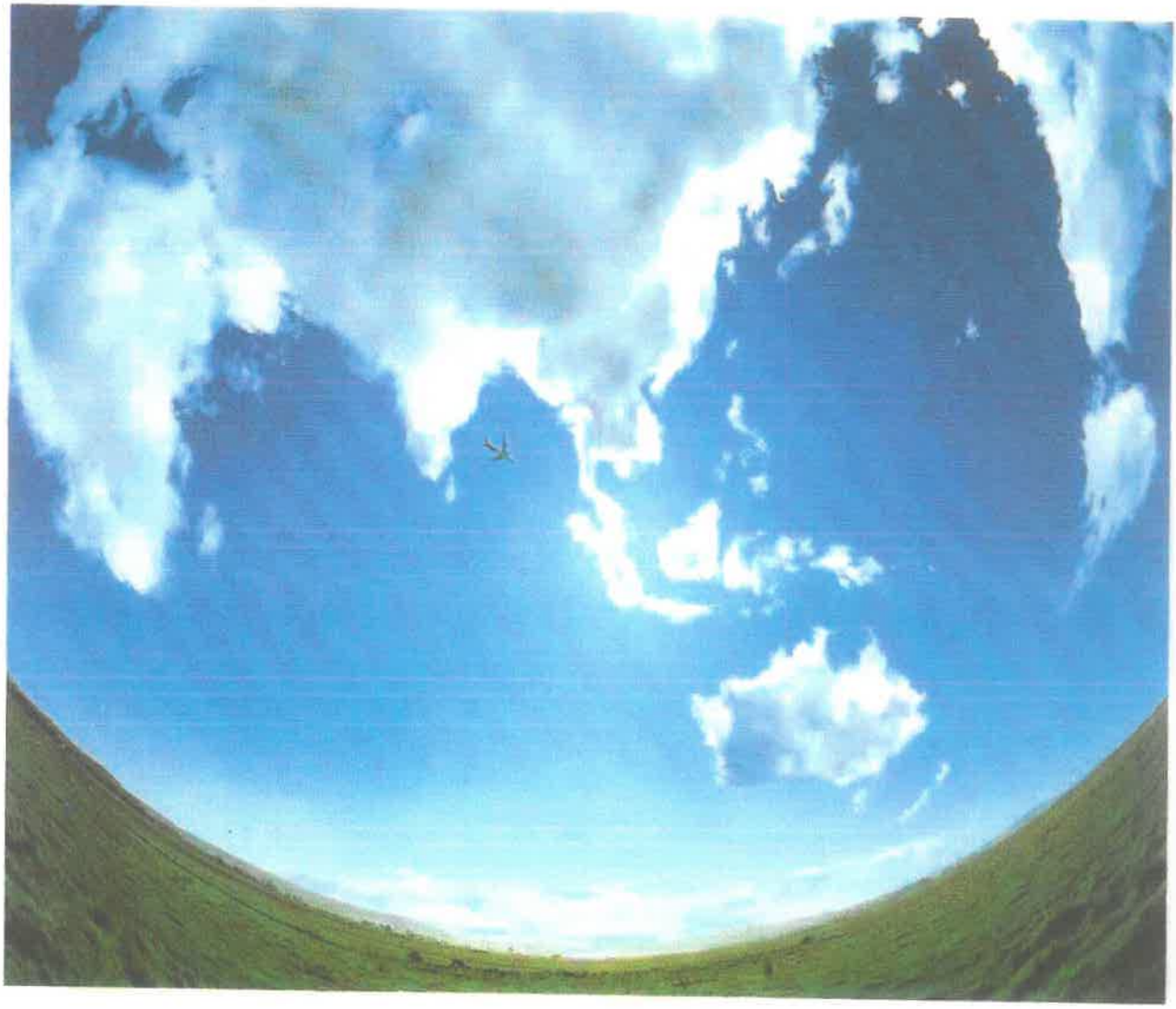

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SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Business Sponsorship of the Arts:
Eastern Initiatives, Western Experience
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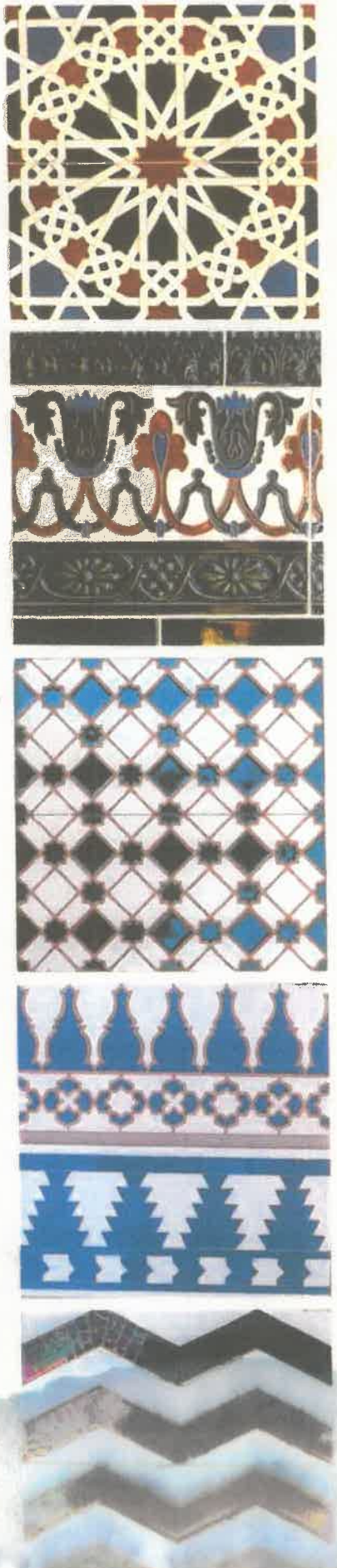
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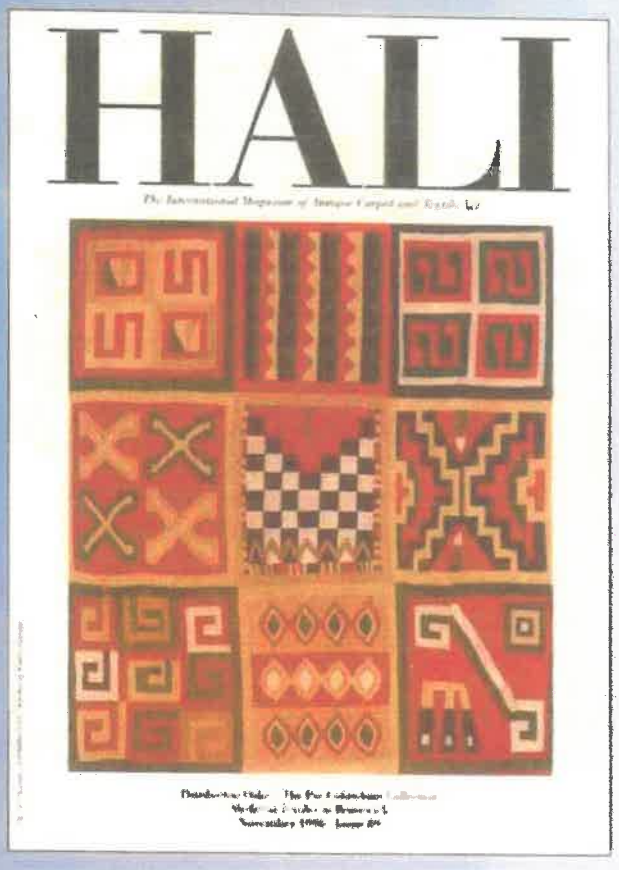


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EDITORIAL

Among major Islamic arts events of the last few months, two stand out: one in the Islamic world itself and the other outside it. Both were held on academic campuses, providing unique opportunities for in-depth deliberations aimed at evaluating traditional resources as well as contemporary interpretations and creative expressions in an art historical perspective. In Jordan, the Al al-Bayt University at Mafraq hosted the first post-Soviet Seminar on *Islamic Arts Resources in Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia*, where art historians, curators, musicologists, artists and architects from Central Asia, Russia and other countries of Eastern Europe shared their work and researches with their counterparts in the United States, Western Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. And the Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, mounted a landmark exhibition to accompany an international conference on *Inscription as Art in the World of Islam*. This issue brings first-hand reports on both these events.

.....

In an earlier issue of *AIW*, we had underlined the need to take positive steps for funding the arts at various levels in the public as well as private sector. In that context we had welcomed the move to set up in London an independent study group to monitor and promote arts support projects and programmes in various countries of the so-called "developing" and "emerging" world. The study group, appropriately named ASDEC (Arts Sponsorship in the Developing/Emerging Countries) is now being launched, and we are happy to include in this issue a special supplement on "Business Sponsorship of the Arts." It has been sponsored by ASDEC and prepared in consultation with ABSA (Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts) in the UK, whose own work was introduced earlier to our readers by its dynamic Director General, Colin Tweedy. In his retrospective article on ABSA in this supplement, he recalls that when ABSA began in 1976, "there was a staff of two, 30 founding members from the business community and sponsorship amounted to £600,000. Twenty years later, ABSA has 50 staff, 10 offices and sponsorship has reached £84 million." Hopefully, ASDEC too will be striving to tap increasing sponsorship resources for the arts and artists in the developing/emerging countries; indeed as the supplement itself serves to emphasise, the 'Eastern initiatives' are already making their mark and may well benefit from the 'Western experience'!

.....

As this issue goes to Press, the good news comes from the Directors of Macmillan about the completion of more than 14 years' work on the 34-volume *The Dictionary of Art*. Progress on what is undoubtedly the most formidable arts publishing project of this millennium, has been reported from time to time in the pages of *AIW*; and to mark its publication, the next issue of *AIW* (No 30 - Winter 1996) will include an overview of this unique work of research and scholarship in which, as the publishers remind us, "6,700 scholars have joined together to change the world of art history."

Istanbul 1996: The Other Habitat

AYYUB MALIK

Question: *what would the United Nations do if it wanted to spend between 80 and 90 million dollars of other people's money in a fortnight?*

Answer: simple! ask Turkey to invite 15,000 people from around the world and host a United Nations Habitat party in a specially cordoned off area in the historic city of Istanbul. Most of the guests would of course be protected from contact with the everyday life of the city and stay in the security of the 'Conference Valley' in air conditioned luxury hotels, feast in air conditioned restaurants, travel in air conditioned cars and coaches, and spend the fortnight making speeches, networking and chatting in the grand air conditioned halls, about what? Well, naturally about their deep concern for the poor and the homeless of the rapidly urbanizing world; about its ever expanding and unmanageable cities; and of course, about the exact wording of the resolutions which will ultimately decide whether the homeless of the world do or do not have the right to basic shelter, sanitation and water supply.

And of course, grand parties such as this demand careful planning; so the cost of the preparatory parties, held earlier in Geneva, Nairobi and New York, would be an extra over. And big parties need big jargons and labels to produce the essential hype to justify the expense, so in addition to Habitat II, the party will be variously referred to as the City Summit, Global Agenda 21, and the Global Plan of Action.

Being the United Nations' party, its deliberations could not begin without some symbolic gesture of compassion, so a full minute's silence will be observed by a large section of the Conference, to honour the death of - well no, not of the men, women and children of the devastated cities of Afghanistan, Beirut, Bosnia or Chechnya, nor of those suffering and starving in Burundi, Rwanda and elsewhere – but to honour the death of Istanbul's stray cats and dogs which had been put down by the city so as not to offend the refined sensibilities of the party guests. And again, as usual, the party would conclude with a grand banquet for the many visiting heads of state and their entourage, who will once again endorse yet another global plan of action to improve the miserable lot of those long suffering poor and deprived in their respective countries.

And all this, of course, will be in the true tradition of many previous parties – this being the seventh in the last four years alone – which started with the 1976 Habitat I in Vancouver where 132 Heads of State gave their firm commitment to provide shelter, water and sanitation for everyone in their country by the year 1990. And since then, regular big parties have continued – on water, health, women and children; on Social Development in Copenhagen, Population and Development in Cairo, Human Rights in Vienna, the Earth Summit in Rio, Women in Beijing, and many more including even an International Year of Shelter for the Homeless in 1987. But despite all this, a far greater part of the world's population is still eagerly awaiting the delivery of the very same basic needs for survival promised in Vancouver 20 years ago.

But enough has been voiced and known about the futile waste of such parties – attended often by the same people, making similar speeches on similar overlapping themes, producing similar 'top down' global plans – to be implemented by the countries which house most of the world's poor and have the greatest urban growth – but which have neither the means and resources, nor indeed the national will to address such issues simply because most of their rulers remain so preoccupied with gaining and retaining power and, whenever they can, with building grand monuments to glorify their own brief tenure.

The main purpose of this report, however, is to refer to another gathering held at the same time, appropriately enough, in the simple and austere underground hall of the Taksim Metro Centre in Istanbul. Hosted by the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality under the title *Alternative Settlement Systems and City Planning*, the ten day parallel event was held between the 3rd and 12th of June. In addition to the numerous Turkish scholars, intellectuals, mayors, administrators, and students and citizens of Istanbul, the conference was attended by delegates from Malaysia, Pakistan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Egypt, Azerbaijan, Saudi Arabia, Sweden, Britain, South Africa, Norway, Germany and the USA.

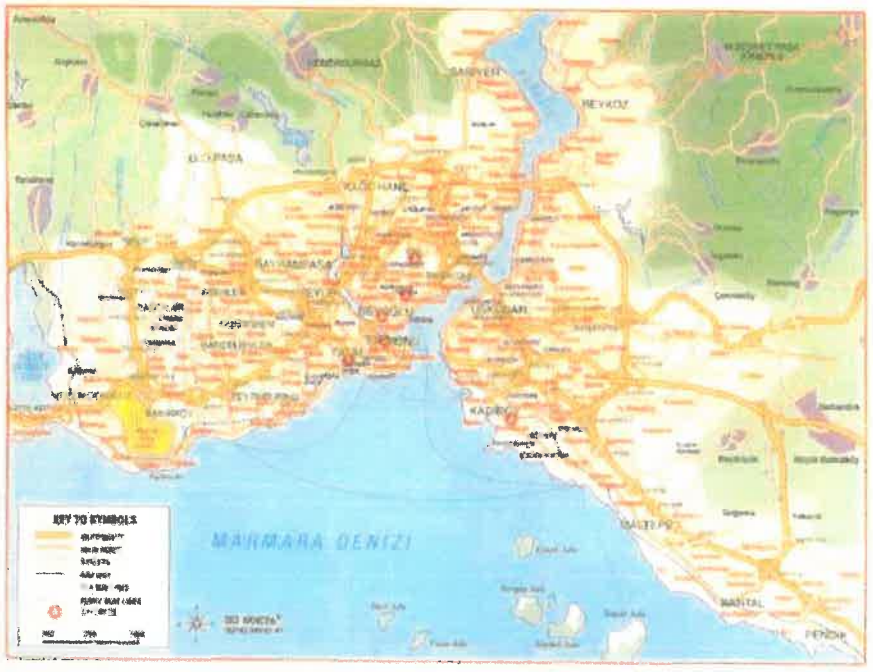
The presentations and discussions during the conference covered a wide range of subjects relating to the city and its living environment. Each of the daily sessions explored specific topics such as the city and its impact on women and family life; youth and children; religion and culture; identity and multiculturalism; traffic and environment; quality of air and water; as well as architecture, planning, management, and sustainable development.

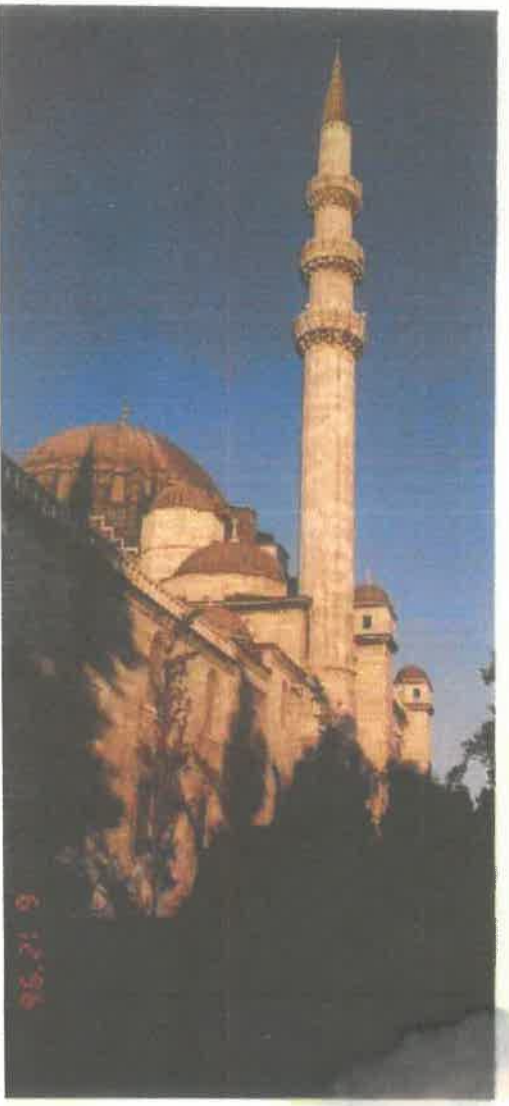
Whatever the reasons behind holding this conference, it was apparent that something was amiss. It appeared to have been arranged at a short notice; the range of subjects was too ambitious for the time available, and as a result, some of the presentations could not do justice to their subject. The common problem of including too many subjects to be covered in too short a time is that few of the topics can be explored in depth and little of value can be gained as a result. Modern city and its society and environment have simply become too complex to be meaningfully explored or understood all at once.

But on the other hand, such informal forums and modest gatherings can be important in generating fresh debate and discussion, and in setting the markers for future detailed studies and workshops. Properly planned and coordinated, such workshops can be used to study specific issues in depth, to learn and draw broad conclusions, to exchange experience and explore new ideas and – instead of importing ready made urban and architectural solutions from elsewhere as has been the case so long – develop culturally sensitive models and prototypes which, as an ongoing learning process

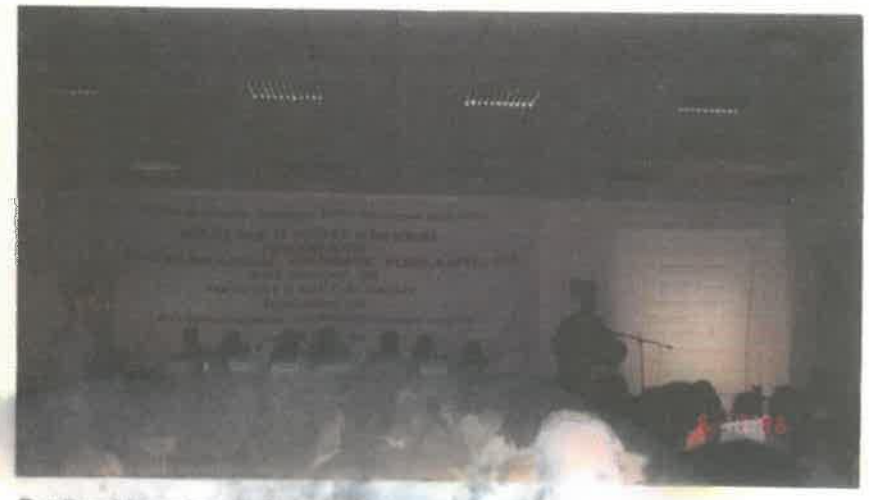
of making cities and living environment, can be further developed and refined.

At their very best, cities have always been the generators of innovations and ideas as well as laboratories and testing grounds where these could be refined to express a certain style of life, living culture and civilization. A systematic exploration of fresh models and prototypes, based on research about how people want to live, the quality of life and environment they want to live in, how they want to travel and work, what urban services they need, and how best they can participate to change and improve their immediate environment is long overdue and can indeed be very useful. Such an approach could, in time, facilitate the development of culturally sensitive

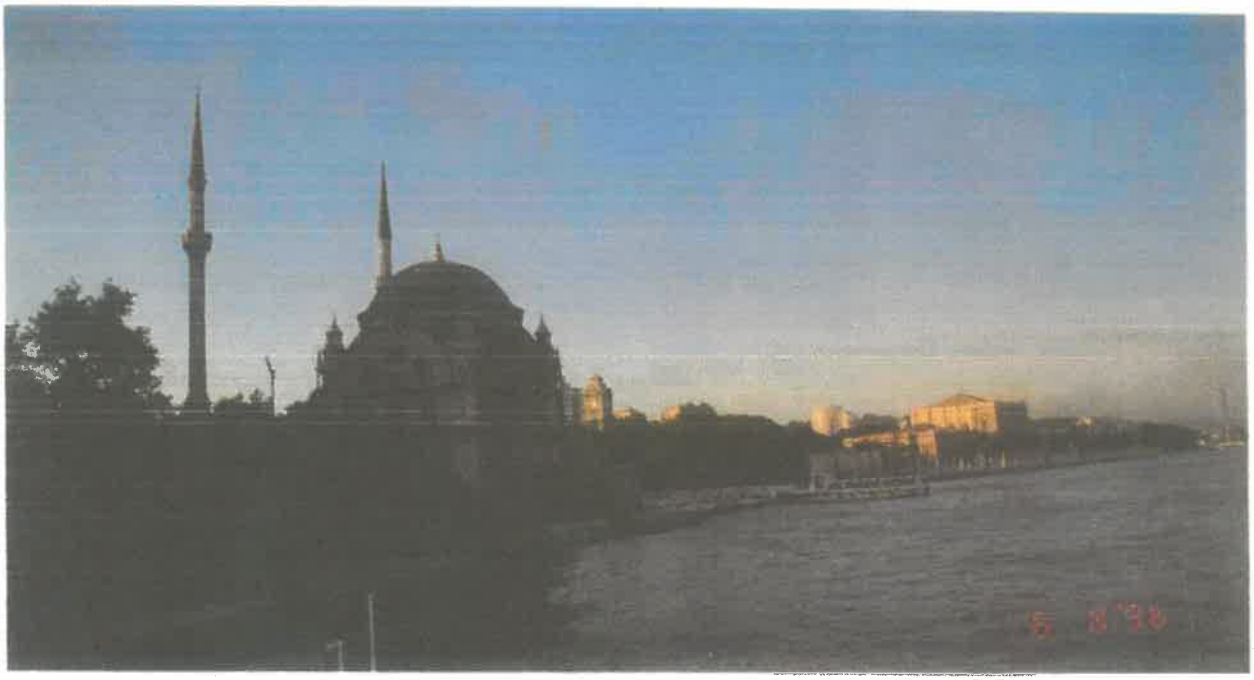








Top: Plan of the modern city of Istanbul, stretching east and west along the Bosphorus and the sea of Marmara. **Middle:** The Royal Pavilion in Topkapi Palace. **Above:** The conference in progress in Taksim Square. **Above, left:** A view of the mosque and minaret in Mimar Sinan's unique complex of Suleymaniye.





Above: A view of the city from the Bosphorus. **Left:** Some of the delegates with Murat Tayyip Erdogan, second left, on the boat trip along the Bosphorus. **Left, bottom:** An informal gathering of the hosts and delegates on the banks of the Bosphorus with the bridge connecting Asia and Europe in the background.



and sustainable solutions to the contemporary problems and could show the way to cities elsewhere.

Renewal and refurbishment of a few of the historic buildings on Istiklal Cad. and elsewhere, for instance, could be explored on the basis of a partnership between the owners and the Municipality to demonstrate economic and environmental benefits of such an approach, and in turn encourage other owners to initiate similar improvements. With a modest economic cost and innovative ideas, the Municipality can thus lead the way and inspire others to participate by adding value to their assets, and in the process, not only improve skills, employment and environment in the city but also create additional revenue income for the Municipality. Started even at a modest scale, this could be used as a rolling programme for funding and improvements in other districts and in time raise the public consciousness about the quality and care of their environment.

Anyhow, back to the rather relaxed, intimate, and modest house party being held in the underground hall; but to what purpose? What if anything might be learnt from it, and how might it help improve the quality of life and environment in the city as a result? Will this be a one-off event, or the start of a regular dialogue between the city administration and the people of Istanbul? Will this lead to fresh thinking, encourage innovative ideas, create permanent civic institutions, and bring about well thought out policies and plans which may restore Istanbul once again to its proper place as a world city of history, ideas, culture and urban elegance?

Big events such as the Habitat II may have a positive role in expressing a broad overview on global issues, in helping with the exchange of experience and ideas, even generally inspiring and cajoling the 'international community' into some action on matters of global concern. But cities will improve and get better only if those who live there begin to value their city and its culture and quality of life. It is only through active participation by the citizens and their civic institutions that local issues of concern can be raised and resolved. In this, the underground gathering may have its significance in bringing together a variety of people – Mayors from different cities, national and international scholars and specialists, and equally important, the citizens and students who not only actively participated in the proceedings but by freely meeting and mixing with the delegates, provided a memorable insight into the people and culture of the city.

With its urban history stretching from the city walls of Theodosius and Heraclius and Justinian's Haghia Sophia, to Mimar Sinan's numerous masterworks including the Suleymaniye complex with its many colleges and madrasas, medical school, hospital, and hamam and gardens, Istanbul is indeed a very unique city. The dramatic silhouette of the mosques from the Sea of Marmara and around the Golden Horn and the views of the city from the sailing ships along the Bosphorus – with Asia on one side and Europe on the other – simply have to be one of the most unforgettable experiences. But more than this, Istanbul is the only city which straddles two continents and has its multicultural roots going deep into its Roman, Byzantine, Christian and Muslim cultural heritage. Located on the crossroads of East and West, it has absorbed from both to shape its own distinct cultural identity.

But while many of its outstanding monuments are being well looked after – as was so evident from the enthusiasm of the mayor of Eyüp, Ahmed Genç, during his late night guided tour of the delegates through the Eyüp Sultan Camii conservation area – there are many historic districts, the old *mahallese* of the city with their physical fabric and texture of community life still intact, which continue to suffer from serious neglect. Even the once glamorous Grand Rue de Pera – now Istiklal Cad. – with its now faded but once elegant 18th and 19th century buildings, needs an inspired commitment to make it the prime shopping and walking thoroughfare of Istanbul. Historic areas such as these not only require sensitive care and conservation but also inventive and imaginative ideas to integrate them into the social and economic vitality of the city. Because, to imagine Istanbul without its inherited urban fabric and lifestyle is as impossible as to imagine it without the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. To bring back the kind of life and vitality, so abundantly evident in the bustling 16th and 17th century Kapali Carsi or the Grand Bazaar, to the humbler historic areas of the city and elsewhere, is a challenge as much for the Municipality as it is for the people of Istanbul themselves.

Cities are never finished but are an ongoing enterprise in which every generation must take its turn to look after and enhance what it inherits and, in meeting its own needs and solving problems, add something valuable of its own. There are certain conditions which enable a city to grow, change and adjust to new needs and demands and in the process, maintain and enhance what is already good, and build and improve what needs to be made better. Let us hope that by arranging this first underground meeting in Taksim Square, Mayor Tayyip Erdogan and the Istanbul Municipality have made a good start in bringing so many skills, minds and citizens together, and wish them well in their civic enterprise.

