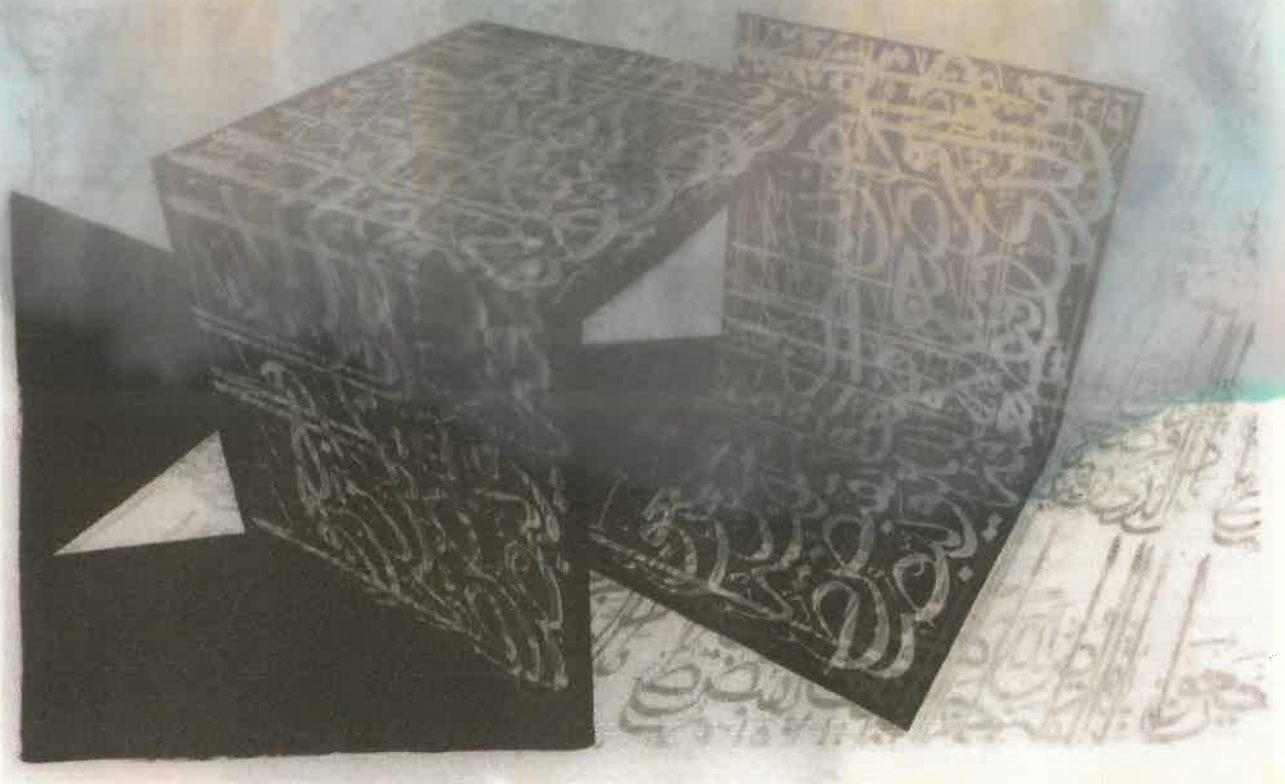
Business in the Arts

Public and private support is also given to another ABSA initiative, Business In the Arts, which aims to encourage business men and women to offer their skills and experience to help those who work in the arts to develop their managerial capabilities.

The programme works in two major ways. Through the Placement Scheme it recruits and trains business executives with a wide variety of skills to work in the arts as voluntary management advisers. Placements range from a few hours to several months. Also, the arts management training initiative opens up business training opportunities for arts managers through bursaries, free places on in-house courses, seminars,

Ahmed Moustafa: Expressing the Essential

Jeremy Theophilus



The Two Sides of Reality, 1987. Oil and water colour on hand made paper, 125 x 76cm.

THE ARABIC letter form has always been dominated by its calligraphic roots, even at this stage of the 20th century, and its basic structure dates back to the tenth century. Since then, calligraphers have developed a whole range of images that experiment with the pictorial potential of the script, using superimposition of letters or words, counter pointing different texts in different hands, and mirror images of a text. By comparison, European calligraphy seems to have been lacking in such innovative approaches to design, and only now is beginning to take a more experimental approach that side-steps tradition.

In many ways we might regard Ahmed Moustafa as an exemplary link between these two cultures. A conversation with him soon reveals the ways in which his practical training and experience as an artist and calligrapher has been of crucial importance in informing his academic research into structure of the Arabic letter form. Underlying these activities is his strong Islamic belief which enables him to create images of the most intense complexity, yet which can have an aesthetic and spiritual appeal to those with little understanding of their meaning. A further contributing factor has been the fact that the central core of his working life has taken place in the UK, something he feels to be essential to his own development.

Although an Egyptian, Moustafa was trained in a classical European tradition, with the vaguest expectations of ever experiencing that culture at first-hand. However, a first class degree at Alexandria University led to teaching there, and eventually a sabbatical year in the UK in 1974, where he persuaded Leonard Meecham in the Printmaking Department of the Central School of Art & Design to let him develop his skills.

It was the chance offer of a calligraphic commission that led to his change of direction, when he realised that this "was a job for a designer/painter, with a knowledge of penmanship in Arabic." His researches led him to discover a wealth of Arabic material in the Central archives, and the final result so impressed David Gloak, then Head of Printmaking, as being so different from the more traditionally Western images that Moustafa had been





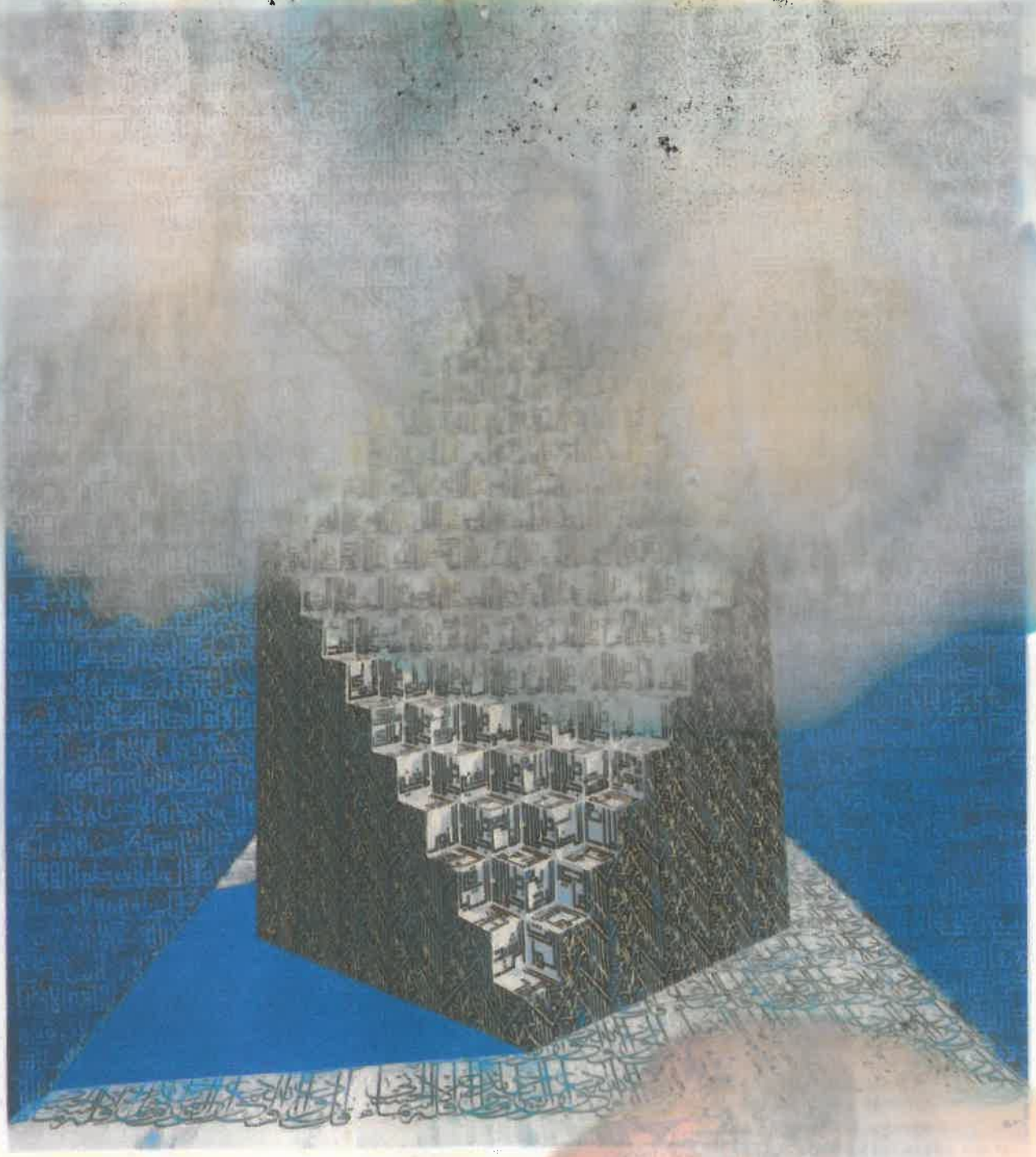


"Western art deals with the casual rather than with what I call the immutable essence. As Michelangelo said: good painting is nothing but a copy of the perfection of God."

This reference to the Renaissance is a pertinent one: he often makes wistful comparison between his status as an Islamic artist and that of those Italian artists whose images were firmly based in a tradition of belief.

As this interest in his own traditions grew, Moustafa came across an article concerning the original designer of the Arabic letter form, a tenth century scribe and geometrical, Ibn Muqla. Provoked by the argument of the text, and more importantly by the inherent mystery of the original document and its references to "proportional script", he began an MA under Nicolette Gray at the Central to explain this phrase by exploring the visual images that had never been included by Muqla.

It is now 14 years since the start of his researches during which time he moved from an MA to a PhD, under the guidance of Dr Michael Rogers at the British Museum. The outcome has produced a document that is both physically and intellectually weighty, in which Moustafa reveals, for the first time in one thousand years, the underlying geometrical grid upon which Ibn Muqla based his design: that is, the whole structure that underpins Arabic letter form and, indeed, the essential visual



Above: *The Residents of Dreams*, [illegible] 1997, [illegible] on handmade paper, 150 × 16 cm
Opposite page: *Qu'ranic Cryptic*, 1993, Qu'ranic verses in [illegible] on hand-made paper, 3 of 8 × 100 cm each panel

harmony of Islamic art.

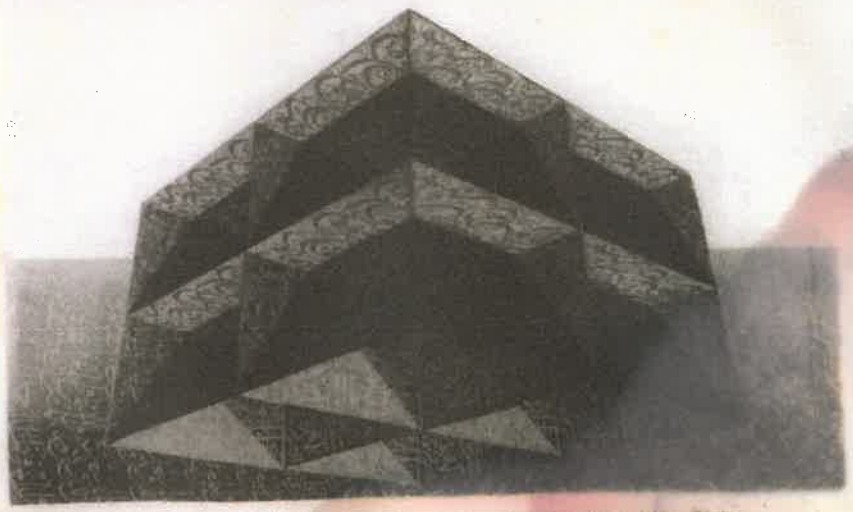
During this period his academic and practical activities developed in tandem, the one feeding off and inspiring the other, indeed he recognises that it was his curiosity as a practising lettering artist that led to the startling discovery, and that without his experience with eye and pen, "a tool guided by an invisible hand" he would never have been able to understand the logic that guided Muqla's original work.

Although his designs have been translated into other media, most notably tapestry and stained glass,

such diversity of approach seems to hold no fear for Moustafa. An early project led him to collaborate with Patrick Reyntiens, from whose experience and skill he learnt a great deal which has since led to private practice with a commission for stained glass windows for a school in Jeddah, manufactured by the Derix Studio in Germany.

But it must surely be the translation of his designs into woven tapestry that are the happiest and most successful images. For these he has worked consistently with one studio in Felletin-Aubusson, that of the Pinton family. There, the weavers have recognised Moustafa's inherent understanding of the colour relationships necessary to construct such ambitious images, a rarity amongst artist designers in their experience. These tapestries can now be seen in the Royal reception at the airports in Jeddah and Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.





Top: *Infinite Interior*, 1987. Oil and water colour on hand made paper, 125 x 76cm.
Above: *The Face of Relativity*, 1987. Oil and water colour on hand made paper, 125 x 76cm.

The most recent public exposure of his work has been the purchase of one of his calligraphic compositions, "The attributes of Divine Perfection" for the newly opened St Mungo Museum of Religious Life & Art in Glasgow. There it will join an illustrious gathering of religious images that include the Salvador Dali 'Crucifixion'. For Moustafa this is a most moving and appropriate location for one of his works, where its spiritual and aesthetic imagery can be appreciated in a truly multi-cultural setting.

A touring exhibition of his work organised by Artizans Gallery was seen in Manchester City Art Galleries (23 July - 24 October 1993), and will be on show at St Mungo's Museum, Glasgow (15 May - 22 July 1994).

Saleem Arif: Seeds of Celebration; Moments of Grace

Sarah Wilson

The luminous and flame paintings of Saleem Arif are not of this world. Their grace and purity belong to the paradisiacal world of eternity, Islam's universe. Born Syed Saleem Arif Quadri, in Hyderabad, Southern India, in 1948, the artist was from a family whose antecedents had been religious sufis. 'Syed' implies a descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, 'Quadri' a religious and spiritual line of descent, and 'Saleem' - peace. Saleem, indeed, is an emissary of an age-old Indian culture whose wisdoms, transformed into figures and colours, shapes and surfaces he has celebrated in exhibitions all over Britain and Europe.

An abrupt move from India to Birmingham in 1966 immediately created a clash of cultures. The kaleidoscopic 1960s nonetheless marked a high moment for creativity in Britain, and after a turbulent period of adjustment at Birmingham College of Art, Arif emerged as the arrestingly handsome young Sculptor of the Year, feted in the colour supplements of 1971. A student at London's Royal College of Art from 1972, he awaited both the rediscovery of his country and its literature before achieving maturity as an artist. A year spent in India after his course finished in 1975 'was the most profound experience of my life.'[1] The rediscovery of his birthplace and his homeland led both to a realisation of India's extraordinary cultural diversity and to a recognition of his inner cultural heritage, not only in terms of the senses: sights, colours, sounds, and smells,but the rich oral tradition of Islamic literature he had absorbed as a boy.

Reminiscing about the journey, his reactions and the contrasts with his more recent past, he recalled in 1991: 'In the East it is all patterns whereas in the West it is shadows.'[2]

Ostensibly, here, Arif is contrasting the flat, bright patterning of Islamic art, the rich designs for carpets and hangings and the visual impact of calligraphy incorporated into the architecture of the great mosques with Western notions of painting. 'Chiaroscuro' or 'clair-obscur' - the painting of shadow gave depth concurrently with the perfection of the art of perspective, to the great Italian masterpieces of the Renaissance. Humanism was at the heart of shadow and perspective. Lines converging on a vanishing point in the standard perspectival scheme had their equivalent in the lines which converged in the eye of the beholder: the ability to situate objects in space equated with man's power over the universe in the realms of geography, science, ballistics: 'What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty!...in action how like angel! in apprehension how like a god!'[3] The elevation of man through the discovery of shadow implied his progressive slipping away from the spiritual, the loss of God in a calculated and material world and an estrangement from the East.

Yet, through a charmed conjunction of research and experience, Saleem Arif was able to unite an Italian world of shadows with his Islamic heritage. Beginning with the illustrations of Gustave Dore and John Flaxman for Dante's *Inferno* - chance discoveries - he pursued an intuition. An intuition which led to an extraordinary confirmation.

In 1919, a Catholic priest and professor of Arabic at the University of Madrid, Miguel Asin y Palacios had created a furore in both Spain and Italy with the publication of *La Escatalogia musulmana en la Divina Comedia*. Saleem Arif hunted down its translation: *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, published in London in 1926.[4] It revealed that Dante's poem - a cornerstone of Christendom - was constructed upon a bedrock of Muslim sources. A study of the Illuministic, neo-Platonic mysticism of Ibn Massara of Cordova, had led Asin from this Spanish Muslim philosopher to his master, Ibn Arabi, the great Sufi of Murcia who had written a quasi-Dantesque allegory, the *Futuhat*. This, in turn, was a mystical adaptation of the *Miraj* or Ascension of Prophet Muhammad from Jerusalem to the Throne of God. The *Miraj*, famous in Islamic theological literature, was preceded by his nocturnal journey, the *Isra*. Parallels with Dante's *Inferno* and *Paradiso*, written a century later, extended from the architecture of the cosmos - the imaginary topography of the infernal regions and celestial spheres - to precise episodes of narrative and picturesque details. In an attempt to find a common source narrative, the Muslim origin of many later Christian legends was also revealed. Dante's tutor Bruenetto Latini provided the link.[5]

Italian Danteists were not pleased in the 1920s; in the mid-1970s Saleem Arif was delighted and inspired. Here was the link between the world of patterns and the world of shadows, between East and West, that he had sought; and the evidence of the greatness to be achieved through the fusion and interpenetration of two great cultures.[6] From 1975-1981 Arif worked on a series depicting the *Inferno*. Over five hundred works emerged, crowned with forty coloured ink paintings. The first drawings were done immediately after his return from India. When he came to work in poster colour and gouache: 'I found the Indian culture had somehow surfaced the various colours I had in me, they were raw, bright and primitive.' Far from Botticelli's fantastic Inferno illustrations, the visions of Flaxman, Dore, or nearer to our time those of Rodin, or Jean Fautrier, Arif dispensed with the realm of shadow - the ghostly Shades - his was more patterned, a more oppositional rendering. 'What I found fascinating about the *Divine Comedy* was that, in one work you get the positive, the negative and the in-between.' Strong lino-cuts invoked a play of light/dark



values - the in-between was not a shade but a vibrating intermediary space of confrontation and lines of force (see *Canto XXV: Vanni Fuci and Monster Cacus*). The directness of Saleem's imagination had led him to 'symbolise the burning hell by tearing the edges of the paper...the most obvious thing you could think of.' Yet this led to a permanent assault on the traditional oblong format that was the catalyst for his later irregularly-shaped canvases.

Prophet Muhammad guided by the angel Gabriel in the Isra has an experience paralleled in the West, by Dante and his spirit guide, the poet Virgil: Dante's Malebolge, a place in hell, has a bottom 'divided into ten valleys, successive ditches and bridges': movement is not linear, but 'circling and sinking.' One has only to think of the whirling of the lovers Paola and Francesca in space - a motif for so many artists - to see how poetic vision, an allegorical psychomachia, an imaginary and aerial experience (the Cantos read aloud and chanted), are totally at odds with the fixed, humanist world view of projected spaces, rays of light and cast shadows.