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Tareq Rajab Museum

GEZA FEHERVARI

The Tareq Rajab Museum in Kuwait, built and run privately by Jehan and Tareq Rajab, was opened to the general public in 1980 and has steadily shaped as among the most outstanding art collections in the region.

Tareq Sayid Rajab was the first Kuwaiti who was sent abroad to study art and history of art. He pursued his university studies in Britain between 1953 and 1958. It was during this period that he met his future wife, Jehan Wellborne, who from childhood had a great interest for the arts and in particular for the folklore of exotic nations and minority groups, like gypsies. The interest and the love for arts brought them together and they got married in 1955. Upon the completion of his studies they returned to Kuwait. After one year of postgraduate studies in Denmark, he was appointed as the first director of the Department of Antiquities and Museums of Kuwait. The Danish excavations on the Island of Failaka were carried out during this directorship. In 1969 Mr Rajab left the government service and together with his wife founded the New English School, which was one of the first such schools in the country. By then they were already deeply involved in collecting artifacts, primarily from Islamic countries, but later also from all over the continent of Asia. It took them nearly 35 years of collecting, travelling, studying and researching and by 1980 they were in a position to open their own museum.

The museum, which is in the basements of their and their son Ziad's houses, in Jabriyya, grew gradually. Today the Museum possesses several thousand objects and it is divided into two parts. Both parts display objects from the Islamic world and from other countries, which may culturally or stylistically be connected to the main themes. The two parts of the museum are called Part A and B.

Part A includes calligraphy, manuscripts, metalwork, glass and other media. The calligraphic section is again divided into an early and later period. Among the early calligraphic examples is a Qur'an page, written in *al-mail* or 'slanting' style, which is one of the oldest styles of the Arabic script. It is written, like so many other early Qur'an pages and manuscripts, on vellum. Another important and early example is a complete Holy Qur'an, also on vellum, dated 393 AH / AD 1002. An outstanding scholarly work in the collection is by Ya'qub ibn Ishaq al-Kindi's treatise on optics, which was written in c.240 AH / AD 902. An important Qur'an is written by Yaqut al-Mustasimi, a famous calligrapher, who lived in Baghdad during the Mongol invasion of 656 AH / AD 1258. Another copy of the Qur'an was written and richly illuminated by Abd Allah al-Sayrafi, (died in 801 AH / AD 1338) who was one of the pupils of Yaqut. From the 15th century dates Prince Baysunqur's calligraphic work. He was one of Timur's grandsons. He was an outstanding calligrapher and was responsible for a very large Qur'an having only seven lines to a page. Two lines of such a page are preserved in the Museum. Among the calligraphic examples of the later periods are several outstanding Ottoman works by Hamdullah Al-Amasi and Hafiz Othman, dating from the period between the 17th to 19th centuries. Among the illustrated manuscripts there are several Persian and Indian Shah Namah copies, including a page from the famous Houghton Shah Namah, which was copied and illustrated during the early 16th century AD.

The objects of the pottery section present a complete history of this art from pre-Islamic times, right up to the early part of the 20th century. Among the early examples, the large number of opaque white-glazed, also known as tin-glazed wares, should be mentioned. Among them there are two signed pieces, one of them showing the signature of a certain 'Ubayd and the other of Mohammed. Splashed wares, which were very popular and widespread during the 9th and 10th centuries, are also represented by a number of notable vessels, including a lamp. Among the large number of the celebrated and now well-known slip painted pottery vessels of Nishapur, is a unique piece, a large bowl of the polychrome-on-white type, bearing the date of 300 AH / AD 912. Up to date, this is the only known dated vessel of this type of pottery. Of the so called 'Saljuq period' pottery, two objects should be mentioned: one of them is an incense-burner, imitating metal examples. It is coated with a turquoise-blue glaze showing a small bird sitting on the top of the domical cover. The second example is a large lustre-painted tray, with fluted sides. The decoration depicts an enthroned ruler, surrounded by courtiers and attendants. There are five similarly shaped large trays known today, two of which are dated. One of them is in the Victoria and Albert Museum, dated 604 AH / AD 1207 and the other to 607 AH / AD 1210 in the Freer Gallery of Art in Washington.

Among the later period wares is a superb *lajvardina* tile with Qur'anic inscription dating from the end of the 13th or beginning of the 14th century. The panel has nine hexagonal tiles which were most likely made in Damascus during the 15th century. Very rare examples outside Egypt are the so called Mamluk sgraffiato wares which are represented in the Museum by complete vessels and some fragments. These may be dated to the 14th or early 15th century. Ottoman pottery of Iznik and Kutahya are also well demonstrated, albeit early 16th century pieces are missing. Of the later Iranian pottery of the Safavid and Qajar periods, a beautiful Kirman polychrome dish and several Qajar tiles should be recalled. In the metalwork section every period, perhaps with the exception of the Jazira schools, is well represented. An early example is an Umayyad incense-burner, which most likely originates from Syria. A rare specimen is the hemispherical bowl, made of bell-metal and decorated with engraved and punched designs. There are only two other such examples known today and their date

Right: Dress from Tihama in the Yemen. It was worn with tight trousers and tall straw hats. **Below:** Display of the musical instruments. **Bottom, left:** View of the Museum from the street. **Bottom, right:** Mirror-box, papier-mache lacquer painted, signed: Ali Qar. India, Kashmir, dated: 1105AH / AD 1693. **Opposite page, top:** Necklace, gold, diamond, rubies, emeralds and pearls, enamel work on the reverse. Japan, India c.18th century. **Bottom:** Panel of nine hexagonal tiles. Damascus, 15th century.







is considered to be of the 12th or early 13th century. A bronze candlestick, although it lost its original silver inlaid decoration, is a prominent example of the early Mamluk period. Its inscription mentions the name of Mamluk Sultan al-Mansur Sayf al-Din Qula'un, who reigned between 678 AH / AD 1280 and 689AH / AD 1290. Likewise a rare example is the spouted silver bowl which is decorated with incised intertwined scrollwork below the rim. A similar vessel in the Victoria and Albert museum is attributed to Iran and dated to the 12th century. However, according to Dr Anatol Ivanov, an almost identical silver vessel is in the Hermitage Museum in St.Petersburg, which comes from the golden horde and accordingly dated to the 14th century. A tinned-copper wine-bowl, with a Persian inscription, dates from the late 16th or early 17th century,





while another one, according to its inscription, was made in 1278AH / AD 1870.

The Museum's glass collection is equally representative. Of the early period a beautiful beaker with cut decoration should be recalled. It most likely comes from Egypt and can be dated to the 8th or 9th century. Another early glass vessel is an inkwell with four small handles on the shoulder. Its shape imitated later Roman pottery inkwells. An ewer with a pear-shaped body and a small bird sitting on the tip of its handle, recalls contemporary or somewhat later related bronze vessels. Its body has cut decoration. It may have been manufactured in Iraq or Iran during the 11th or 12 century. A fragmentary enamel painted goblet of the late 13th or early 14th century and a small fragment of a large vessel, probably a bottle, represent this type of Syrian wares in the museum's collection. Egyptian glass displayed by several glass weights, were popular during the Fatimid period, while Mamluk glass is exhibited by a variety of glass bracelets, some of which are polychrome. These latter examples may be dated to the 13th and 14th centuries. The largest number of glass vessels nevertheless originate from Iran and may be attributed to the period between the late 11th to 14th centuries. The glass collection also includes a few Indian painted glass pieces of the Mughal period. Some of these glass objects may have been made in Europe, probably in France, but the paintings were executed in India during



the 17th and 18th centuries.

The art of the Mughal period is introduced by a wide variety of objects, like several finely carved jade vessels, including bottles, trays and beakers. Also of Mughal origin is a lacquer painted mirror box from Kashmir, which bears the date of 1105 AH / AD 1693. Also from Kashmir is a large lacquered pen box with dense and colourful floral decoration. Indian ivory carvings include a North Indian 18th century musical instrument, called Sarinda, and a pen-box with intricate design.

Part B of the Museum introduces the jewellery, textiles, costumes and musical instruments not only from the Islamic world, but also other areas of Asia. The exhibition starts by showing the artifacts of the Gulf region, then the rest of the Islamic world, and finally India and the Far East. The museum is particularly rich in folk jewellery and perhaps it is justified to say that in this respect it has the largest and most representative collection in the world. Among the items from the Gulf region is a silver necklace richly decorated with gold and Maria Theresa Thalers of the 18th century. It comes from Nizwa, the Sultanate of Oman. Among the items of the Indian folk jewellery is a silver necklace with delicate filigree and blue enamel work. Tribal people prefer silver jewellery and silver was abundant in most of these regions already in pre-Islamic times. There is sufficient written evidence to show that silver work was widely practised in the Near East well before the advent of Islam. Later, however, in Seljuq times in Iran and during the Mamluks in Egypt there was a temporary silver shortage, when production of silver vessels and jewels had to be stopped.

The more delicate, or rather more expensive gold jewellery is exhibited in the gold room, which is situated behind one of the galleries. In front of the entrance in a small cabinet, attached to the roof, an exquisite and rare gold necklace is shown. It is set with diamonds, rubies, emeralds and pearls on its front side, while the back has fine enamel work. It was made at Jaipur in Mughal times during the 18th century. In the gold room itself the exhibited jewellery ranges from pre-Islamic times up to the 18th century. The pieces mainly originate from the Islamic world, although related items are also shown from Nepal and Bhutan. The exhibited examples include a richly jewelled dagger with a jade hilt. It was made most likely in Delhi during the 18th century.

The museum's textile and costume collection is equally rich and varied. Early Coptic and Islamic textiles from Egypt are represented by excavated fragments, ranging in date between the 5th and 9th centuries AD. Of the costumes, Syrian, Palestinian and Jordanian examples particularly provide the larger collections, but the Gulf region is also well represented. A detailed study of Palestinian costumes was published by Mrs Jehan Rajab in 1989. The collection also includes Indian, Turkoman and Afghan costumes. Of the textiles a rare example is a fine woven cotton with verses from the Qur'an. It was made in India and bears the date of 1110AH / AD 1698. Textiles of Ottoman Turkey include a silk tomb cover from ca.1800 and a flag from the late 17th or early 18th century and several embroidered towels and napkins of the 19th century. A unique piece is the part of the cover of the Ka'ba called the *Kiswa*. It was embroidered with metal threads in Turkey at the end of the 18th century.

The musical instruments are also exhibited in this part of the museum. Music always played an important role in the Islamic world and it was always encouraged by both religious and state authorities. Obviously it was under the influence of several cultures and hence the collection includes not only Islamic, but other instruments as well. A kind of classical music developed in the Islamic world as early as the 2nd century AH / AD 8th century, mostly in the courts of Damascus, then later in Baghdad, and Qayrawan and Fez in the western Islamic world.

The arms, armour and firearms collection of the Museum is also very rich. These items are exhibited in both parts of the Museum and one room is entirely dedicated to the display of swords and daggers of the Islamic world. The first catalogue of the Museum's collections was published last year by Robert Elgood, *The firearms of the Islamic world in the Tareq Rajab Museum*. Unfortunately lack of space makes it impossible to exhibit this collection in the Museum.

Finally, a recent acquisition should be mentioned, a collection of jewellery which, it is alleged, belonged to the last Emir of Bukhara. It includes silver-gilt and enamelled jewellery made in Uzbekistan during the first half of the 19th century and some textiles, the so-called Suzani, which comes from Kazakhstan.

The Museum is open every weekday between 9 am and 13.00 pm and 16.00 to 19.00 pm and on Fridays in the morning between 9.00 and 12.00 noon. During the holy month of Ramadan, in the afternoons the Museum opens between 19.00 and 22.00 pm. Entrance is free.

The museum is situated in Jabriyya, Kuwait, Block 12, Street 5, House No. 22.

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Mafraq Seminar: Focus on Central Asia and Eastern Europe

KHALID J D DEEMER

Scholars from 21 countries gathered together for the Fifth International Seminar on Islamic Arts which had as its theme "Islamic Arts Resources in Central Asia and Eastern and Central Europe". A total of 68 papers were presented at the Seminar which was held on the campus of Al al-Bayt University in Mafraq, Jordan, (20-24 April 1996)

The Seminar was jointly sponsored by Al al-Bayt University and the Islamic Arts Foundation (London), and was held under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince al-Hasan bin Talal. Significant financial support for the transportation of participants to and from their home countries was provided by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO); and the Islamic Education, Science and Culture Organization (ISESCO) provided funds for the organization of the Seminar as well as the subsequent publication of the proceedings. Royal Jordanian Airlines also contributed greatly to the success of the Seminar by providing very generous price reductions on tickets for the participants. The faculty of the Higher Institute for Islamic Art and Architecture of Al al-Bayt University coordinated much of the organization and administration of the Seminar, with the assistance of the Royal Society of Fine Arts (Amman). Dr Said H Kiamilev and the Institute of Islamic Civilization (Moscow) coordinated the very difficult logistics of communication and transportation within the states of the former Soviet Union. During their stay in Jordan, the participants were comfortably accommodated on the university campus, and there were field trips both before and after the Seminar to sites such as the Roman-Byzantine city of Umm al-Jimal, the Umayyad desert castles, the Archaeological Museum, Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts in Amman, and the Byzantine churches at Madaba and Mount Nebo.

The opening ceremony was held in the al-Husayn bin Ali Theater of Al al-Bayt University on the morning of 20 April, with messages to the gathering from Seminar Director Dr Wijdan Ali, Chairman of the Islamic Arts Foundation Mr Muazzam Ali (read by Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmad), Director General of ISESCO HE Dr Abdulaziz Othman Altwaijri (delivered by Dr Omar Qadi), and the President of Al al-Bayt University Dr Muhammad Adnan al-Bakhit. Dr Nurhan Atasoy then delivered the keynote address, in which she emphasized the importance of reintegrating scholars of Islamic Studies in general, and Islamic art and architecture in particular, from the Russian Federation and the newly independent Muslim states of Central Asia, into the international academic community. She also pointed out the need for increased efforts to carry out research in Islamic art and architecture in these regions, as well as in the former Soviet-bloc nations of Eastern Europe, in order to fill this gap in our knowledge. The Seminar delegates and guests at the opening ceremony then went to the nearby Imam Muslim Hall, where several exhibitions on art and archaeology, including a photographic exhibition on the art and architecture of the Siberian Tatars provided by Institute of History and Material Culture in St. Petersburg, as well as art and photography projects by students of Al al-Bayt University, were opened.

From the earliest planning stages, it had been the primary objective of the Seminar organizers to gather together as many eminent scholars as possible from the varions nations of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe to present papers on their current research and engage in discussions of issues related to Islamic art, architecture, and culture in their regions. In this, the Seminar was a success. On the one hand, it provided a valuable and unique opportunity for the Western and Arab scholars who attended the Seminar to be exposed to this vast and rich cultural heritage, which until now has received little of the international academic attention that it deserves, both because of language barriers and the closed nature of Soviet society. On the other hand, it facilitated the exchange of information and ideas among the scholars from these regions, many of whom met for the first time at the Seminar.

A wide range of topics within the broad theme of the Seminar was considered. These included architecture, historical as well as contemporary applied arts, urbanism, music, theater, cinema, museums and archives, and other general cultural topics related to the various regions of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. A total of 68 papers were read during the five days of the Seminar, often followed by quite lively discussions with members of the audience. Several additional papers have been submitted *in absentia* by scholars who were unable to attend. The participants represented twenty-one different nations: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Iran, Jordan, Pakistan, Poland, the Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Tatarstan, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Uzbekistan.

Many of the presentations on architecture were illustrated national or regional surveys, and included papers on Muslim architecture in Hungary, Albania, Bosnia, Uzbekistan, northern Tajikistan, and Daghistan. There were also several studies of a more focused monographical nature, such as on the Islamic content and political meaning of St. Basil's Cathedral outside the Moscow Kremlin as a memorial to the Russian conquest of Kazan in 1552, and the dating and attribution of Shah Fazil funerary complex in Ferghana based on a new reading of its inscriptions. A

survey of the important early Timurid constructions of Timur and Ulughbeg at and near Shahrisabz in Uzbekistan included information on such monuments as the Ak Sarai palace complex of Timur, the Kuk Gumbaz Mosque and Mausoleum of Shamsuddin Kuliala at Dorut Tilovat, and the Dar al-Sacudat funerary complex of the Timurid family. A more general and theoretical orientation was taken in presentation on holy sites in Central Asia.

The field of urban studies was represented by two papers. One dealt with the design and organization of the city of Khiva in Khwarizm (Uzbekistan) as a representative of earlier local as well as international Islamic urban models. The other paper informed the audience what has been discovered during the excavations of the 11thC miners' settlement of Bazar-dara in the Gorny-Badakhshan Autonomous Region of Tajikistan.

Themes of current relevance were dealt with in papers on the traditional dimensions of modern architecture in Tajikistan, conservation problems and projects in Uzbekistan, and the planned Imam Bukhari restoration and development project in Samarqand. Finally, the photographic documentation of Islamic architecture throughout the former Soviet Union was discussed in a paper dealing with the rich and extensive archives of 19thC and early 20thC images at the Institute of History and Material Culture in St. Petersburg.

Applied arts, to include works of royal patronage, crafts, textiles, costumes, leather inlay, wood carving, carpets, ceramics, jewellery, amulets, armor, miniature paintings, numismatics, calligraphy and epigraphy, were a major theme in the Seminar. There were also several papers dealing with the collections of major museums in Eastern Europe, Russia, and Central Asia.

Illustrated general surveys were presented on crafts in Uzbekistan, among the Turkish-speaking people of Central Asia, in the Volga region, and among the Tatars of Western Siberia. An interesting paper on women's jewellery in Bukhara provided many examples from the 19th and 20th centuries, and explained the origins, functions, and religious as well as social meanings of several different types. A paper on Shamayls among the Tatars discussed the beginnings of revival of this art form with its original religious and cultural meanings, after it had been corrupted by a process of both formal and ideological 'Sovietization'. Two papers dealt with architectural representations and motifs in manuscript illumination: in Qur'ans in Russian collections, and in 15th-17thC miniature paintings. Also presented were a study of leather-inlay crafts among the Kazan Tatars, and a description and analysis of North Caucasian prayer rugs and ablution jugs. Epigraphy and calligraphy were the topics of two papers. The first was concerned with examples from the Tatar decorative arts; and the second was a detailed analysis of monumental architectural applications under the Armenian Shaddadid Amirs, in the 11thC Mamuchihr Mosque and city gate at Ani, the 12thC citadel at Nerkin Talin, and the 12thC Mama-Khatun mausoleum. Numismatics was represented by a paper on the different types of Golden Horde coins of the Volga and Khwarizm regions, and an analysis of the pre-Islamic and Islamic iconography.

There were several presentations on the holdings of museums and archives in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. These included reports on textile collections in Polish museums, Islamic art in Russia and at the Tajik Academy of Sciences in Dushanbe, prayer rugs in the State Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow, and calligraphic manuscripts in the Tatarstan Academy of Science in Kazan. Papers were also presented on amulets in the Hungarian National Museum, Persian and Central Asian miniature paintings in various collections in the former Soviet Union, and the Islamic art holdings of the Hermitage in St. Petersburg. Two papers concerning collections in Bosnia were presented, one on the National Library in Sarajevo and the other about Islamic manuscripts in Bosnia.



Music and theater were the themes of a number of presentations. Two papers on musical traditions in Azerbaijan were read. One was concerned with the *maqam* tradition and some of its modern interpretations, and the other on the folkloric contributions to modern music in Azerbaijan. The influences of Islam upon Turkman music, and of Arab-Islamic culture on Central Asian music in general, were the subjects of two broader and more theoretical studies. Finally, there were two papers considering general issues regarding the place of theater and cinema in Islamic societies.

Cultural and ethnographic studies shed light on some of the social and anthropological factors that have

influenced societies in Central Asia. A paper on the effects of the Slavonic conquests, and later the introduction of the Soviet state, on the way of life of Central Asian Muslims, argued that influences often passed in both directions. Other papers of this type considered family rituals among the Uygurs, the ethnocultural history of the Tatars of western Siberia, and the introduction of modern elements into Tajik culture.

Several papers dealt with theoretical issues related to Islamic art. A very interesting paper on the Shi'ite Alevi (Kizalbash and Bektash) group in eastern Bulgaria revealed some of their important spiritual motifs and how these were translated into an iconographical programme that is then manifested in their art and architecture. A presentation on the problems of developing and studying Islamic culture in modern post-Soviet Russia explored the many conflicts that exist between the momentum towards a revival of religious culture among the Muslim people in the newly independent states and autonomous regions, and the heavy vestiges of 75 years of Soviet ideology and cultural interference.

These papers, together with those which are being submitted *in absentia*, are currently in the process of being edited at the Higher Institute for Islamic Art and Architecture of Al al-Bayt University, and should be published early in 1997 with the support of ISESCO and Al al-Bayt University.





Top: One of the Seminar sessions in progress. **Above:** A group photo of the Seminar participants. **Opposite page:** Inaugural ceremony: Jordan national anthem being played.

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Art and Spirituality

MICHAEL VOLPE

A true definition of Islamic Art is something that nobody has really been able to give me ever since I came into contact with the contemporary exponents of it. As a newcomer to the creations of artists from the Middle East, my appreciation and understanding of it is still in its infancy, like a child desperate to know more but not quite understanding what it is I am pursuing.

What is clear is that the few artists I have come across in my work at Leighton House Museum in London, have evoked in me some unearthly pleasures, the significance or source of which still prove elusive. It is ferociously difficult to articulate what happens when one sees a room full of work by Suad al-Attar, Khaled Ben Slimane or Khairat al-Saleh. The eyes see but the heart feels. Even the simplest forms possess elegance and "personality". Silent voices speak; suddenly, the burning enthusiasm so obvious in the artists is transported to the viewer. Very few people at Leighton House have failed to be moved by this new breed of Arab and Islamic masters - fewer still have the words to explain why it should be so.

Perhaps what is truly tripping me up on my quest is the consideration of the colossal heritage and history behind the work; the legends; the religious meaning; the breathtaking imagery born of hundreds of years of architectural decoration, calligraphy and cultural development. However, from my position as a non-Muslim art lover, I am beginning to think that what moves me in Islamic art is a mechanism much closer to home.

It is easy to find books which detail the physical aspects and history of Islamic Art but much harder to find those giving an emotional account of the culture. But perhaps this is an unfair criticism; even these artists cannot give me a clear and concise definition of Islamic Art. Khairat al Saleh who has recently enjoyed a hugely successful first exhibition at Leighton House is able to articulate beautifully what she feels and what it is that motivates her. "There are things you understand intuitively and spiritually" she says. But still I never could get my head above the water. I just couldn't put my finger on what it was that was so special. Neither it seems could Khairat, "I am struck dumb when I work. I cannot speak".

Yet I think, for my own purposes at least, I am now nearer an explanation than ever before and it took the work of an Englishman to act as the beacon from which enlightenment floods.

The artist is Alex Stewart, a man who only five years ago was at death's door. Years of alcohol abuse had reduced his body to desperate fragility; his mind wandered about him unable to grasp at anything likely to pull him from the abyss. But one day, three months into his expected six months of remaining life, he stopped drinking – for no explicable reason – and picked up a paintbrush. Four years on and he was offering myself and my colleagues a chance to judge his work – and reward him with an exhibition if we liked it. We did, but in the mass of work we were looking at, the true emotional power of Alex's work did not march stridently into my psyche. It was not until I was selecting work for the publicity that my eye was held for longer than usual on one of Alex's slides.

It struck me immediately how similar in form and content this painting was to one by a good friend and wonderful Iraqi artist, Suad al-Attar. Entitled "An angel once I saw", the painting showed a man seated, holding a book. His eyes were diverted to the sky and above him , suspended in air, was the form of an "angel"; a be-winged woman, reposed and sanguine, eyes closed. The man, (clearly a self-portrait) is pleased to see her, a gentle smile upon his face. It was indeed a moving picture whose spiritual content shone brightly.

Suad Al Attar is one of the most sensitive artists you are ever likely to come across. Looking through works that she did in the late 60's and 70's, it immediately becomes clear that she supports an emotional talent with her intellectual abilities and knowledge. It seems inconceivable that her work would lack its profound spiritual dimension, even if she were not to possess an astonishing colour sense and technique; surely, I suggested, if she was to paint using a hairbrush her work would strike home regardless. Like most Islamic artists in my experience, such compliments provoke an outpouring of gratitude. "That is so kind. When someone sees something in your work you feel so satisfied". It is particularly pleasing she says, when a western observer absorbs the work from an emotional point of view, and not just the visual aspect. After all, in Suad's experience, when she has shown her paintings to gallery owners and so called art dealers, she is met with blank looks.

It was later, after viewing what by any standards was a body of work of startling intensity that I began to discuss Alex Stewart's paintings with him. All of the pictures had one or more of the motifs found in the first picture; angels (saviours - the only cultural reference he had - he is not a religious man), boats (places of safety), fish (symbols of knowledge), masks (to signify the false impressions people give - the barriers to who we really are) and lighthouses (the beacon of safety – a place to head for in a storm). I remembered something Khairat had said some time ago. "Everything in the past was meant to attract light" she said, "because God was the light. I will not let go of that; when the world around me dies, that will not die".

I have said that Alex is not a religious man. His lighthouses do not represent God, they represent safety and kindness (which for Muslims, Christians and many other religions, is indeed what God signifies). Of course, this opens a debate on "spirituality" as opposed to "religion" and the ceremony and teachings that accompany it. Alex Stewart's idea of God or his greater power is more

abstract. My version of God he says, works through people, things, places - it is like having a guide, because life is a series of cross-roads and the guide is a companion on a journey.

It was now that Alex told me his story, of his fight with alcohol, his disastrous relationships, his crumbling health – and the moment he decided to paint, with no training, no real experience and of how his art is now his therapy. I was also startled to hear that he too had visited Suad al-Attar's exhibition two years earlier and had been deeply moved by it. It was also astounding when, without mentioning the art to Suad, I later took her to Alex's exhibition in The Ice House in Holland Park and her attention was immediately drawn to "An angel once I saw". "That is amazing" she said "this picture is so much like my work". It was then that the fog began to clear.

Alcoholics and drug addicts who have gone through rehabilitation, talk of "a greater power"; an intangible thing that guides them, that they must respect if they are to survive and remain strong forever. It is this unidentified "greater power" that Alex is trying to show us in his pictures - he uses angels but he is not a man of worship. His is a spiritual art. He paints from another dimension. He says he is trying to get away from who he was; many of his pictures show a traveller resting on his way along a road. He is still on a journey and he does not believe he will ever arrive – in life he must constantly question himself, develop inner inspiration to continue; I don't think I will ever really arrive – if I do I will stand still, says Alex. You have to keep taking risks and pushing yourself.

His battle with drink goes on and on. The paintings that Alex Stewart creates are in effect his worship, his thanks for being saved and he wants to share that with people.