As Arif's paintings challenged the tyranny of perspective and gravity, of the square, so they challenged the tyranny of narrative and linear interpretation. A reversion to a flat picture space and a rejection of narrative were central to the development of modernism - and Arif was able to see in the forms of the Inferno echoes of another modern master, Henri Matisse, perhaps France's greatest twentieth-century orientalist. Travelling to Moorish southern Spain and to Morocco - as Arif would after him - Matisse had at first heightened the patterning of his work by painting



exotic rugs and pottery as part of his still lives and studio backgrounds; he then changed the space of his work itself to that of the oriental wall hanging. At the end of his life he worked on the Dominican chapel at Vence using ceramic tiles and calligraphy, with many references to oriental places of prayer. (Arif too, is a talented ceramicist). Simultaneously Matisse's 'papiers decoupes' - his paper cut-outs - used the brilliant colours and positive and negative shapes from which Arif was to draw such confirmation. Matisse's *Polynesia, the Sky* and *Polynesia, the Sea*, of 1946, white paper cut-outs on a blue ground of bird and fish and seaweed shapes (recollection of Tahiti), are the closest to Arif's painting, in particular the recent work, an irregular and composite oil, *Changeable Gardens*, 1990-1. The blue of sea and air, the blue of contemplation are key colours for both artists. However Matisse's complex shapes never approached the ambiguities of Arif's invention that he calls 'volumetric perspective.' Arif locks creatures great and small into symbolic patterns; there is no Matissean balance but movement and conflict. *Chorus of Heavenly Spirits*, 1987-8 in azure, emerald and purple, with complex vibrating layers of underpainting, is a prime example of 'volumetric perspective.' It shows

Farid Uddin Attar, the twelfth-century Sufic Persian poet came from Nishapur in Khorassan, the village of Omar Khayyam. Again the metaphor of a journey structures his poem, a perilous journey where trials and dangers must be overcome, enigmas solved before the birds can encounter with Simorg, the Bird-king - and the revelation at the end of the journey. It is none other than the confrontation with oneself. Arif's travels to Italy, to Spain, to Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Far East, not to mention India and Pakistan, have enriched his work externally speaking, but have been fundamentally a journey towards internal self-realization and grace. His trips have also nourished a secondary profession - he is an excellent photographer. Not for Arif the concept of emigrant, exile or diaspora: 'If you can really find yourself in your work, then you feel home wherever you are.'[9]

'O birds without aspirations...He

caressed and
One recalls
bringing Sheba
to embrace
secret life of the
and massaged surfaces
of the Earth, 1990-1, reveals a surface
whose swirls and arabesques
irresistibly recall Islamic calligraphy;
the beholder is plunged once again
into a field of polysemic metaphor.
The gap between the two female
profiles here represents a moment of life
and fecundity. An abyss of space in
the painting is the void
the heart of the
Arif's art is at once full of personal
significance and public
boldness. It breaks the pattern
gallery spaces filled with
Western paintings with their
and their shadows. The
themselves are given soul and
through the holes and shaped spaces
that his work life and breath. He has
received large public commissions:
Oasis, 1988, for Hounslow Central
Library, celebrates the world of
contemplation and sustenance
offered by books, the gifts of
knowledge bestowed. Saleem
acknowledges the power of the three
religions of the book, Judaism,
Christianity and Islam, their
relationships and their conflicts. For
who should dispute the cultural
origins of the humorous teapot in
Oasis? Tea and the *Divine Comedy* -
both spring from the East, and Arif is
a practical fellow as well as an artist.
An adept of Prophet Muhammad, he
has taken his motto from the *Hadith*,
and has used it to title several works:
Enthusiasm is my Horse. But of course
enthusiasm itself is divine in origin, a
God-inspired zeal.

Grace, celebration, enthusiasm,
enchantment, purgatory, paradise,
prayer. The rarity of such notions in
art today is reason enough for their
preciousness. Saleem Arif has
embraced the words and performed
the deeds. He has aspired on his
journey and will not fail in his quest.

Saleem Arif was selected by the British Council earlier this year to represent Great Britain along with one other artist at the 24th International Festival of Painting, Cagnes-sur-Mer (June 29th - September 29th); and a solo show of his work opens at Mid-Pennine Arts, Burnley, Lancashire in January 1994.

NOTES

1 Arnold de Liagre Böhl, Saleem Arif interviewed by Hilary Robinson, *Art & The Islamic World*, June-July 1991, p. 27.

2 Ibid.

3 William Shakespeare, Hamlet, II.ii. 310.

4 Miguel Asín Palacios, *La Escatología musulmana en la Divina Comedia*, Madrid, 1919, translated by Harold Sunderland as *Islam and the Divine Comedy*, London, John Murray, 1926.

5 Ibid., pp. 232-3. Dante's vision, however, failed to be the source of its translation of the mythical heavenly steed, the *Buraq*, which carried Muhammad on his Night Journey to Jerusalem and his Ascension to Heaven.

6 [illegible] Arif, The Spirit of Tradition, *Indian Express*, Mar. 11th, 1985, p. 11, for the three quotations. *Images of Dante's Inferno by Saleem Arif* were exhibited at 21-32 Carlton Street, Nottingham, 1983. The first set of drawings 1976-7, were followed by a second set, 1979-80. Black ink and brush designs were given texture with acrylic. From 1980-1 he worked on a set of watercolours with an overlay of pen and ink. The linocut date from 1982.

8 *The Inferno of Dante Alighieri*, (1306, first printed 1472), J.M. Dent and Sons, London 1909, Canto XVIII, p. 190.

9 Arif discovered the work of Matisse and Paul Klee along with Indian miniatures at the Victoria and Albert Museum during his first year in London.

10 The first translation of *Mantiq at-Tair* was Garcin de Tassy's French version of 1863. *The Conference of the Birds*, translated by C.S. Nott, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1954, p. 74.

11 Arif quoted by Jonathan Green: 'Another Story' Tatler, vol 285, no 1 Dec 89/Jan 90 p. 30.

12 *The Conference of the Birds*, op. cit., p. 30.

13 See alternative interpretations of *Squaring the Circle* by John Gillett, George T. Noszlopy and Alison Kirkwood in *Saleem Arif, Garden of Reconciliation*, Ipswich Museum and the Winchester Gallery, 1990, and by Tony Godfrey in *Saleem Arif - Paintings 1986-1991*, Laing Art Gallery, Newcastle upon Tyne, 1991, p. 5.

14 T.S. Eliot, from 'The Journey of the Magi' in *The complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot*, Faber and Faber, London, 1969, p. 105.

Abdul Qader Al Rais: Now, Then, and There

Malik A Omar

Abdul Qader is to hold his 12th solo exhibition, titled "Now, Then, and There" sponsored by the Arab American Cultural Foundation at its Alif Gallery in Washington DC, from October 18 to November 8, 1998. It will be the first time that art lovers in the US will be able to view in depth the works of an artist from the UAE.

Mohammed Al Mur, leading writer and art enthusiast of Dubai, sums up the artist's work: The widespread dimension of Abdul Qader's paintings is fascinating. Usually artists tend to specialize in one or the other school of painting. But Abdul Qader, with his rich and varied experience, imparts a special flavour to his works, without loosing his individuality."

As a boy, Abdul Qader loved to play in the alleys of his neighbourhood, the 'bastakia' (an old quarter of Dubai), with its coral stone courtyard houses, carved entrance doors and majestic 'barjils, (wind-towers), which were a common sight in the Gulf in a bygone era. Devoid of electricity and airconditioning, the houses were cooled by the breeze which funnelled through the towers into the rooms below, providing relief from the desert heat. The young boy was fond of doodling on the walls with bits of chalk and charcoal, which usually got him into trouble. Having lost his father at an early age, Abdul Qader was sent to Kuwait, where his sister resided, to do his schooling. "I loved my school days", says Abdul Qader. "There were many activities to enjoy - athletic meets, [illegible] exhibitions and [illegible] our school [illegible] the early 1960s when Kuwait had embarked on a modern system of education replacing the traditional 'kuttab' where children gathered at the teacher's house to memorise the Holy Qur'an and learn discipline and manners. The varied activities produced a dynamic interaction between the society and the school which now catered to the former's needs and ambitions.

Abdul Qader's talent for drawing was encouraged by his art teacher who had him enrolled in a local atelier. Kuwait, incidentally, was one of the earliest Gulf states to start free ateliers equipped with art material, library on art and trained artists, brought from outside, to teach drawing, painting, sculpture and calligraphy to aspiring artists. Abdul Qader spent his leisure hours in the atelier, mastering pencil and charcoal drawings, doing self-portraits and sketching in the 'souk' (marketplace). It is incredible that he was even being called by the locals to do their portraits. The boy soon mastered the techniques of oil paints and gouache - both difficult mediums for his age. "That is the secret of his success," says Dr. Yousef Aidabi, of the Sharjah Cultural Foundation, who has followed Abdul Qader's career over the years. "It was the strong foundation he gained in his formative years which has withstood the test of time."

With his schooling completed Abdul Qader returned home in 1974 and created quite a sensation with his solo exhibition at the Public Library in Dubai. The following year he bagged a gold medal at the First Youth Exhibition. He then joined the Emirates University in Al Ain to do his Law and 'Shariah' (Islamic Law), got his Licence and joined the Ministry of Labour at its Dubai office, where he still works. In the meantime [illegible] converts to the new religion [illegible] reverting to atheism and worship of idols. Abdul Qader shies away from any controversy, just smiles and says: "I have a thousand other subjects to choose from".

On reviving his love of painting Abdul Qader went back to the scene of his childhood days. "Sadly many of the old houses were being demolished to make way for modern concrete and glass cubes. for me it was a race against time to capture on canvas a threatened heritage." He took to renderings in water colour and brought out with sensitivity and skill the desolation and foreboding in his monocolour hues. He had these printed – "Final Countdown", "Room on the Terrace" and "Wednesday Evening" - in limited editions, "to make them affordable to a larger audience and remind them of our vanishing heritage." Abdul Qader is happy that the new office of HH The Ruler of Dubai, built adjacent to a surviving section of the 'bastakia', incorporate the wind-tower features, in sympathy with its surroundings. "This will keep our traditions alive."

Containing this monochromatic phase, Abdul Qader united the traditional craft of [illegible] building, with his eye for detailing. The wooden scantlings of the seacrafts and those lying alongside spring to life with his skilled brush strokes. He has used the Arabic names of the boat types in his titles such as, "Shure Under Construction", "Al Houris Nos 1, 2 etc", some of which are in wide colours. Once







again, the artist goes back to his traditions for which he has a passion.

He has returned to it with a number of impressionist compositions incorporating the architectural elements of the old houses - the carved wooden doors, barred windows, wooden screens and perforated gypsum fanlights. He has ventured to use the cobalt blue in them in his otherwise sober palette, with dramatic effect. One of these paintings titled "Mashrabiyat (wooden screen), is in shades of blue with light filtering through against an arched background. "I will be sad to sell this painting," he muses.

Lately Abdul Qader has taken to abstract art in watercolours and oils on canvas in a style known as 'alphabetism' in which the Arabic letters are incorporated. His "Waw" series introduce the letter resembling a 'comma'. These abstracts are in hues of reds, blues and greens, some of them with an occasional touch in slight borders of gold and yellow. Other successful abstracts have been done in pencils and mixed media.

[illegible] Ali Dawish, Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, who visited Dubai, has this to say about the artist: "There is no question that Abdul Qader [illegible] from his comprehensive of design that he used [illegible] in the [illegible], which is [illegible] and straightforward. His use of colour is unique both in creating an atmospheric feeling and in the handling of the [illegible] as well, composed in a [illegible] strong originality and with [illegible]. This show a singular and personal approach to painting."

Abdul Qader is often nostalgic about his days in Kuwait, and hopes that some day the authorities in the UAE would also encourage art as they do in the sponsorship of sports. "In the absence of full fledged art





collection of a number of Shaikhs and members of the ruling families in the Emirates, and other VIPs at home and abroad e.g. the Museum of Art, New Delhi, India and the Cultural Foundation in Abu Dhabi.



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Riffat Alvi: Earth is the Inspiration



'physical-metaphysical' parallel, Riffat Alvi's work is the beginning of an end – or beginning of a beginning?

"I believe the power, intensity and aesthetic appeal of a work of art are immeasurably increased when form is touched with history," she says – a claim her work has never failed to withstand.





With resonating allusions drawn from the remains of the cities of the Indus Valley Civilisation – Moenjodaro, Harappa and Mehr Garh – her current work, 'Lost Civilisation' at the Commonwealth Institute, Bradford, is poised to leave the self same perimeters of British art in specific and western art theory and practice in general, with an epochal statement.

Recreating the past from the

...grammes of a given space and time ... spirit, history subtle translations spell ... and a current concern in Riffat's ... worldly perception, along with a ... validity of ... Spiritual concepts, extant traditions ... and ancient sites, the points of past ... continuum, diffuse to form the ... content of her works.

A water-colour, acrylic and oil painter by training, the fateful moment that was to later initiate her medium and content dramatically, arrived when the Greek painter Helen Lewis mixed paints of soil pigments, sparked a new inspiration in her by asking, 'what colour is your soil.'

"Much that I prided myself in being a Pakistani, I could but hardly find an adequate response, for I had never observed the colour of our soil."

A reflection directed to the world around, is one that triggers a transmigration to the alien within as well, from thereon has initiated a consistent period of exploration and contemplation. Exploration that would continue to lead her to probe into her very being, and a contemplation that would lead her to rediscover the past.

Parting from acrylics and oil paints, today, her medium is as complex as her work. A synthesis of ground earth, resins, various oils and binders to which are added hand grounded natural colours, derived from vegetation, precious and semi precious stones and mineral ores – these constitute her medium. In painting what she calls 'a sensitive subject', she chooses the earth pigments made from the earth collected from the actual sites. Like Buddha's crematorial ashes ground into hundreds of clay tablets and used in the making of each stupa built after his demise, her medium would enliven the aura of the ancient cities –

...ancient civilisations she would elect to ... encompass.

... exploring the world around ... increasingly aware of its ... Riffat composed letters to ... 'Letters from Mockingbird'. ... yet know what the letters ... mean, but they do mean something. Perhaps when the signs will finally be deciphered, I would know.

But that is not the point ... observation. The point ... question makes us to ... ourselves ... ancient civilisations ... symbols, ... mythic ... ... anxieties, death, fidelity, ... fear of the unknown, into an immediate contemporaneity. Creating an unmistakable paradigm between the cerebral psychedelia of her images and Jungian discourse on collective unconscious, Riffat's works have continued to equivocally affirm her conceptual association with her subject.

Like mediaeval frescoes, thick layers of mud cover each other, from which shadows and shapes emerge, some marginally concealed, and some abruptly unveiling themselves before the viewer. In both the cases, however, the challenge remains not only aesthetic, but textual.

A dexterous application of the earth pigment, layer upon layer, congests and sometimes saturates the format leaving one gasping for some breathing space – but so does history. Should one really feel the surface, one discovers the inexhaustibility of texture, stunning numerosity and ... variety of pigments, both in colour and granularity. The entire humanity indeed, unfolds itself there. Not just a ... reflecting only surface ... deferring the comprehensible, but ... each work becomes a window into the realm of the apparently invisible.

... Metaphysical, as the work of art is, Riffat's work may find itself subject to ... reflections of conclusions and probabilities. She would need to, somehow, prevent her work being ... and enclosed as a curiosity ... around its artist as a philanthropic ... ethnic or ... cultures for its ... which, given the Western ... ... chances are perhaps ... How would she ... with a ... ...

Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri: A Silent Language of Heart and Soul

Clio Ki

in the beginning is the ending
to die is to be born again
to journey on the back of time in eternity
is to feel and to hope once more
once more to renew the silent
secret communion with the stars
and to hear in the hush of the cosmos
a silent language of heart and soul
like the birds the seasons and nature
talk to one another in the same tongue
the artist captures this echo of silence
for she, too, converses in such manner
in this silent calligraphy of the stars
a dialogue with the revolving spheres
the universe
from heart to heart
an inspiration to the soul
which lights up
whenever we look up to the sun the sky
for a warm touch or a joyful sign



IN THE beginning a word, and she takes refuge in word to decipher solace when all around her is in chaos. She bleeds too, for their pain, for their aborted living into death. Bosnia-Herzegovina. The historic recycling of power torn asunder and sheer human madness. The end of time? So she turns to the Qur'an to realign her bearings and to put her trust in that divine direction. To listen to the temper of time so she, too, may sing the cries of human suffering.

From the two letters *Ha* and *Mim*, the beginning, the ending, taken from Surahs 40-46 in the Qur'an, Sharifah Zuriah calligraphs the confusion and frenzy of the present time, the last decade of the twentieth century. To exorcise, to synthesize her pain with their pain. To feel, to share, to express in her paintings that which cannot be uttered by a people in passing.

The impulse of her recent paintings comes from the very heart of Nature. The same force that guides the salmon upstream to spawn and then die in the out-going tide; that drives the migration of birds and fish from season to season. The same sap that pulls a blade of grass, wax and wane the moon, the eclipse of the sun, the rising and setting of the constellations. All the same force of Nature that turns the seasons, turns the series of paintings of a sensitive artist.

Sharifah Zuriah surrenders to the silent language with Nature in communion with the Universe, the eternal cycles of space-time. She firmly believes this silent bond with the stars is in all of us. We are born with this gift. She breaks with her former style of painting and listens to the stirring of her own heart and soul, the mirror image of that Greater Soul, the source of all languages.

To forge a bond with this violent time, the *Ha Mim* series of paintings



Top: *Bosnia 20*. 1992. Above: *Bosnia 19*. 1992. Collection Sarawak Museum. Opposite page: [illegible]. Previous page: [illegible]

real words?

The force that drives her art is like the force that bears a wasp to lay her eggs on a grasshopper she has stung unconscious, so that her children when they hatch can feed on the grasshopper without killing it. Sharifah Zurian listens to the time silence and answers to the call of yet another divine direction to chart new bearings for her journeying. Her art and her life merge as one. She remains faithful to this call, this silent communion with the cosmos [illegible]

Research Triangle Park North Carolina. Earlier this year (1994) [illegible] paintings done in 1992 especially for the NGO Forum of the UN World Conference on Human Rights were exhibited at the Austria Centre in Vienna. Two of her previous exhibitions, in Kuala Lumpur and Sarawak, helped raise M$29,000 for [illegible]



Nayyar Ali Dada: Tradition and Beyond

Marcella N Sirhandi

Nayyar Ali Dada, a leading Pakistani architect is spearheading a renaissance in his country's architecture. Years of blind adherence by most Pakistani architects to the Western modernist movement of architecture has contributed to the dehumanization of Pakistani cities and to the obliteration of its history and culture. Nayyar has learned - and is promoting among his colleagues and political decision makers - the need for a balance between what is modern and what is traditional and for a return to the aspirations of the people, the consumers of the physical environment.

Born in Delhi in 1944, Nayyar entered the Mayo School of Arts in Lahore as a painting student. After changing his field, however, he became one of the first graduates in the early 1960s of the newly formed department of architecture1. While still a student, he started a partnership, (H. Khan and Associates), that dealt mainly with residential projects. In 1970, he established his present firm, Nayyar Ali Dada and Associates, one of the largest and most successful in Lahore, which includes 14 architects as well as civil, mechanical, and electrical engineers, surveyors, landscapists, interior designers, graphic designers, and draftsmen.

Pakistani educated, Nayyar's success in his profession at a time when foreign degrees were a mark of distinction, attests to his talent and ingenuity. Though he never studied abroad, Nayyar was trained in the international modernist movement by foreign professors from the U.S.A., Britain, and Canada during his student years at the National College of Arts, the former Mayo School of Arts.

The arts and crafts tradition - the original curriculum of this school, like that of other government schools set up by the British in India - was by Nayyar's time regarded as outdated and useless. Nevertheless, Nayyar had absorbed much of the arts and crafts training in his four years at the Mayo School of Arts and this background was instrumental in broadening his personal philosophy and his concerns for architecture.

The international modernist movement, epitomized by the German Bauhaus School, was a response to the scientific age of reason and logic. Nayyar and his colleagues accepted the modernist credo "form follows function," as they looked to Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and the American architect Frank Lloyd Wright for guidance. The modern movement, according to Pakistani architect and author, Kamil Khan Mumtaz, "established an aesthetic of bare, unadorned surface of glass, concrete and steel, crisp rectangular planes and grids, or deliberate asymmetry and highly sculpturesque forms which defied all established conventions and did not relate to any historical style".[2] That which was handcrafted or ornamental was regarded as superfluous and counterproductive.

Nayyar's early buildings, mostly private residences, reflected his training in the modern style but his commitment to that approach was already faltering when a fortuitous opportunity presented itself in the early 1970s. His mentor Shakir Ali, principal of the National College of Arts, asked him to help design his (Shakir's) new home. Nayyar's work on the residence incorporated much of his new philosophy. The design of the stately two-storey residence built of brick drew from functional trends in modern architecture yet incorporated old forms, such as niches and arches and thick brick walls that safeguarded the interior from noise and heat. The Shakir residence, now a museum, respected the historic practices but presented them in a contemporary fashion.

The purely modernist tradition, Nayyar concluded, was not responsive to local needs, and it was at odds with the indigenous culture. The extensive use of glass, for example, was not conducive to long hot summers in Pakistan where air conditioning is expensive and unreliable. Local materials such as brick were readily available, and more economical than steel, and the available technology - using bamboo scaffolding - resisted the crisp, clean lines of modernist architecture. In contrast, pre-modern architecture had high windows in thick walls as well as corridors that directed the flow of air, kept out the heat, and preserved the coolness within. Overhanging eaves deflected the sun and the heavy downpours of monsoon rains. Water was used as a cooling agent as well as for decoration in the Mughal period and Nayyar believed it could be used again in fountains and in water coolers. "We must make our buildings energy efficient, rely as little as possible on air conditioning and heating devices," he said. "Our predecessors were far more successful than we were even without these mechanical means".[3]

According to Nayyar, to lose sight of all the old but practical solutions for the sake of fashion and modernity was bad enough, but to distort the cultural environment was even worse. The modernist movement was insensitive to the physical and the spiritual unity of the Muslim community, he explained. "The mosque extends into the souk (market place) and the street with housing around it, a focal and ethereal quality of space is created." Thus in his designs, buildings were connected by open courtyards alternating with gardens, which provided an ambience and contact with nature. Recent architecture and urban planning had ignored these human and cultural elements, and Nayyar was frustrated and determined to change these shortcomings.

Alhamra

His big break came in 1980, with the commission for the Alhamra Arts

Council on Mall Road in Lahore. This commission put him in the forefront of the Pakistani architectural profession and allowed him the freedom to test his theories. To prepare for the task, Nayyar studied the buildings on the Mall. In a 1991 interview with the author he stated that "Many British period structures were successful, excellent - Aitchison College and High Court. They belonged to Lahore, to the climate, to the Mall. They made use of local materials, bricks and stone. The British could produce nice buildings, why can't we?"

Brick characterized many of the best buildings of the Mall, it is indigenous, inexpensive, and has good insulation quality. Consequently, Nayyar chose brick as the obvious material for the multifaceted Alhamra Art Complex.

Today the Alhamra is an integrated site, with theaters, an auditorium, studio spaces, and an administration building that includes art exhibition space on two levels. Monumental in scale, the complex is reminiscent of the Mughal-period Lahore Fort, whereas the inward-sloping, octagonal walls derive from one of Nayyar's favorite buildings - the 14th century tomb of Shah Ruka-e-Alam. Arranged on an irregular shaped plot, the complex weaves itself into micro-community with courtyards and walkways. A grass-space and tree-filled garden shields the site from the busy traffic of Mall Road.

The brick walls, in keeping with other buildings along the Mall, appear thick and massive like those of the Mughal and British periods; they are, however, hollow. Hollow walls are less expensive than solid ones, and the added space is a buffer to the summer heat and damp chill of winter. They also provide a convenient place for water pipes and mechanical support devices.

If Nayyar was energy and space conscious for the sake of his client, he was also sensitive to the needs of the artists and the audience. Nayyar referred to the logistics of Epidarous, a classical Greek amphitheater, in determining the slopes and angles of walls and ceilings. As a result, the acoustics of the theater and auditorium are excellent.

At first glance, the complex appears to be completely devoid of glass. On closer view, floor-to-ceiling glass inserts can be seen behind junctures of the brick wall panels. An additional

[illegible] art gallery [illegible] the roofs during the day. The understated use of [illegible], a departure from the modernistic, respects local tradition, as did the use of brick.

Children's Complex

In later buildings, Nayyar becomes even more eclectic - "post-modern" - according to architectural historian Nadir Khan. The Children's Complex in Lahore is a melange of architectural styles and periods. The complex includes an auditorium, a library, craft studios, and [illegible] stepped courtyard. The shallow colonnade in front of each wing unites the site and, like the stucco reliefs outside, functions as ornamentation - a practice shunned by the modernists. Khan believes that Nayyar's eclecticism, evident in the Children's Complex, has elements in common with American post-modernist architect Robert Venturi.

The Punjab House

The Punjab House, residency of the Punjab government in the capital, Islamabad, is also built around a courtyard. Its encircling colonnade, with projecting watercourse and fountain, is reminiscent of the Panch Mahal, a five-tiered, open air, arcaded structure at Akbar's short-lived city, Fatehpur Sikri. Large geometric forms defining the floor in local marble do not copy past designs but do invoke the spirit of the past, a sentiment Nayyar often expressed.[8]

Open Air Theater

Lahore's new Open Air Theater is yet another structure that balances East and West, past and present. Completed in 1989, the 4,000-seat theater departs from its Western precedent less in form than in decoration. Located in the sport zone of Lahore (in company of other stadiums), the theater was modelled after the Roman Colosseum. Constructed of concrete, the building is faced on the exterior with brick so that the majestic structure looks as if it is built of the native brick Nayyar had come to appreciate. In contrast to the building's earthly red bricks are the bright indigo Hala tiles that decorate the facade drawing attention to the entrance and the colonnade. The tiles lend an unmistakable regional and Muslim character to the building - a major accomplishment

[illegible] dering the lack of public [illegible] eaters as historical models in this and other Islamic countries.

SAPICO Office Building

High rise office buildings, also without native historical precedent in Pakistan, were prime examples of modernist disasters. The 22 storied Sapico Office Building in Islamabad departs from the glass and steel concept of the modernist idiom. The precast concrete panels set within four towering corner turrets give the building the appearance of the Lahore Fort, particularly the Maasjid Dawaza. To break the heaviness, Nayyar divided the building into three levels of five stories with arcades at each juncture. Each segment resembles a Mughal pavilion with hand-made glazed tiles ornamenting the exterior.

Conservation Efforts

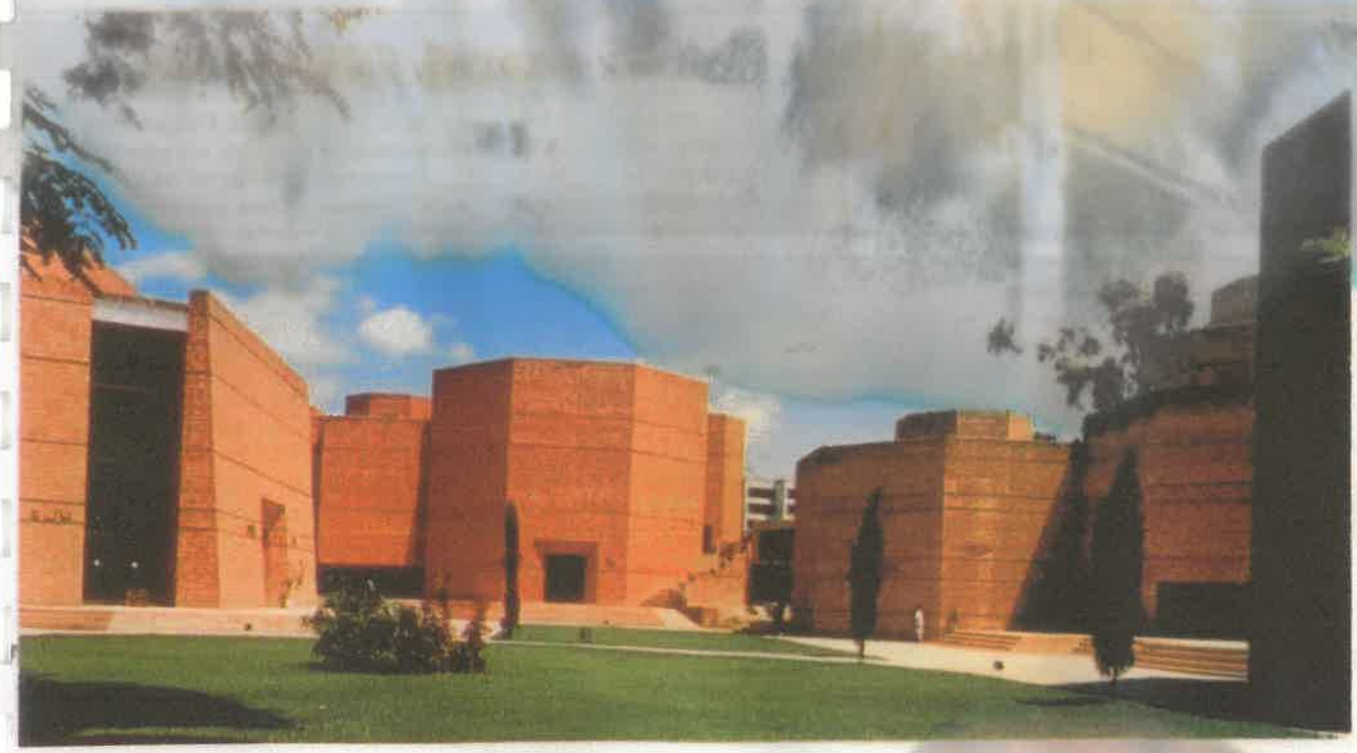
Not all of Nayyar's commissions have been for new buildings. He is also deeply committed to and involved in preservation and renovation. As one of the founding members of the Lahore Conservation Society (1986), Nayyar has contributed to the public's awareness of the need for conserving old traditional buildings.

A classic example of renovation was the Quaid-e-Azam Library in Lahore, which Nayyar transformed from the British Gymkhana Club building. The decayed roof was reconstructed and the new ceiling hand painted. Elegant yet stately - the remodelled interior now offers a suitable ambience for research and study.

The Society's lobbying efforts, augmented by support from the Punjab governor, led to the Punjab Preservation Act, under which architecturally and historically important buildings cannot be remodelled or demolished without permission. The Lahore Conservation Society has had such a strong impact, Nayyar reported in an interview for *Shir* magazine, that the "government had to call us and ask us what we wanted."[9]

Largely responsible for identifying 100 buildings to be protected in Lahore, Nayyar regrets that legislation came too late to save such valuable buildings as Al-Mamur, a bungalow used by Quaid-e-Azam, and the Civil and Military Gazette building, where Rudyard Kipling worked. But he also said that conservation is not so simple as



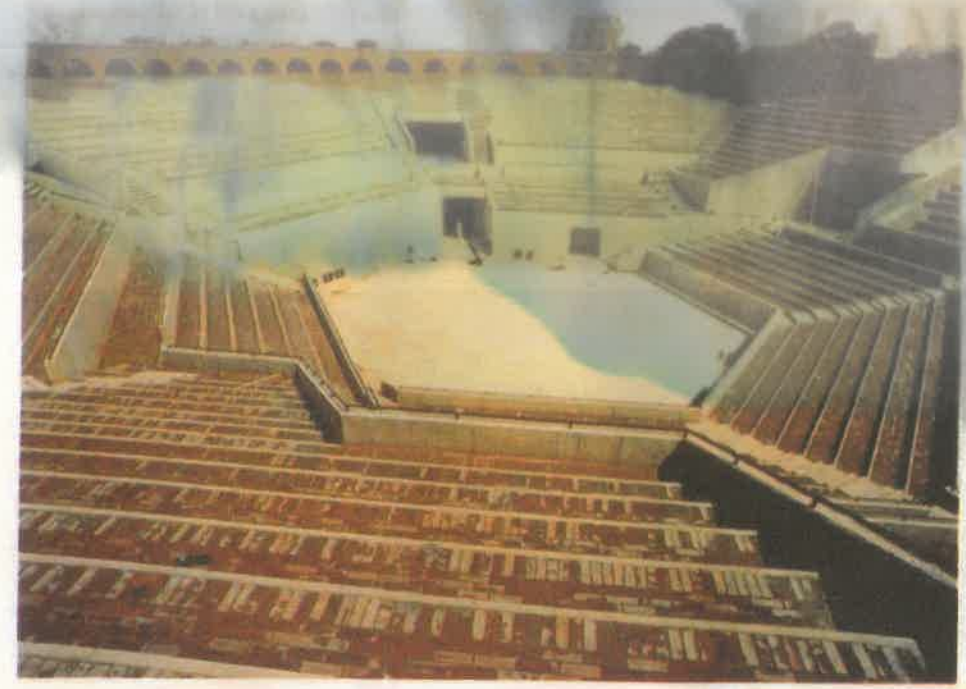






Top: Children's Library, Aga Khan Trust for Culture, Aga Khan Cultural Services, Inc. Art Complex, Aluwer Children's Library











Top and Middle, left: Open Air Theatre. Middle, right: Entrance. Quaid-e-Azam Library.
and above right: Facade and interior, Quaid-e-Azam Library.

...hosts there can be no significant change without a corresponding probable education. In a very personal way, Nayyar works toward this end. He lectures at the National College of Arts. He hires / consequently influencing / young architecture graduates who later start their own firms. He influences high-level policy as a member of the board of governors of Lahore's most important architectural and arts organizations.

An artist as well as architect, Nayyar is owner and director of his own art gallery, Anasar, where classical music concerts and other cultural activities contribute to the renaissance he is fostering. With his keen sense of humor, quiet manner, perseverance, and political acumen, Nayyar is returning humanism to Pakistan's architectural profession and preserving a part of the country's cultural history as well.

Footnotes

1. Nayyar completed the three year course of architecture at the Mayo School of Arts and when it became the National College of Arts he continued his studies there as an advanced placement student in the new five year degree program.

2. Kamil Khan Mumtaz, *Architecture in Pakistan*, Concept Media, Singapore, 1985, p. 163.

3. Lahore experiences regular hours of load shedding during the hot summer months when electric service is shut off for several hours once or twice a day and is rotated around the city.

4. Interview with Nayyar Ali Dada August 1991.

5. Nayyar Ali Dada, "Search for an appropriate Environment for a developing Muslim Society," Conference paper presented in Teheran, Iran, n.d. p.4.

6. Interview, 1991

7. Nadir Mohammad Khan, "Search for Identity: The Approaches of Three Pakistani Architects," PhD dissertation, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, June 1990, p.64.

8. Interview 1991

9. Cassandra Balchin "Clear Winner - Nayyar Dada," *She*, 1988, p. 60

10. Ibid, p. 61.

11. Nayyar Ali Dada, "Search for ...," p. 1.

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of copying history, or forgetting it altogether in preference to modern approach - have been the most common during the last few decades. Whole areas of inherited cities in many countries have already been replaced with modern buildings, devoid of culture, climate and tradition, either too hot to work and live in , or usable only by mechanical aids and air conditioning.

But it is in the design of mosques - social and urban focus of many traditional cities and their inhabitants - that the first approach, that of copying history, continues to persist, less because most architects favour such an approach or indeed understand it well enough, but more so because those who commission such buildings - individual patrons and lay committees - deem and demand it to be the desirable approach.

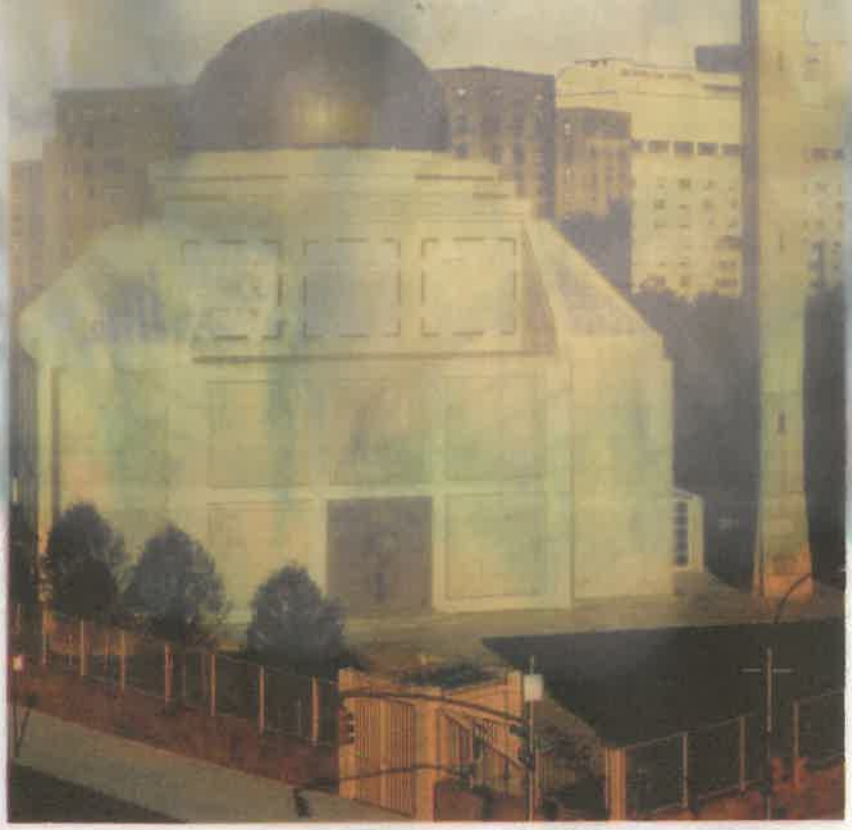
The evidence of this approach, as applied to most new mosques and cultural centres, particularly those in the western countries, can be seen in the sad and dismal results which have been achieved. Most of the new centres hark back to the vague and lingering memories of the mosques left behind by the first generation who seem not to have much time or inclination yet to properly work out their own social and cultural needs in context with their new existence. Their emphasis still remains on the end product - what the building looks like from the outside - rather than on the process of a community seriously trying to balance its needs and resources in order to redefine and express its own formative culture and identity.

The results are buildings which are inadequate, badly planned, and inflexible to adjust and absorb future changes. Instead of being inspired by the refinement, maturity and pragmatism of a building type long evolved in different regions, climates and the many diverse cultures of the Muslim world, most of the contemporary Islamic centres are but a clumsy caricature of their distinguished past. In its totality, it reflects neither the architectural and artistic heritage it tries to emulate, nor satisfies much of the evolving social and cultural needs, adds little to the contemporary Muslim identity, and more seriously, fails to make any connections with their new cultural landscape. What is built is seldom published except in the annual Muslim calenders; little of critical value is learnt from the experience; and not much debate and discussion is generated to influence future direction.