On hearing his story and his thoughts, I was struck by how similar it was to the words of many Islamic artists I have spoken to. They become their art; their faith is a lifelong journey that continues when they die; they too give thanks and are reverential to a greater power than themselves. One has told me, "It doesn't matter whether we love or hate our lives, we still want them to be meaningful and have significance. Otherwise, we have darkness and despair". Alex Stewart was in deep despair and he fends it off everyday. He lives a simple life, often spending hours reading in Holland Park, drinking coffee. He is not a bold, brash man . He hardly seems aware of his gifts, he is still immensely flattered by the kind comments he receives. This is another aspect of Islamic and Arab artists that set them apart: no matter what successes they have, they still appear genuinely moved when someone praises them; when someone sees what a picture means; Khairat was never in a greater state of excitement than when a visitor to her show would offer their interpretation of her work. Could they be sharing my vision ? she wonders. Up to the point of seeing Alex Stewart's work, only Islamic artists could rudely interrupt my emotions - moved by mere pictures.

During Alex's Ice House exhibition, The Independent on Sunday printed a colour reproduction of one of his travellers series. A man lay on the ground sleeping under a tree with a symbolic wheel resting against the trunk. Two days after it appeared, Alex received a letter from a man in Yorkshire (co-incidentally, Alex's home county). In it, the man professed to be ignorant of virtually all art and seemed almost embarrassed to be writing the letter. "But", he said, "I just had to write to you. I was surprised to find myself extremely moved by the picture. It seemed to show a man on a journey, resting on his arduous way. Life perhaps?" The writer was clearly touched by this simple picture. It had reached out from the page and struck a chord with him. Maybe he was suffering difficulties in his own life and he was asking Alex to confirm that his feelings about the picture indeed corresponded with those of it's creator. Although the exhibition was a great success for Alex, I believe he thought that letter to be his greatest achievement.

The physical aspects of Islamic art, the influences they draw upon, are firmly laid down in their cultures. The distinct nature of colour, form and structure is familiar to many but Alex did not have such inspiration to draw upon. For Muslim artists, their life enhancing religion and faith gives guidance to their brush: for Alex it is the "conversion" from a destructive disease that has shaped his art.

Both Alex and the Islamic artist paint from the same place – the heart. They grasp at a something that lies beyond the eye and perhaps even the mind. It is another, a spiritual, dimension that they struggle to depict. Some with angels, spirits, ghosts, the sky, clouds, birds. Always painted with much colour and serenity; often bearing smiles, sometimes a reassuring expression, often with eyes closed – always with all the beauty the artist is able to portray – and often with a profound sense of space and freedom. In Stewart's work we are often viewing from high above and in his depiction of himself, his body is commonly seen floating above the ground. Alex explains this phenomenon thus; My childhood was compressed by severe illnesses, I was often in hospital or sick at home. Such a sickly condition made me a target of bullies and my whole personality was restricted. When I left school and went to college I discovered drink and drugs. This freed me – partying was my release. When that got out of control I became constrained again – shackled by my addiction. Making the decision to stop and recover myself was like the first emancipation: I was free again to make my own choices. This is why my pictures have such a sense of space, flight and freedom.

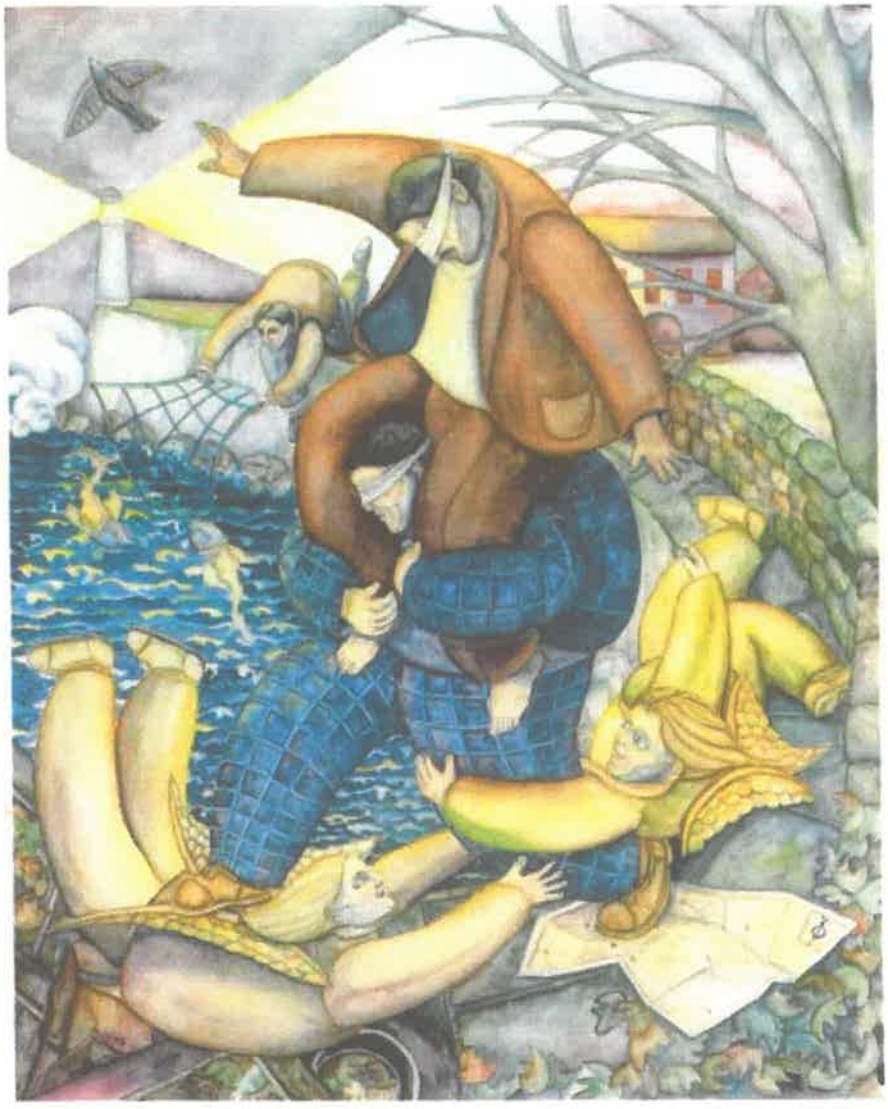
And what both Alex's work and other Islamic artists' pictures do is invite introspection and ask the viewer to examine his or her own values, whether we wear a mask or whether we are lost on our journey. This is not necessarily a religious challenge - it is a "spiritual" one that need not involve ceremony, adoration or "religious" practice.

The works of Alex Stewart have dual significance to him and ultimately the viewer. They are the keys to his heaven but those keys also open every door in his hell. They keep him on his path and he asks questions of himself every time he sits down to his canvas. They act as his therapy.

As he becomes more successful (and his exhibition at The Ice House was indeed the most successful ever) more people are sharing his vision and each and every time someone expresses how moved they are by it, the stronger he becomes for the next step on the road; it proves he is on the right road.

There is little doubt of Suad Al Attar's significance in modern Islamic art. In Iraq, she was a star, well known and revered. Society there (politics aside) was able, as a matter of

course, to look at her work and "feel" it. Is it just a coincidence that on seeing her work, Alex Stewart was moved so much? And why was I moved by it, as well as by that of so many other artists who seem to possess that same spirituality and who just happen to come from similar cultural and religious backgrounds. I am not a Muslim, my colleagues whose emotions were equally dented are not either. Perhaps we should look further into our pasts and examine our present. Yet we are not unusual, maintains Suad. "Many people feel the way you do, some just cannot articulate it but others just avoid it – they are literally afraid of their feelings". I always thought art was meant to move you, to provoke, evoke and challenge. When you see the massive frescoes on cathedrals in Italy, one wants to weep, to shout, to tell everyone of what you have seen. Undoubtedly I have experienced similarly when looking at great Arab and Islamic art. Just writing this paragraph creates in me the impression that a huge debate on 20th century materialism, our inability to express our emotions in the cynical society, is looming over me. I have no desire to step into its shadow. But all of us at Leighton House cannot be so different. I have a niggling fear that there is more to the general aversion





This page: Alex Stewart **top:** *Go your own way.* **Left:** *Now I lay me down to sleep.* **Opposite page:** Suad Al Attar **top:** *Once Upon A Time* Oil on canvas. **bottom:** *Bird of Paradise* Oil on canvas.

to Islamic art by the majority of the art establishment than just the ancient cultural references that these artist use and it may be an aversion created by more contemporary political history.

Alex Stewart's exhibition was a deeply emotional experience and the most unlikely visitors or viewers of





his work were perfectly able to respond in the "right" way. His show was enormously successful on all levels. But it is clear to me that the what sets Alex's paintings apart from others is exactly the same as that in Suad's pictures. In Suad's case she says "I have used the art, for example of the Assyria of 1500 BC. to develop my style and technique and my personality as an artist. But Islam is a spiritual society and now I paint more than that which I see before me". Alex Stewart says: "I am trying to depict a greater power – I can't see it but I can feel it. I know it is there. I try to de-religionize it and make it a part of my reality."

And all of the artists I mention here have another central theme that goes through their work. It is love; love of oneself, love of others, love of something greater than ourselves. Yet that appreciation of love affords them (or curses them) with the insight to see the dark side - what it is like without hope or love or spirit. They are equally capable of depicting darkness and despair. It is the burden of the artist to travel a road whose dips are as deep as it's peaks are high.

Yet the grand themes, and vast fantasies such as those in Stewart's pictures of angels and birds; such mesmerising and incredibly sacred religious stories as those of the Bouraq in Suad's paintings; such as the wonderful notion of the tree of life so common in Khairat al Saleh's work, are all compressed and focused tightly onto the canvas and become, in the most unlikely way, utterly personalised, both to the painter and the viewer. Even when that viewer has no direct experience of the subject or context: mythology, Islam, Islamic society or culture or in Stewart's case alcoholism. But one can understand. The human spirit responds in similar ways to different stimulations; we cry when we are sad and we cry when we are happy. Despair comes in many forms - alcoholism, divorce, bereavement - and spiritual contentment comes in many forms also – beautiful music, religion, love. This is why it is essential for the work of these artists

to cross-fertilise with Western culture: they simplify what art should be and how it should affect us. This is not forgetting, however, their physical beauty and aesthetic achievement.

Many claim spiritual greatness for their work – most have only succeeded in intellectualising about their spirituality. Alex Stewart has found, perhaps even by accident, a formula for articulating in paint what he has experienced. He does this in the most abstract and fantastical way, but like Suad, I don't believe he could fail, no matter how or what he painted. He has opened the doors of his mind and his heart. He has grasped that third dimension.

But perhaps I expect too much of the art-loving public. After all, a painting should be a beautiful thing to behold (and I certainly believe this). I can't help noticing however that even if the forms within these pictures are not of intrinsic beauty themselves, the effort that has been made to portray them "beautifully" renders them so. Perhaps the colours that Suad is drawn to in her pictures are those we associate with natural beauty – forests, jungles, things of the earth. Brightness is all around in Stewart's pictures too – it is that light again! And perhaps I am being far too emotional about this subject – it is for the individual to respond to art in his or her own way. What I can say is that becoming involved with these artists has given a deeper meaning to what I want from a picture – from that "beautiful thing" we hang upon our walls. Suad's pictures tell us everything we need to know about her – her sensuality, her spirituality and perhaps even her religion. Alex Stewart's work offers a glimpse of what it is like to be emancipated from the imprisonment of addiction. I do not need to practice Islam to understand Suad's work and I do not need to teeter on the brink of death to appreciate what Alex has been through. Maybe many people reading this think that I have had a revelation not uncommon to most people. But this revelation which relates to my experience of a relatively small group of artists and what is crucial to me personally, is that one is from my culture and the others from one a million miles away. The language is, however, the same.

Perhaps there is now a simple answer to my question posed at the head of this article. Islamic art, for me at least, is a very simple, clear thing. It is no more or less the work of people whose lives are dominated by something that is more potent than just what they see and hear. By money, by vice, by worldly goods. True, they can paint a pretty picture of something before them but they try to paint things that no one sees but only feels. For the Islamic artist it is perhaps God, or even a thousand years of philosophy, legend and iconography. For Alex Stewart it is his redemption that flows from his brush. For both Alex and the Islamic artist it is the motivation for the work that sets them apart. Their wondrous skills lie in their unerring aim, striking at the heart and spirit every time.

The last word goes to Alex Stewart; "I am trying to depict the serenity that I thirst for – but I don't think I will ever get it. If I do, my pictures will die". Alex deserves to find his serenity. But many of us need him and his kind to continue telling us how we may find it or what it looks like when we get there. As we often crave what we do not have and fail to appreciate it if we do acquire it, I suspect that travelling the road with these artists is a far more rewarding proposition.

Michael Volpe works for the Libraries and Art Service of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea in London.

Problems of Art Education in the Islamic World

PROCEEDINGS OF THE
3RD INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR ON ISLAMIC ARTS

Organised by the
Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman
and the Islamic Arts Foundation, London
from 18-20 October 1988 in Amman, Jordan.

35 Working Papers
(28 in English and 7 in Arabic)
by Scholars from the Islamic World and the West.

Published jointly by the Ministry of Culture
and the Royal Society of Fine Arts.

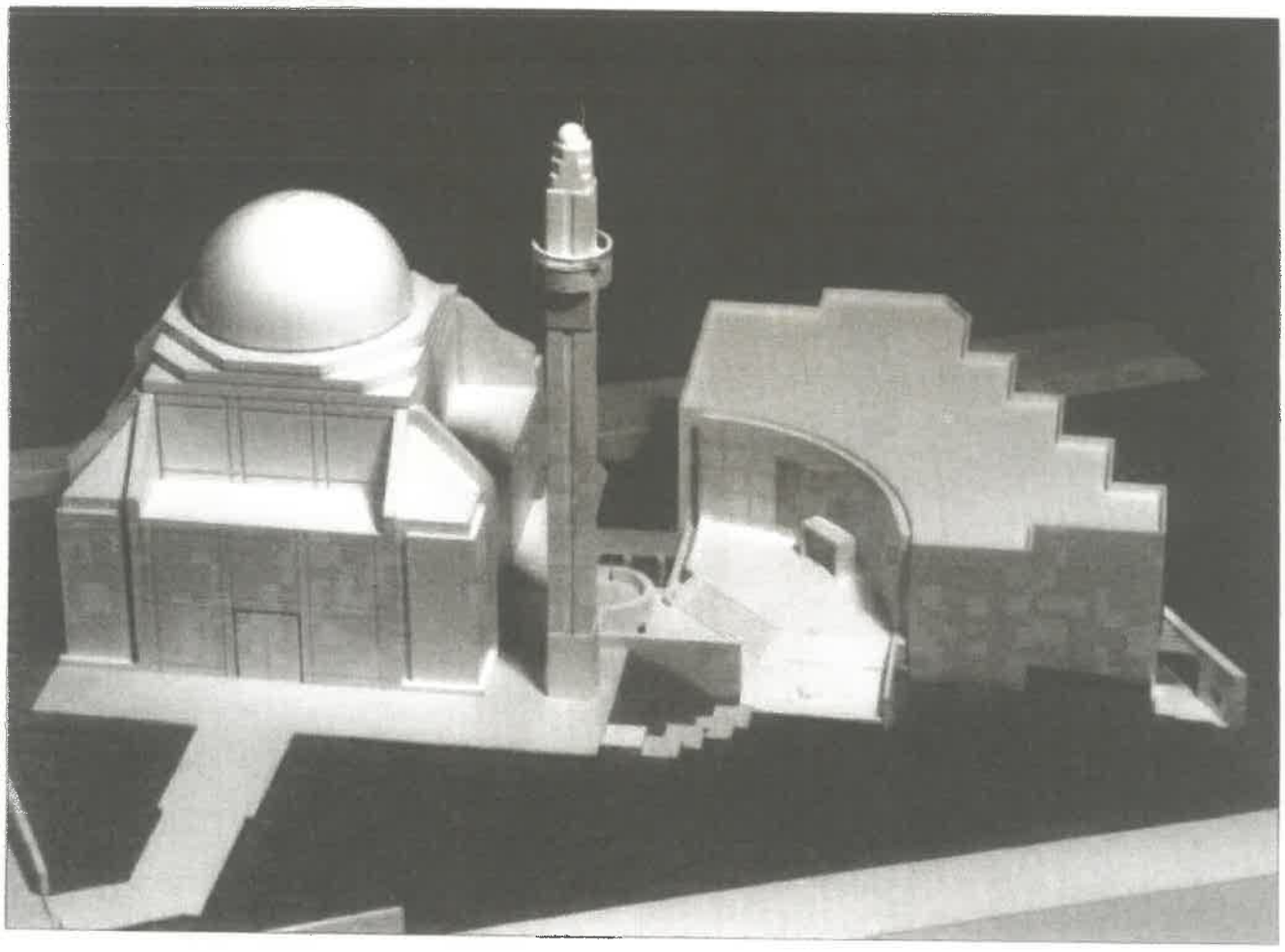
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The school's semi-circular plaza mirrors the graceful geometry of the mosque's dome. Sunken one-half storey below the plaza leading to the mosque, the plaza acts simultaneously as an element to unify the entire cultural center and as a way for visitors to distinguish between its two major spaces.

The School of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York

HUSSEIN SHAHINE



The 25,000 sq.ft. school (right) is a three-storey facility which includes classrooms, library, cafetena, exhibition spaces, and office spaces for the Imam. The school is also designed for future expandibility, both atop its roof and through new space to be added at grade level. In deference to the worshippers at the mosque, whose main entrance is on 96th Street (foreground), the school has its own entrance on 97th Street (rear). Another entrance to the school is through the plaza between the two buildings

The Islamic Cultural Center School is conceived as a significant enhancement to the expression of Muslim spirituality embodied in the mosque already built on the site. Thus, it embraces the design vocabulary of elegant but unaffected symmetry and simplicity of materials of its neighbour, while addressing the temporal needs of the community it serves.

Located in Manhattan, most prominent of the New York City's five boroughs, the school's design is suggestive of the vitality of Islamic culture, emphasizing both the religious and spatial connection to the Center as a whole, and its appropriate context within the world's most international city.

The inspiration

Every successful architectural design begins with the vision of an inspired client. The Islamic Cultural Center (ICC) is a non-profit organisation established in the early 1960's with a four-fold mission. Its first goal is to serve the neighbouring Muslim community, the fastest-growing religious group in the United States; second, to enlighten American public opinion 'with the true knowledge' about Islam, its teaching, culture, and the countries where it is practiced; third, to provide religious guidance, opinions, and legal rulings of Islamic Law pertaining to religious, cultural, and social questions critical to Muslim communities in the Americas; and fourth, to promote understanding and friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.

'The classrooms, library, cafeteria, and exhibition spaces at the school reflect the vibrancy of Islamic culture in New York,' notes His Excellency Mohammed A Abulhasan, Chairman of the ICC Board of Trustees, Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations, and a tireless proponent of the ICC's objectives and building program. 'This cultural dynamic will be mirrored in classes for children and adults, in the display of art, and in the convocation of the faithful.'

Also pivotal to project's successful implementation are Dr Muhammed Salem Agwa, Director and Imam, and the ICC's other Board members, representatives from the 33 Islamic states that are members of the United Nations. Their efforts are key both to the planning and design of the school and to raising the $10,221,000 required to build it.

At a time of confusion about the *true intentions of the Muslim* community in the United States, this center, newest of 1,250 in America, speaks to the moderate, peaceable, and reverent requirements of a rapidly growing community.

The Site and Plan

Situated in an ethnically and culturally diverse neighbourhood between Manhattan's black and Hispanic Upper East Side and Spanish Harlem, the Center's focal point is the mosque, completed in 1991, immediately to the west of the school in the same hillside site. The

design team was able to capitalise on a 19-foot differential in grade level – it slopes from west to east– to reduce the scale of the school relative to the mosque. In effect, the school is built into the slope and encloses a total of 35,200 square feet, including cellar level. Its 'footprint' is 190 feet by 125 feet and the structure has an average elevation of 40 feet.

An additional challenge to the design team is the result of unstable soil conditions on the site, which consists of fill some 20 to 30 feet in depth. This necessitates a structural support system of flat plate reinforced concrete on piles. In turn, these piles vary in length commensurate with thickness of the fill between the surface and bedrock below. On average, each pile is 45 feet in length.

The Center's site lines extend to 97th and 96th streets on the north and south, and to Third Avenue on the west. The main entrance to the mosque is canted to the 90-degree angle formed by 96th Street and Third Avenue. In deference to worshippers and the circulation patterns inherent in this layout, the ground floor of the school will be accessible via an entry on the 97th street side of the site. Even here, though, the interrelatedness of mosque and school is reinforced by a side entrance to the mosque, actually the principal point of entry used by most worshippers.

The semi-circular plaza in front of the school mirrors the circle-on-square geometry of the mosque's imposing dome. Recessed one-half storey below the ceremonial main plaza that leads to the mosque, the new plaza acts simultaneously as an element to unify the entire cultural center and as a way for visitors to distinguish between its two major components. In addition, the area will be used for outdoor recreation, as a gathering space, and for overflow space for prayers during the feasts. A typically 'American' complement to the typically Islamic lines of the plaza is its total accessibility to the handicapped, now a code requirement throughout the United states.

The Program and Scope

The school consists of three stories and a cellar level. Each above-grade level is 12ft 6in high. The ground level will include a 4,000-square-foot cafeteria and library, 2,500 square feet devoted to offices for the center's leadership, and mechanical and support spaces that will later become a permanent museum space and assembly hall seating 100. The mechanical system is specified for its adaptability to the school's multi-faceted functions.

Levels Two and Three each include six classrooms totalling approximately 8,000 square feet on each floor. In addition, four classrooms on each level can be combined by using moveable partitions to create two larger classrooms. When it is completely occupied, the school can accommodate 240 students. Considerable flexibility is essential to the school's educational objectives, since the classrooms will be utilised day and night, offering instructions in a variety of subjects to adults as well as children.

A skylighted lobby on the second and third levels provides a design element of visual interest, as well as a source of natural light.

CULTURAL COLLABORATION

SOM wins an award for New York's Purpose-Built mosque

Karin Tetlow

Located on the noisy corner of 96th Street and Third Avenue in Manhattan is New York's Muslim mosque. Designed by the New York office of Skidmore, Owings & Merrill the Islamic Cultural Center, whose chairman is Kuwait's ambassador to the UN, His Excellency Mohammad Abulhassan, is both a spiritual refuge for faithful from all walks of life and an intriguing example of interior architecture exactly expressed as exterior form.

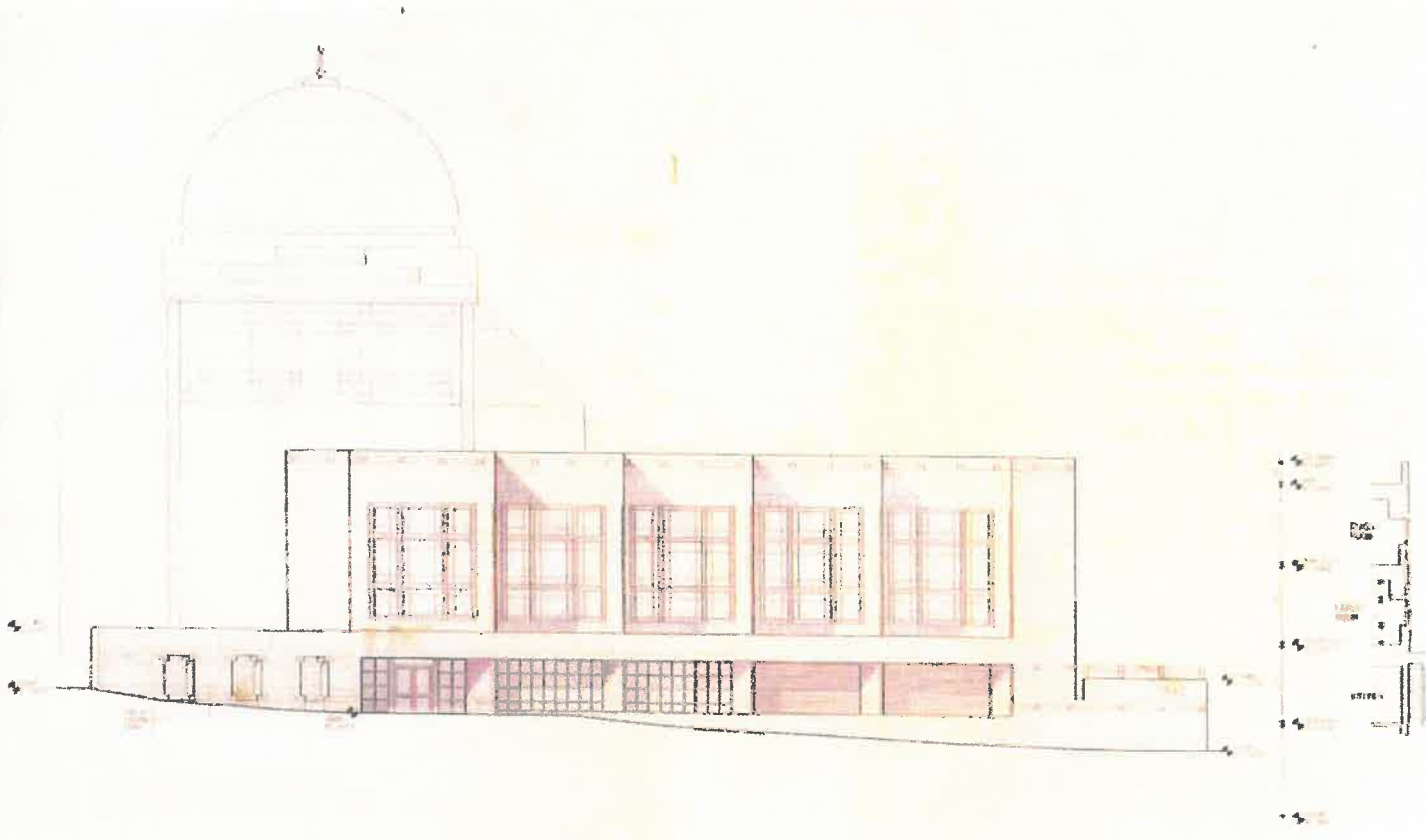
Charged with creating a structure that would deliver contemporary design materials and methods yet embrace the theology of Islam and architectural traditions developed over the course of 1400 years since the death of Prophet Mohammed, design partner Michael McCarthy looked to history. By fortuitous coincidence, the senior designer assigned to the project, Mustafa Abadan, had earlier visited some 50 mosques under the auspices of Cornell University, his alma mater. The architects learned that the major religious requirements are simple: the depiction of natural forms, because they are part of the image of God, were proscribed, and the orientation of the prayer niche, or mihrab, must be toward the shortest route to Makkah. Other traditional practices, such as the inclusion of the minaret to sound the call to prayer, had developed by custom over the centuries. Aided by two committees, one representing the people who would be using the mosque, the other – composed of secular experts on Islam – concerned with accurate representation of Islamic tradition and thought, McCarthy chose to base his design on historical concept rather than literal interpretation.

Since geometry is both a major principle in Islamic forms and story of 20th-century architecture, he decided to use it in the form of recurring units of squares as the ordering principle of the mosque's design.

The building fits exactly into a 90 foot cube. Four large steel trusses form the structural 9 square grid which supports the dome and forms a column-free interior for the prayer hall. Departing from traditional construction, transitional tier between the square of the building and the plane of the intersecting trusses is composed of metal and glass, while the concrete dome itself floats on a horizontal band of clear glass, which is illuminated at night. The green-toned entrance portal to the prayer hall is created from layers of overlapping glass panels that are stepped to form an arch.

Ornamentation is supplied by a modern computer adaptation of Kufic, a form of Arabic calligraphy. The mihrab opposite the entrance has similar glass panels edged again in a frieze composed of Kufic verses from the Qur'an. Since there was no space for ductwork, the design team created a pair of sentinels for each wall. Topped with decorative lights, each structure provides ventilation and helps organise the geometry of the hall. Signalling such a rich melding of Islamic architectural tradition with twentieth century opportunities, the building is truly an oasis for New York.

Courtesy: *Interiors*





LEGEND
1 Lobby
2 Library
3 Cafeteria
4 Kitchen
5 Service Line
6 Refrigerator/Freezer
7 Storage
8 Imam's Office
9 Office
10 Secretary
11 Waiting
12 Conference/Teacher's Room
13 Toilet
14 Service Area

First level plan

Design vocabulary

The school's cladding will consist of a granite from the New England region north of New York and of Kynar-coated aluminium-and-glass curtain wall and windows. Like the facade of the mosque, the granite surface of the new building's exterior walls will be adorned with discreet geometric patterns characteristic of Islamic architecture throughout the world. But while the school's building materials may be identical to those of the mosque, the decorative patterns on its facade will be different enough to help establish the new building's own identity.

The interiors are currently on the drawing boards and are being designed with special considerations in mind: Each of the countries represented within the ICC is donating artwork symbolising its devotion to Islamic principles and culture. Accordingly, design is proceeding in a way contrary to the usual sequence, with interior design determinated by its compatibility with the artwork, not the other way around.

A Work in Progress

Like Islamic culture in New York and United states generally, the ICC is in a state of dynamic flux. In recognition of this capacity for growth, the school's design has embraced the



possibility of expansion, both vertical and horizontal. Its flat roof includes structural connections for the addition of several more floors. A saw-toothed wall facing east not only helps to alleviate the rigid rectilinearity of the school, it will also facilitate horizontal expansion as ICC continues to grow in the new millennium. Completion of construction is scheduled for 1997.

Dr Hussein Shahine, chairman of Rogers, Burgun, Shahine & Deschler, architect for the Islamic Cultural Center School, has an international practice that also includes buildings for healthcare and hospitality, many of which are in the Middle East.



Opposite page, top: The granite cladding and simple symmetry of the school (foreground) have been selected to complement the center's focal point, the mosque. But while the school's building materials may be identical to those of the mosque, the decorative patterns seen on the facade and in the interiors will help to establish the new building's own identity while still using geometric patterns typical of Islamic architecture. **Bottom:** First level plan. **This page, top: (L-R)** Dr Muhammad Salem Agwa, Director and Imam of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York, HE Ambassador Mohammad Abulhasan, Permanent Representative of Kuwait to the United Nations and Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Cultural Center, Dr Abdel-Rahman Osman, Senior Imam and Director of the Islamic Cultural Center, Community Representative with some members of the community. **Above: (L-R)** Dr Hussein Shahine of Rogers, Burgun, Shahine & Deschler, Inc Architects, HE Ambassador Gaafar M Allagany, Permanent Representative of Saudi Arabia to the United Nations, HE Ambassador Hassan Ali Hussain Al-Nimah, Permanent Representative of Qatar to the United Nations.

Summary Information

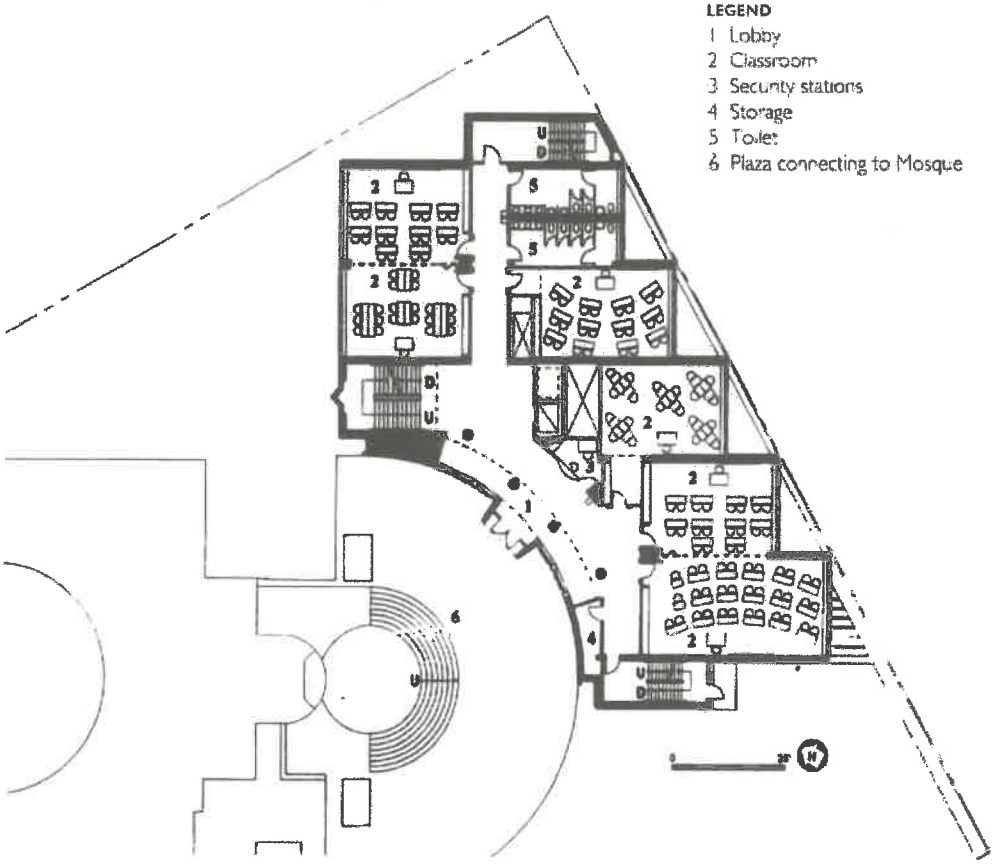
Project name
The School of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York

Location
1711 Third Avenue (between 96th and 97th Streets), New York City

Americas; and promote understanding and friendly relations between Muslims and non-Muslims.
The founders of the Islamic Cultural Center are the Islamic states represented in United Nations.

Building type
School and cultural facility for all ages

Architect
Rogers, Burgun, Shahine and Deschler, Inc., Architects:



Second level plan

differential to reduce the scale of the new School's structure relative to the mosque by building the school into the slope.
The neighborhood is economically and culturally diverse, between the Upper East Side and Spanish Harlem.

Zoning constraints
Residential R7 and R10 (referring to density, R1 being single-family housing)

Political climate
At a time of confusion about the *true* intentions of the Muslim community in the US, this center, newest of 1,250 in America, speaks to the moderate, peaceable and reverent requirements of a rapidly growing community.

How was the project designed?
The project was awarded to RBSD in 1994, at the request of the Ambassador of Kuwait to develop a concept design for a school based on outline ideas for what was then a modest building.

Milestones
Commission: July 1994
Construction start-up: April 19, 1996 – Phase 1 (concrete foundation and superstructure)
Occupancy: Late 1997

Other members of the design team
ASSOCIATE ARCHITECT FOR INTERIORS:
Lee Borerro, Architect, New York City
ENGINEERS STRUCTURAL:
Thornton-Tomasetti/Engineers, New York City
MECHANICAL/ELECTRICAL:
Edward A Sears & Associates, New York City

Owner
The Islamic Cultural Center Of New York

About the Owner
Established early in the 1960s, the non-profit ICC has as its four-fold mission to serve the neighboring Muslim community; enlighten American public opinion "with true knowledge" about Islam, its teaching, culture, and countries; provide religious guidance, opinions, and legal rulings of Islamic Law over religious, cultural, and social critical questions to Muslim communities in the

Owner's representatives
Dr Muhammed Salem Agwa, Director and Imam of the Islamic Cultural Center of New York.
HE Mohammed A Abulhasan, Chairman of the ICC Board of Trustees and Permanent Representative of the State of Kuwait to the United Nations.

PRINCIPAL-IN-CHARGE
Dr Hussein Shahine, AIA
DESIGN PRINCIPAL
Dusan Popovic, AIA
MANAGING PRINCIPAL
Dr Mahmoud Agha, AIA
PROJECT ARCHITECT
Mark O'Leary

Physical surroundings
Immediately to the east of the mosque already constructed (officially opened in 1991) on the site as the Center's focal point. The site drops 19 ft. to the East , allowing for a ceremonial plaza. The design team was able to capitalize on this

GEOTECHNICAL:
Converse Consultants East, PC, Parsippany, NJ
FOOD SERVICE
Romano Gatland, Lindenhurst, NY
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT
The Saratoga Associates, NYC office
CONSTRUCTION
Method:
General contracting
GENERAL CONTRACTOR
Ryder Construction, Inc. (Phase 1 work)

Program/project scope
Site:
The ground floor will be accessible via an entry on the 97th St. side of the site not far from the side entrance to the mosque that is actually the principal door used by worshippers.

The semi-circular plaza in front of the School mirrors the circle-on-square geometry of the mosque's imposing dome. Located one-half storey below the ceremonial main plaza that leads to the mosque, the new plaza acts simultaneously as an element to unify the entire cultural center and as a way for visitors to distinguish between its two major components. This area will be used for outdoor recreation, as a gathering space, and for overflow areas for prayers during the feasts.

The ground level will include a cafeteria, library, office for the center's leadership, and mechanical and support spaces that will later become a permanent museum space and assembly hall seating 100.

The second level includes 6 classrooms, 4 of which can be combined to create 2 larger classrooms by using moveable partitions.

The third level contains 6 classrooms like those on the floor below, as well as the continuation of a skylighted lobby running through the second and third levels. The classrooms, which can serve up to 240 students (adults as well as children), and public spaces will also be used to exhibit artwork and other expressions of Islamic culture.

The school is also designed for future expandability, both atop its flat roof and through new space to be added at grade level.

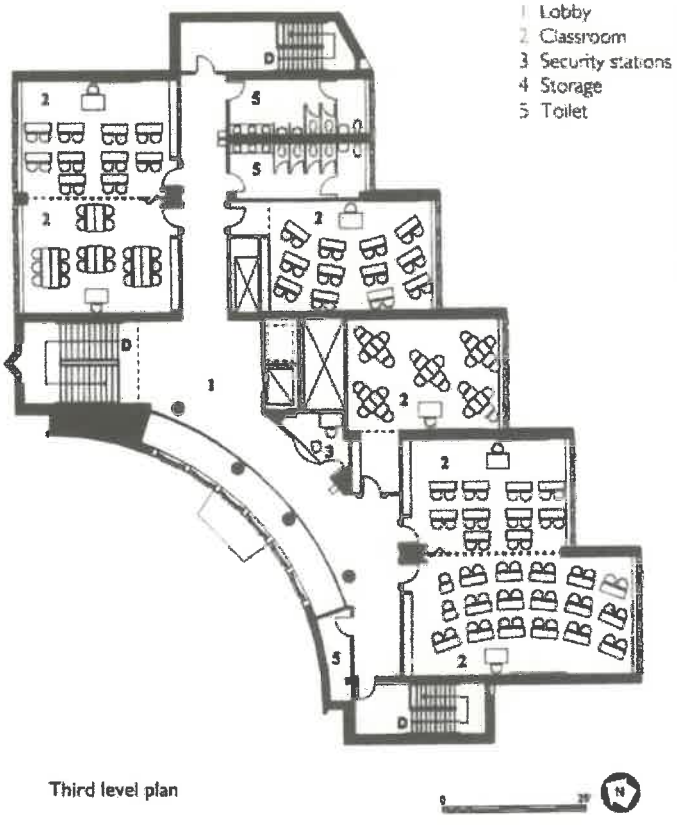
Design vocabulary
The honed granite cladding and simple geometry of the school complement the ICC's focal point, the mosque. Thus, though the School's building materials may be identical to those of the mosque, the decorative patterns seen on the facade and in the interiors will help to establish the new building's own identity, while still using the geometric patterns typical of Islamic architecture.

Dimensions
Building: Roughly 190 ft. by 125 ft. 35.200 s.f., including cellar level
Height: Approximately 40 ft. high
Storeys: 3 levels, each 12 ft 6 in + cellar
Typical floor areas
Classroom levels (2 and 3) are approximately 8,000 s.f. each

S/F breakdown by program components: 2nd and 3rd levels: classrooms totalling 16,000 s.f.
1st level: approximately 10,000 s.f. total, of which:
Administration/library 2,500 s. f.
Cafeteria/kitchen 4,000 s.f.
Cellar: approximately 10,000 s.f. total, of which
Mechanical equipment 4,000 s.f.
Future exhibit/assembly 6,000 s.f.

Mechanical system
Boiler with hot water fin tubes at perimeter. Air handling units in cellar mechanical room, zoned for different areas and uses.

Materials
Honed New England Stoney Creek granite cladding



Third level plan

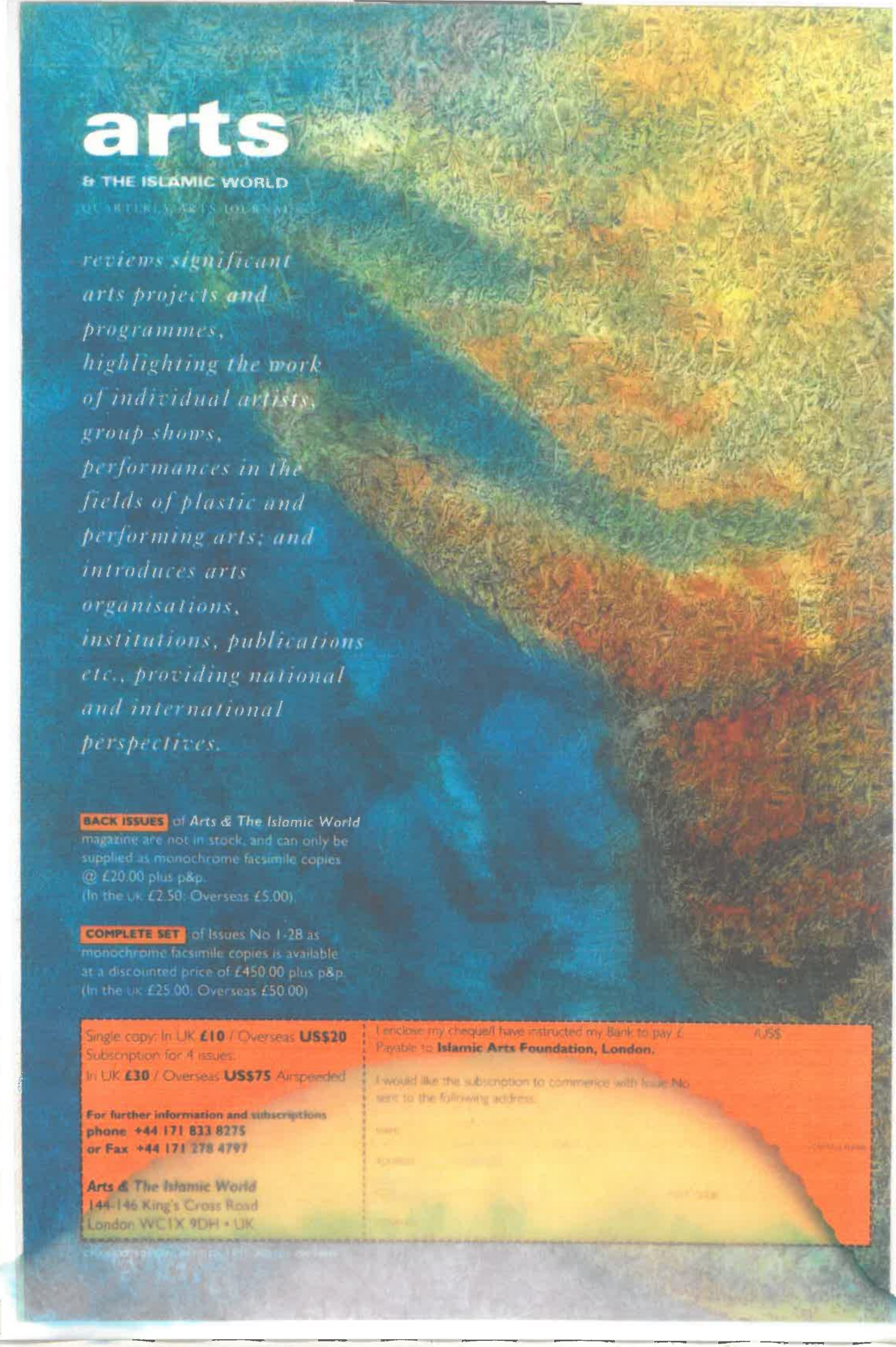
Cost of project
$10,221,000 (estimate)

Funding
Private donations

Type of construction
Structural system: Flat plate reinforced concrete on piles.
The site itself actually consists of fill some 20-30 ft. in depth, requiring a structural support system with piles an average of 45 feet in length, down to bedrock.

Kynar-coated aluminium-and-glass curtain wall and windows.

Photographs and plans, courtesy: Rogers, Burgun, Shahine & Deschler, Inc. Artwork Rendering of west elevation by Sun and Associates, NY City. Rendered computer drawing of east elevation by RBSD


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Muslim Heritage Cultural Centre Planned for London

RUMMAN AHMED

A fusion of contemporary visual vocabulary and historic Islamic architectural features has been adapted in designing a cultural centre for the Muslim community in west London's Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. All infrastructure works are now in place to make the site ready for laying the foundation of the Centre later this year.

A full professional team is now on board. The London based architecture firm Frederick Gibberd Partnership has won the design competition. The community, through its representatives, is keen to encourage a forward looking approach to the design and is involved extensively in the planning of the building.

The vision statement of the proposed Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre begins with the Qur'anic injunction: "Verily never will Allah change the condition of a people until they change what is in themselves." (13, XI) and emphasises that its aim is:

"To provide the Muslim community in and around the North Kensington City Challenge area with a focal point for a range of social, cultural, economic, training and educational activities: to develop greater self-confidence and sense of belonging; to affirm its cultural identity and plurality; to renew its zest for self-reliance; to be at one with itself in order to enhance its smooth integration and play a greater role in the promotion of good community relations and the advancement of a multicultural society."

Ambitious stuff, coming from a project which only had its inception in February 1992! But then, this is no ordinary project. The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre (MCHC) is a multi-faceted and unique project, designed to tackle a range of social, economic and cultural problems faced by Muslims in Britain today, whilst offering a place in which religious identity can be expressed.

The official launch of the MCHC project took place in December 1993, after months of hard work behind the scenes, and amidst a prestigious array of guests, including ambassadors, councillors from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea (including the Leader of the Council), Directors of the North Kensington City Challenge Company, and many leading Muslims. Also present were members of the local Muslim community, many of whom had been instrumental in pushing for getting some kind of provision for the many thousands of Muslims in the area

What has been surprising is the level of support, both financially and morally, that has been given to a project such as this, particularly during a climate which can hardly be described as positive towards Muslim issues. Furthermore, this support has come from not only a Conservative-controlled council, but also from the Department of the Environment!. This support comes through a Central Government initiative known as City Challenge where each council in the UK is invited to bid for a grant to carry out a 5 year plan to regenerate a selected inner city area within its borders. Successful bids get 37.5 million each over 5 years to implement the plan.

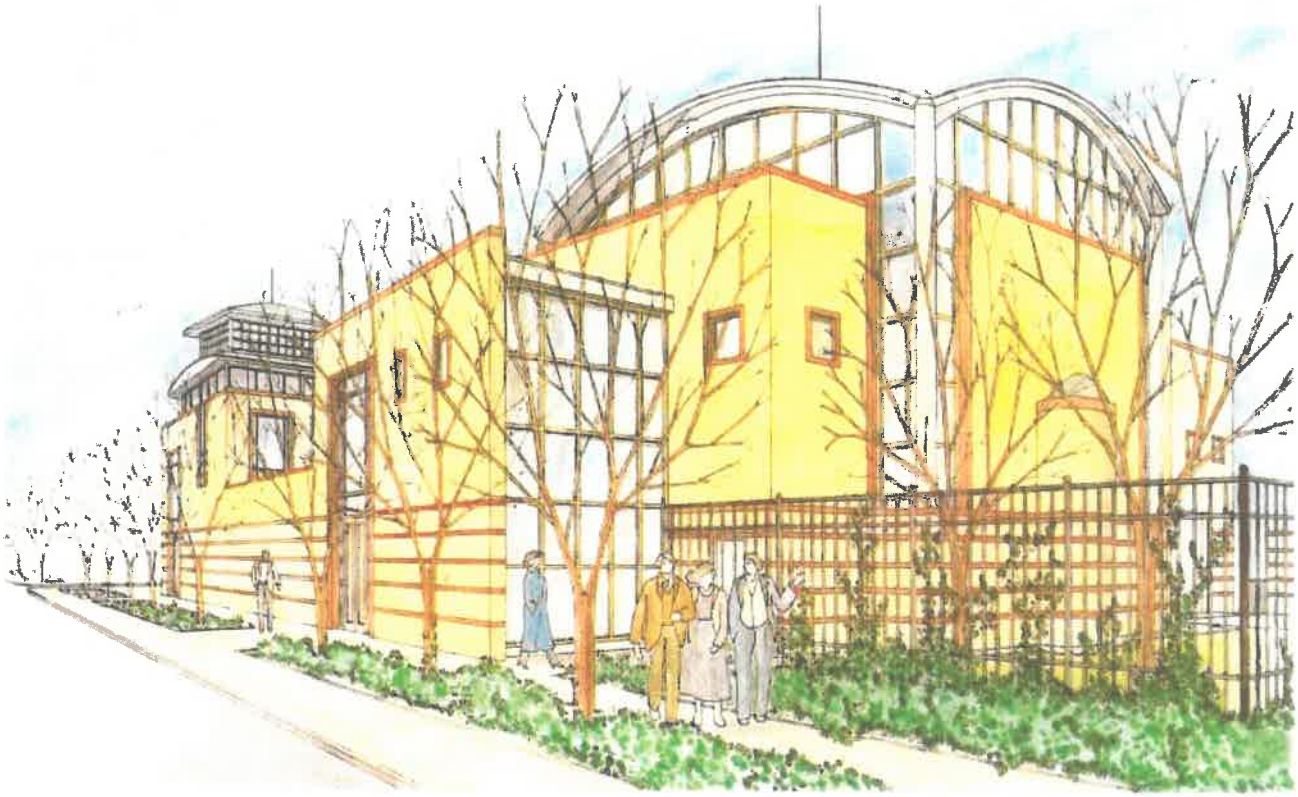
The Muslim community which makes up about one third of the population in North Kensington City Challenge area (part of the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea council in west London), was well placed to take part in the City Challenge initiative. In February 1992, the people started with the help of the local Community Relations Section, to put together a project which was then submitted as part of the larger Action For Change proposal to the Department of the Environment. The Centre was given the status of being one of the major flagship projects of City Challenge when the bid was put forward in April 1992, and in June of that year, the Royal Borough heard that it had been successful.

In September 1992, the Muslim communities organised themselves formally into a charitable association, the Muslim Communities Forum. The Forum, made up of representatives from the various Muslim nationalities living and working in North Kensington, assumed responsibility for overseeing and implementing the Project.

The total cost of the MCHC project is estimated to be approximately £3.65 million to cover the cost of the land and the infrastructure (approx. £.5 million), the cost of building (approx. £2 million), the cost of Waqf to help with running and maintenance cost (approx. £1Million) and £150,000 as revenue cost for the Project office and the fund-raising campaign. The City Challenge contribution amounts to approximately one million pounds. The balance, £2.65 million, is being raised by the Community itself. Approximately £1.6 million has been secured so far. An extensive fund-raising campaign is planned for the next 9 months to raise the remaining £1.15 million.

The Centre, expected to open in December 1997, will provide a variety of facilities, including: a prayer hall; a life-skills and job-hunting project for unemployed adults; a halal luncheon club for the elderly, an Open Learning Resource Centre providing education and training, including Arabic and other language courses, as well as ESOL training; a harmony section to promote better understanding between persons of different multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-faith communities; a permanent exhibition room and a library.

This project, the first of its kind anywhere in Europe, comes at a time when surveys have highlighted acute problems and levels of deprivation among particular sections of the Muslim community. Educational under-achievement, high levels of unemployment, discrimination in housing and inaccessibility to mainstream services, have been the

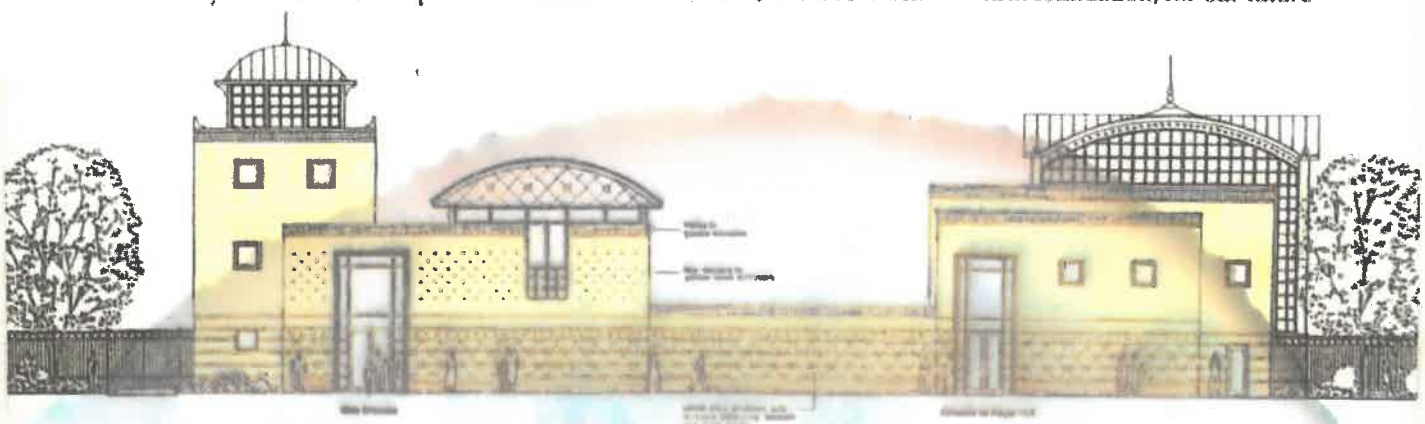


background against which the idea for a Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre was born. The Centre hopes to provide positive and practical solutions for a community increasingly faced with isolation, language difficulties, racial hostility, official indifference and a lack of access to basic information. It will also act as a binding force, benefiting the community as a whole, and promoting better community relations.