[illegible] expression, while the [illegible] organization favoured a more literal version of the Ottoman historic forgoing and details. The end result is all the more interesting for following the first experience in that considerable effort has been made to study the historic elements of form, detail and decorations to arrive at an interpretation which attempts seriously to belong to its own place and time. Both internally and externally, the building as well as the minaret are exquisitely detailed and finished, and through actual use, will in time become an apt subject for deeper and more objective study.

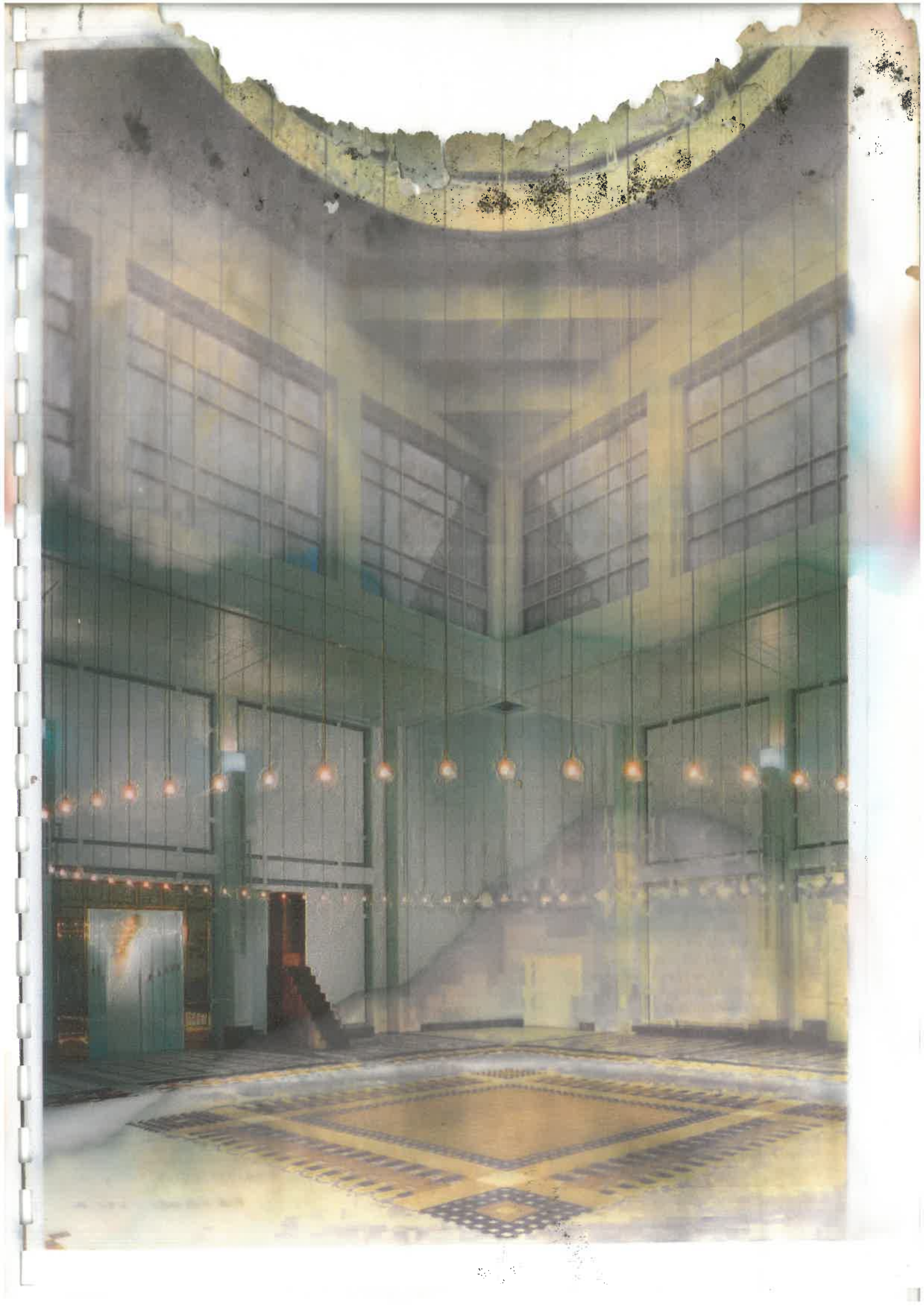
Located at the intersection of the Third Avenue and 96th Street, a short distance from the eastern edge of the Central Park, the new centre is meant to supplement and provide focus to the many small mosques housed in a variety of existing buildings in the five boroughs of New York. Essentially, the building is based on a square [illegible] plan covered by a central dome and a 70-foot high free-standing minaret which, unlike the Ottoman mosques, does not perform its original function of actually delivering the call to the prayers. The column free prayer hall has four large steel girders and stepped squinches, not unlike the "Muqarnas" of traditional dome construction, to support a copper clad hemisphere of a dome above. A women's prayer gallery, suspended by steel rods from the girders is approached by two stairs flanking the main entrance. Ablution areas and





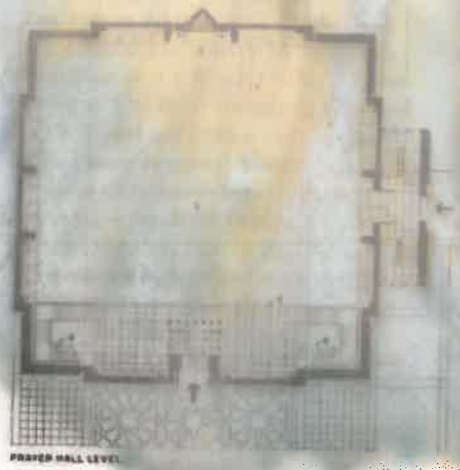






space for social functions, classroom and a library is located in the basement.

A square grid of structure and granite faced panels generally defines the external envelope of the building. Two layered square grids at the base of the building are made up of entrance screens and granite clad panels edged with narrow strips of



PRAYER HALL LEVEL

1. Mihrab
2. Minbar
3. Prayer Hall
4. Shoe storage
5. Women's gallery
6. Men's toilets (over)
7. Men's ablutions
8. Womens ablutions
9. Women

glass to achieve a floating appearance. The third layer of the panel grid at the base of the dome is glazed with geometric decorations to provide defused light to the prayer hall. The ribbed dome has been separated from its base by a foot high glazed strip to light the surface of the dome during the day and at night, giving the dome a floating appearance.

Historically, the hierarchy of the mosque is based on three different types: small neighbourhood mosque or 'masjid' within an easy walking distance - say between five and ten minutes - for the daily prayers; the Friday mosque or the 'jami' for the congregational address and prayer on Fridays; and thirdly, the 'musalla', an open prayer area with minimum structure - only a long *qibla* wall and the *mihrab* - located at the edge of the town for the largest gatherings on the two festivals. Not unlike other main mosques in the western cities, the New York mosque will need to serve all three purposes: for daily prayers by those within easy reach; full and brimming over into the open area when the weather permits on Fridays; and two or even three shifts for the

fille

background, the design and placing of the building in its setting needs to be examined. The [illegible] structure of the square building and its central high dome refers more to the square plans of the free standing tombs and mausoleums - Humayun and Safdar Jang's tombs in Delhi, 1565 and 1753 respectively; or Adil Shah's tomb in Bijapur, 1656; or even the square plan of the Taj Mahal itself, 1651 - hollowed out of their mass from the inside, and with their platform bases removed. The effect is that instead of the clear and powerful directional orientation towards the qibla - historically achieved by a rectangular plan with entrances in one long wall and the mihrab in the wall opposite - an unusual and concentric orientation has been imposed upon the prayer hall. This effect is all the more heightened by the similarity of visual weight and decorative treatment to the entrance screens and the mihrab and by the ornate central design in the carpet floor, indicative more of the position where an ornate central grave stone would have been in a mausoleum.

The orientation of the site itself has resulted in the awkward placing of the square mass at an angle to the rectilinear street grid, with the surrounding irregular space enclosed by a boundary wall incorporating a small portico to mark the entrance. Unfortunately, the effect is of an axially designed monument unhappily placed in a setting which neither provides the axial approach and vista nor indeed the necessary formality of landscape.

In search of a monumental approach, an opportunity seems to have been lost to explore the traditional plan forms with the same degree of vigour which has gone into the study of details and decorations; and here one cannot escape recalling, among many others, the example of the famous mosque-madrasa of Sultan Hasan in Cairo, 1359; or the Friday mosque in Isfahan, 8-17c; where clear and memorable internal spaces have been ordered on irregular and awkward sites. Save a few royal mosques and monuments to the dead kings finished for ever as

bilateral impositions, and must change by orb new communal ally arise with the ne. The complex and of the Friday mosque in Israel is an example where a few vagaries of change has been absorbed around the wonderful nucleus of the original design still retaining the oft admired 'hidden' and internal quality of Islamic architecture.

Given the fluctuating needs for the prayer space - daily, and on Fridays and Festivals - would a less lofty and less monumental building - more horizontal, adaptable, and democratic - enclosing the whole of the awkward site while shutting out the traffic noise, have been more appropriate? Would a layout based more on the all too familiar a sequence - through the gateway, into the courtyard, and into the covered prayer area - have worked equally or better? Might a less dominant and more accessible building, with a much richer and mellifluous imagery, have transmitted a more appropriate range of visual and cultural messages instead of the one single dominant history based message of a monument? Is the demoted and fixed-for-ever social and cultural space in the basement all that will be needed in the foreseeable future by those who will use the centre to express their culture, to explain and communicate, and to shape a cultural identity for themselves in the new world?

These questions, applicable as these often are to many more new mosques and cultural centres in the western as well as in the Muslim world, have perhaps less to do with the designers themselves, but pertinent more to those who sponsor and commission these buildings. And herein lies the serious task, long overdue, the task for the community itself to redefine the visual message and proper functions of the mosque - social, educational and cultural - which it must perform, not only to renew their own culture but also to redefine it in a contemporary context. Seen in this way, the New York mosque and cultural centre, luxurious and well finished as it is, is a response less to the new and emerging needs of those for whom it is built, but a monument finished forever - a certain kind of monument, to a certain kind of history and patronage!

Keith Critchlow

Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts at the Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture

Emma Clark

The Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Course was started by Dr Keith Critchlow at the Royal College of Art in 1984. The first students graduated in 1987 and since then over twenty others have received Masters Degrees (several with distinction) and over eight have received Doctorates. This course, the only one in higher education which offers students the opportunity to study the practice, as well as the theory, of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts, has now transferred from the Royal College of Art in Kensington to become a department in The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture in Regent's Park, London. The new intake of students started in October 1993.

The VITA Department continues in its new location with Dr. Critchlow as Director, a nucleus of permanent teaching staff and a wide range of distinguished visiting lecturers and tutors such as Dr Martin Lings, Professor S H Nasr and Dr Kathleen Raine. The Department is committed, as it always has been, to teach, study and research Visual Islamic Arts as well as the arts of the other great traditions of the world. Most importantly, through the teaching of geometry as the universal objective language underlying the art and architecture of the world's great traditions, students are encouraged to apply this geometry to their own particular activity whether it is wood carving, textile design, ceramics or painting.

Dr Critchlow is internationally known as an inspiring lecturer, educator and writer, but most of all as a Master of Geometry. His book "Islamic Patterns, a Cosmological Approach" written almost twenty years ago now, was a pioneering work on, not only the practical analysis of the geometry of Islamic patterns, but also on their symbolic and metaphysical content. Dr S H Nasr comments in his foreword to the book that "this study .... is the key to the understanding of many aspects of Islamic civilisation and also the reality which both surrounds and transcends man".

One of the principle aims of the Department is to encourage an understanding of the timeless values that sustain all the great art of the world. Islamic art is chosen as the main tradition of art to study because it is a "living tradition", i.e. the traditional way of life is still alive in several parts of the Islamic world, in spite of the tremendous onslaught in the shape of Western "civilisation". By "traditional way of life" we mean, in short, a life where there is no distinction between the sacred and the profane, where every human activity, from eating and washing to the practising of art and architecture, is imbued with a sense of the sacred. In Islam, the whole pattern of daily life is punctuated by the remembrance of God – not only do the faithful pray five times a day, but their greetings to each other, their conversations, their daily habits, are impossible to perform without mentioning God. In Western society such daily remembrances of a Higher Reality have all but disappeared, for example "Good-Bye" and "Holiday" are all that remain of "God be with you" and "Holy Day".

To return to the subject of Islamic and Traditional Arts, it is worth mentioning that the distinction made today between "Fine Art" and "Craft" is entirely modern. In a traditional society an artist was someone who practiced an art or a craft and, in the words of René Guénon, "his activity was bound up with the principles of a much more profound order".[1] The VITA Course aims to encourage an awareness amongst its students that the beauty of form, pattern and colour as manifested in the various branches of Islamic Art, are not simply aesthetically pleasing or demonstrations of good design, but are representatives of this "much more profound order". If we look at a masterpiece of Islamic Art such as, for instance, the Mosque of Cordoba, or that of Ibn Tulun in Cairo, or the Taj Mahal, the transcendent quality of their beauty is testimony to their embodiment of this "profound order". These three supreme examples of sacred architecture (sacred art and architecture being the essence or "heart" of traditional art), situated as they are in four distant parts of the world, are representative of the guiding principle of Islamic art, the principle of Divine Unity, (*al-Tawhid*).

This Divine Unity cannot be manifested in an image, but only through "abstractions".[2] Geometry, arabesque and calligraphy are the three principle "languages" of Islamic art by which this Unity is conveyed. Calligraphy stands in a class of its own because of its sacred character being the means by which the Qur'an is written down, thus becoming the visual manifestation of the Word of God. These three languages are found in enormous variety throughout the Islamic World from Spain to Samarkand, from Morocco to India. However, in spite of the diversity in expression according to the changing ethnic environment, there is clearly a unifying idea linking all of them together. As Titus Burckhardt writes, Islamic art "is essentially the projection into the visual order of certain aspects or dimensions of Divine Unity".[3] The VITA Department offers courses on geometry, arabesque and calligraphy in order that the students not only learn new techniques for creative design but, through practical applications, can also partake in the essentially contemplative nature of sacred and traditional art. In the words of a former student, Simon Trethewey (MA by Course, 1989) "I can divide a circle perfectly into six equal sections to create a hexagram, but I have not actually made a hexagram if I do that. Rather, I have adhered to something that was already inherent in the circle... I am







Above, left and right, before

not just working with pencil and pen, I am also working with an inner structuring... developing an understanding of the subtlety of pattern that transcends any idea of the merely decorative."

In his book *The Eleventh Hour*, Dr Martin Lings remarks that, in spite of the destruction of the Christian civilisation ... "many of its landmarks still remain ... the cathedrals for example, are monuments of overwhelming beauty which bear witness to the spiritual exaltation of the age which produced them". Although the VITA Course concentrates on Islamic Art and the teaching of geometry, Islimi (or Arabesque, the stylised motifs based on natural forms) and calligraphy, the great art of other sacred traditions are also looked at - Celtic Art for example, and the great cathedrals referred to above. Dr Critchlow has himself researched the complex and beautiful geometry on which Chartres Cathedral is based, and this project continues under his direction in the Research Department at The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture.

In the same book mentioned above, Dr Lings makes an important point, "for the great loss of the experience of a traditional way of life, there can now be, for those capable of taking it, a certain compensation in the gain of access to the spiritual

riches of traditions other than one's own". This is very relevant to the work of the VITA Department since, by introducing Western students to the riches of the Islamic artistic heritage and re-awakening Muslim students to their own traditions, a greater understanding and appreciation of Islamic Civilisation and spirituality can result.

Past students in the VITA Department have included practitioners in almost all fields of traditional arts, as well as architects who have concentrated on various aspects of Traditional Islamic Architecture. With regard to the latter, one of the first students to







learning from him the importance of building with local materials, skills and traditions. Her thesis has recently been published as "A Yemen Reality" by Garnet Publishing Limited.

Other architects include Yasser El-Bouri (MA by Course, 1987) who studied traditional Islamic Brickwork and applies this to modern architecture; Sorcen Placet (PhD, 1988) who studied how South Indian houses can avoid being replaced by the Western style; Wadi Saadoun (PhD, 1990) who studied the Sacred Dimensions in the architecture of the Islamic City; and Khaled Azzam (PhD, 1993) whose detailed research on the neighbourhood spaces of the madinah in the Islamic City demonstrates the importance of maintaining traditional values in order for the madinah to survive in the modern world.

graduate with a doctoral degree (1987) was Samar Dimitri whose study was on the mud-brick housing of the Hadramut in South Yemen. She had previously worked with Hassan Fathy.

Top: Karim Lahlou. **Middle, left:** Kate Montgomery. **Middle, right:** Stephenie René. **Above:** Emma Clark.

These architects are just a few of the students who have passed through the VITA Department in the past eight years. Others have studied painting and ceramics (Simon Ivethewer, 1989; Nicholas Cope, 1988; Emma Mcock, 1992); textile design (Munira Ahmed, 1991); wood-carving (Ruth Blundell, 1992); stained glass, stone-carving and jewellery design. Stephanie Rene, one of very few practising iconographers in the Coptic Orthodox tradition, received his doctorate in 1990 and continues as a tutor in the VITA Department. Prizes have been awarded annually to students graduating from the VITA course from various institutions such as the World of Islam Festival Trust (who have provided excellent support to the Department), the Barakat Trust and the Kuda Gallery. The MA graduates in 1990 (John Boyd-Brent, Khalid Seydo and Emma Clark) were the recipients of the Royal College of Art's most prestigious prize, The Flour Cowles Award for Excellence.

There are various courses offered by the Visual Islamic and Traditional

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DISCOVERING THE LINKS AS WELL AS THE DIFFERENCES

COMMENTING ON the graduation show last year (1992) at the Royal College of Arts, art critic Giles Auty wrote:

The great value of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts course run at the Royal College of Art in London is that it is at the farthest extreme from superficial. The seriousness and the knowledge of Keith Critchlow and his staff guarantees that this will not be the case and the students will leave enriched both in skills and spiritual understanding. The umbilical connection between the two seems to me to lie at the heart of Islamic art, on which I am anything but an expert. Nonetheless, I would rate time I have spent in the great Moorish palaces of Granada as perhaps the happiest and most enriching of my life. By contrast, lack of any spiritual understanding and resonance seems to me to lie at the foot of the abyss that opens ever wider in contemporary Western art. Arrogance compounds ignorance. Indeed, as a friend remarked to me once, "If they are even a little bit wiser they would know what fools they are."

The work of the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts course stands in marked contrast both in form and content to the activities of young modern or post-modern painters at the Royal College. The latter hope for fame and fortune to be visited quickly on their generally inchoate productions. Since most believe that no worthwhile critical criteria exist any longer, why should not the finger of fortune point their way? Most are brought up to despise the immediate past – "last year's fashions" – and even dismiss the great European heritage to which they at least nominally belong: "irrelevant to the modern world."

The wisdom of continuity and the proper valuing of heritage is taught too seldom now, in Western art colleges especially. The Islamic and Traditional Arts course at the Royal College teaches a proper valuing of Islamic as well as Christian cultures and encourages the discovery of links as well as differences in their basic iconographies, based, as often as not, on objective principles of geometry. The work of Lydia Sharman Male, Kate Montgomery, Nina Mercer, Emma Alcock and Ruth Blundell encourages hope for a re-winding of the spiritual and aesthetic mainspring of art. It is high time this happened.

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Calligraphy Bra
Indonesia's Istio al *Mushaf*

Rediscovering the Traditions of Islamic Sacred Art

Machmud Buchari

In the cultural history of Islam, the art of *mushaf* writing in its true form has been, and still is, a great and fundamental, as well as sacred art, which in the modern era seems to have been somewhat neglected.