All of the services offered by the Centre are aimed at making the community in the area develop a sense of belonging, safety and solidarity, especially among the large numbers of women and children, for whom there are few existing facilities. It also aims to ensure that Muslims find a greater self confidence in order to participate in and contribute to mainstream society.

With its practical aspects, the Centre will also provide a moral, spiritual and psychological way forward for many who feel that they have been left on the periphery of a society that views them unjustly. This will be a particularly important aspect of the Centre's work, and one which echoes the theme of the speech made by HRH Prince Charles on his visit to the Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies in 1998, when he stated that "the degree of misunderstanding between the Islamic and Western worlds remains dangerously high" and that "the need for the two to live and work together in our increasingly interdependent world has never been greater".

To some extent, the mission of the MCHC is to help ensure that Islamic perspectives are not misunderstood and misconstrued and to help lay a firm foundation, for our future



generations.

As a part of this process, the question of leadership also needs to be examined, a question which is crucial to enable the community as a whole to progress. But 'leadership' should not be interpreted in a narrow sense as it is a collective issue. It is about an important vision that has to be translated into real tasks to be implemented in stages. Those involved with the MCHC project see it as a way forward, a way in which such progress can be made. The Centre will seek to redress some of the imbalances and inequities faced by Muslims, by acting as a building block upon which improvements could be made.

Gradually, the MCHC hopes to affect change: change amongst those locally who may be traditionally hostile to Muslim issues; the way in which Muslims are perceived nationally; and ultimately a change in the community's own outlook.

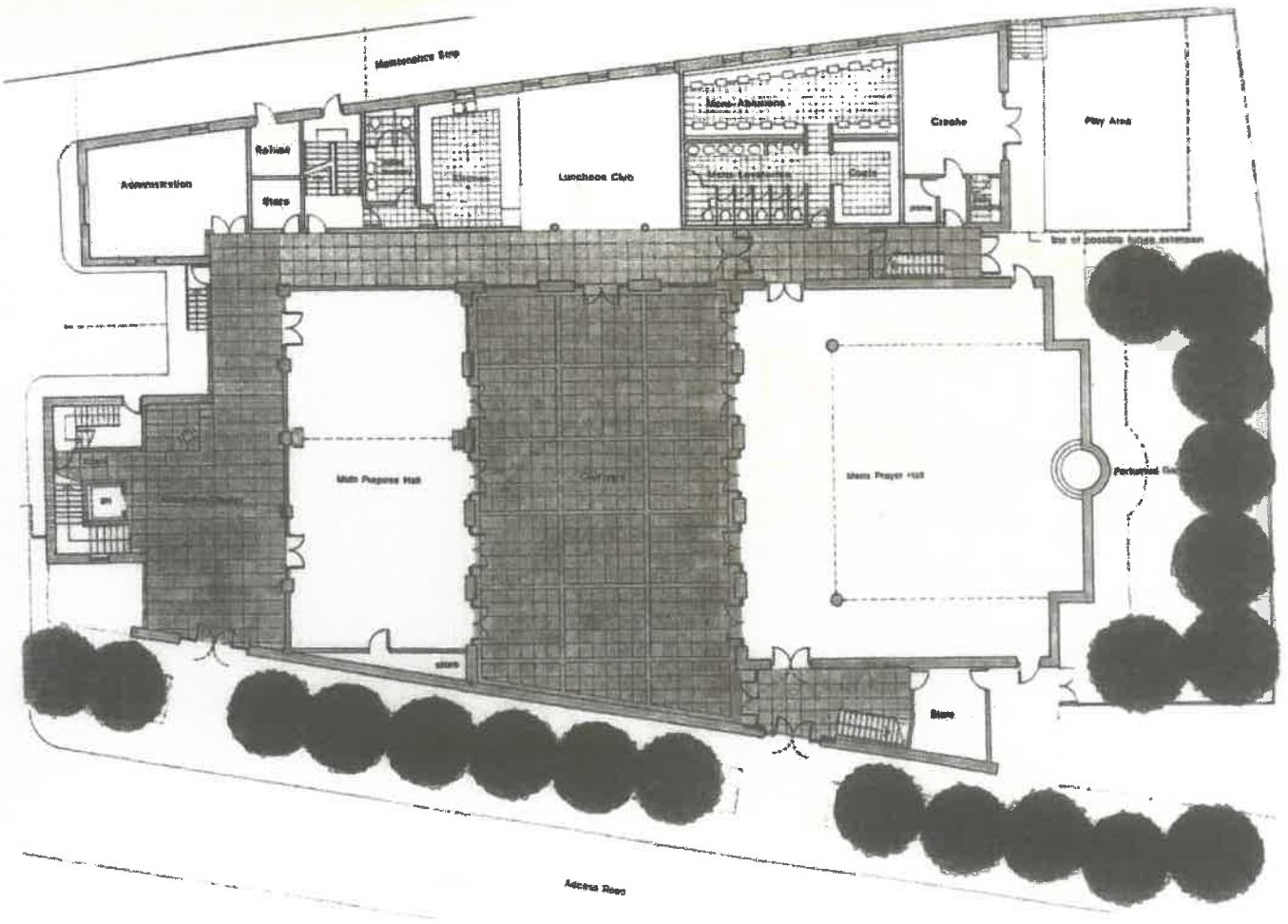
But for this change to have a lasting effect upon the lives of ordinary Muslims everywhere, it must come slowly and steadily. The MCHC project came about through a combination of awareness, purpose and determination which galvanised the local community to seize the opportunity and thus hopes to put into practice the above Qur'anic injunction. The Centre can act as a positive example for the Muslims across the country.

To ensure a stable, capable and accountable management of this ambitious project the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre Trust has been set up recently to continue the work started by the Muslim





Above: Two views of the model of the Muslim Heritage Cultural Centre. **Opposite page, top:** Drawing of view from west. **Bottom:** South elevation.



Plan: Ground floor

Communities Forum which will provide the base for a Shura (advisory) council for the Trust and possibly adopt new projects for the benefit of the community in the area. The Trust will be responsible for the building, management and maintenance of the Centre. A board of twelve Trustees has been appointed, including representation from the local Muslim community (7), the Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea Council (2) and 3 others chosen for their special skills and experience in areas relevant to the work and needs of the Trust such as fund-raising and management.

Situated on a former railway goods yard, bounded to the north by a main line railway and to the east by an elevated motorway, the MCHC has been designed to face a central courtyard with natural light and ventilation. The Centre is a fusion of contemporary and historic architectural forms adapted to incorporate subtle references to Islamic design. The frequently used symbols of traditional Mosque design such as highly curved domes and arched windows have been avoided in favour of a design which blends into its surroundings. The external materials are chosen primarily for their durability and suitability for the English climate. On a background for London stock brick walls, the main elevations are decorated with a base storey of red brick banding enhanced with relief brickwork in repeating patterns, reminiscent of architecture found in various areas of the Muslim world. A frieze of glazed bricks forming Arabic lettering leads the eye to distinctive copper-clad curved roofs which cover the main areas of the Centre. Large windows with stained hardwood frames face on to the courtyard to maximise natural light in the building without sacrificing privacy, and natural ventilation is provided by clerestory windows.

The massing and layout of the building was derived by carefully zoning its uses into separately defined areas, interlinked with circulation routes and grouped on three sides of the south-facing courtyard. To the east of the courtyard is a 10 meter high Prayer Hall with a mezzanine floor on three sides for women. To the north, administration, training, educational and counselling facilities are housed in a two storey block which protects the courtyard and prayer hall from railway noise. The structure for this block has been designed to accommodate an extra storey in the future. To the west are exhibition areas, a library and a multi purpose hall near the main entrance. On axis with the prayer hall and opposite the multi purpose hall is a four storey tower modelled on North African minaret design which houses the main stairs and lift with a caretaker apartment above. Each block has been designed to express the function it houses, but certain architectural features such as the windows, curved roofs and external materials, remain constant to provide a cohesive architectural language for the building.

The total gross floor area is 1890 square meters. The Centre, in spite of the small plot of land allocated for it, will be embraced to the east and south by a carefully planned garden including fragrant shrubs.

With the planning permission secured, a one year construction programme is to commence later this year. The Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre project is visualised to to be a success story for a community determined to change for the better.

Mr Rumman Ahmed is Chief Project Advisor for the MCHC project.

Below: Carpet, Caucasus (Karabagh), 18th century. The Textile Museum .TD 670.1, Collection of Wells & C. Klein

This carpet exhibits an overall repeat pattern of large blossoms within a hexagonal grid. As in the carpet from 16th-century Spain the blossoms are shown in profile and rely on reflection.

The tulip-and-leaf border uses the symmetry operations of glide reflection combined with reflection. While each tulip is framed by a pair of leaves, the symmetry of this border pattern allows for the play of ambiguity among the leaves, such that each leaf belongs to two tulips!



Right: Carpet, India (Lahore), Mughal style, 17th century. The Textile Museum 1994.12.1, Gift of James D. Burns

The style of this carpet relates it to Mughal court arts. In particular it is related to the red ground floral carpets associated with the palace at Jaipur. The naturalistic flowers with leaves and stems grow upward from a base. Just as in nature, many symmetries are represented in the blossom. Each plant is displayed around a vertical axis, and all are laid out within an oblique grid.



A lack of symmetry, however, is clearly evident in the overlays of small circular medallions, which are not concentric. Closer viewing reveals a distinct lack of symmetry throughout the central field. In particular, the orientations of the botch are different at the top and bottom of the field.

The beauty of carpets also depends upon the quality of yarns that go into their construction. The warp consists of a set of parallel yarns held taut on a loom. The weft is composed of cross-wise yarns that interlace with the length-wise warp yarns as weaving progresses. The pile is formed by rows of what are called knots projecting from the foundation of interlacing warp and weft. Each knot is formed by inserting a supplementary yarn and wrapping it around a pair or warps. After weaving, the pile is cut to a uniform height.

Only the pile yarns are visible on the surface of a carpet. It is the pile that carries the colors, designs, and patterns. Thus,Oriental carpets are two-dimensional in the appearance of surface design; they are, however, three-dimensional in structure.

Patterns in Islamic Art

The beauty of Oriental carpets can be approached not only in terms of art and mathematics, but also within the contexst of Islamic art and spirituality. Historically, throughout the Islamic world from Spain to Indonesia, patterns appear in architecture and interiors to organise space and to beautify the environment. All patterns reflect the pure beauty of numbers, considered to be of divine origin in Islamic doctrine. And by their very nature, patterns exhibit multiplicity as expressions of unity, which is an attribute of God. Patterns in Oriental carpets may thus be seen as expressive of a world view in which multiplicity exists in relation to the unity of all existence

Within the galleries of the exhibition *Symmetry & Pattern: The Art of Oriental Carpets*, museum visitors are encouraged to explore symmetry through selected hands-on activities. Nearby, a loom allows for the exploration of pattern-making through the medium of rug-weaving. By playing with pattern, visitors can experience first-hand the



Carpet, Spain, 16th century
The Textile Museum R44.2.1, acquired by George Hewitt Myers in 1920.
The pattern of this 16th-century Spanish carpet, comprising large blossoms within an interlacing hexagonal grid, combines stylish influences of the Islamic world and Europe.
Resembling Gothic silks, it shares in the use of an emphatic mirror axis of symmetry. The green bands of illusionary interlace interrupt the symmetry of the central field. All to be viewed from the same direction, the upper, lower, and side borders rely upon reflection and translation

processes of making patterns, learning first-hand about symmetry and its role in the making of Oriental carpet.

The innovative approach to study and appreciation of Oriental carpets represented by this exhibition has benefited from the participation of an Advisory Panel of specialists in the fields of mathematics, eduction, psychology, and Islamic studies:

Diane Proctor
The Calvert School, Baltimore

David Williamson Shaffer
MIT, The Media Laboratory, Cambridge

Amira El-Zein
Georgetown University

Tom Cook
Northwestern University

Symmetry & Pattern: The Art of Oriental Carpets draws from the great carpet-weaving traditions of the world. Thirty carpets, including several acknowledged masterpieces rarely seen, will be on view from 4 October 1996 through 23 February 1997 at The Textile Museum in Washington, DC.

The Textile Museum acknowledges major funding for *Symmetry & Pattern: The Art of Oriental Carpets* from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. Additional funding is provided by Aramco Services Company.

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Carol Bier is Curator, Eastern Hemisphere Collections, The Textile Museum, Washington, DC.

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& 250 Wood Netsuke Lots)
TUE, 5 NOV 1996, 10 AM - 7PM.
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1016 GZ Amsterdam

London Viewing:
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NCA: Prepared for the Future, Cognizant of Heritage

MARCELLA N SIRHANDI

NCA – National College of Arts in Lahore, has a certain kind of energy and a dynamism which goes much beyond its physical size, argues its Principal, Salima Hashmi, herself a practising artist and co-curator of the exhibition "Intelligent Rebellion" which recently toured UK and Europe. The interviewer is teaching art at the Oklahoma State University in the United States.

MARCELLA SIRHANDI: *The National College of Arts, Lahore is generally regarded as the premier art training institution in Pakistan. What are the requirements for admission and what are the courses of study?*

SALIMA HASHMI: The National College of Arts (NCA), is the only federally funded professional institution in Pakistan. It is not affiliated with any university and awards its own degrees. These are national degrees recognised all over Pakistan as well as internationally. It is a school which draws students from all over Pakistan and has a quota of reserved seats from the different provinces of the country. Students from all over Pakistan compete for entry with students from their own area. On a pre-arranged date teams go out to test students from each area for admission.

In addition to the diversity of ethnic student population represented by the different provinces within Pakistan, the social fabric of the college is further enriched by the presence of foreign students. For the last 20 years we have had students coming from all over Asia and Africa. There are students from Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and also children of Pakistan emigrees to America and Britain, born there and in other parts of the world returning to Pakistan and taking admission in the NCA. This is an institution that manages to bridge the gap and I think they find it a way to capture the culture from which their parents came. Our student body is a mingling of so many backgrounds – young people from remote parts of Pakistan, from Gilgit, Hunza, the tribal areas and from far flung areas of Baluchistan, from rural Sind as well as very sophisticated urban cities - from the Karachi Grammar school, the American school of Islamabad or Lahore. It is truly a melting pot and the criteria for success are based on their talent and hard work. The economically privileged do not necessarily form the upper crust at NCA, an unusual phenomenon when you look at this microcosm of Pakistan society.

The college awards a 4 year degree in Art and Design and a 5 year degree in Architecture. In Fine Arts there are four major areas of specialisation: painting, printmaking, sculpture and miniature paintings. Students who take a design degree may specialise in textile design, produce design, graphic design or ceramic design. Architecture students all follow the same curriculum.

MS: *I understand that your attrition rate is very small. Why is that?*

SH: The maximum drop out rate is only 5%, very small compared to other institutions world wide. This is because the struggle to get into the college is so tremendous. Students feel privileged to have been admitted and realise the intense competition. Their commitment and enthusiasm is apparent from the moment they enter NCA!

MS: *Pakistan is such a diverse country with great urban and vast rural areas. How do you evaluate students for admission?*

SH: Our students have to go through a series of gruelling tests and those that qualify in the tests are called for an interview. If we have 20 seats available, we call 50 or 60 for an interview. A team with faculty from each department conducts the interview. They spend quite a long time with each prospective student in the interview. We look at the educational background, the struggle to get admission, and the motivation of each person. We recognise that Pakistan is a country that has given unequal opportunity to young people in terms of education and economic access and during the interview we probe into these things. We want to access talent as well as motivation and to ensure that the economically underprivileged are not at any disadvantage in the interview process. If weak English skills are a problem we try to determine if lack of opportunity were a factor. We try to equal the balance in the interview.

We have approximately 1000 applicants every year and place for about 140, so the admission process is taken very seriously and is very difficult. The free hand drawing test takes four hours and the English language requires about a 12th grade comprehension level. Architecture students must also pass a maths test for admission.

MS: *The National College of Arts, Lahore is a relatively small institution considering the great impact it has on art and culture in Pakistan. Can you elaborate on its role in this regard.*

SH: The National College of Arts has a certain kind of energy and a dynamism which goes much beyond its physical size. It is small - about 550 students and 50-60 faculty - compared to the massive size of Punjab University just across the road from us or other major institutions in the country. In terms of influence, however, it does stand out. People look to this college for innovative ideas, not just in the art fields they specialise in, but generally speaking for fresh ideas, new directions, art criticism and how to communicate in







Above: Main gate to NCA. **Top, right:** Computer Graphics studio. **Right:** Sculpture student at work. Photographs: Nadim Bashir and Muzhar Hussain. **Opposite page, top, left:** Students in the courtyard, N.C.A. **Bottom:** Sculpture student. **Top, left:** Inside view of main building, N.C.A. **Page 44:** Sculpture student. Photographs: Nadim Bashir and Muzhar Hussain.

the media. It operates far beyond its mandate. The college has links with Pakistan TV, the media, the National Council of the Arts, and is involved with conservation of the cultural heritage, with promotion of traditional crafts. It undertakes publications, works with the textile industry and of course, is in constant dialogue with the advertising industry.

Among its alumni and teachers have been A R Chugtai, B C Sanyal, Haji Shareef, Satish Gujral, Shakir Ali, Zahoorul Akhlaq, Bashir Mirza, Navyar Ali Dada and other nationally and internationally renowned artists and architects. A number of professionals, both well-established names, as well as the young-and-upcoming are on the faculty. A very wide-ranging and eclectic approach is encouraged, which makes it possible for students to interact with teachers with very diverse points of view.

MS: *Student groups sanctioned by the college have contributed to this greater cultural and social outreach.*

SH: Yes, the Nautankye Society (a drama club) produces performances in Lahore and other cities, the puppeteers took a puppet show to the mountains, to Kaghan, the Undraap Nexus Society is a mime group that has had innovative performances at the college and elsewhere. There is also an active Eastern Music Society and Poetry Club, as well as the Western Music Society, a film club called The End. Fanoon-e-Sanga is an organisation concerned primarily with the Frontier Province but open to any student. These groups participate in civic projects such as those intended to clean up the environment, or making of ID cards for a hospital. They have also done publicity for the family planning programme and organised a project to grow more trees. An elaborate research project culminated in an exhibition on the medieval city of Uch near Multan.

MS: *When I was here in the 1980s the college seemed to be in the news as a target for censorship and criticised for its liberalism. Is this true today?*

SH: A school like this is a perfect target for controversy and it has always attracted controversy and the ire of the conservatives. It has always been targeted by a certain section of the orthodoxy within the media and from the pulpit. During President Zia's time it was physically attacked by a mob of students – not our students – but right wing students from outside. They attacked the college, broke furniture in the principal's office, they attacked some students – one lost an eye. In the 1980s – a time of martial law – academic freedom was very hard pressed, one had to walk a tight rope. I myself taught a class and saw an intelligence man sitting there taking notes. He was there to intimidate.

We had to be careful, but we survived with most of the syllabus intact. The school closed ranks and even though there were a small number of fundamentalists – or zealots – it withstood because it was very united and the majority of students did not support that point of







view. Today the atmosphere is much freer, though one is always under the threat of being targeted by a section of society which is very intolerant of any kind of dissent or any kind of progressive thinking. We value what we have today and never tire of reminding the students about the difficulty endured by the students and faculty 15 years ago. In this way the NCA is a microcosm that reflects the ups and downs of the social and political turmoil of Pakistan. Throughout these periods of uncertainty the college has managed to remain a creative entity. It is a valuable lesson that exemplifies what a resourceful people we are - that one manages in spite of what has happened. We continue to be productive and do not rest on any laurels, but realise that there is still a great deal to be done.

MS: ***The NCA has a very impressive history which is summarised in your new and very attractive catalogue. Starting on page 3 we learn that the sanction to set up a college of art in Lahore was granted on 24 September 1874 and named the Mayo School of Art in honour of the late Viceroy and Governor General Lord Mayo. The building was part of the same architectural complex and the Lahore museum. John Lockwood Kipling, a sculptor and teacher at the J J School of Arts in Bombay, was appointed the first principal as well as Curator of the Lahore museum. Kiplingis first group of 88 students graduated in 1875. Under Kipling the school grew rapidly in size and prestige. By the close of the century it had 178 students. New buildings were added to the complex in 1880 - six rooms in the late Mughal style and temporary additions in 1881 were made permanent in 1891. By 1915 work done at the school was recognised all over India and in England. Students and faculty undertook important works including public and private commissions all over India and in England. By 1915 the Mayo School of Arts also functioned as the inspection facility for 28 industrial schools in the Punjab. During the World War I the number of students began to decline and continued into the 1920s. After Kipling's retirement, Lionel Heath and Percy Brown served terms as principals. Bhai Ram Singh and Khan Sahib Munshi Sher Muhammad were also eminent members of the faculty. Abdur Rehman Chughtai was associated with the school in the early 1920s and S N Gupta was Vice Principal and then Principal in 1929.***

In 1925-26 the Mayo School of Arts was re-organised and admission was limited to men who had passed the Industrial Middle School examination. Financial constraints during World War II caused closure of one department after another but the years immediately following independence in 1947 were the most difficult in the life of the institution. The school lost most of its teaching staff and students. In 1958 the school was restructured, upgraded and renamed The National College of Arts with Professor Mark Sponenburgh as the first principal of the college. Rapid industrialisation of the country required a shift from craft based ideology to professional design oriented philosophy and integration of the visual arts. The three major departments previously named came into existence and the department of Academics, also a current part of the college, was set up to provide a theoretical base.

Recognised by the government as the premier arts institution in Pakistan in 1963, the NCA was consequently transferred from the Department of Industries to the Education Department within its own Board of Governors. In 1985 the college was granted the authority to award its own degrees and to establish a post graduate program. Recently the college has undergone further

restructuring and philosophical self examination. Can you elaborate?

SH: To keep pace and move forward, a fully equipped computer centre has recently been established. This will give our students skills for the present and the future but we encourage them to keep in touch with their heritage. Every student takes the same course in the first year. The foundation course has been recently revised to make this link with the cultural and artistic heritage. In addition to a series of experiences with the different media and processes, introduced through demonstrations and hands on problem solving, the students must take Introduction to the Visual Arts. Here they attend lectures referring to all the visual arts. A new course, just added this year to the Foundation programme is one on the history and culture of Pakistan. This course introduces the students to all the arts of Pakistan historically and today: to current archaeology, to literature, dance, music, theatre, puppetry, the languages of Pakistan, costumes and so on. The best minds of the country come to lecture in his or her field. This year we had stimulating presentations on native crafts, poetry, Sufi poetry, law, human rights and much more. After each lecture the students break up into small groups and discuss. They do museum studies, library studies, go on trips to factories, archaeological sites, to exhibitions. All this is part of the curriculum.

The college library has the largest collection of books on the visual arts in Pakistan and is used extensively. It has a rare book section and some of the folios from the 19th century like the Jaipur folio are quite rare now. We are engaged in restoring these and setting up an archive section in the library for scholars.

We have a gallery on premises and are starting a permanent collection. We are doing a serious study of the history of the NCA. Further cementing our link with the past, Bashir Ahmed, head of the miniature painting department, restructured the curriculum and miniature painting was recently established as a separate major within the fine arts department. While students learn techniques practised by the Mughals and Rajputs, they are encouraged to apply their skills to current themes and subjects. In the department of Architecture there are two major parallel interests: a commitment to the conservation of traditional architecture and building patterns, as well as looking into problems of the built environment in urban centres.



MS: *What are your plans for the future?*

SH: We are exploring the possibilities of formal links with institutions in other parts of the world and have had visiting scholars, artists-in-residence, and teachers under international grants programme like Fulbright. We want to expand. There is land adjacent to the college owned by the armed forces and we hope they will make a generous gesture to enable the college to accomplish its future goals. We are very cramped in our present campus and need more physical space due to our numbers. We want to offer courses in the performing arts, and to create a school of film and video. In a country that has such a long tradition in certain kinds of design such as jewellery design, carpet design - there is no formal teaching. We would offer glass making, interior design, more courses in book design and book production and in industrial design. These plans look to the future but are a link to the past. We encourage revival and propagation of tradition but with a firm hold on current day realities. We would like to explore calligraphy as we have done with miniature painting.

MS: *In a way the school has come full circle. The British established government schools in India to revive the crafts, the schools moved away from a concern for traditional crafts in the 20th century and now you are reviving that idiom.*

SH: For now and for the future we have two aims for the college. One, we want to encourage an awareness of the environment and to impress upon each student his or her individual expression as part of that environment. Secondly, we want to inculcate a respect for tradition and an interest in heritage – not with the idea of being repetitive, mimicking but to reinterpret. Because of Pakistan's very chequered history, we have been through periods of great obscurantism in which there was an attempt to erase large parts of our culture. There was at one time a negative attitude towards any expression in theatre, music, dance and therefore, our intention is to let the younger generation know that these are all creative expressions to be proud of. They will know that the arts are interdependent. We will help them trace the links and make the connections. They will make the statements and carry on with their talent, their enthusiasm and with a solid background from the NCA.

Inscription as Art in the World of Islam

HABIBEH RAHIM

Hofstra University in Hempstead, New York, hosted a conference and exhibition titled: Inscription as Art in the World of Islam. At the three-day conference (April 25-27, 1996), international scholars presented their papers. The exhibition (April 14 - May 24, 1996) was divided into two sections, traditional and contemporary. Dr. Habibeh Rahim, directed the conference and was the curator for the exhibition.

The focus on inscription in the Muslim weltanschauung emanates from the honor given to writing in the Islamic tradition. Fifteen centuries of art that has evolved and flourished under the aegis of the Muslim ethos is associated with a variety of media and a multitude of objects. Amidst this art one unique feature becomes increasingly obvious- the ubiquitous flow of inscriptions. The saturation of majestic writing lends a distinctive character to Muslim aesthetics. Inscription serves as the principal theme that structures and contextualizes varied objects, spanning centuries and representing diverse regions and cultures where Islam was accepted as the primary modes vivendi.

On a religious plane it is believed that the transcendent speech of God is incomparable with the form of letter and sound. But the Divine words revealed to Prophet Muhammad in the Qur'an were given the clothing of letters and sounds. Writing is then tantamount to a visual theophany of the Divine word. Deliberation and focus on transcribing the text of the Qur'an becomes an act of worship, an *ibadah*. Another seldom identified context of the importance of inscription is the frequent mystical meditation on the essence of Divine Words, regarded as interminable.

Over the centuries the synthesis of rhythm and form in the projection of the Sacred Words became an enduring tradition. The aural art of recitation of the Qur'an manifests the Sublime words in time; the visual art of writing, locates the Sacred transcribed text in space: both become expressions of the faltering ordinary human attempt to convey the Supreme Majesty of the Divine Words. As calligraphy symbolized the visual image of the spoken words of God, by extension, via writing dignity was imparted to routine, common and insignificant objects, for the script associated them with a transcendent realm.