The writing of *mushaf* is certainly an expression of the most authentic and original Islamic art, one of the salient manifestations of the realization of the Law of God (*al-Shari'ah*) through the spiritual way (*al-Tariqah*), and whose goal is to reach the Truth (*al-Haqiqah*). In Islam, everything must be referred to the Qur'an and the Way of the Prophet (*al-Sunnah*), including art in all its various forms.

Every Muslim believes that the reciting (*al-Tilawah*) and writing of the Qur'anic *ayat* (verses) in a beautiful and correct manner is a form of the remembrance of God (*dhikr Allah*) and is, therefore, rewarded by Him. Therefore, it is the aspiration and endeavour of every Muslim scholar, intellectual or pious man to copy the Holy Qur'an in the most beautiful writing. The reciting and writing of the Holy Qur'an are the origin of Islamic art. In the course of its development, the writing of the Holy Book has become the art of *mushaf* writing.

The term "*mushaf art*", as used in this article, means Islamic calligraphy and also the art of illuminating the Holy Qur'an in the form of a book.

Mushaf art is considered to have developed in the IXth century, in Kufah or Baghdad, as a continuation of the progress of calligraphy from the VIIth century, early in Islamic history. During this period, one of the Prophet's disciples, Zaid ibn Thabit, who had mastered the art of beautiful writing, became a Qur'anic scribe by the order of the Prophet. Later, during the caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan, when the Qur'an was compiled and codified into one single *mushaf*, Zaid was once more entrusted with the office of scribe and was made the head of a group of Qur'anic scribes or copiers. This period is considered to have been the beginning of Islamic calligraphy. In later centuries, the art of calligraphy and the art of illumination developed simultaneously, interacting with each other and perfecting each other.

In the view of Islam, calligraphy is expression of God's Revelation because it is only this art which is able to reflect the language of the Qur'an, the Arabic language. It was decreed by Allah Himself, as the Qur'an has said repeatedly, in seven verses of seven different surahs, that the Qur'an is revealed in the Arabic language. This has important implications in the life of Islamic society (*ummah*), both normatively and metaphysically. That is why, as history has proved, the development of calligraphy towards perfection has its roots in the intellectual and spiritual demands of those who wanted to guard the Word of God (*al-Qur'an*) by writing it down in a correct and beautiful way. The experts and artists in calligraphy in past centuries by their inventive imagination, have made the beautiful mushaf a symbol of creativity which has been recognized by the people as well as the state rulers. Even today, after 1000 years, examples of *mushaf* written in the past ages are preserved in many museums as evidence of the great craftsmanship of the Islamic centuries.

Among the experts and pious men of the past (the era of the Abbasids in Kufah and Baghdad, 750-1258 CE), we must mention some celebrated names. Ibn Muqlah, for example, who lived towards the middle of the tenth century, was a genius in calligraphy, who worked out the rules of proportion for the six main systems of calligraphy (*al-aqlam al-sittah*): Tsuluts, Naskhi, Rayhani, Muhaqqaq, Tawqi and Riqa'.

Ibn al-Bawwab (d.1022), who is said to have been the pupil of Ibn Muqlah, wrote as many as 61 beautiful *mushafs*, a record which probably has never been equalled.

Another genius whose name we must not forget is Yaqut al-Musta'simi (d.1298), who is said to have given unequalled perfection and beauty to the art of calligraphy, so much so that he was given the title of The King (Sultan) of Calligraphers.

The mushafs of Yaqut al-Musta'simi have their own style and system and are so beautiful that later they became one of the main sources of reference in the traditional *mushaf* art.

Every Muslim country has its own *mushaf* art with regional characteristics, but conceptually, the whole of *mushaf* art lies within a frame of contemplative thought which has arisen from the Qur'an.

Therefore, the illumination which has been applied to the Qur'anic *mushaf* is traditionally floramorphic (palmette, tree, flower) being the symbolic visualisation of the verse *"Seest thou not how God sets forth a parable. A goodly Word like a goodly tree, whose root is firmly fixed, and its branches (reach) to the heavens. It brings forth its fruit at all times, by the leave and permission of its Lord. So God sets forth parables for men, in order that they may receive admonition."* (Ibrahim,14: 24-25).

Qur'anic verses contain many parables taken from the world of real and concrete things or the world of abstract qualities which have symbolic meanings to help men remember (*dhikr*) and submit (*taqwa*) to Him.

The representations of light which are found in almost every piece of *mushaf* art work are derived from Surah an-Nur, verse 35, which describes the Light of God, which gives light (teaching, guidance, instruction) to man as His sovereign (*khalifah*) on the earth.

Likewise, the use of the colour gold is a transcendent symbol of God's majesty, because gold is the only original colour which is found in no other object except gold itself.

The *mushaf* art is considered to have reached its culmination in the 14th century in Egypt during the era of the Mamluk dynasty but then degenerated until the 15th - 16th



Above: *Symbol of Surah Indication.*
Right: *Mushaf Istaqlal Indonesia.*
Opposite page: *Surah Al-Nas.*
Photographs by Anas Sirgany


سورة الناس مدنية
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
قل اعوذ برب الناس ١ ملك
الناس ٢ اله الناس ٣ من شر
الوسواس الخناس ٤ الذي
يوسوس في صدور الناس ٥
من الجنة والناس ٦
وهي ست آيات

centuries during the Safiqid Dynasty in Persia. This is known from several researches conducted by modern scholars.

The researchers' reports express their respect and admiration with respect to the high value and significant meaning of mushaf art, and the readers feels deeply moved that Islamic art which had such a glorious past, has so much deteriorated and to a great extent disappeared.

Indonesian Muslims have made well-planned attempts to rediscover this sacred art. It is felt that this art belongs to the Indonesian people, as is historically proved by the collections of mushaf art found in Indonesian museums.

The history of mushaf art in Indonesia is considered to have started at the end of the XVIth century, at the time when other Islamic countries (the Middle East, Turkey and North Africa) were experiencing degeneration of this art.

The *mushafs* found in Indonesia were generally written and illuminated by religious scholars and pious men from almost every Islamic kingdom or sultanate. The age of the *mushafs* is considered to be between 100 and 400 years. They show the richness of illumination which is typical of the high standards of taste

Shaikh Muhammad Arwad al-Muqry from South Kalimantan, Shaikh Syamsuri al-Banjari from Banten, the *Diponegoro Mushaf* and the *Istiqlal I Mushaf*.

The Head of State, President Soeharto, aware of the great value of Indonesia's art heritage has, in his wish to promote the creation of mushaf art, initiated this great task. He has given personal support by forming a group of experts in calligraphy, painting, Qur'anic exegesis and Islamic culture in general. This action has been given the name of the "The Istiqlal Mushaf of the Nation," and the president himself, Al-Haj Muhammad Soeharto, became the first of the mushaf calligraphers by writing the first verse of the *Basmalah* of the *Surat Al-Fatihah* on October 15, 1991, at the Istiqlal Mosque during the ceremony of the Istiqlal Festival.

The work on this *mushaf*, God willing, will be finished in 1995, and it will be dedicated to the Muslim *ummah* of Indonesia, who, by His Grace, will then be celebrating their fifty years of independence.

The Istiqlal *Mushaf* will be illuminated by decorations taken from the various regions in

THE ISTIQLAL FESTIVAL FOUNDATION

An Effort to Preserve and Develop an Islamic Indonesian Culture

INDONESIA IS a country which consists of almost 13,000 islands spread out along the Equator. It has a population of about 180 million people, consisting of ethnic groups of various religions. The majority of the people, that is 87% (about 157 million people), are Muslims, and the others (about 23 million), embrace other religions and beliefs, including Christianity, Hinduism and Buddhism.

Such a composition of people took root 700 years ago, when Islam came peacefully to Indonesia in the 12th century. Interaction between Islam and the original culture set in motion a process that gave birth to a new Indonesian culture, imbued with the Islamic spirit.

The 1991 Istiqlal Festival (15 October - 15 November 1991) which displayed the Islamic spirit of Indonesian culture in all its forms, took place at the Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta and was visited by more than 7 million people, the greatest number of visitors ever recorded to have visited a festival in the country. Such a number of visitors is certainly a strong indication that Indonesian culture is in the process of finding its own identity.

In view of this fact, some ministers, men of arts, and lovers of art and culture were inspired to found, on February 22, 1993, The Istiqlal Festival Foundation (Yayasan Festival Istiqlal).

They were the Minister of Religious Affairs, the Minister of Education and Culture and the Minister of Tourism, Post and Telecommunications. The three ministers acted ex officio, together with Pratiwi Sudarmono, Mr. Rambang Triluanodjo and Mr. Martie Muhammad. The Foundation was registered on April 14, 1993 in Jakarta.

The Istiqlal Festival Foundation is an institution operating particularly in the fields of Indonesian Islamic art and culture. Its programme includes conducting studies and researches, holding festivals, exhibiting works of art, setting up scientific forums and developing cultural relations with other countries.

Sotheby's a

Paris in Jellicoe



"Baysunghur" Qu'ran, c.1425 AD, probably from Herat - a rare and thrilling opportunity as the last excerpt from this Qu'ran to come on the market was sold at Sotheby's in the late 1980's.

Two small rolls of thick paper untie to unveil under the Tughra of Mehmet the Conqueror Firmans dated the Hijra equivalent of 27th April 1453 and December 1450 AD - the first written three weeks before the conquest of Constantinople - addressed to Sitti Hatoun, daughter of Fatima Sultan, (Sultan Murad II 's sister), and wife of Zaganos Mehmet Pasha, appointed Grand Vizier shortly afterwards.

Two miniature paintings are outstanding: From Herat or Trans-Oxiana, second quarter of 15th c., in a ravishing rainbow of pastel colours and gold, the sinuously curling Simurgh is depicted carrying the diminutive figure of Zal. In contrast to this is a Persian miniature, c.1580, by Muhammadi with an elegantly delicate figure of a young archer.

Metalwork reveals some splendid pieces. A Shia steel standard from Safavid Persia, roughly 5 feet in height, bears the date AH 1097 and a religious invocation on its finely pierced metalwork. Two of these standards (to represent the five Shia Saints) were originally military standards but are now carried in the Muharram religious processions. A steel doorplate, also from Safavid Persia, again bears a religious invocation and the Hijra equivalent to the date 1600 CE AD on its delicately scrolled background. A similar doorplate is in the British Museum. A very large (10.7 x 7.1 ins) superbly simplified decorative brass door knocker of the Turkoman is from Mosul - soon to come to the Khalid Collection. Copyright A small brass horse, c.1600 and thought to be Mughal from Delhi has an incised saddle cloth matching contemporary decorative brass bands on Timurid and Safavid vessels. A bronze footed dish from Khorassan is inlaid with benedictory inscriptions in silver. A heavy Mamluk brass bowl made for an anonymous Amir of Sultan al-Malik an-Nasr - Muhammad ibn Qala'un is also inlaid in silver.

The most staggering surprise is a huge 11c. Lion originally from Islamic Spain, and though slightly smaller, undoubtedly from the same workshop as the famed "Pisa Griffin," having many similarities such as the decorative circles on its back to the Andalusian "Griffin". Found, like the "Griffin" in Europe, it is being sold by a European noble family. (An intriguing development for research is the discovery in both animals of an inner metal hose connected by a tube to the rear - and therefore not a water channel for a fountain head, but for what use is fascinating puzzle.) A rare museum object, this Lion should surely achieve a record price.

Large Timurid Qur'an

At Sotheby's (22 October), a superb and highly important early Timurid Large Qu'ran from Persia, dated AH 807 AD 1404, has an inscription at the end written by Dawud ibn Hasan which states that it was copied by Ja'far Tabrizi who was "sought by Sultans and could write the scripts of the Arabs and Persians." It is therefore the earliest known dated work by Ja'far, one of the most

Calligraphy from Kairouan

A deep blue page with its strong, gold 8th c. Kufic calligraphy is from the Kairouan Mosque: though a number of these Qu'ran pages left Kairouan some time ago, most still remain in its Mosque.

A very large Qu'ran (56 x 37 cm) from early 16th c Safavid Persia has delicately beautiful Surahs in various colours and gold.

An Ottoman medical treatise of 1554 - midway in Suleiman the Magnificent's reign - the "Muntakhab-i Shifa" is a veritable gem with its pages of embroidery-like small and distinct calligraphy.

A large panel exhibits, with superb strength in its black calligraphy, a line from the famed











famous and well-respected Timurid calligraphers. Master of an atelier of 40 scribes under Baysunghur Timur's grandson, and more usually known as Jafar Baysunghuri, here he is Jafar Tabrizi as in 1404 Baysunghur was only seven years old, and possibly Jafar was in the employ of the royal court at this period of Timur's power in Iran.

The magnificent large Muhaqqaq script in black on buff paper in this Qur'an is typical of the monumental calligraphic style which developed in the early Timurid era. The most famous of these Qur'ans is the massive Qur'an of 1420 of which some fragments and leaves survive — of c.1400-25 AD, traditionally attributed to Baysunghur himself.

The Jafar Tabrizi Qur'an has 789 leaves, 7 lines to the page, diacritics in black, gold rosettes decorated with blue and red dots between verses, numerous large circular and oval illuminated marginal devices of floral and foliate motifs in colours and gold, while Surah headings are in large gold Tawqi' script with floral decoration and red cross hatching. Two double pages of fine illumination at the beginning and end have floral and foliate motifs in colours and gold against red cross hatching. The illumination on the present manuscript shows not only remarkable variety and richness, but also an original use of popular foliate and geometric forms which set it apart from other published Timurid manuscripts.

A beautifully clear and fine ink drawing on paper of an unarmed horseman attacked by a dragon, defending himself with his bare fists as the beast entwines itself about him and the horse, is dated c.1540-50 AD and from Tabriz. A seal impression is at the lower left corner with the name Mansur Muzaffar Ali (?), and the drawing mounted on 18/19th c. Indian album page with a descriptive legend in Negari at the top. This drawing belongs to a small group of works attributable to the master artists of Shah Tahmasp's atelier in Tabriz. On grounds of style it may be assigned to Aqa Mirak, the third painter to take charge after Sultan Muhammad and Mir Musavvir, of the production of Shah Tahmasp's great Shahnama manuscript.

An octagonal Persian lacquer mirror-case is signed and dated AH 1104/1689-90 AD. The front of the case has silver hinges and a clasp with [illegible] and stones, a [illegible] the centre of the upswinging cherub's head and the squirrels on either side. The painting is mounted on an album leaf of gold-sprinkled pink paper bearing a Hindi inscription in gold naming Govardhan and a seal impression at the top right, dated AH 1075/1664 AD, which reads "Sayid Ali al-Husaini devotee of Alamgir Padsh".

Regarded as one of the greatest Indian artists for his quality of line and his perception of character, Govardhan was the son of the painter, Bhawant Das, who worked in the Mughal atelier for Akbar. As some of the most significant portraits of Dara Shikoh are by Govardhan, his relationship with the Prince seems to have been a special one. (The Prince, the eldest and favourite son of Shah Jahan and heir apparent to the Mughal throne, has left to us the album of paintings and calligraphy known now as the Dara Shikoh Album, which he gave to his young wife in 1641 - a testament to his devotion to the arts. The two best known portraits of the Prince by Govardhan are the double equestrian portrait of Dara Shikoh with Shah Jahan from the Minto Album in the Victoria and Albert Museum, and the portrait of him and his father in the Binney collection (no.56) in the San Diego Museum in America.

The ethereal quality and beauty of colouring of this miniature painting by Govardhan is unsurpassed.

[illegible] of the Prince. This [illegible] and on the back [illegible] portrait of Nur Ali Shah Isfahani is on the inside cover. The case is inlaid but has been refurbished, probably in the 19th c., when the portrait of Nur Ali Shah was added together with a new mirror.

The particular interest of this mirror-case is that it is signed and dated, and is a fine example of the [illegible] European style in Persian painting, which resulted later in the so-called Persian Qajar paintings. European engravings were very popular in Shah Abbas's Persia and were copied in local paintings in the houses of New Julfa Armenians. Julfa are witness that European artists came to Isfahan. Dutch influence is strong in the portraits of the women on the front and back covers of the mirror-case - the bird and the rose held in the hand, their dress, lace-edged. European of the period, as is their jewellery - a necklace of pearls, identical bracelets on each wrist and a coral pendant. The background landscapes too are European - with the addition, it seems, of Isfahan's pigeon towers and the domes of the two largest churches in New Julfa.

The painting of this mirror-case is of a very high quality and close in style to the work of the famous Persian artist, Muhammad Zaman. Its date falls within his lifetime, while the honourific inscription suggests that the painting was possibly done under his guidance. Such inscriptions also found on various lacquers and on some miniature paintings of the period have caused much speculation as to whether the work was his own or under his guidance.

Dara Shikoh Miniature

THE PROPERTY of a European collector, an Indian miniature of the Mughal Prince Dara Shikoh is one of the most beautiful to have been painted. Holding a fruit and a long sword, his head encircled by a gold halo above which hovers a crescent moon within a smaller radiant halo, the dark background is a foil for starry branches of blossom and the aerial shimmer of silk, the [illegible] gold-decorated jama and gold embroidered Parka of his apparel. On the water in the foreground is a contemporary inscription "Amal-i Govardhan".

Kashan Bowls

POLITICAL CHANGES in the world are opening up new areas for further Islamic discoveries. Six Kashan bowls and a Ewer from early 13th c. Persia (Sotheby's 23 October) have come from Central Asia, the three Lustre Pottery bowls are very fine and most interesting as [illegible] decoration of the Ewer. The [illegible] Lustre Bowls are "intact and virtually flawless". Decorated in brownish and plum coloured lustre, its subject "would appear to be unique and without parallel with other pieces of Kashan lustre of this period" - a kneeling camel with an elaborate heart shaped saddle, and a bearded camel driver standing beside it, his face in profile and wearing a floppy hat. Curving leaf sprays above and below link this bowl to a famous dish in

Washington's Freer Gallery of Art, signed by Shams al-Din al-Husain and dated Jumada II AH 607 November 1210 AD. The fact that this bowl and the other six pieces were found together could imply that the production of lustre ware - underglaze cobalt blue and black under turquoise glaze - were contemporaneous products of the Kashan kilns.

The second Freer bowl decorated in turquoise with Naskhi and kufic scripts and comma-like motifs - and centrally two figures, genuine or stylised, of a seated lady holding a long-handled fan-like ornament - is a typical example of the Kashan style of lustre ware. The comma-like motifs on the rear can be found on two ewers and six beakers formerly in the Adle collection.

The third Freer bowl could also appear to be the same. Decorated in a brownish and a purple lustre, Naskhi script and spiky circles of dots encircle two seated figures similar to those on the second bowl.

The Kashan lustre pottery cockerel-head Ewer is a familiar form in Persian of the early medieval period and originates from the early 8th c T'ang dynasty period in China. Decorated in brownish lustre with Naskhi script, a cock's head with large eyes, and vertical bands of comma-like motifs, on the body are two pairs of seated male and female figures with a third male figure on the handle. The females have long ringlets and a long braid, the males sidelocks and a shoulder-length lock on the nape; between the figures are doves and between their heads coiled, spitting serpents.

A blue and white Kashan pottery bowl of white ware with a white slip is decorated both inside and out in underglaze cobalt blue radiating stripes. From a well-known category of Persian ware, the group appears to be a painted derivative of Chinese celadon carved with radiating lotus petals. The fracture with a section of the rim missing "allows one to see how the bowl was extremely finely potted, while the cobalt blue is of brilliant intensity and remarkably able in firing with little trance of diffusion in the glaze."