In the world of Islam then, writing is considered to have a Divine purpose because of the Arabic script which was used for copying the text of the Qur'an. It ensured that calligraphy came to be considered a supreme sacred activity and quickly evolved into the finest form of art. As the sublime words of the Qur'an, were secured and protected via the means of the Arabic script, it became the magic mirror to reflect the invisible transcendence of the Divine logos. In time the auspiciousness associated with the revered activity of copying the Qur'an, obligated calligraphers to adhere to detailed professional rules and to maintain strict social, moral and spiritual codes.

From the Qur'an, calligraphy quickly spread to books and thence indeed to all objects, including architectural constructs of the lived environment. A fluid flexibility in the shapes of the Arabic alphabet led to the development of several different styles, each with a resonance and visual rhythm.

The application of inscription identified and commemorated the Words of God and also served to contextualize the use and ownership of the objects. Frequently, benedictions to patrons were juxtaposed within calligraphic patterns and incorporated in the design of the object. The owner of a vessel with inscription for instance, possessed not only a splendid article but the decoration comprised of calligraphy which wished the user health and prosperity. Again, in architecture, inscriptions from the Qur'an or other appropriate texts were inserted as elements of *barakah* (Divine Grace) or decoration or with the need to state and identify the purpose of the structure. This plethora of writing, as opposed to symbols or images, may allude to the literacy of the society, or it may merely designate and identify an object. It certainly projects a communicative device in the guise of art.

As a decorative factor, Arabic letters lent themselves easily to elegant and elaborate transmutations that could be adapted into the design format. The embellished letters were effectively combined in the creation of patterns with abstracted flora and fauna or arabesques. Phonetically altered versions of the script were used in the extended non-Arab cultures and included Javanese, Persian, Punjabi, Sindhi, Turkish among others.

The two-part project, conference cum exhibition at Hofstra University, elucidated then the central role of writing in the Muslim world. Historical considerations and contemporary relevance for the pivotal position of writing per se were addressed. The reasons for the perpetuation and conscious inculcation of inscription as an aesthetic, functional and pietistic component of monumental structures and portable objects were also investigated.

The exhibition in the Emily Lowe Gallery of Hofstra university, had two definitive sections, historical or traditional and contemporary, in order to reflect the enduring legacy of the appeal of writing in the world of Islam. In the traditional section the objects were borrowed from private collections as well as from museums in the northeast United States. The diversity of articles in this section was the sine qua non of the scholarly investigation of the conference and the visual representation in the exhibition. The eclectic mix indicated the immense variety and range in the use of writing as devotional, functional and ornamental on a variety of media. Three principal constituents of Islamic art were thereby represented: architecture, arts of the book (calligraphy, illumination, illustration), arts of the object

(ceramics, metal, wood, textiles). These were garnered from seventh century examples to contemporary creations, indicative of the regional diversity and expansive cross-cultural range of Muslim societies from North America to South East Asia.

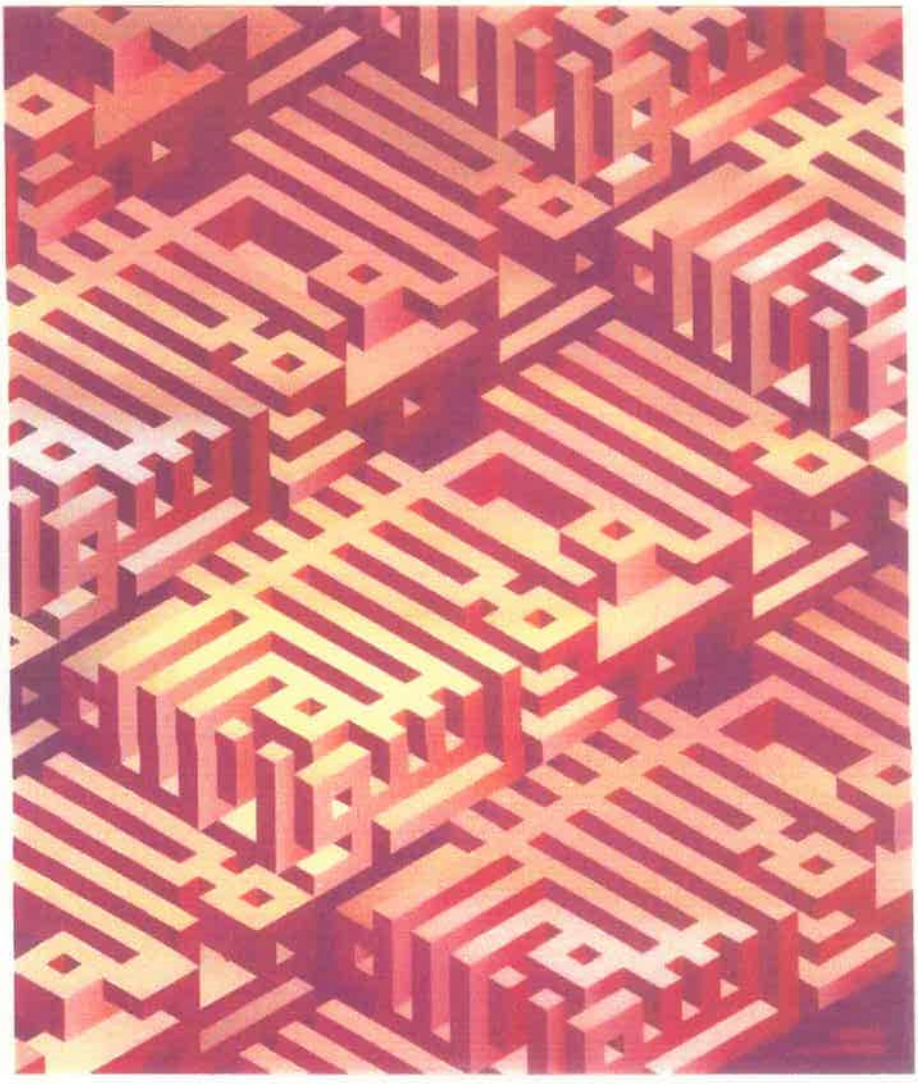
Included in the display were texts with varied styles of writing from the Qur'an and other religious and secular literature, such as poetry, didactic accounts and royal decrees. The appearance of writing on objects with humble usages such as a beggar's bowl harmonized with articles with







ceremonial or courtly purpose such as an emperor's imperial garment, to functional items such as a coffee-mill or pen-box or candle-stand to ordinary things such as a kitchen utensil to a hero's helmet. All of them were inscribed: the imperial with the popular, the common with the special, the secular with the sacred. In all this traditional art, the name of the individual artisan is



Above: Mamoun Sakkal. *Steps and Shadows*. **Left, top:** Jehan Rohani. *Allah*. **Middle:** Amri Yahya. *Mowdah wa Rahma*. **Bottom:** Gulgee. *Musawir* (Name of God). **Opposite page, top:** Wasma Chorbachi's ceramics on display. **Right:** Mohamed Zakaria's classic calligraphy.

generally absent. The artifact is usually a component of anonymous combined effort. In this section the art was made and deployed by centuries-old methods, techniques and objectives.

In the contemporary section, the compositions of artists who use inscriptions as a definitive context of their creative work were included from different parts of the Muslim world. They address the query regarding the contemporary pertinency of the ethos of inscription. Their work indicates their adhesion to the efficacy, potency, and vitality associated with script as symbol and as the function of a message and a telos. The aesthetic endeavors of these artists extend over a variety of usages, media and techniques. In contrast to the general perception of the anonymity of traditional art, with appropriate pride the artists have their signature on their compositions. The fourteen artists included in this section were Rosie Boyd, Wasma'a Chorbachi, Silvia Safiya Godlass, Endi Poskovic, Jehan Rohani, Mamoun Sakkal and Mohamed Zakaria from the United States; Gulgee and Amin Gulgee from Pakistan; Sharifah Zuriyah Aljeffri from Malaysia; Ali Al-Bidah from Kuwait; Salah Sherzad from the United Arab Republic; Amri Yahya from Indonesia; Ali Hasan from Qatar. Each has chosen to reflect their creative endeavors entirely or partially within the context of the immediacy of the script that has come to be identified as *the* 'Islamic' writing. They use textile, ceramic, metal, paper, parchment, oil on canvas and the microchip and computer. Their formulations are as diverse as their media, some choose to be completely conventional, while others combine the conventional with the avant guard, while still others use the script as a factor of their social consciousness as artists and as a modus to make a statement. Their diversity of context, design and formulation made for an intellectually fascinating and visually riveting display in the contemporary section



of the gallery.

In the three-day conference organized by Hofstra Cultural Center, a key issue addressed was the influence and effect of inscriptions in the ecumenical Muslim context. Were objects with inscriptions traditionally considered more meritorious or distinguished than other comparable ones? Does the traditional focus on writing differ or remain unchanged in the contemporary society? Are inscriptions connected to specific moral or didactic or ethical purposes? What was the value of purely ornamental or decorative lettering? Did writing serve to define and hence limit and regulate the assigned utilization of an article or did it merely enhance the aesthetic appeal? What are the reasons for writing, generally considered to be prosaic, to be associated with exquisite elegance? Is there a future for the inscription?

During the three days of the conference, thirty-two papers were presented by scholars from the United States, Canada, Bangladesh, United Kingdom, Iran, Turkey, South Africa, France, Kuwait, United Arab Republic, Nigeria and Germany. Dr S H Nasr presented the Keynote Address, Dr O Grabar presented a paper and delivered the Opening Address, Dr Sheila Blair made a special paper presentation. Other prominent scholars who participated with their papers were Dr A Schimmel, Dr M Bates, Dr Howard Federspiel, Dr E Dodd, Dr S Ory, Dr S Carboni and Dr Y Tabbaa. Additionally papers were presented by Dr M Haroon, Dr M Ekhtiar, Dr S Babaie, Dr V Gonzalez, Dr K Barrett-Wilt, Dr K El-Araby, Dr K Mathews, Dr. M. Y. Siddiq, Dr H Edwards, Dr N Banerji and Dr A Kahera. Other scholars who presented scholarly papers and shared their expertise included Saiyad Nizamuddin Ahmad, Alexandra Bain, Peter Daniels, Mohammad Khazaee, Elizabeth Lambourn, Rahmatullahi Ogunmuyiwa, Nada sharbout, Mahnaz Shayesteh and Richard Weisman. In all of these erudite presentations a variety of perspectives were provided and a multitude of issues pertaining to fifteen centuries of Muslim art were discussed.

In addition to the paper presentations, nine artists whose works were displayed in the exhibition were also scheduled to offer demonstration / workshops in which they shared their expertise and proffered insights as to the reasons for their use of inscriptions. Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri, Gulgee, Amin Gulgee, Amri Yahya, Mohamed Zakaria and Jehan Rohani were scheduled for workshops while three artists Ali Al-Bidah, Mamoun Sakkal and Sherzad Salah presented papers in addition to the workshops. As evident, the conference proved to be a significant intellectual forum that brought together the scholars who elucidate, investigate and study Muslim art with the contemporary artists who practise art.

A post script. What comes after this project? As the conference and the exhibition explored various aspects of the Muslim ethos within the construct of the aesthetic realm, a variety of concerns and questions arose. What is the future of this inscription based art? Is it a fossil without a future or is it an energetic element that is very significant in the various Muslim societies? What is the aftermath or the result of the status of inscription in those countries where the Arabic based script has been replaced by the Roman script? Turkey specifically followed by Indonesia, Malaysia and Tajikistan, fell into this category. In the case of Indonesia it was discussed that with the introduction of the Roman script, the incidence of Arabic and its aesthetic context has dramatically reduced over the years. Though not pertinent per se to the context of the conference but still of pivotal apprehension was the loss of centuries of literature as a result of the change in script.

Perhaps the issue to be critically reflected upon and earnestly addressed by Muslim societies as they enter the next century is how may the heritage be preserved and at what price is the loss of literature to be accepted? When a legacy is relinquished does it devolve a socio-cultural disconnection and alienation? The issue is certainly intriguing and merits primary consideration for future alternatives and options in the educational curricula. Art as an impression of the society that creates it becomes



thereby a portentous matrix to suggest, define and elucidate its normative, metaphysical and cerebral orientation. Would Muslim art suggest the projected direction of the Ummah in the next century? Would the heritage and legacy be carried into the future with the tutelage of minors or would it be allowed to go past as this generation passes. A somber thought that merits concerted collective deliberation.

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Wednesday 8 January 1997
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Wednesday 5 February 1997
Michael Willis – *Architecture in Saudi Arabia 1750-1950*

Wednesday 5 March 1997
Jens Kroger – *Early Islamic glass*

Wednesday 23 April 1997
Kjeld von Folsach – *Islamic Art in the CL David Collection in Copenhagen: the museum's founder, history and collection*

Wednesday 14 May 1997
Silke Ackermann – *Science and society: the manifold faces of the astrolabe*

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These lectures are organised in association with the Centre of Near and Middle Eastern Studies, the School of Oriental and African Studies, Thornhaugh Street, WC1 and take place in the lecture theatre of the School of Oriental and African Studies at 6.30pm.

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Maysaloun Faraj

THERESE RINALDI

Maysaloun Faraj whose recent exhibition was held at the School of Oriental and African Studies last winter (December 1995) is one of the leading contemporary Arab woman artists living and working in Britain.

Entitled *Once Upon a... Culture*, the exhibition was dedicated to the ancient and unique culture of the Marshes of the south of Iraq which is now facing destruction. She expressed feelings of nostalgia and remembrances of peaceful times spent in the mid seventies whilst growing up in Iraq: "I have had the privilege of visiting the Marshes of the south of Iraq as part of an educational school trip from Baghdad in 1972, the serene beauty of the area, the warmth and hospitality of its people shall forever be engraved in my soul. The exhibition is an attempt to communicate, acknowledge and educate people as to what we have lost in the Marshes and what we hope would be restored".

Her paintings and ceramics have a spiritual element and are inspired by the unique cultural blend of her ancient Iraqi discipline and devotion to her work which is a natural part of the artist herself. She has received numerous awards and has exhibited widely.

Born in Hollywood, California where her parents were studying and later working, Faraj returned to live in her native country where she graduated in Architecture from the University of Baghdad. Since 1982 she and her husband Ali Al Mousawi, a prominent architect, have been living and working in London.

Maysaloun draws on a strong architectural style and her faith in Islam for inspiration. Symbolic representation, vibrant colours, persistent use of verses from the Holy Qur'an are all contributing factors in her work, which is a strong fusion of abstract expressionism influenced by her inherent Sumerian and Mesopotamian origins. The geometric patterns drawn from Islamic tradition are developed to a degree of complexity and sophistication that Maysaloun depicts, transforming decorative geometry into a major art form. The use of colour, pattern, and symmetry relates to rhythms. This rhythm and repetition have their roots in the study of mathematics which were keenly pursued for centuries by scientists and philosophers of the Islamic world.

The assurance of a strong Islamic design element linking her to her historical background is the integration of geometry with optical effects of balancing positive and negative areas, interfacing with fluid overlapping of Qur'anic verse, strapwork and the use of texture and tone. In Maysaloun's paintings and ceramics, all the parts work as a whole. This example of contemporary Islamic art has its base in Islamic philosophy which is in the search of order and harmony in the natural world, the intelligible world and the human soul. As Al Ghazali said in the *Alchemy of Happiness* "the beauty of a thing lies in the appearance of that perfection which is reliable and in accord with nature".

Faraj was also invited to participate in the Sharjah exhibition for Arab women artists *Arabian Eyes* held in November 1995. Organised by the Department of Culture & Information in the United Arab Emirates, the exhibition aimed at providing a platform to showcase the consolidation of creative abilities and further the advancement of the contemporary Arab women artists. Faraj was chosen to represent Iraq amongst a total of twenty artists each representing a different Arab country. HRH Princess Wijdan Ali (Jordan), Gazbia Sirry (Egypt), Leila Nsair (Syria), Fedwa Bizzari (Palestine,) Hour and Bidour el Qassimi and Hissa el Mektoum (UAE), Kamala Ibrahim (Sudan), Chiebia (Algiers) were some of the participating artists.

Earlier in 1994 Faraj took part in the ground-breaking touring exhibition, *Forces of Change - Women Artists of the Arab World* organised by the International Council for Women in the Arts (ICWA). This was a selective exhibition of seventy artists originating from fifteen countries and was launched in the National Museum for Women in the Arts (NMWA) in Washington DC, USA (February 1994). Faraj's artwork was acquired for the permanent collection of NMWA. Maysaloun's most recent painting and ceramics can be seen in *Eastern and Icelandic Art*, an exhibition exploring the inspirations and cultural influences of one of the most influential and innovative nineteenth century designer, William Morris. It is also part of events in London, marking the celebrated designers Centenary *William Morris in Merton*.

Maysaloun is also organising *Strokes of Genius .... Contemporary Iraqi Artists*, a project for the prospective publication of a book on Iraqi artists. On March 1995, an international survey was launched with the aim of gathering details, documenting information, and establishing a data base on Iraqi artists world wide.

Maysaloun comments:

Throughout history Mesopotamia has been repeatedly referred to as the 'cradle of civilisation'. Early Mesopotamian art is ranked amongst the most highly respected and treasured collections in museums world wide. Is it not therefore ironic that the very descendants of such an advanced people be for so long forgotten if not totally ignored? If there is truth in the notion that great masterpieces are created in times of stress, then who more so than the Iraqi artist today bears evidence to such thought? Obviously a book of such a nature would be an asset to the Iraqi community in particular. However, I believe that it has the capacity to benefit the international community as a whole through what would be a unique and valuable contribution to the art world. Our current objective is to provoke the interest of a reputable publisher to produce a book of international appeal that would, reflect the positive and creative energies of the Iraqi people. I am fully aware of the current situation in Iraq and that my expectations maybe high, however I believe that the contemporary Iraqi artists need to be seen in a better light. In the words of Dr Ulrike Al Khamis curator and lecturer





Above: Eruptions... of the Soul, high fired, glazed stoneware with onglaze and gold metal, height: 7in width: 14in. **Top:** Prayers... of the Soul, mixed media & oils on canvas, 33in x 24in.

at Glasgow Museums...

"It is high time that someone challenges the distorted and wholly negative image of Iraq and the Iraqi people created by the western media for political reasons. Great talent has emerged from Iraq throughout the centuries and can still be traced all over the world today. Iraqi artists are perhaps the most visible sign of that talent and highlighting their creativity in the face of adversity will be invaluable in trying to redress the misconceptions that shape the opinion of the West today... I will be very happy to support you in any way I can..."[3]

It is my perseverance, ambition and firm belief in the abilities of a people whose history stretches far beyond the controversy of the day that has led me to reach out for this dream; many ideas began as dreams and many dreams have come true. A year and a half has already passed since the commencement of this challenge which has proven to be totally indulgent, time consuming yet exhilarating experience. Response from as far as Canada, USA, Austria, Greece, Europe and other Arab countries in addition to Iraq has been received. As strokes of Genius reaches further out, our data base continues to expand and we hope that this information will become a vital source of reference. Meanwhile we continue to establish more essential contact that would consolidate our efforts and assist us to achieve the ultimate aims. Financial support is welcome and highly appreciated as it will help us with the basic running cost of stationary, printing and postage. We are constantly on the lookout for possible venues i.e. galleries, bookshops, cultural centres etc., that maybe willing to provide outlets for the prospective publication or perhaps organise special programmes to coincide with the publication in due course. We are also preparing to pursue the project via fund raising and private sponsorship due to the current political situation which could otherwise prove difficult.

In London, Maysaloun Faraj's work can be viewed at London Artforms Ltd 7-15 Rosebery Avenue, EC1R 4PR.







Top: *Civilisations... Unearthed*, mixed media & oils on canvas. 19in x 19in. **Above:** *On Stars & Sky of Mine. Reach for Me*, mixed media & oils on canvas. 19in x 19in. **Above, right:** *Pots... of Fortune*, high fired, glazed stoneware with onglaze and gold metal.

Alnoor Mitha: Deeply Rooted in the Inner Life

JOHN HOLT

Alnoor Mitha, whose new work goes on display at Rochdale Art Gallery in October, has adopted a self proclaimed psycho-analytical approach to the recurrence of shape and colour. Deeply inspired by Rumi, the synthesis of his work is the corollary of an East-West dialectic.

> "This all important spark of inner life today is at present only a spark. Our minds, which are even now only just awakening after years of materialism, are infected with the despair of unbelief, of lack of purpose and ideal. The nightmare of materialism, which has turned the life of the universe into an evil, useless game, is not yet past, it holds the awakening soul still in its grip..... He (the artist) will endeavour to awaken subtler emotions, as yet unnamed. Living himself a complicated and comparatively subtle life, his work will give to those observers capable of feeling them lofty emotions beyond the reach of works."
>
> Wassily Kandinsky, *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*, 1914.

Kandinsky's appeal for a spiritual evolution via the inner journeying of the artist, was made in 1914. If the process of 'individuation',[1] was a mere linear progression, then the latter part of the twentieth century should have manifested an abundance of visionary art!

> ***What bread looks like depends upon whether you are hungry or not*** -
> - Rumi

It is clearly evident that the visual language of the visionary artist is not apparent in any universal sense today in the Western world. This dearth of metaphysical visual reference, (even by intent), is being challenged by artists whose histories are significantly different to those of the Western tradition, a legacy with its cultural mind set in a state of uncertainty and flux.

Despite the failed aspiration of Kandinsky's in relation to Western art, there are exceptions, (even by intent). Manchester based artist Alnoor Mitha's visual work locates itself in the psychic process of an inward movement.

> ***Counterfeiters exist because there is such a thing as gold***
> - Rumi

The search for a spiritual reality through art may not have survived the modernist petition, and the ambition to do so is no longer culturally chic, but there are always exceptions to the ravages of contemporary expectation, with its seeming reckless eclecticism and inaccessible outcomes.

> '.. public demand is in a state of evolution, bored by the degeneracy of fine art, whose evolution has led to a series of even more vain and intellectualised performances which are hard to follow. A new public is becoming apparent, looking for something else, signs, symbols, myths, even rituals which can help it to survive in this new hyper sophisticated civilisation which has severed man's links forever from his peasant ancestors'.
>
> Lauren Danchin
> *Dubuffet; peintre-philosophe*.
> Edition La Manufacture, Lyons.
> 1988.

In the rationale of Alnoor Mitha is instilled a more metaphysical intent, rooted in both elementary and ethnic references.

> ***Every prayer has a sound and a physical form***
> - Rumi

Born in East Africa, Alnoor Mitha moved to Britain as a consequence of Amin's expulsion of Ugandan Asians. He studied fine art in France, Britain and India. This diversity of cultural experiences, together with the already stated inclination towards visual archetype, led Alnoor to embrace a heterogeneity of influence resulting in a 'hybridised', formal outcome.

> ***Every thought has a parallel action***
> - Rumi

This, though is not formal hybridisation or a mimesis, resulting in a 'mongrelised' consequence. Alnoor Mitha's work is more a narrative of identity, reflecting the transitional cultural experiences of so many people in this capricious modern world. The emulsifier in this search for a neo-language of 'mythic perception' is the need for a vocabulary of community and, more importantly, of the individual and universal soul (implicate as they are).

> "Significantly, these paintings by Newman, Gottlieb, and Pollock, as well as all the others in the Tate Gallery by members of this school of artists, are non-illustrative, non-diachronic, and necessarily dialogical in ways that recall Levi-Strauss' insights into the shifting, generative relationships of ancient myths, concerned as they are with the problem of kinship (*totem* is the Algonquin (Native American) word for "related to me" and the problem of life, whether of the individual - i.e. ontogenesis - or of civilisation - i.e. phylogenesis).:
>
> David Craven. *Myth Making*.
> Abstract Expressionist Painting From the United States.
> Tate Gallery 1993.

Alnoor Mitha's new works, which are due to be exhibited at Rochdale Art Gallery in October, spring from this need to evolve as an individual and as a cultural being, within a historical context, and to equate a visual language to the evolutionary process. In this course, I would specifically identify those whose histories are other than European as having a particular significance, inaccessible through Western experience, and yet burdened by the oppressive sufferings of a colonised past.

First you were mineral, then vegetable, then man. You will be an Angel, and you will pass beyond that too
- Rumi

In his new work, Alnoor Mitha has adopted a self proclaimed psycho-analytical approach to the recurrence of shape and colour. The synthesis of his work is the corollary of an East/West dialectic in which he, for example, draws upon the admi-motif, of Asia which ultimately developed into the Paisley pattern, so beloved of Western textile design.

"In Islam, artist and artisan are one; both are the instruments of God in creating beauty, and none of them is a creator 'par ' excellence' on his own. Artistic creativity in Islam is never exercised 'gratuitously', it always answers to well defined ends. Unlike modern Western art, Islamic art has never known the distinction between so-called 'pure art', or 'art for arts sake', that aims solely at provoking an aesthetic emotion in the viewer, and a utilitarian or applied art that is devoid of beauty and only responds to a certain mundane need."

Wijdan Ali. *What is Islamic Art?*
Al al-Bayt University, 1996.

If archetypes can be described as 'elementary behaviour patterns' of the psyche, whose effects are observable only in the subjects inner vision but not, as in the case with many people, by comparison with their outer behaviour, then Alnoor Mitha is an 'archetypist' by inclination and outcome. Jung regarded the question of the origin of the archetypes as one of a psychic heredity. In the case of Alnoor Mitha's work, he seems to be both concerned with symbolic reference to image, counterpointing Eastern and Western emblematic images in a direct and observedly paradoxical way.

The worker is hidden in the workshop
- Rumi

On his canvasas he places 'psychic forms', forms derived from an unconscious root onto a ground of Paisly fabric. One is thrust into a paradoxical, contradictory experience, compounded by scale and simplicity of application. These formal images, organic inner designs, float on a sea of Paisley. Inherent in these works is both a colonial discourse and a psychological challenge to the viewer.

From his improvisational, free-form drawings, enkindled by his musician ancestors, he distils images, as though trawling his unconscious memories. From these inner visual narratives he selects configurations which he takes down to deeper, stiller levels of perception. Placing these formal prototypes onto grounds of pure colour and subtle textural fields, he seems to be alluding to a gestalt constructed upon a foundation of stillness, of an approximation of the brink of manifestation itself.

The Infinite universe lies beyond this world
- Rumi

The paintings of Alnoor Mitha impel towards a gestalt of universal implication, yet in their femininity and cosmic nature they carry a maternal, nurturing ethos. Alnoor cites his mother, who he lost at an early age, as a primary influence upon him. A cosmological metaphor which promotes the maternal aspect, appears to be a primary concern for Alnoor, as is the purity and innocence of his daughter in her delight in colour.

The founder of the Anthroposophical movement, Rudolph Steiner maintained that where souls originate there is no form and structure, only colour. In the innocent play of his daughter Aniqah, Alnoor has acknowledged her contact with the soul of life.

The moment you entered this world of form, an escape ladder was put out for you
- Rumi

The Islamic influence is evident in the works. Penetrative tendencies, the puncturing of surface to still deeper levels, is a predilection, it seems, of contemporary Islamic art. In the use of metallic leaf, an aspect of the dominant inner forms of his paintings, is a citation to the preciousness of the spirit, of the divine reference.