A buff coloured Kashan pottery bowl with a creamy white slip, painted in underglaze greenish-black, has a wreath of leaves on an undulating stem around a decorated centre.

these s[illegible] ever-made in [illegible]

The last of these seven pieces is a Kashan pottery bowl "distinctive for the linear calligraphic character of the design" of stylised repetitive Kufic around it. In black under a greenish turquoise crackled glaze, it is also decorated on the exterior and in the centre.

A Syrian pottery bowl, from Damascus, 13-2" in height by 4" in diameter, is heavily crackled in blue and painted in dark blue and turquoise stripes, vertical splatters and lines on the body and horizontal lines vertically on the neck. (Pieces in Cosimo de Medici in 1456 - recorded as owning three "albarelli damascheni"). A 13/14th c Syrian pottery miniature albarello from Raqqa is painted in cobalt blue and black similar to one in Athens' Byzantine Museum found at Mt. Athos, while a larger example is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford. A 7.25in Damascus pottery candlestick of the mid 15th c. also painted in cobalt and black, has eight rosettes amid scrolling foliage around the sides and lotus petals surrounding the striped neck.

Fatimid Rock Crystal Ewer

A TINY 9/10th c Fatimid rock crystal ewer from Egypt, whose amphora-like body is more in form similar to the early Roman or Sassanian, has an exquisite handle of symmetrical leafy fronds with four holes drilled at the centre forming a cross, suggestive of Christian symbolism, and it may be that the ewer had a liturgical function as a cruet. While the neck is of clear, polished crystal, the lower part of the body is of solid crackled glass thus stabilising the ewer - which Sotheby's says "pours perfectly"!

A superb and beautiful silver-gilt belt, buckle and fittings from Syria of the 12/13th c Ayyubid period, though related to four other surviving examples of the general style, is unique, however, in detail. (The four others are an Ortukid 13th c belt in the British Museum; two Ayyubid belts in Jerusalem's Mayer collection one of which is in gold and inscribed; a pierced gilt-bronze belt in the Benaki Museum, Athens; and a Seljuk silver-gilt belt and fittings offered at Sotheby's on 25th April 1988). The Khalili collection has a number of

[illegible] Oriental [illegible] great significance [illegible] Islamic world. Estimated at [illegible] to 1000, the collection [illegible] rectangular and triangular [illegible] sided, clasp, [illegible] suspension hook and 40 spacers, 6 of which are pierced. The 2 end sections, [illegible] which have a hinged buckle and pin, are of 3 sheets of silver gilt, each originally clasped to the belt with 6 rivets. A central panel is in high relief in a finely beaded frame of interlacing arabesque leaves on lobed stems and floral motifs against a pierced background. A continuous Arabic inscription, finely engraved, is on all 4 sides and panels of elongated chain ornament are at each end. The clasp is rectangular with 2 apertures, and its upper surface has an elongated hexagonal design with a central arabesque panel and foliate border. The suspension hook has cone-shaped finials, while the spacers have shell-like finials.

A silver belt plaque measuring 3 inches with its ring is a superbly strong though small piece with an arched frame at the top and waisted sides. In a finely beaded frame the background loosely ring-matted, it is decorated in "repousse" with a strongly sculpted deer prancing to the right, head turned back. From Central Asia, possibly Samarqand, c.1200-1250 AD, though slightly narrower, it is very similar in other respects to one in the Nasser D. Khalili collection, which was compared by David Alexander to one found in Samarqand, and to two cups in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg and the Historical Museum, Moscow, which were discovered near Tereklobo in Siberia's Tobolsk region. The manner in which the fur is chased on all four examples is identical suggesting they were all made by the same craftsman.

A mamluk bill bronze helmet of the 16th c, has 9 square and 10 rectangular plaques on a leather backing, the rectangular plaques centred with raised bosses.

A 16th c. Ottoman helmet is particularly finely decorated all over.

An early Iznik cobalt blue and white pottery vase c.1500 AD, formerly in the Desenfants Collection, though damaged, is remarkable for the clarity of its design and painting. Its beautiful and

continued on page 63

Bonham's First Islamic Sale

Daliff Malek









Iraq and the Gulf States), and now have been working at Bonham's auction house for the past seven years.

Bonham's is the fourth largest London based international auction house, and this year celebrates its Bicentenary. Still a family owned

Top, left: *18th century Qur'an.* Top, right: *17th century Mughal comb.* Above: *Kufic Qur'an leaf.* Right: *Illuminated Qur'an.* Opposite page: *Mughal Tent Hanging.*





Diddi Malek. Photograph by Craig Easton.

Department at this time shows Bonham's initiative and imagination.

London is the centre for trade in Islamic art, and auction sales are held bi-annually in April and October. Prices dropped dramatically after the Gulf War, and it was not until the April sales this year that we saw a return to interest in Islamic art. The prices in April were extremely encouraging, and a carpet that had sold in 1984 for £120,000 fetched £400,000 in April 1993 - this reflects an increase of 300% or so!

Our first Islamic auction at Bonham's will be held on October 20th, at 2.00 p.m. (London time) and the prices range from £200 to £50,000, reflecting our philosophy that there is something for everybody. We have a very interesting range of items in the sale, from Metalwork, Ceramics, Manuscripts, Jewellery and Silver to Textiles and Carpets.

The Star lot in the sale is a rare Mughal tent hanging, which dates from the 17th century, and is hand-painted and block printed with red poppies. The piece is rare not only because it is enormous (6 m x 4 m)

of 10 Qur'anic pages on vellum dating from the 9th/10th century AD valued at between £15,000 - £18,000); the other is a fine and complete 18th Century Qur'an with extensive illumination throughout, signed by a well-known calligrapher and dated AH 1182 (AD 1768). The Qur'an has a beautiful period lacquer binding, and at the estimate of £7,000 - £9,000 it is very reasonably priced. Both pieces are from private collections, and this makes them all the more desirable.

Also included in the sale is the second half of an important Armenian group of the 18th century Kutahya Pottery, from the Haroutune Hazarian Collection. The pieces were all made in Turkey and appeal not only to Armenians, but also to collectors of Islamic art, since they are considered Islamic. Some of the pieces in the auction were displayed in the Exhibition of Armenian Ceramic Art at the Armenian Museum, New York, in 1982. Prices for this pottery, which is extremely decorative, will range from £300 to £2,000 so at these prices will be

of calligraphy, embellished with silver inlay; this combination of the Arabic script (often from the Qur'an) worked with a silver overlay is common in Islamic metalwork. However, not all Islamic metalwork is inlaid, hence the bird dating from the 10th century, has incised decoration, but no inlay. The ceramics in the sale range from the 10th century to the 19th century, from Persia, Syria and Turkey. The pottery from Persia from the 15th - 17th century shows the influence of Chinese porcelain. However, one must not forget that it was Persia that introduced the cobalt blue used in Ming Porcelain not the other way round.

Apart from having exquisite [illegible] in the sale with several [illegible] from Kashan and [illegible] from Uzbekistan, we have a wide range of carpets. One of the finest in the sale is a silk Kashan prayer rug, which dates from the late 19th century. This belonged to a distinguished family from Kermanshah and has been passed down from generation to generation. We have estimated it between £4,000 - £6,000, but could sell for a little more on the day.

Hanging Ornaments

The second hanging ornament, of oval form, also in two halves with pierced ends, is decorated in underglaze blue, yellow, green and relief red dots with greyish outlines, with a tassle design and the whole divided lengthwise into twelve panels.

The third hanging ornament, of melon-shaped form and again made in two halves with pierced ends, is decorated in underglaze cobalt blue on a greenish-white ground with eight petalled rosettes at either end and four heart-shaped motifs in rococo frames on the body. As in the first, there are the marks of a triple kiln spur at one end. The original silk and silver thread tassle remains on this unique hanging ornament.

Detailed reference to the monk Elia Vardepet's refurbishing and re-tiling of the Monastery of St. James in Jerusalem are of vital interest in comparisons with design and date with these three hanging ornaments.

An imposing pair of Ottoman silver-gilt candlesticks, 22.75 inches in height, probably from Egypt, (with Egyptian and Dutch control marks for 800 standard), are each composed of seven pieces bearing a coronet above an inscription in Arabic - to Shaikh Nur 1201AH/1885-4 - and this date on either foot.

A fine Ottoman brass candlestick of the late 15th - early 16th c. in form and decoration is closely related to one shown at Sotheby's on 11th October 1990 and now in the Sadberk

lot 284 was a particularly fine collection of Turkish glass.

A Qajar, pale bronze enamel portrait medallion of Muhammad Shah Qajar (of whom there are no less than likenesses - shows a bust of the monarch and bearing a plumed turban, pink robe and the sultan's ornament, together, his left front and right shoulder with rose-cut diamonds. The background is blue and the portrait is flanked by two gold bordered tear-shaped medallions inscribed in Persian "As Sahib al-Zaman Sultan, as Sultan Muhammad Shah Qajar". The mount to the portrait is of beaten gold, pierced intermittently and with granulated borders, studded with a row of 19 alternately red and green enamel rosettes, each set with a flat rose or rough-cut diamond.

An elegant small object is a Mughal gold-mounted hardstone seal from India, dated AH 1138/1725-26 AD. The heart-shaped translucent agate pendant is inscribed with two bands of Arabic surrounding a central panel on one side, and a tear-shaped Persian inscribed and dated medallion surrounded by a meandering calligraph border on the other. The Persian inscription on the front translates "Ahmad is the king of the faith, and the world, 1138," and the names of the twelve Imams. The reverse in Arabic reads: "Oh Muhammad," and Qu'ran, 11, 255, the "Ayat al-Kursi" or Throne Verse. The 19th c late Ottoman linear gold mount terminates in a coronet flanked by foliage set with rose diamonds. Although the name "Ahmad Shah" could refer to various Muslim kings in India it seems appropriate that the seal should have been made to commemorate the birth of a Mughal Emperor, Ahmad Shah Bahadur Mudjahid al-Din Abu Nasr, son and successor of the Mughal Emperor Muhammad Shah, born at the Red Fort, Delhi, on 14th December, AH 1138/1725-6 AD, (the date on the Persian inscription), and crowned at Panipat on 19th April 1748 AD.

Splendid Ottoman Room

THE MOST enchanting and evocative

Ottoman carved and painted and [illegible] room [illegible] interior in a 17th c. bourgeois house in Aleppo, one of the most important trading cities on the main Caravan routes between Asia and Europe. Among its merchants were English and Italians and the present day Italian Consulate is still in its original 17th c. trading khan. The two most important examples of Ottoman style houses in Syria - both dating from the 1740's - are the 'Azm family palaces in Hama and Damascus, while some two dozen Syrian interiors survive in the Late H.E. Henri Pharaon's Beirut home, sadly many such interiors have now disappeared throughout Syria. There is a room in the Berlin Museum and one dated 1707 AD in the Metropolitan Museum in New York.

This incomparable room is unique for its style and for its freshness of colouring - unlike other examples, it has never been vanished. Although the proportions have had to be slightly altered and an arched recess once in the room is now erected on the outer courtyard wall for viewing, the original beauty of the room has been re-created. The elaborate carved and painted ceiling is dominated by a pendant stalactite centre piece of carved leaves set with mirrors from which is suspended a bunch of grapes. Four corner brackets, elaborately and deeply carved in similar fashion to a former cornice, are now separately viewed. The main room with its door to an interior courtyard flanked by two windows, is decorated in carved and painted stucco, much of it gilded and with the original mirror inserts. Decorative motifs include wide, interlacing bands with cartouches containing stylised landscapes, houses, bouquets of tulips and other flowers, and elaborate floral and chevron borders.

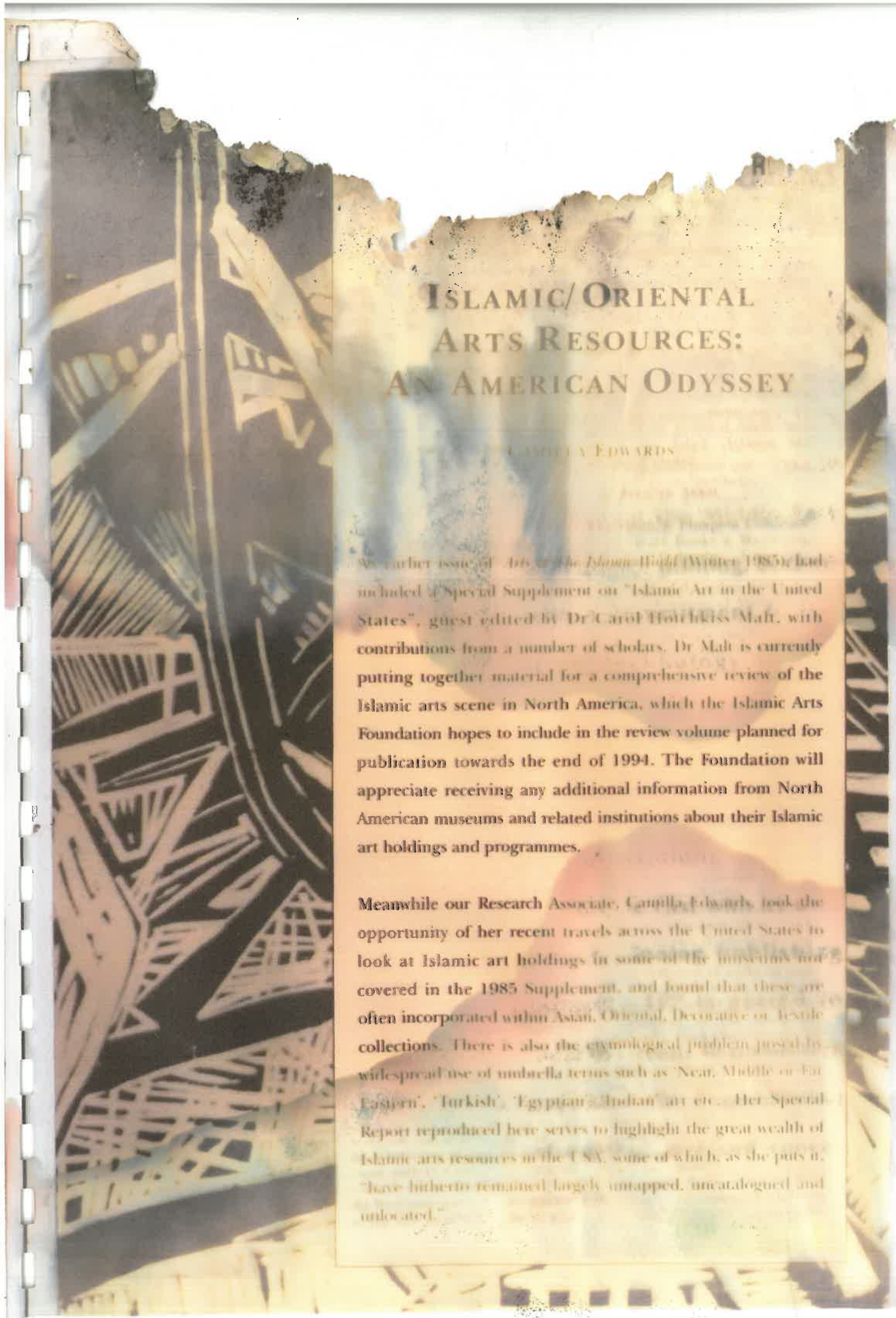
Such a rococo dream of soft rose and silvery gold echoes the feelings of Lady Mary Wortley Montague: "In true their Magnificence is of a different taste from ours, and perhaps of a better. I am all most of an opinion they have the right notion of Life; while they consume it in Music, Gardens, Wine and delicate Eating, while we are tormenting our brains with some scheme of Politics...."

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ISLAMIC/ORIENTAL ARTS RESOURCES: AN AMERICAN ODYSSEY

CAMILLA EDWARDS

An earlier issue of *Arts of the Islamic World* (Winter 1985) had included a Special Supplement on "Islamic Art in the United States", guest edited by Dr Carol Hoffhkiss Mah, with contributions from a number of scholars. Dr Mah is currently putting together material for a comprehensive review of the Islamic arts scene in North America, which the Islamic Arts Foundation hopes to include in the review volume planned for publication towards the end of 1994. The Foundation will appreciate receiving any additional information from North American museums and related institutions about their Islamic art holdings and programmes.

Meanwhile our Research Associate, Camilla Edwards, took the opportunity of her recent travels across the United States to look at Islamic art holdings in some of the museums not covered in the 1985 Supplement, and found that these are often incorporated within Asian, Oriental, Decorative or Textile collections. There is also the etymological problem posed by widespread use of umbrella terms such as 'Near, Middle or Far Eastern', 'Turkish', 'Egyptian', 'Indian' art etc. Her Special Report reproduced here serves to highlight the great wealth of Islamic arts resources in the USA, some of which, as she puts it, "have hitherto remained largely untapped, uncatalogued and unlocated."

NEW YORK

...Brooklyn Museum... Layla S. Diba... Curator of Islamic Art... Although overshadowed by its big sister... the Metropolitan Museum... collection here is... [illegible]

...one... decorative... techniques... roughly 1200-1300 items... only a small number are on permanent display. The strengths of the collection include textiles (something Layla Diba concentrated on during her first few years here, resulting in a symposium called "Rediscovering Islamic Textiles" put on by the Museum in April 1992); ceramics including Nishapur, Mamluk, Mina'i, Kashan/Rayy, Safavid, Qajar and Iznik, as well as some fine Shah-nameh miniatures, Qur'an pages and Qajar paintings. There is a very strong Mughal collection which forms part of the Indian department under Amy Poster, but is nevertheless in constant contact with its Islamic neighbours.

One of the many contributions Ms Diba has made to the installation and display of the collection is her particular focus on the inter-relationship and cross-fertilization of the arts and lands of the Islamic and Oriental world. This has created a public collection that not only teaches people the versatility of Islamic art but also its geographical, religious and cultural breadth.

Presently Ms Diba is working on plans to bring out a catalogue of the collection in its entirety which will include not only the outstanding show pieces but a checklist of every single object for reference and research purposes. This will be a mega task, cataloguing and researching objects...

...exhibition... of special... for her... Judaica following her... in... Qajar... planned for 1995... in which the best of Qajar painting... from all corners of the world will be... brought together and will also be... made widely accessible in the form of... travelling show.

This is a very wealthy city... that has... [illegible] ...in the field of... [illegible] ...Islamic art... [illegible] ...Although... [illegible] ...the... [illegible] ...one... [illegible] ...to... [illegible] ...collectors and... [illegible] ...be... [illegible] ...Persian court painter - Muza Baba.

Strong Educational Bias

The strong educational bias in the Museum has recently seen a collaboration formed between the Brooklyn Museum and Bard College, NYU for an Indian & Islamic decorative arts programme, hoping to foster new converts to this art using the collections as a visual starting point. This symbiotic relationship between a museum and academic institution which also sees NY State University interns working in the museum, (thus making accessible to future academics, art critics and dealers this somewhat unknown field of art), makes an invaluable contribution to the wide cultural outlook of a multi-racial generation.

Together with the Islamic art presence in the Met (the largest comprehensive collection in the world), New York City boasts a wealth of Islamic treasures tucked away in museum storage, university libraries and special collections of public libraries. Sadly though, the presence of the former inhibits rather than encourages these other collections and more often than not steals the limelight. This is not only a problem faced by New York City but by NY State too and indeed together with the resources in Washington, the East coast suffers from these extreme concentrations of interests in a way the West coast gains. A collection such as the Los Angeles County Museum...