God's Mirror: The front is the heart, its back the world
- Rumi

The work of Alnoor Mitha is deeply rooted in the depth of experience and in the psyche of he who undertakes the journey within, through layers of knowledge, until, as Saint John of the Cross cites:

'I entered in, I know not where, And I remained, though knowing naught. Transcending knowledge with my thought.'

(St. John of The Cross. 1542-1591.) Verses written after an ecstasy of high exhalation)

And so Alnoor Mitha constructs a visual language in his paintings. A language drawn from, inspirited by his Islamic musician ancestors, from his observations of innocence and the feminine principal as references to the Divine, of his Eastern and Western cultural experiences, all bound by his own sense of journey within. As Wassily Kandinsky, an artist who himself explored the relationship between the visual arts and music, observed in relation to the stature of the artist:

'I value only those artists who really are artists, that is, who consciously or unconsciously, in an entirely original form, embody the expression of their inner life; who work only for this end and cannot work otherwise'.

Wassily Kandinsky
Concerning the Spiritual in Art
Dover Publications. New York, 1977.

And so Alnoor Mitha in his rootedness, in his downward thrust to the core of being, is an artist who cannot work otherwise.

John Holt, artist, writer, is Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts, Bretton Hall College of the University of Leeds.



Right: *Untitled*, mixed media on hand made paper, 1996. Middle: *Untitled*, mixed media on hand made paper, 1996. Bottom: *Silent Energy*, mixed media on hand made paper 1996.

FOOTNOTE

1. *individuation*: C G Jung: a process of personal growth and integration whereby a person evolves to his true centre, or Self, as opposed to his ego. The ego, or persona, is seen as the centre of conscious life, whereas the Self is the result of bringing the conscious mind into harmony with the unconscious.

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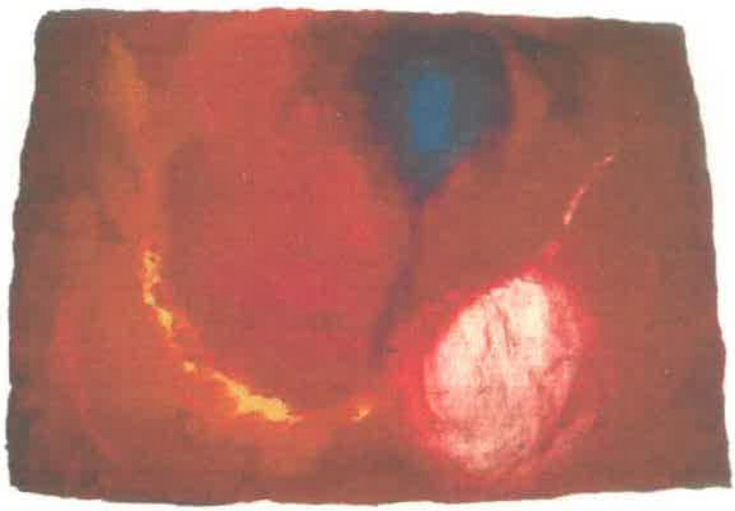
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Above, left: *Yellow Leaf*, mixed media on canvas, 1996. **Left:** *Ten*, mixed media on canvas, 1996.

Islamic Art Sales: An Overview

PATRICIA JELLICOE

Interest in Islamic art world has grown enormously over the years since the "Festival of Islam" was organised in 1976, and with it, controversy, of course. But this is the world of art, not politics, Patricia Jellicoe argues. Politics come and go with changing situations, but art is the heritage of a people, stemming from the age-old traditions and born from their innermost soul.

Autumn Sales - Rare Objects on Offer

The popularisation of extensive travels in the Middle East and the Sub-Continent has enabled Westerners to view objects against their own background, and conversely, emigration to the West brought an appreciation to many of their own artistic heritage.

More importantly, there has been a very large growth in serious and scholarly publications which has resulted in a widening knowledge of history, archaeology , the movement of peoples and their arts, of the artists and their patrons, of literature and the rendition of the original language in translations.

Study in the West has encouraged young Eastern scholars returning home to add Western methodology and the benefits of scientific testing to their own traditions and learning. The resultant fusion of methods in research will hopefully open new horizons and, possibly, re-evaluations.

While all these achievements over 20 years give amazed pleasure, there is also for us the continuing surprise of rare objects still appearing. Despite many nostalgically viewing past Sales, quality is high. The difference is, as with everything, that prices are very much higher, excluding the medium range collector, although Peter Wilson, of Sotheby's, used to say there was always a bargain in every Sale!

Two immensely successful Sales of these past years were Sotheby's in 1982 and Christie's in October 1993. Included in the latters metalwork on offer was the vast 11/12thC Lion sold by a European family and hitherto unknown for £2.3 million. More surprising was the successful sale in April 1996 by Christie's of a Coat of Mail for £220,000, as it had been known and even published in 1950. However, sold in Germany for £3,000, it had completely disappeared over the years.

In the forthcoming October 1996 Christie's Sales there are a number of very interesting Miniatures, including some related to certain of the Chester Beatty Library's collection. Another group from a collection made in 1940, includes three pages from a 1341 *Shahnameh*, from Shiraz.

There is increasing interest in classical carpets and in the Sale on the 17th October, there are some 30 spectacular classical carpets - never before seen on the market. These include 3 Ushak, 4 Trans-sylvanian and a superb 16th century Isfahan.

In the field of ceramics, the Izniks will interest the Turkish buyers, now returning to the Salesrooms.

Among Sotheby's past Sales, the Railway Pension Fund sold some pages from the Houghton Shahnameh, one of which made a world record price of £720,000 (hammer price), and was sold to a new Indian collector. In October 1995, the fascinating - and so far unique - larger than life painting of the Mughal Emperor Jahangir was sold for £573,000 (including premium) to a Swiss account.

Interest in ceramics continues though these are in smaller groups. However, the sale of an Iznik plate in October 1995 for £55,000 returned one to the high prices of the 1980's, and a Persian Kashan lustre plate with a rider and his hawk on horseback brought £70,000 (hammer price).

Over the past two years Turkish collectors have been very active buying paintings - many by Europeans, such as a Russian artist who painted in Istanbul at the turn of the century. A great favourite is the artist Osman Pasha Hamdi Bey (1842-1910) whose 1881 "Portrait of a Veiled Lady" sold for £524,000 in 1995.

Sotheby's will have seven Sales between the 8th and the 18th of October. A fine wheel-cut flask of the post-Sassanian period (7/8th C.) is estimated at £6,000 - £8,000. A splendid group of medieval Persian pottery is to be sold on the 17th October; among the finest of these is a lustre ewer, dated 1261 AD, and first published in a London exhibition in 1979, (estimated £60,000 - £80,000), and a superb lustre bowl, also of the 13th century., estimated £30,000-£50,000). Their perfect condition is extremely rare for medieval Islamic pottery, and the quality of their painting very fine. Estimated at £4 - £6,000 is a Persian sword with and 18th century blade and opulent gem-set and enamelled gold mounts of the Qajar period, while amongst the jewellery are two small 19th century enamelled gold Qur'an boxes (£15,000 - £3,000).

On the 11th October Sotheby's will hold the first international sale devoted exclusively to works of art and pictures from Turkey - these range from the golden age of the Ottoman Empire to the Ottoman "baroque" of the 18th and 19th centuries.

A group of Iznik dishes from the second half of the 16th century from the Lagonico collection includes a dish in cobalt blue, turquoise and relief red with a design of a cypress tree (estimate £30 - £35,000). An important ceramic arched-form panel of tiles made in Diyarbekir (E.Turkey), but in the Iznik style, would have formed part of a mihrab and is typical of works of this production (estimate £25 - £35,000).

Among 18th and 19th C. gilt-copper (*tombak*) works is a circular serving dish and domed cover with an incised design of a scrolling foliage and berries (£10 - £15,000).

Arms and armour include an ivory handled yataghan with its scabbard, dated AH 1226/1811 AD., (£2 - £3,000) and a 17th century rifle, its stock set with brass mosaics and ivory (£3 - £5,000).

Enamelled 19th century Beykoz glass estimates vary from £800 -







Above: Miniature Royal Timurid manuscript of Nizami's *Khamseh*, circa 1420. Provenance: The Cartier Collection.Estimate £60-80k
Above, left: Large stele in white marble inscribed with a Qur'anic surah and crowned with a Toghra, signed Abd El Halim for the sculpture and Abd E. Rahman for the calligraphy. Turkey, Ottoman, 19th century. **Left:** An Ummayad dish in red terra-cotta, probably one of the first Muslim objects from Spain – it has a decoration of Visigothic crosses and an inscription in Arabic on its raised rim

£2,000. Sure to be fought over is a most delectable group of 19th C. enamelled gold zarfs (cup-holders), complete with their leather cases. These were enamelled by Genevan Swiss enamellers especially for the Turkish market.

Paris is, of course, well known to much of the Islamic Mediterranean world, and a home to many to whom French is a second language. Laurie Soustiel, daughter of Jacques Soustiel, continues to produce a good variety of Islamic objects and sales are steady; Turkish clients have apparently been particularly well pleased.

Here in London, Bonhams have been successfully developing their Islamic Sales over the past few years. Included in their Sale on the 16th October is an early 15th C. Timurid manuscript of Nizami's Khamsa from the Carter collection and a water-colour view of the Bosphorus by Preciosi and to tempt you to your dream world their gold and gem-set Mughal Indian bedposts!

Patricia, Countess Jellicoe, is a lecturer in Middle and Far Eastern Art.

NOTE FROM PARIS

An Ommayyad dish in red terra-cotta, probably one of the first Muslim objects from Spain - it has a decoration of Visigothic crosses and an inscription in Arabic on its raised rim - is among the antiquities from the "Galerie Samarcande" coming up for auction in Paris (Dorout Room 7) on 7 and 8 October 1996.

Other objects from Meyer Joseph Uzan's collection, built up since 1973, which will be on public exhibition at Dorout Richelieu from 5-11 October and for private viewing at the offices of Me Paul Renaud on 2 and 3 October, include a large stele in white marble inscribed with a Qur'anic sura and crowned with a Toghra, signed Abd El Halim for the sculpture and Abd El Rahman for the calligraphy (Turkey, Ottoman, 19th C.). There are some outstanding pieces, Greek, Egyptian, Roman, Bactrian and Central Asian, and the majority of objects have a "passport" authorising their free passage out of France, delivered by the French Ministry of Culture. Catalogue available on request (120F including postage) from: Paul Renaud, 6 rue de la Gramge Bateliere, 75009 Paris - Phone 4770 4895 Fax 4800 9575.

ISLAMIC BANKING - AN OVERVIEW

Published by the **Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, London**

Starting from scratch, Islamic banking has come a long way during the past two decades. Today, well over a hundred Islamic banks and financial institutions are functioning not only in Muslim countries but also in the west.

In its early days, Islamic banking was seen by many, including Muslims, as a passing fad. But it soon earned a respectable place in the world of finance, and several prestigious international conventional banks set up in-house units working on Islamic principles.

Moreover, people of vision began to see the great future for this inherently ethical financial system and began to take it seriously. A natural consequence of this was the emergence of a keen desire among the general public and professionals to study and understand various aspects of this fast evolving system.

This book has been specially produced to fulfil this need. It is an invaluable publication on the subject both for the lay reader and the professional

Edited by Daphne Buckmaster, consultant to the Institute of Islamic Banking and Insurance, it covers a wide spectrum of topics relating to Islamic banking, and provides an excellent overview of the subject.

The stated aim is "to give some idea of the present state of development of the main aspects of Islamic banking" and this is exceeded. It certainly helps to illuminate Mukarram Ali's comments in his introduction: "we should not have any illusions about the tasks and challenges that lie ahead. The Islamic economic and financial system is still evolving." This book is a welcome addition to my own bookshelf.

Richard G Thomas
Head of Investments, Islamic Investment Banking Unit,
United Bank of Kuwait

Please send me copy/ies of *Islamic Banking - An Overview* (hardback, 180pp) @ £25 each including p&p

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YEMEN

Tourism's Impact on Heritage

SHIRLEY KAY

The glow of the setting sun lit up the minarets and amazing high rise houses of Sana'a as a breathless group of tourists gasped in admiration on the rooftop of one of the city's ancient buildings. They had struggled up five steep flights of stairs, at an altitude of 7,000 feet above sea level where such exertion takes the breath away, but it was worth it. The panorama spread out before them was incomparably beautiful, unique to this corner of Arabia, and preserved in virtually pristine state.

Yemen had lived in dogged isolation, almost completely closed to foreigners, until the civil war of the late 1960s swept away the medieval style regime of the Imams. Then the doors opened a fraction and visitors with a purpose began to find a way through. It was not until the 1980s, however, that tourism began in a very modest way, and only in the 1990s, when the shock waves of the Gulf War had abated, that this tentative trickle became a steady flow. Will this flow, over the next decade, perhaps turn into a regular flood?

The idea has caused considerable consternation in many circles. The effects of contact with an alien culture on an old civilisation have been endlessly debated and frequently feared. Even at the most basic level, will the tramp of hundreds of tourist feet quite simply demolish the places they are so eager to see? Will crowds of foreigners, pushing and purchasing in the souqs, inexorably alter the character of those venerable markets and attract the kind of redevelopment that is happening in Oman?

Mass tourism has been much maligned, scorned by the genuine adventurous traveller, seen at the worst as a means of exporting troublesome elements of the population to some distant, sunnier beach, during the summer holidays when leisure might make ill work for idle hands. The reverse of the coin has, however, a handsomer face. Tourism brings the influential sectors of wealthy countries into contact with other cultures, other treasures of art and architecture, to whose conservation they may well be willing afterwards to contribute. Public opinion is formed; appeals for conservation campaigns by such organisations as UNESCO no longer fall on deaf ears.

For the host country, too, the benefits may be not merely commercial (although the foreign currency revenues of tourism are of course always welcome). But faced with the need to attract tourists in a competitive way, a government must assess the attractions of its own heritage, convince its people that the immediate financial advantage of replacing an old building by a quickly and cheaply erected new one is a short-sighted policy with little advantage in the long term. In the past, when an old building was renewed, it was replaced by a similar one, built with the same traditional materials. Today, concrete blocks have swept away traditional building techniques, and the result is very different.

Before the tourists came Yemenis had always been surrounded by traces of the magnificent ancient civilisations which flourished in the days of the incense trade, from the early first millennium B.C. until shortly before the time of the Prophet Muhammad. Naturally, through the ages, these monumental buildings had served as stone quarries for later inhabitants of the same sites. By the middle of this century, however, it was becoming easier to remove stone and the Imam's agents had the power to do so on a large scale.

Ahmed Fakhri, an Egyptian archaeologist who visited Marib in the late 1940s, tried unsuccessfully to stop the massive destruction of some 15 to 20 ancient temples and palaces, for the construction of the huge governor's palace. This bleak building, of no architectural merit, now itself stands in ruins beside the tell, shattered by the earthquake of the '80s. A few years later, when the first archaeological expedition to Marib, under Wendell Phillips, was allowed in by the Imam, the latter took the opportunity to order tunnelling into another ancient temple, Arsh Bilqis, in a search for treasure.

Traditional architecture suffered a similar fate, as indeed it had done world wide until the middle of this century. In Sana'a, the old houses and city wall were untouched by the modern world until the early 1960s. As the city began to expand, the wall was progressively destroyed in the later 1960s and 70s - a fate which had befallen almost all the ancient city walls of Europe, whose inner ring roads still betray the original line of their former defences. Fortunately for Sana'a, the interests of tourism and an appreciation of tradition have come in time to preserve sections of the old wall, while other sections are being reconstructed.

Sana'a and Shibam UNESCO project

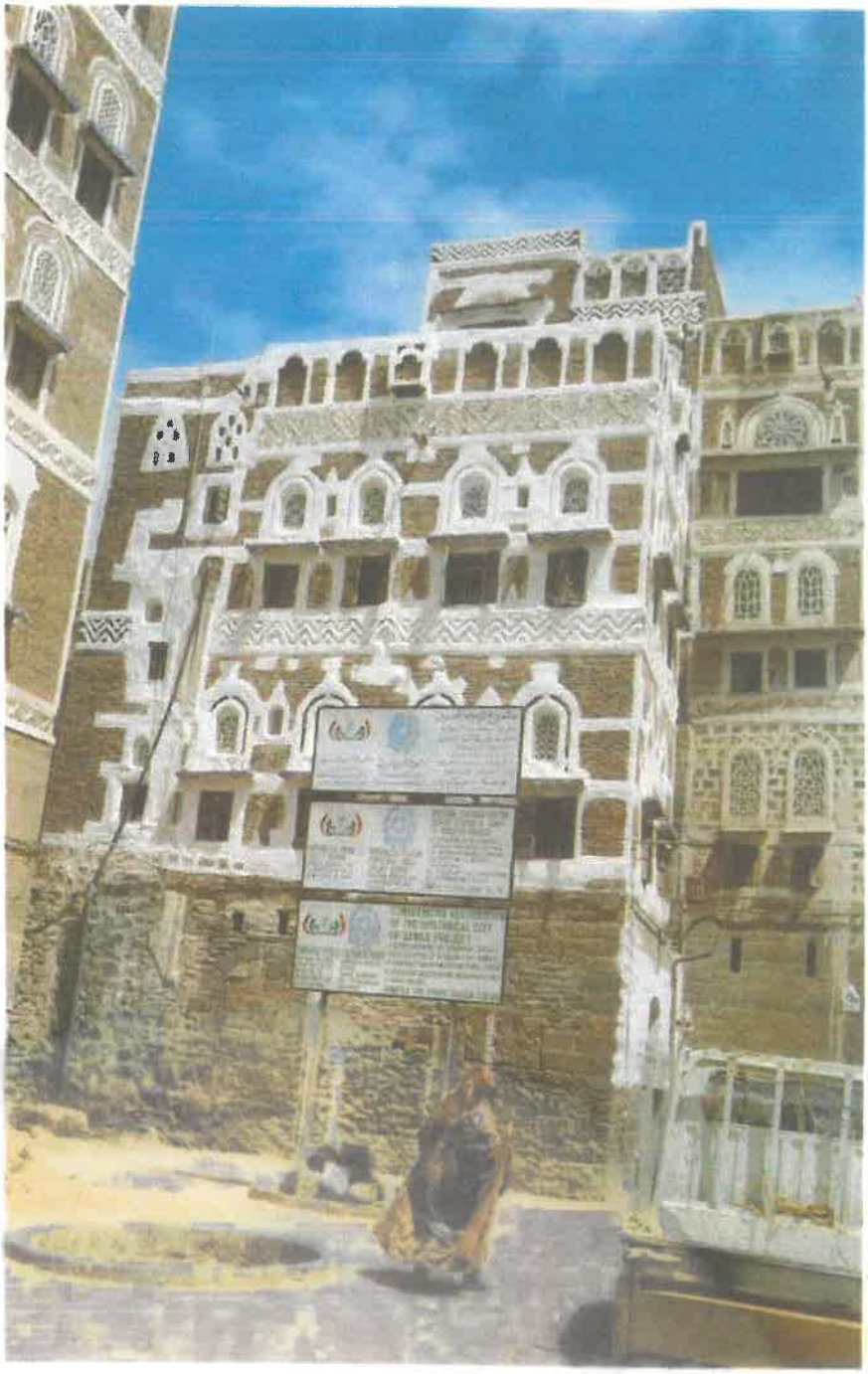
Sana'a and Shibam are two of the world's most attractive ancient cities. Their amazing, mudbrick houses rise five or six storeys high, the decoration picked out in white paint or, in the case of Sana'a, consisting of a fretwork of mud brick patterning, relieved by stained glass, half-moon-shaped windows. In both towns the total effect is completely satisfying, while the architectural styles are quite different.

Both towns, however, were in a perilous if not to say desperate condition by the early 1980s. It is easy to pipe water into a town, but far more difficult to pipe the waste water out again. The result for any buildings would be extremely harmful; for mudbrick 'skyscrapers' it is disastrous. This is exactly what had happened in both Sana'a and Shibam; piped water had caused the water table to rise and the buildings were beginning to crack and crumble. UNESCO was asked to help and launched an appeal for an international campaign to save the cities. Fortunately they were able to raise sufficient funds to install sewage systems, and to undertake the repair of many of the worst hit houses in Shibam. In part the success of this campaign must be credited to international interest in these beautiful ancient cities, created by the start of the tourist movement in the 1980s.

Shibam, built on the bed of the great Wadi Hadramaut, had suffered recently from a further danger, that of floods. Flooding was no new peril to the city which had been destroyed twice before, in

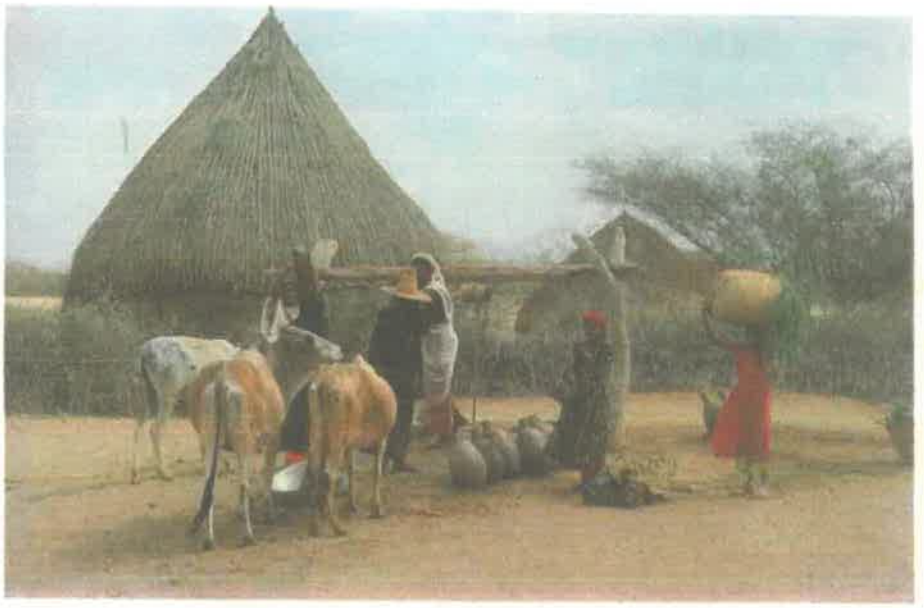






Top: Views of Shibam, Wadi Hadramaut.
Above: Saada city walls and gate. Right: UNESCO conservation project sign board, Sana'a.

Right: Tihama village and well in 1970s. Below: Detail of traditional architecture.





1299 and 1524 AD; after these floods the city was rebuilt within its present walls, but the great flood of 1989 breached these and destroyed some buildings, so flood defence walls were also needed, and provided in the 1990s.

Sana'a flourishes

With the suggestions of the UNESCO project, and under the impetus of rapidly increasing tourism, the Yemen government is achieving an attractive conservation of the old city, and a more controlled development of the exploding new suburbs outside it. The city has expanded extremely rapidly, from a population of 55,000 in the early 1960s to 250,000 in the early 1980s and around one million today; it has now spread right across the high plateau on the edge of which the old town was built. Initially, concrete block building led to very ugly development, but the present ruling that all buildings must be faced with stone is greatly improving the appearance of these suburbs. Rebuilding of parts of the city wall will also help to prevent encroachment.

The old town was divided by a water course, the Sayla, which tended to serve as a refuse tip, conveniently cleared out at regular intervals by the flood waters flowing strongly along the channel. This has now been cleaned up and the banks are being stone faced, making the area far more appealing for the local people as well as the groups of tourists who usually start their visit of the town at the Sayla.

Within the old city a number of buildings have already been renovated for tourist use. One or two of the fine, multi-storeyed old

houses have become small hotels and provide a splendid opportunity to savour the experience of living in a traditional Sana'a high-rise house, for those energetic enough to face the stairs. Two of the great caravanserais at the centre of the souq have also been renovated. One, the Samsarah al Nahas, is now used as a mini souq, with more ambitious shops selling antiques, brassware, jewellery, carpets etc, of a kind to interest visitors. Nearby the Samsarah Hasan was opened in 1993 as an art gallery and exhibition centre. On an upper floor a splendid collection of old photographs of Sana'a reveal how close the old city still is to its state in the early part of the century. From the roof, visitors command a superb view over the souq and part of the Great Mosque.

Tourism can also be credited, I believe, with the flourishing state of Yemen's craftwork. Many crafts, especially jewellery making, were severely hit by the exodus of Jews from Yemen in the 1950s, since they had been the major craftsmen. Crafts could easily have fallen into decline, as they did in many other Middle Eastern countries, when plastic replaced pottery, imported gold became more popular than silver, and metal doors ousted wooden ones. The keen sales to groups of tourists have, however, kept jewellery, pottery, basketwork and other craft shops in the souq flourishing. Fine old workmanship is also preserved in this way too. One of my tourist companions, an expert in traditional weapons, was delighted to discover old khanjars (daggers) in beautifully worked silver sheaths, in many of the souqs. He intended to keep the best daggers, in the hope that Yemen would one day want them back for their museums.

Museums are indeed beginning to flourish, as the tide of tourism spreads throughout the land but also, and very much, for their own people who are now becoming fascinated by their past. In Sana'a, a large new museum has been developed in one of the Imam's old palaces, combining the interest of archaeological and anthropological exhibits with that of the building itself. Some superb huge ancient bronze statues, originally found in pieces (one of which hung limply for many years on the wall of the former little museum), have been splendidly restored by the German archaeological expedition and now have pride of place.

Although Sana'a and Shibam have, justly, attracted the lion's share of conservation effort, other historic towns are now seen to be of importance also. While for Ibb, interest has come a little too late and the beautiful old city walls are already demolished, in Saada they are being preserved, and efforts made to prevent modern building right alongside the (at present intact) mud circuit wall. In Jibla work is to start on the crumbling stone palace of the famous 11th century Queen Arwa.

It was in Jibla that, 20 years ago, local people were urged to come in and admire the Mosque of Queen Arwa. Regrettably today most of the fine old mosques have been closed in face of the large tourist groups which until a couple of years ago traipsed through them. Since large amounts of money are needed for the conservation of some of the finest mosques, especially the Ashrafiya mosque in Taezz, perhaps a system of contributions to their cost might be devised, in exchange for the right to visit at restricted times of the day.

Throughout Yemen, however, it now seems that on the whole both traditional and ancient buildings are likely to be conserved and will be increasingly more protected. In Marib, for example, the Arsh Bilqis temple (once tunnelled in the search for treasure) has now been exhaustively excavated by German archaeologists. It is protected by a high fence while work is in progress but is scheduled to be opened to the public in a couple of years time. In Baraqish, a neighbouring ancient caravan town, another fine temple, surviving up to roof level, has been excavated by Italian archaeologists and is protected by a fence and by a military guard. The days of wanton stone robbing are gone.

Even in the remotest districts, the power of tourism is now appreciated. On one journey, a group of tourists went into a round-hut village of the Tihama, asking to take photographs. The old patriarch there agreed, on condition that they write to the government to ask that electricity be supplied to the village. "They are more likely to listen to you," he added wistfully.