...[illegible] ...Art... [illegible] ...America tends towards teaching establishments and universities where public funding and support is minimal. These collections also path to their inclusion within Asian or Oriental Departments tend to be overlooked in favour of Indian, Chinese or Japanese art due to greater public demand and interest in these but more importantly due path to the political implications which the label 'Islamic art' mistakenly evokes.

An Eclectic Array

The Smith & Plimpton Collections at the Rare Books & Manuscript Library, Columbia University, revealed an eclectic array of Islamic objects. David Eugene Smith was Professor Emeritus of Mathematics and acquired extensive collections, primarily to trace the history of mathematics. His interest in mathematics allowed his interests and historical background encroach on the valuable contribution of the Orient thus making his collection broadly representative: the printed volumes, together with Oriental manuscripts number over one hundred items, (at least fifty of which are beautifully decorated manuscript Qur'ans) whilst there is an entirely uncatalogued collection of Talismans and some outstanding astronomical and scientific instruments - amongst them one very important astrolabe from Persia, dated 1065. Inlaid with silver nails this displays fine incised details of enthroned rulers, courtly scenes, mythical creatures and zodiacal symbols.

The collection of works on paper here is invaluable for the scholar in search of the history of painting and development of the book (ie calligraphy, book illustrations and book binding). Barbara Schmitz has worked on one or two miniatures from the outstanding illustrated manuscript in the collection "Qisas al-Anbiya" or "Lives of the Prophet" dated 1571 A.D. with thirty large miniatures, but otherwise it remains largely unpublished.

Surprising though it may be, these resources at Columbia University have no educational counterpart...



Islamic Manuscripts in The New York Public Library
BARBARA SCHMITZ

Islamic manuscripts is no exception for until recently it's collection (mainly the *Spencer Collection*) of Islamic Manuscripts was similarly unpublished and unknown in its entirety until, with the help of Robert Rainwater - Curator of Manuscripts in the Spencer Collection, Barbara Schmitz, published *Islamic Manuscripts in the New York Public Library* (in conjunction with Oxford University Press). This had contributions from the library's oriental department and specialists in the oriental languages such as Latif Khayyat, Siva Soucek & Massoud Pourfarrokh.

This major undertaking (a catalogue of all Islamic manuscripts in

most outstanding manuscripts is the Ottoman 'Siyar-i nabi' or 'Life of Prophet' dating to 1594-5 A.D. commissioned by Sultan Murad, where merging of text and illustration is so effective that the images seem to grow out of the text calligraphs. The iconographs of the margins in the 'Miraj' plate is such that the flame halo of the Prophet, licks its way out of the image into the text and appears to burnish the very illumination of the text. The collection also contains 25 illustrated Indian manuscripts mostly 18th & 19th Century.

This uncovering of major public

Over 62,000 Islamic

other New York institutions with major Islamic interests include The American Numismatic Society and The Asia Society.

The American Numismatic Society is primarily a teaching and research centre rather than a museum, though they do have two exhibition halls where they show part of their permanent collection and put on temporary shows. The Society sees itself as a numismatic centre which throws light on and helps research across a wide spectrum of religion, economics, politics and culture. The last sum count in the Islamic department of 62,000 (which excludes the ten thousand to fifteen thousand in the Asian department) shows the sheer size and scope of research and specialist Islamic numismatic resources. The Graduate Numismatic Studies course, which is highly specialised and very competitive, has places for twelve North Americans per year (i.e. those enrolled and/or affiliated with North American Colleges or Universities) who receive a fellowship, and a maximum of two non-North Americans per year who must find their own funding.

The Asia Society This plays a larger role in the public realm than the Numismatic society. Its aim is to deepen appreciation between Asians and Americans particularly through a wider cultural understanding and acknowledgement of artistic achievement of both the visual and performing arts. As a society it predates almost any other kind of institution of its kind in New York. Their use of the term 'Asia' in geographical terms refers to anything east of Egypt. As Dr Jose Leal, curator of the Galleries pointed out to me, the Asia Society like many similar institutions sees itself as politically neutral. However it seems that this attempt to avoid political issues and be alert to political sensitivity is often in vain as one fights against the pre conceptions of so many that all Muslims are extremists and therefore Islamic art is synonymous with Muslim fundamentalism. The political sensitivity in the US has in the past undoubtedly been a contributing

Inaugural Exhibition

New York University Grey Art Gallery and Study Center

Communication Through Art

The contemporary Asian and Middle Eastern art scene could not be better catered for than by **The Grey Art Gallery and Study Center of New York University** made possible through the generosity of Abby Weed Grey, which not only boasts a very established and reputable collection of Asian and Middle Eastern art but also includes the University's collection of American and European art. The very co-existence of these two very different founding collections is a pioneering achievement and was the personal vision of a universal woman and collector who aimed "to improve communication among the world's people through art".

In the first phase of the inaugural united through the communicative powers of artists everywhere. Abby Grey Weed, the cultural emissary had a prophetic vision. An exhibition in 1972 saw all Mrs Grey's Asian and Middle Eastern collections consolidated and 1,001 works shown in "One world through Art" which was exhibited in the Art Gallery of the Minnesota State Fair Grounds. Other exhibitions have included "Communication through art" (catalogue entitled "Contemporary Turkish Painting" 1971), "Iran Rugs from Ears" 1975-77 circulated by Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service and "Looks from Iran - Parviz Tanavoli" 1976. Other than the numerous shows of contemporary Middle Eastern art they also put on exhibitions of traditional court art. Mughal painting

Symbiotic Relationship

The relationship between the Philadelphia Museum of Art and **The University Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology's** Islamic collections displays a symbiotic relationship i.e. where one part of a two piece architectural structure in the form of a Persian tile formation from a 16th century Sufi monastery in Nurabad is lent to the Philadelphia Museum (which owns the other half) by the University to complete the display. In the past their collaboration saw shared excavations and research projects. These complementary interests mean that the Islamic art presence in the city is composite. Maude de Schauensee, the Fowler/Van Santvoord Keeper of the Near Eastern Section stresses the main responsibility of the museum being an anthropological and archaeological one and the collections being thus primarily study ones.

However, the Islamic art collection displays an impressive array of the major arts, styles and techniques. It comprises considerable examples of manuscripts, textiles, brass, architectural pieces, tiles and

The [illegible] among [illegible] carved ivory table with [illegible] a wooden [illegible] an ancient Mamluk metal drum and a small [illegible] fountain from a 15th century house in Cairo as well as extensive ceramic fragments from Fustat dating from the 9th to 13th century. The works on paper include a copy of the Shahnameh by Nizami from Shiraz dated 1341 with three full page miniatures and exquisite illuminations together with a Seljuk Qur'an folio in Egypt by Mahmud ibn al Hassan al Kirmani (died A.D. 1111) written in Naskhi and richly decorated with gold margins and rules. The latter was the subject of Ettinghausen's "A signed and dated Seljuq Qur'an" (Bulletin of American Institute for Persian Art & Archaeology Vol. IV, No.2 Dec. 1935.) Lastly a mention must be made of an unusual calligraphic puzzle in the form of a 13th century Cairene stone mosaic panel in red, black, and white stone with pieces of serpentine forming the corner decorations which comes from a mosque and in its' geometrical rendering of the Muslim confession of faith, points to its religious import.

BOSTON, MASS

Boston is another city whose Civic and University collections complement and enhance each other's strengths and interests. **The Museum of Fine Arts (MFA)** is another largely unpublished collection. (There has been no catalogue of any Islamic material published since 1929 when A. K Coomaraswamy published the newly acquired Goloubew Painting collection). Like so many already cited, the collection does not come under an Islamic department or have a curator *per se*, but comes under the Asian department. It boasts a very important and sizeable body of Islamic art - a small proportion of which is on permanent display. In all there are approximately 1500 Islamic objects, not including textiles. The interests in this area are somewhat overlooked in favour of the extensive Indian and Asian collections indeed, the Museum is said to own the finest collection of Oriental art under one roof.

Dale Mason, Curatorial Assistant

[illegible] interests [illegible] collection [illegible] the Museum's Islamic holdings yet there is much work to be done on many objects in storage before they can be put on show and given proper attribution. For example a considerable amount of excavated material from Rayy, some from Mamluk and Seljuq metalwork and large collections of ceramic pieces representing all major styles, periods and techniques. Also in the collection is an unusual collection of calligraphic stone carving in the form of tombstones which represent a comprehensive overview of the various calligraphic scripts. The works on paper include substantial Mughal & Islamic collection of miniatures and Qur'anic pages. The collection on show has substantial holdings of ceramics, metalwork, glass, stone and wood and some important manuscripts e.g. pages from the Arabic translation of the 'Materia Medica' of Discorides and a copy of *'Kitab fi ma'rifat al hiyal al-handasiyya'*.

The Textile Department, one of the best in the country, has particular strengths; (other than Japanese, Indian & South East Asian). Its Tiraz fabrics alone number between thirty and sixty pieces, and have been published in N P Britton's 1938 catalogue of Tiraz fragments. There are some very early 13/14th century Islamic compound pieces from Spain and Iraq and some important Buyid and Sassanian pieces.

The most complex Persian silk weaving known is also in the collection: a Safavid 16th century Persian velvet weaving depicting hunting scenes, supposedly the lining for the interior of a tent ceiling. It is cut and voided silk with supplementary patterns of weft and metallic wires. It is said to have been captured by the Ottoman Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent during one of his invasions of Persia between 1543 and 1545. Another important fragment of a shroud comes from southern Spain c 1100 a compound weaving with silk and metallic yarns and a harpie and rounded design. Among some of the fine hunting carpets is a royal Safavid one from the royal loom of Shah Tahmasp. The size and quality of workmanship

CAMBRIDGE, MASS

In terms of University resources and strong Islamic traditions, Harvard undoubtedly boasts the best of these. Not only does the **Arthur M Sackler Museum** itself claim an important Islamic collection but this is curated by Stuart Cary Welch (who followed on from Eric Schroeder) and his assistant Juliet Bailey, both with strong academic interests which have enhanced the strengths of the collection. In addition, over the road in the **Fine Art Library** of the **Fogg Art Museum** are housed the offices of the Aga Khan programme of Islamic Architecture (headed by Professor Gulu Necipolu). The resources and interests of the programme together with those of the Fine Art department, create the most comprehensive visual resources of Islamic art and one of the finest Islamic art libraries.

The Sackler Museum's collection of Islamic art numbers about 25,000 objects that belong to the museum, including works on paper, metalwork, ceramics and textiles. Among the major contributors of the collection were John Goelet and Edwin Binney, whilst more recently Cary Welch has lent much of his own collection on a long-term basis. The particular strengths of the collection are the works on paper, the Arab and Persian works being the only objects that have been published in a systematic way. (See *Arab & Persian Painting in Fogg Art Museum*.) This curatorial department is also responsible for later Indian art such as the Moghal and Rajput Hindu manuscripts and paintings which diffuses the specialist interests in this field.

The Aga Khan Programme's Fine Arts Library and visual collection combine to form the main Islamic art resource centre. The importance of much of their resources is the documentation and visual evidence (largely photographic) of demolished/war torn structures together with display pieces that show historical, cultural and political waves, i.e. revolutionary posters from Iran as well as the ethnographic dimension which provides a vital visual context for art and architecture. The Aga Khan programme owes its existence to the guru of Islamic art in America, Oleg Grabar, who in 1969 came to Harvard from the University of Michigan. While teaching in 1979 he prevailed upon Harvard to set up an architecture programme to highlight and encourage the Islamic

PRINCETON, NEW JERSEY

The Art Museum of the Princeton University displays a very similar tendency. The three basics of Islamic manuscripts in the museum collection include Indian Mughal, Persian and Turkish manuscripts and miniatures. Some of these are of particular importance and outstanding quality and Priscilla Soucek from the Institute of Fine Arts in New York has recently spent some time going over the manuscripts offering identifications and dates where possible. Richard Ettinghausen also worked on a number of them when compiling his catalogue "*Islamic art from Princeton Collections*" for an exhibition in 1974. One miniature he discusses which illustrates the finding of Darab shows a "Scene at River's Edge" from the historical work *Jami al-Tawarikh* (Iran, Herat c. 1425). The image shows a man in the scene wringing out a white cloth. Another Persian candidate worthy of mention is a "Battle in a Landscape" miniature from a "Shah-nameh" manuscript, Iran, end of the 15th century. Two manuscript leaves that have received more attention from scholars are: a battle scene from a "Razm-nameh" manuscript, attributed to Ahmad Kashmiri, India, Mughal school, Akbar period, late 16th century; and a scene of entertainment from a "Babur-nameh" manuscript, c.1590. The latter was included in the Asia Society *Akbar's India* exhibition in 1985. (no.34).

12,000 Islamic Manuscripts

The Department of Rare Books and Special Collections, Princeton University Libraries, has the largest Islamic manuscript collection in the Western Hemisphere, including approximately 10,000 texts in Arabic and 2,000 in Persian, Turkish and Urdu. About 9,000 of the 12,000 manuscripts were collected by Robert Garrett, the rest came from other donors or were purchased by Princeton itself. While most of the

the Baltimore Museum

East Coast Collections

The Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester houses a modest small but worthy collection. Although there is no curator for these holdings the collection has been basically catalogued.

There are many other small museums and institutions that have collections, particularly rug and textile collections like those found at the **George Walter Vincent & Belle Townsley Smith Collection** part of the **Museum of Fine Arts and George Walter Vincent Smith Art Museum in Springfield**, Massachusetts, or the collection in the **Woodmere Art Museum** in Philadelphia which contains mostly 18-19th century Turkish, Persian and Indian carpets.

The Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh has a small collection of Islamic and Oriental decorative arts. Again with no specialist on the staff the holdings remain unpublished and without major recognition. Some of the works of art are on view permanently, although these are primarily Chinese rather than Islamic.

The Shrine to Music Museum & Center for Study of the History of Musical Instruments at the University of South Dakota, Vermillion, has a collection of 35 Islamic instruments such as a Kamancha (spike fiddle with a bowl), a Zarb (goblet drum) and a Tar (long lute), all 19th century Persian instruments. These are housed in the Beede Gallery which explores the vast world of non-western music with exhibits which include exotic instruments from the great civilizations of Africa, Eastern Asia, India, the Pacific Islands, S.E. Asia, Tibet and Western Asia.

MIDWEST

CLEVELAND, OHIO

Moving westwards towards Ohio, Michigan and Illinois, the Islamic art resources do not quite dry up. First mention must be made of the **Cleveland Museum of Art's** spectacular Islamic art collection. This wonderful collection lays claim to some of the published key study pieces students of Islamic art will be familiar with, particularly the 'Wade cup'; but there remains an untapped wealth of important yet unpublished holdings. It is testimony to the neglect that Islamic art suffers in America that this collection, in which acquisitions began in 1915, one year before the Museum opened, has only in the last year been appointed a curator and seen a department created around it. This being the case, fortunately there have been in the past curators from other departments with an active interest in Islamic art. The first was Howard Hollis, Curator of Far Eastern Art (1937-51), and in the last decade or so Anne Wardwell, Curator of Textiles and her predecessor Dorothey Shepherd, who have all acquired a significant number of pieces in the collection. Mary McWilliams who now holds the coveted position of Islamic curator is faced with the huge task of re-vamping the installation, display and role of the collection (at present it is shown in order of technique and material rather than chronologically).

She also faces the complication that only a fraction of the CMA's collection of objects produced in Islamic countries are held in this newly created Department of Islamic art. Those which aren't include Spanish material in the Department of Western Art under Stephen Fliegel, Mughal material in the Department of Asian Art under Stan Czuma and Islamic textiles in the Department of Textiles under Anne Wardwell. The

CINCINNATI OHIO



As yet there are still so many Museums in America with extensive important collections of Islamic art that remain relatively unknown and unpublished. An outstanding example is the Cincinnati Art Museum. This collection has benefited from ten years curatorial presence of Daniel Walker (now Curator of Islamic art at the Met and now Glenn Markoe, Curator of Classical Near Eastern art who has previously been at the Met and the LA County Museum.

The collection is an encyclopaedic one and benefits from the extensive holdings of Ancient Near Eastern art, particularly Sassanian, which is displayed chronologically with the

Among the outstanding manuscripts are two miniatures from the 'Demotte Shahnameh,' a page from the Arabic translation of the Greek version of Dioscorides' "De Materia Medica", pages from a Safavid Khamsa by Nizami and some spectacular Qur'an pages including a newly acquired 9th century gold North African illuminated page in kufic script at its best. Lastly there

Among the rug and textile holdings are medallion rugs, Kilims and Hispano-Moresque examples while I was there I witnessed an exhibition on Kurdish Tribal Rugs of the Seaweb Tradition mostly from the Markarian Foundation and the Museum's own permanent collection. However the department's pièce de resistance is undoubtedly the 18th century Damascus Room. This together with the 16th century ceramic tiled and mosaic mihrab from Iran or Central Asia, rivals the similar masterpieces of the Met's collection making Cincinnati's collection all the more impressive considering its size and status. The room, panelled and carved with gessoed wood and painted decoration is typical of the Syrian craftsmen working within the milieu of an Ottoman Turkish decorative style and shows the

Pride of the Princes



influence of contemporary Ottoman textile and ceramic designs infused with elements of European Baroque art.)

Among the factors that contribute to the richness of this setting is the *mihrab* with stalactite vaulting, the gilt ornamentation on walls and ceiling, pictorial vignettes and the geometric star pattern in octagonal coffers of the ceiling, ivory inlaid walnut doors and ornamental stonework, together with the all important Qur'anic inscriptions. In this sumptuous setting are placed those decorative and utilitarian objects that might have been encountered in a Syrian house of the early 18th century. This contextual display of Islamic art is a valuable one yet a sadly unusual



aspect of the installation of Islamic art collections. Other outstanding pieces include a Seljuk turquoise ceramic sculpture of a seated lion – one of the largest known examples of the

including Mamluk [illegible] and [illegible] enamelled [illegible] and [illegible] combined with elegant cursive Arabic [illegible] together with a Seljuk silver incense-burner decorated with gilt engraving and niello. There is also a magnificent Court Bowl from the Ottoman period (2nd half of 16th century) made of silver, gilt and enamel with intricate arabesque and floral patterns.

Collections Not Visited

On a smaller but relatively speaking equally impressive level of Islamic art is the collection found in the **Allen Memorial Art Museum of Oberlin College**, Ohio. This comprises an extensive rug collection that seems to grow each year through the generosity of a local collector. An article entitled "Colour and Design in Islamic Carpets" by Ernest H Roberts that appeared in the February 1976 issue of *Apollo* summarized the collection as a whole. The richness of the holdings and strength of the collection here enabled the museum to put on varied exhibitions and organise symposiums. At the time of writing they have on show an exhibition entitled "Order & Rhythm: Carpets from the Islamic World", which draws from the Museum's permanent collection.

This pattern of small Islamic collections appearing in random places again recurs at the *Dayton Art Institute* with a small collection of Near Eastern artifacts - mostly ceramics and a few manuscripts. The strength of the ceramic collection is in its Persian holdings which span the Persian Renaissance and main manufacturing centres of Rayy, Nishapur, Kashan and Kurdistan. Among the miniatures are two 16th century Persian ones. One Safavid piece dated 1530 of a "Murder scene in a Palace" and another recent (but unknown) of a rider holding audience in a rocky landscape shows significant Chinese influence in the stylized rocks, cloud forms and gnarled trees. The Institute's October 1968 bulletin that covers the highlights of the collection is the only publication of the collection.

There are 10,000 pieces in all. Among these are extensive holdings of coins; many Ottoman Empire coins and two hoards of coins which have recently been published, the Abu Said and Oljeitu Hoardes, a small collection of glass stone weights and some interesting Islamic glass pieces from Koranis, together with an extensive photo archive attributed mainly to George Swain - a photographer who went on many of the University excavations. These photographic records are priceless in their recording of now unrecognisable sites, and non extant structures. Ruthvin also collected many Qur'an pages now in the Rare Books and Manuscripts section of the Hatcher Graduate Library of the University. Among the textiles they possess is a wonderful collection of inscribed Tiraz textile fragments (about 150) many of which have been published in 'Ars Islamica' and the 'Journal of Royal Asiatic Society'. The ceramic holdings, the main body of which is in the University of Michigan Museums are somewhat fragmentary and include many sherds of Islamic pottery from Fustat, luster ware pieces, tile fragments and an

Islamic Musical Instruments

One of the more unlikely sources of Islamic art was the **Stearns Collection of Musical Instruments at the University of Michigan School of Music**. This department and collection is headed by Dr William Malm. Unfortunately I was to miss by a couple of weeks, an exhibition called "Music of Islam" which drew on the rich collection of musical instruments and the beauty of musical sound. Stearns was a 19th century collector who left his 1400 musical instruments to the University and gave invaluable funds to have it properly catalogued. The holdings include: Dombak's, Tambourines, Drums, Rebabs, Cymbals, guitars etc and cover the countries of Iran, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Arab Sudan, Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco. The department, in line with the University's tradition, does specialise in all Islamic music with large audio and visual resources from an extensive library of recordings, many

Forty minutes away in Detroit the famed **Detroit Institute of Arts** lays claim to one of the top Islamic art collections in America. This is a collection, whose present existence and content owes much to Elsie Holmes Peck, Associate Curator of Near Eastern art. Her primary interests and specialisation in Ancient Near Eastern art have contributed to rather than detracted from the Islamic collection. She has dedicated much time and effort to acquiring important and interesting pieces to fill gaps in the collection and has used the collection in such a way that it is seen as part of a many faceted cultural jigsaw rather than in isolation. She is at present planning a Coptic Islamic exhibition to bear witness to the very large and important Coptic textile collection. Similarly, her efforts to combine the Sassanian objects with the Islamic collection are admirable and I think a valuable curatorial insight, as is also her vision in comparing techniques and materials: a Scipal double shell cast is displayed near the Mamluk metalwork case to show a cross over of techniques used in different materials. The strengths of the collection are on show and include rugs and textiles a collection which covers a geographical range and date from the 9th to 19th centuries manuscripts, works on paper, glass and metalwork (such as a fine 13th century Seljuk bronze candlestick oil Lamp cast with openwork geometric and palmette

designs and ceramics.

Some of the [illegible] including a [illegible] from Herat. [illegible] gold with filigree [illegible] different coloured paper – some with Chinese cloud-band background and [illegible] arrow or cartouche-shape. This was not established but Priscilla Soucek is working on its publication. The collection of ceramics is wider ranging and more extensive and includes such pieces as the 11th century Nishapur black-on-white vase [illegible] inscription whose calligraphy is modified to create a sightly rotating effect and the 13th century Abbasid monochrome lustre bowl from Baghdad with the humorous design of a camel supporting a stanked and pavilion surrounded by a plain border and standing against a stippled background. The decoration is framed by a scalloped band whilst the exterior is decorated with medallions of small x-shaped forms set against a field of dots and dashes.

An interesting Nishapur piece of earthenware (9-10th century) with sgraffito technique of incised floral and cross hatched designs is displayed next to a Chinese three-colour ware vessel with tall foot of the T'ang Dynasty (618-907) from Lo yang-fu, Honan Province thus showing the influence of colour and design on Islamic art.

In the collection is also the often published Seljuk Minai piece (13th C - Kashan) showing a scene from the 'Shah-nameh' of the Sassanian King Feriden and hero Khaveh bearing a standard. Unusually, the collection boasts an exquisite 11th century Fatimid bracelet from Syria, displaying a filigree floral design and an inscription set against a background of floral arabesques.

The treasures on paper include the very famous page from the 'Demotte Shah-nameh' of the "Combat between Ardashir and Bahram, son of Ardawan" and some fine leather book bindings, one from a Safavid manuscript (first half of the 16th century) where the exterior binding is of stamped and gilded relief decoration and interior doublure in filigree. There are also wonderful examples of Qajar painting and lacquer work, Iznik tile pieces, a Fatimid fountain and Polish sashes showing influence of Safavid 17th century textiles imported to Poland through the Turkish market in Constantinople and lastly an unusual

The important [illegible] collection for the teaching of Islamic art is primary. Not only is there a programme of docent-tours through the collection but Yasser Tabbaa the Professor of Islamic art in the University of Michigan uses it as an indispensable tool for his students. Children from the Dearborn area of Detroit (a very populated Muslim area) are also encouraged to come and familiarize themselves with their cultural heritage. With the deposition of the Toledo Museum of Art and its marvellous collection of Islamic glass, together with neighbouring Ann Arbor, also [illegible] are enormous and in their geographical concentration thankfully recognised and utilized.

[illegible] manuscripts [illegible] Kevorkian [illegible] leaves from a 14th century [illegible] manuscript (Herat or Bezmjurd) 1485, manuscript of the Khamsa of Nizam from Herat.

The Indian paintings reveal a predilection for the more purely indigenous works of Jain and Rajput painters, though the collection includes several fine Mughal subjects. The illustrations for the Jain texts are highly stylized renderings in a rather limited palette from the mid to late 15th century. The richly coloured and boldly patterned Rajput paintings include works by Mewar, Malwa, Jaipur and Sirohi artists ranging from the 16th to early 19th century. Much work was done on this collection by the previous Curator of Oriental Art – Jack Sewell.

As with many civic museums discussed already, it is often the case their Islamic art interests are combined with or complement those of the university. So it is at the **Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago**. Karen Wilson the curator here, stressed the importance of the Institute as first and foremost a teaching and research unit (both for academics and students and as part of the Education and Public Programmes office) and secondly a place famed for its collections, exhibitions and museum-like status. It has strong holdings of archaeologically important pieces i.e. those found on excavations like pot sherds etc. There is almost nothing Islamic on display and it is in fact hotly debated whether there should be. The line of argument against this is that the Institutes' primary interest is in art and archaeology of the Ancient Near East and that its scope does not really include Islamic material *per se*. Where the split occurs, other university departments are seen to supplement the gaps in the way the Middle East Centre deals with the language and culture of Islam. However the presence of Fred Donner at the Institute (who is Associate Professor of Islamic Studies in the Centre for Middle Eastern Studies) means that his interest in the period of Arab conquest has been visually realised in the form of Fatimid tombstones. Mamluk documents and the earliest version of Ody Thousand and one nights written on the earliest dated piece of

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Art Institute of Chicago sadly suffers the same financial problems that so many art bodies face. The implications of this for the Islamic collection are immediate. It has meant the complete removal of the objects on display to join the rest in storage. An unfortunate situation and one that will disappoint any museum goer in search of Islamic art.

The pieces that were on display included such varied pieces as a Sassanian stucco fragment of an architectural roundel with relief decoration from the 6-7th century, a large Persian pottery bowl with a decorative band of horsemen, animals, human headed animals and floral patterns in golden brown lustre dated 1191, a 14th century Iranian star shaped pottery tile with a moulded design of Phoenix under dark blue and copper lustre and some 16th and 17th century Iznik pieces. The strength of the collection is mainly in metalwork, textiles and works on paper. The majority of the latter come from the Persian and Indian miniature collection of Everett & Ann McNear, whose collection has been on show and toured to Iowa and Baltimore. Everett and Ann McNear were collecting between 1964-74 and assembled a relatively comprehensive and carefully chosen collection of Indian and Iranian miniature paintings. The superb paintings from the 15th century through the early

WEST COAST

The west coast of America has never traditionally been a mecca for Islamic art followers, however the distribution of Islamic art collections is wide and far ranging and includes centres such as The San Diego Museum of Art, The Los Angeles County Museum, The Asian Art Museum of San Francisco and The Seattle Art Museum which are among the most extensive, although largely unpublished with the exception of that of the LA County Museum.

LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

The Los Angeles County Museum has, since Thomas Lentz moved to the Sackler Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution a year or so ago, suffered the neglect of curatorial presence. There is however at present an ongoing project to fully catalogue the entire collection of about 500 objects. This is being done by Abbas Daneshvari, from the Los Angeles State University, who plans to have the first volume of Decorative arts out by Christmas 1993. The collection was last published as a whole in 1973 but has since then been added to with 50 or so works on paper and 30 objects added to the ceramics and metalwork holdings.

Daneshvari then plans to work on the second volume covering 600-700 other objects. Although the main priority is to fully catalogue the collection, he also wants to include supplementary information and archaeological material. Before Tom Lentz left, the collection saw a new

the South
Pomegranates
Saudi Arabia

The permanent collection
among 16 Uzbek pieces, examples
from Turkey, ceremonial dress from
Indonesia, textiles from Morocco and
many other ceremonial festival and
domestic pieces such as costumes and
jewellery, ceramics and metalwork.

The aim to re-connect the
community with these cultural
heritage is manifested in the
interactive component of any
exhibition where many of the
participants are from local
communities. The museum was
founded in 1949 by Ali Shah who was a folk
art collector mainly interested in
Asian and Hispanic folk art and the
bulk of the Museum's main collections
thus focus on these areas. However,
the Islamic collection is steadily
growing in size and stature. The
educational side of the Museum is an
integral part of its 'raison d'etre' but
this active involvement includes
taking craft exhibitions to schools,
local community centres and
shopping malls. Classes are given on
a regular basis for the local children,
indeed education is their primary and
fundamental commitment.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

Further up the coast in San Francisco is found one of the greatest undiscovered treasures of the Islamic art world. Tucked away in the storage vaults of the **Asian Art Museum** that adjoins the De Young in Golden Gate Park lies a collection of great merit which has remained for years, and essentially still is, totally undiscovered. Only a handful of scholars seem to have visited it; Lisa Golombek has done some work on a few pieces, Terry Allen has written a sampling of the Islamic pieces for a planned future exhibition "Masterworks of the Collection" and Valerie Reynolds (now curator of the Oriental Collection at The Newark Museum) has worked on the ceramics. Diane Fish - Adjunct Curator revealed to me the extent of the collection and explained to me its strengths in ceramics, bronzes, manuscripts, jade and some sculptural relief.

The ceramics which are mostly Persian, Syrian and Turkish cover the early lustre, epigraphic ware, Sari bowls, Iznik and Kubachi ware. A particularly lively Nishapur piece shows an (13-14th century) image of horse and rider widely published.

[illegible] Young Museum (the Art Museum
Catherine Coomer, Curator of
Textiles, talked me through a very
lively explanation of her present
exhibition, 'Unravelling Yarns: The
Art of Everyday Life'. This deals with
tribal and ethnographic textiles from
Oceania, Americas and the Middle
East showing intercultural influences.
Evident from the material available,
the kilims of Middle East, particularly
Anatolia, display a greater
architectural role than those of Peru
or North America. This theme
prompted Coomer to trace the arch
form in textiles and how it develops
side by side with architecture, wall
painting and other mediums. The up
shot of this was the marvellous
publication *The Caroline & H McCon
Jones Collection — Anatolian Kilims*
published in 1988 in association with
the Fine Arts Museums and Hali
Publications. This was the first
comprehensive exhibition of pre-19th
century Anatolian kilims from what is
considered to be the finest collection
of this type in the world. With the
exception of the Vakiflar Museum in
Istanbul, no collection comes even
remotely close in overall quality and
breadth. In fact probably no more
than half a dozen people outside the
museums have seen the collection in
its entirety.

The collection was assembled by
Garry Muse over the past 15 years
with single minded determination
and was donated in phases by the
Joneses to the Fine Arts Museum of
San Francisco and is now recognised
as the finest of its type in the world.
The exhibition pieces cover five
centuries of Anatolian tradition and
Coomer throws new light on ancient
traditions behind Anatolian kilim
design, while Garry Muse's catalogue
notes focus on the symbolism in kilim
decoration that underlies the direct
visual beauty of these wonderful
objects.

The very nature of this exhibition
is important in that it gives
unadulterated attention to an
otherwise neglected textile tradition.
Before, kilims always played second
fiddle to their knotted cousins. The
revival of interest in kilims and their
designs could perhaps be seen as a
symptom of the modern sensibility
linked many modern artists. Matisse

BERKELEY, CALIFORNIA

The University of California, Berkeley, across the water doesn't boast an outstanding Islamic art collection per se, but does enjoy the presence of Lisbet Thalgott, Professor of Near Eastern Art History in the Department of Near Eastern Studies. The department is concerned with languages and civilisations of the ancient, medieval and modern Near East. It also offers specialized training in Archaeology, Art History, Assyrology, Egyptology, Hittitology, Iranian Studies, Judaic & Islamic Studies, Turkish, Hebrew, Arabic and Persian. For example two of the courses she teaches are: "The Art of the Ancient Near East" and "The Art of the Silk Road".

On campus the only notable visual accompaniment to these courses are found in the Bade Institute of Biblical Archaeology and The Phoebe Hearst Museum of Anthropology, both of which tend to focus primarily on Ancient Near Eastern art.

The Bade Institute (not officially affiliated to the University) is primarily a research centre for Near Eastern archaeology and its relationship to Biblical studies. Frederic Bade (1871-1936) is remembered among archaeologists as the excavator of Tell en-Nasbeh, usually identified as Mizpah of Benjamin - an eight acre site, seven miles north of Jerusalem which was an ancient city inhabited by the Israelites of the Old Testament. Thus the artefacts consist mainly of pottery and metal pieces; lamps, pitchers, bowls, jars and jewellery from the Iron Age and Persian period of Palestianian archaeology. Amongst the artefacts are "slipper lamps" of the early Byzanto-Islamic period (7th-9th century) which are important for the typological study in Palestinian archeology.

Similarly the **Phoebe Hearst Museum** focuses mainly on Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt. It has a few pieces of 16th century Persian armour, some Islamic coins and other archaeological surface artefacts from Saudi Arabia eg. shards etc. The textiles include some Coptic pieces and Indonesian holdings, but otherwise the holdings are of minor

CALIFORNIA: OTHER COLLECTIONS

The **Monterey Peninsula Museum of Art** has an Asian art collection of approximately 4,000 objects. The majority are 19th and 20th century folk pieces, but there are many other objects as well, including small bronzes, several Imari pieces, Ming archaic ceramics and two hundred Nevasky collected before the turn of the century. There are also selections of Islamic folk, ethnic and tribal art as well as a number of textiles.

Hearst Castle - San Simeon State Historical Monument boasts extensive Islamic collections of many areas of the decorative arts. William Randolph Hearst built his San Simeon Estate from 1919 to 1947, in the Mediterranean revival architectural style popular in the western United States at that time. The architectural flavour of Hearst Castle is heavily Spanish and the time periods of the art objects Hearst collected are the Gothic and Renaissance; much of the Spanish art, therefore, is from Islamic Spain. Mudejar ceilings, and furniture, doors and wooden panels are used throughout the buildings. Also, Persian tile panels are inset in the buildings, depicting hunting scenes, stories and writing. Also, as was customary at this time, the rooms are decorated with rugs, mainly from the Middle East. This is quite a special collection of Islamic textiles with some rare and large pieces.

The collections of the **Rosicrucian Egyptian Museum**, San Jose include objects from predynastic times through Egypt's early Christian era thus incorporating a substantial Islamic presence. Items include Mesopotamian and Coptic textiles, Persian collection and other miscellaneous items.

SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

The Museum of International Folk Art in Santa Fe has a Middle Eastern collection which totals about 1025 objects, not including an outstanding collection of costumes and jewellery.

ST LOUIS, MISSOURI

The Saint Louis Art Museum, is another collection tucked away yet deserving of public attention. There is a substantial collection of Asian art and a fairly important collection of Islamic art. The Islamic collection consists of ceramics, glass, metalwork and rugs. Although unpublished, there are six bound bulletins on various aspects of the collections. For example, the 1988 summer bulletin on Turkish rugs and The Saint Louis Art Museum Handbook of the Collections, 1991 features seven works from the Islamic collection and twenty-five objects from the Asian collection.

DENVER, COLORADO

The collection in **The Denver Art Museum** according to Bij Avery, Staff Aide for the Asian Department, is "although small, the only Islamic art to be seen between the Mississippi

MINNEAPOLIS, MINNESOTA

The Minneapolis Institute of Arts has a small Islamic collection assembled by Robert Jacobsen, Curator of Asian art which contains some outstanding Persian miniatures donated by Margaret McMillan Webber and some representative ceramics donated by Alfred I. Pillsbury. It also includes a small grouping of Middle Eastern textiles and glass.

Among the miniatures are some published in the museum's "Bulletin" vol 62 1963 entitled "Persian Miniature Painting in the Minneapolis Institute of Arts by Ehsan Yarshater.

The miniature paintings and illuminations come from a single private collection which include thirty four Persian paintings, a number of illuminated folios and a manuscript; these cover a period of five centuries. Highlights include: two 13th century leaves from Arabic translation of Discorides "Materia Medica"; a miniature depicting two stags from a dispersed copy of the Manafi al-Hayawan (on the 'Uses derived from animals') text; part of a dispersed 15th century copy of Rashid-al Din's 'Universal History'; 3 miniatures from an Inju 'Shah-nameh' of 1341; miniatures from different 15th century manuscripts of the 'Khamseh' - Nizami; 2 miniatures from the texts of 'Sa'di' & 'Jami' and lastly a selection of Safavid 16th century folios from manuscripts and other drawings.

MANOA, HAWAII

The University of Hawaii at Manoa Art Gallery has a selection of Middle

THE RECURRING PATTERN

The recurring pattern that appeared in the course of my research was firstly the etymological problem one faces in distinguishing Islamic art from say Chinese or Japanese art. This problem is created by the widespread use of umbrella terms such as 'Asian', 'Near, Middle or Far Eastern', 'Turkish', 'Egyptian', 'Indian', 'Oriental' and 'Decorative arts and secondly the desperate need

Indeed the value of this research project is I hope evident in the discovery and further uncovering of the vast array of Islamic art resources in America that have hitherto remained largely untapped, uncatalogued and undocumented.

The list below comprises those museum collections (not otherwise mentioned in this survey) who responded to our research enquiries and which are listed in the official Museums Directory 1992 as having specifically "Islamic art". As already stated above, "Islamic art" is often incorporated within Asian, Oriental, Decorative or Textile collections. It is therefore inevitable that many more small collections exist within this context,which need to be investigated.



1. Miami University Art Museum
Ancient, Islamic and Asian Art

2. The Freeport Art Museum and Cultural Center, Illinois
Oriental and Islamic Art

3. Museum of Art and Archaeology - University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri

4. Hood Museum of Art, Hanover, New Hampshire
Asian and Near Eastern Art

5. The Newark Museum, New Jersey
Asian Art

6. Vanderbilt Museum, Centerport, NY
Oriental, Near Eastern and Islamic Art

7. Fonthill Museum - Doylestown, Pennsylvania
Islamic and Oriental Art

8. Fine Art Museum, Erie, Pennsylvania

9. The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, Missouri
Asian Art

10. Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington
South East Asian and Oriental Art

11. Huntington Museum of Art, West Virginia
Decorative Art

12. San Diego Museum of Art, California
Asian and Indian Art



Dar Al Maal Al Islami

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Islamic Investment Companies

•

Massaref Faysal Al Islamia

(Islamic Banks)

•

Islamic Takafol Companies

(The Islamic Alternative to Western Insurance)

•

Islamic Business Enterprises

•

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