Shirley Kay has written extensively on art, architecture, archaeology and tourism in the Gulf countries.

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"The Right to Hope": Art in a Polycultural World

WIJDAN ALI

The UN travelling exhibition 'The Right to Hope' displayed at the Jordan National Gallery in Amman earlier this year brought together the work of artists from 42 countries, spanning a wide spectrum of artistic experiences from varied and sometimes conflicting backgrounds, and expressing their concerns and hopes for a better world through their images and words.

The originality of materials used by Anahi Caceres, Youssouf Bath, Ivo Lill, Zerihum Yetmgeta, Cecilia Martner Peyrelongue, Moviemientoo Manuela Rmos, Groupe Bogolan Kasobane and Willem Boshoff, coupled by their deftness in manipulating these materials show the new horizons artists have reached in their exploration of the world. Judy Watson and Gonzalo Mella, Marilene Phipps, El Anatsui, Efrain Recinos, Gazbia Sirry, Santiago Rodrigues Olazabal, Owusu Ankomah, Ansupati, Gizella Varga Sinai, Hamiduzzaman Khan, Siron Franco, Zeng Shanqing and Yang Yanping, Angus Cockney Kaanerk, Kimio Tsuchiya, Khalid Khreis, Alexander Borodie, Gongkar Gyatso, Louse Metzger, Laila shawa, Rashid Diab, Johan Mhlanga, Ricardo Benaim, Ariffin Mohd Ismail, Marco Pogancnik, Joe Madisia, Nike Olaniyi Davies, Victor Anicet, Buu Chi and Gladman Zinyeka present works made of oils, canvas, prints, stone, paper and other familiar media; however, their dramatization of such materials and the concepts that are contained within them give new impetus and input to their media, turning them, as if by magic, into novel and meaningful creations.



Nike Olaniyi Davies, *The Tree of Life*, Indigo batik, 213x 22cms

Last but not the least we have the artists who have expressed their ideas through installations. Ali Jabri, Vivan Sunndaram, Tony Capellan, Duck-Hyun Cho, Handan Borutecene, Monica Gonzalez and Osvaldo Salerno and Willem Boshoff give us three-

THE RIGHT TO HOPE TRUST

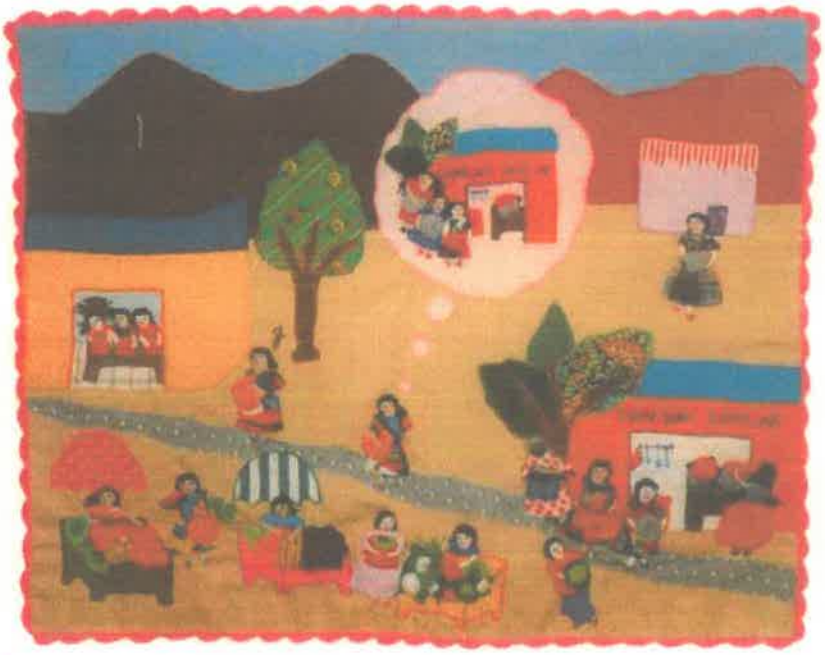
The Right to Hope is an international cultural and educational project which is part of the United Nations' 50th anniversary commemorations. The three components of the project – a global television series, a travelling exhibition, and related publications - show art as means of communication and education. The artists taking part in this exhibition are from all around the world and their art works and statements are very different in style and content.

The long term work of the project stems from South Africa where the Right to Hope Trust was established in 1995. Right to Hope book will help raise awareness around the world of the objectives underlying the project and the Trust. The Trust is committed to educational, development, cultural and human rights issues in South Africa and internationally. The Trust will produce educational materials for South Africa, and will help adapt, integrate and disseminate the Right to Hope educational materials produced in other countries (through travelling exhibition and films), thereby collaborating with other associated agencies within and beyond South Africa. The following are the educational priorities for the Trust through 1996 which were reached through consultation with the Department of Education, teachers and educational advisers:

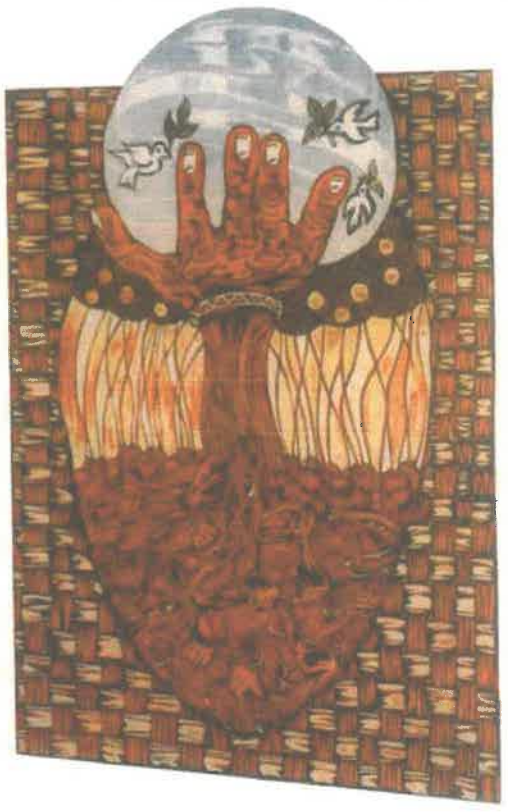
- to develop primary and secondary educational materials focusing on South African culture to help meet the existing shortage of resources; to develop materials to not only meet these physical shortages but which also empower teachers; to adapt the international pack for local use; to develop materials for early childhood;
- to invite proposals for educational projects and materials from educational organizations, teacher and NGOs;
- to bring information on culture, development, environment and human rights from around the world into South Africa for use by the Trust and other educational groups.
- to foster existing connections with UNDP, UNICEF (the Trust has joined their global task force on education) UNESCO, the EU and other international agencies, and collaborate with them to develop educational materials.

dimensional interpretations of their messages in a vibrant and eclectic manner.

What distinguishes the artists participating in 'The Right to Hope' is their commitment to express their feelings and beliefs, regardless of their media, mode of expression, artistic, geo-political and religious backgrounds. This is not an exhibition of 'art for art's sake'; it is an exhibition where every work comes with a conviction which the artist tries to convey through what he or she deems most appropriate. We live in a world with too many conflicts and much injustice, therefore not every one can remain indifferent and uninvolved. By transmitting a message for a better future 'The Right to Hope' shows what art in a poly-cultured world can do to serve humanity through commitment to hope.







Dr Wijdan Ali is President, Royal Society of Fine Arts, Amman, and heads the Higher Institute for Islamic Art and Architecture, Al-al-Bayt University, Mafraq (Jordan).

Top: Movimiento Manuela Ramos, *Restaurant and Market*, arpillera (fabric applique), 40 x 52cm. **Extreme left:** George Bogolan Kasobane *The Long March*, fabric 1.10 x .70cm. **Left:** Joe Madisa, *Tree of Unity*, Print, 1.- x 1.4m. **Below:** El Anatsui, *Unfolding the Scroll of History*, wood and tempera, 60 x 629cm.



Anglo-Omani Ties Pay Artistic Dividends

JAMES PARRY

The oil-rich states of the Arabian Gulf remain heavily dependent on expatriate labour and, despite recent programmes designed to increase the number of nationals within the regional workforce, the situation is unlikely to change much in the foreseeable future. Yet what is the cultural and artistic impact of the expatriate presence? In the first of an occasional series on artistic interchange, James Parry *looks at the visual arts in Oman.*

The close political links between the Sultanate of Oman and Britain are well-known and date back to at least the days of Sir Percy Cox, Honorary Consul in Muscat from 1899-1904, during the reign of Sultan Said Faisal. Subsequent rulers maintained good relations with the British and the Omani authorities traditionally looked towards London for assistance in times of need. Her Majesty's Government, aware of Oman's strategic importance, was usually happy to oblige.

However, the relationship constitutes a more complex interface than might appear at first sight and in recent years it has shown signs of maturing into a multi-dimensional exchange. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the arts, traditionally an awkward arena in which Western cultural values can jar with conservative Islamic mores. All the signs are there that a genuine accommodation has taken place, and one which may well mark a meaningful advance beyond the neo-colonial hang-ups that so often inhibit artistic development in developing countries.

There is no doubt that over the past decade the West has witnessed a tremendous groundswell of interest in Islamic art and culture generally. Whereas some of this fascination has been paradoxically generated by negative media coverage of Islamic fundamentalism and its motivations, there has also been a genuine renaissance in Western appreciation of the achievements of Islamic art, prompted in part by greater exposure to Islamic culture via Western nationals working in the region. This development has resulted in several seminal exhibitions (such as the highly successful "Treasures of Kuwait" touring show), high market prices for Islamic works and a noticeable increase in the number of European and American institutions offering courses in Islamic art and culture.

A country like Oman, with its substantial expatriate community, is well-placed to act as a crucible for cultural exchange. Oman is, in any case, far from being a culturally homogenous society. The seafaring and mercantile tradition of this part of Arabia led her people far and wide across the Indian Ocean, where they established colonial outposts in Baluchistan and East Africa and extensive trading networks in India. It is little surprise therefore that strong links were developed with societies beyond Oman's immediate neighbours, and a network of cultural interchange established which was far more extensive than any other in the region. When Sultan Qaboos assumed power from his father in 1970, he invited Omanis to return from the economic and political exile they had sought overseas. Back they came, bringing with them not only commercial skills, but also the assumed cultural and artistic values of their adopted homelands. The result is one of the most stimulating ethnic mixes in the region, a country where Arabic literature, African music and Indian textile design can be found in healthy cohabitation.

Into this already complex picture came the arrival of European (predominantly British) expatriates in the early 1970's, ostensibly to provide technical assistance in the white heat of Oman's infrastructural revolution. A close relationship subsequently developed, due in part perhaps to intrinsic similarities between the two nations: both seafaring peoples with a long-standing tradition of overseas influence, and yet also conservative and potentially insular societies. Western cultural and artistic attitudes sought local expression and were an important manifestation of the European response to life in such a dramatic, colourful and, at that time, virtually unknown country.

Superficially at least, European modes of cultural expression had little in common with indigenous art forms. Oman had a rich tradition in poetry and oral story-telling, but the written novel was an unknown medium and although dance and music were an important part of life across the country, "theatre" and the visual arts were both non-existent and theologically contentious.

It is therefore no surprise that for the first few decades of mutual contact, indigenous Omani artistic expression and that of Europeans living in Oman followed independent paths. For Westerners, the most obvious media were painting and, later, photography. Whereas initially these activities often had a strategic, if not downright military, motivation, with the arrival of large numbers of civilian expatriates in the early 1970's they took on a more esoteric aspect. Although some of the newcomers were proficient artists, many of the burgeoning cadre were little more than enthusiastic amateurs. Whilst some of these people were happy to paint purely for their own enjoyment, others showed greater commercial zeal and their impact on the local art market – and on the development of Oman's own embryonic arts constituency – was little short of disastrous.

The art market was buoyant, propped up by demand from wealthy expatriates anxious to secure a memento of their time in Oman, and from middle-class Omanis well-versed in Western material values. As ever, the market dictated the nature of the product and so endless views of forts and wadis, swathed in green and purple washes, filled Oman's handful of galleries and the lobbies of Muscat's international hotels. Some were real quality landscapes, but many were at best mediocre. Both expatriate and Omani artists rushed to meet the seemingly inexhaustible demand. Innovation and originality were hard to find with little evidence of any real interchange between the Omani experience and the Western perspective.

Meanwhile, traditional Omani art forms, under pressure from changing







Above: Mohammed Fadil Al Hassani *Name of God*, oil on canvas. **Top, right:** Sarah White: *Muttrah*, oil on board **Bottom, right:** Patricia Milns, *Amulet series*, mixed media. **Opposite page:** Mohammed Al sayegh, *untitled*, oil on canvas.

lifestyles and the modernisation of their social context, became the subject of increased attention from the Ministry of National Heritage and Culture. Craft exhibitions, workshops and demonstrations in venues such as urban shopping malls and tourist sites increased the exposure of the expatriate community to Omani culture. No longer were the striking designs of traditional weaving an enigmatic product of the hinterland; suddenly they could be seen on the loom at the local shopping arcade. The increased accessibility of such a wealth of design motifs, and the recognition they rightly attained, helped forge a new direction in art in Oman. It is at this time that we can detect the beginning of a real interface between two distinct cultural traditions. This took place on two levels: first, the use by some expatriate artists of local motifs to produce work of genuine originality; second, the emergence of Omani artists of real maturity and imagination.

The development of an Omani artistic cadre began as a result of both the presence in Oman of non-Arab artists and of the exposure to Western art forms of Omani students studying overseas. The latter often returned home with inspiration on how hitherto "foreign" media could be used to express Omani ideas and values. In one respect these local artists were poorly served by the market obsession with indifferent landscapes, although the generally low standard did at least encourage even the most nervous beginner to "have a go", on the grounds that the end product could not be much worse than some of those already on public display. It is to the credit of people such as Anwar Sonya, artist and owner of the Yiti Art Gallery, that local interest in painting and the visual arts generally increased through the 1980's. A small group of local artists, of which Anwar was a member, focused on developing an Omani identity in art, often by the use of traditional Islamic calligraphic forms. Experienced and sometimes trained in classic Western artistic expression, this group strove to achieve a



meaningful fusion of this approach with one of the oldest religious art forms.

These two parallel themes came together most appositely in an exhibition entitled "Symbols of Oman", held last March under the patronage of His Highness Said Faisal, Minister of National Heritage and Culture, at the British Ambassador's Residence in Muscat. The exhibition featured works by four artists, two British and two Omani.

The British contribution to the partnership featured Patricia Millns, who has lived and worked in the Middle East for ten years, and Sarah White, a graduate of London's Royal College of Arts and now resident in Muscat. For those familiar with the Gulf art world, Millns' work will be well-known, but what is noteworthy is the direction it has taken as a result of her period of residence in Oman. Always wary of the one-dimensional landscape school of thought, she has increasingly tried to explore the cultural symbols that are so much a part of the Omani social landscape. This has inevitably involved emphasis on the contribution of women to Oman's identity and in particular the artistic significance of their use of coloured fabrics and jewellery. Millns has identified the different components of the Omani woman's public persona – dress, jewellery, mask, amulets, henna – and explored what these actually mean in terms of image and perception. The exhibition featured several works from her "Women of Oman" series, which has recently gone onto the Internet as part of an initiative called "World's Women on the Line", following the Global Focus exhibition in Beijing last year.

In her search for the motifs that make up Oman's cultural identity, Millns has also looked further afield and found in the traditional architecture the same sort of decoration that features in local jewellery. Her vivid use of blue and indigo and her interest in amulets highlight the contribution made to Omani decorative styles by those of India, emphasising the fact that Oman's artistic base is intrinsically cosmopolitan and not restricted to indigenous bedouin styles.

Sarah White's work explores a different angle of the cultural landscape, notably the shape and form of Oman's historic architecture. The roughly-hewn and fashioned texture of traditonal mud-brick comes through strongly in her mixed media work, suggesting an atmosphere that is becoming increasingly hard to experience at first-hand, as more and more of the country's historic villages are modernised. Adroitly juxtaposing the profiles and the direction of light into confined spaces and narrow streets, she achieves the same quasi-geometric harmony that calligraphic art produces.

The two Omani artists in the exhibition, Mohammed Al Sayegh and Mohammed Fadil Al Hassani, represent two aspects of the current direction in Omani painting. Al Sayegh is the son of a khanjar-maker and at an early age was encouraged to design patterns for khanjar handles. He is a traditionalist, strongly influenced by the style of master calligraphers such as Mustafa Al Arqam, and maintains a tremendous discipline and restraint in his work. The results are beautifully crafted compositions, with the distinct figures often placed against a rich backdrop of deep greens and blues.

Al Hassani's technique is much more free and in one sense he represents a link between traditional calligraphy and modern abstract art. For him, the letter figures are more useful in terms of their contribution to the whole rather than as individuals and he uses them as bold, group features in highly imaginative compositions. In certain respects his work is suggestive of the large abstract pieces of Rabha Mahmoud, who with her sister Nadira, has also helped forge new directions in Omani art. Two other Omani artists, Salim bin Sakhi Al Baluchi and Iqbal bin Ramadan Dawood, are exploring more particularly local imagery such as weaving patterns and indigenous wildlife such as the oryx, a desert-dwelling antelope saved from the brink of extinction and now a potent cultural symbol in the new Oman.

The success of the exhibition brought into focus the growing maturity of the visual arts scene in Oman. Oman now has a substantial number of serious artists who are playing to an increasingly discerning audience. As the expatriate clientele declines, both in terms of number and influence, there is every sign that a healthy creative climate will continue. The work of such bodies as the Qurm Cultural Club, Omani Society for the Fine Arts and the various art and photography clubs is key in this respect, as they provide the means and opportunity for young Omanis to learn about art, not simply through frequent exhibitions and competitions, but also through practical workshops. The Youth Studio in Qurm, organised by the Government authority responsible for youth affairs, acts as a valuable forum in this respect. Interest in photography is also growing fast in Oman and is taking on a more artistic dimension. Exposure to certain visual art forms, such as sculpture, is still very limited, although the highly-acclaimed exhibition of Henry Moore etchings and maquettes entitled "Mother and Child", brought to Oman in 1993 by the British Council, opened new horizons in terms of what was acceptable locally as "art" and which media could be used to express artistic ideas.

"Symbols of Oman" was something of a milestone. It marked both a covergence of the expatriate and national artistic strands and also the coming-of-age of art in Oman. Hitherto the Gulf scene has been dominated by artists from other G.C.C states, particularly Kuwait. Now we are seeing the emergence of a whole team of Omani artists, inspired by the rediscovery of Oman's cultural past, and supported by expatriates such as Millns and White working in their midst. Millns regularly lectures to local audiences about art and painting, working to emphasise the positive engagement that is an increasing feature of the Omani art scene. The results of this cultural synthesis are clearly significant and will be worthy of close attention as the process develops further over the next few years.

James Parry is an architect and a freelance conservation consultant.

THE ART OF JORDAN
Treasures from an Ancient Land

EDITOR: P Biernkowski

Foreword by
Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein of Jordan

The Middle East has always been a volatile yet crucial region of the world. At its hub Jordan has been a major communications and trade centre since ancient times, in contact with the great empires of Egypt, Assyria, Persia and Rome. Here for the first time in aperback is an attractive and accessible introduction to the country's diverse and fascinating cultural heritage.

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Kuala Lumpur, An International Arts Capital

SHARIFAH ZURIAH ALJEFFRI

In the past few years, there has been growing interest in theatre, art exhibitions and other forms of arts and cultural events in the garden city of Kuala Lumpur and the Klang Valley. Theatre performances are sell-out indicating that there is now growing interest and appreciation for theatre.

In Kuala Lumpur private art galleries have grown in size and there seem to be art exhibitions opening practically every day of the month. The art market is healthy with the growing number of young professionals and the newly-rich upper middle class buying art works either purely for the love of them or for long term investment.

The presence of two renowned art auction houses, Christie's and Sotheby's in Singapore (Sotheby's has also an office in Kuala Lumpur) speaks volumes with regard to art trading and art marketing. Sotheby's Singapore director Quek Chin Yeo was quoted as saying "The market for Southeast Asian art is developing at a rapid pace and represents one of the growth areas with the most potential for Sotheby's in Asia." Both houses have been auctioning art works of renowned artists from Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore which have fetched high prices.

The entry of the Philip Morris Group of Companies in the Asean region art scene is a great boost to artists and the art market. It has created the highly-prestigious Philip Morris Asean Art Awards with the support of national bodies and institutions within Asean which include Asean Secretariat; Brunei Artists Association; Brunei Museums; Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports, Brunei Darussalam; Indonesian Fine Arts Foundation; National Art Gallery of Malaysia, Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Malaysia; the Ayala Museum of the Philippines; National Heritage Board, Singapore; Modern Art Society, Singapore; the National Art Gallery of Thailand; Arts and Culture Magazine; and the Ministry of Culture and Information, Vietnam.

There was also the soft launch of the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival by the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, at the premier evening performance of the theatre / musical *Kuala Lumpur, Kuala Lumpur* on July 5 at the City Hall Auditorium.This year's Festival, after a lapse of fifteen years,is in preparation for a bigger and exciting one in 1998 to coincide with the Commonwealth Games.

This 3-month festival, (July 5 - September 30), included a variety of cultural activities by the various ethnic communities, art exhibitions, theatre, music, films, dance and handicrafts. In addition there was substantial participation at international level, for example traditional Japanese theatre (Kabuki), Australian Chamber music, 2nd Asean-Japan Music Festival and workshop, contemporary art exhibitions from Chile, Thailand and Uruguay. A seminar on "The Arts as a Marketing Tool" originally planned for September has now been re-scheduled for October 18.

Kuala Lumpur's artistic infrastructure is ready to host an arts festival every two years. The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, now feels it is appropriate to organise a major cultural festival in the Federal capital to place Kuala Lumpur on a par with foreign cities which are renowned for the arts,'as underlined by the Minister, Dato Sabbaruddin Chik.

As part of the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, two major art exhibitions were held at the National Art Gallery, including 'Islamic Cosmology in Malay Art' at the main gallery from August 8-October 1. Curated by the University of Science Malaysia lecturer/ art historian Zainol Abidin Ahmad Shariff, the works on display are from the permanent collection of the National Museum, National Library, Pusat Islam, National Archives and individual collectors. Among the works exhibited are Malay traditional crafts that manifest Islamic cosmology.

According to Guest curator Zainol Abidin, the exhibition aimed to bring public attention to the central position of Islamic cosmology in the life and consciousness of Malay society as it is manifested in art. As a visual preamble, the exhibition attempts to instil an interest to delve into and further understand the cosmological connections of Malay art.'

A two-day seminar on the same theme to be held from October 1-2. The topics to be addressed by international and Malaysian speakers include *Islam and Cosmology*, *The Significance of Traditional Cosmology for Contemporary Art*, *Does Art need Cosmology? A Cross-Cultural Approach* and *The Spiritual Foundation of Islamic Architecture*.

Both the exhibition and the seminar are jointly organised by the National Art Gallery and the Academy of Malay Studies, University of Malaya.

The other exhibition is by multi-media artist /art educator/social commentator Wong Hoy Cheong whose recent charcoal paintings entitled *Of Migrants and Rubber Trees* are intense and powerful. His solo exhibition is on show at the Gallery's Creative Centre from August 12-28. The exhibition of paintings and an installation piece looks at the issues of migrants and ties it in with the history of rubber – one of the biggest reasons, historically, for the influx of foreign workers in this country (Malaysia).

Wong says: 'My drawings' take these stories, rich with images, as a starting point. I am interested in how histories of people are made, how the individual "I" becomes the collective "I" and easily forgotten dreams of one person become the dreams of people.

'I am interested in the rude ironies of British colonialism and the emergence of modern Malaysia, the clash and convergence and classes, the hopes and failures of society. Most of all,I am moved by the tenacity of the human spirit - the refusal to stand back against sickness, poverty and oppression.'

Wong Hoy Cheong's solo exhibition will be on display at the second Asia-Pacific Triennial of Contemporary Art, at the Queensland Art Gallery, Brisbane Australia from September 26, 1996 - January 19, 1997. Wong is one of the five artists selected to represent Malaysia. The other four are Eng Hwee Chu, Fauzan Omar, Raja Shahriman, and Hasnul Jamal Saidon.

Across to Sabah, the land below the wind, the Sabah State Art Gallery organised an art competition in conjunction with Malaysia's Independence Day celebrations on August 31. The theme of the competition was 'Independence'. The winners were Sylvester Jussem (first prize), Adrian Dominic Ho Fui Ken (second prize) and Rosli Zakaria (third prize).



Towards the Creation of a Malaysian Arts Council

RAMLI IBRAHIM

In Malaysia the importance of supporting, sustaining and developing Malaysian arts to their highest level of creativity and excellence has finally dawned on us. This is essential to balance the country's fast development and industrialisation. There is a real danger that our society is becoming increasingly over-materialistic. The development of awareness and sense of culture and art of a society is in keeping with a vision of an integrated Malaysian society of the future, with a strong sense of identity and heritage of its own. Malaysia's vision of 2020 should be a balanced one and not show evidence of myopia!

At present the Malaysian government's general policies on culture and arts are implemented through the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism. It was only in 1991 that the arts were recognised as a separate entity from culture and tourism. The general cultural and arts policies of the Ministry are advised by the Advisory Council for Culture, whose members consist of scholars, and senior bureaucrats from various ministries and governmental departments, including the Ministries of Information and Education, the National Archives and the Islamic Centre. Representation of active professional artists in the Advisory Council is at present token or minimal.

The two institutions that have been chiefly responsible for the presentation of government cultural policies and the cultural image-making of Malaysia to the outside world are the Kompleks Budaya Negara (KBN) and the Tourist Development Corporation, now the Malaysia Tourist Promotion Board (MTPB). The Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism also implements its cultural policies at local level.

Subsidy and financial support should not be arbitrary, but decided upon after special study by an active Arts Council which works towards promoting excellence in the arts. Project-by-project subsidy is usually ineffective. Grants should be given for a specified term, so that a performing company can have the breathing space to be more independent. Adequate time for forward-planning is essential.

The infrastructure of the Arts Council, whatever model we eventually choose to adopt, must benefit all aspects of Malaysian arts, both long-term and in the more immediate future. Those involved in running the arts must be truly committed to the arts and not civil servants with little or no interest in the subject. Equally, the Council must be accountable both artistically and financially.

Long-term investment covers should cover not only education, but also specific skills-related training. This is particularly relevant to the professional theatre. The creation of professional theatre groups in dance and drama for instance, may be catalytic for the creation of a cadre of professional dancers and actors, and may justify the existence of more solidly based training institutions.

Immediate attention and assistance must be given to traditional performing arts. This will require extreme sensitivity and caution, not only due to religious factors, but also because any effort to rejuvenate the precious traditional court dances, such as Makyong, Joget Gamelan, Menora and Asyek, represents their last chance of survival.

An intense archival programme is also essential to document existing living treasures. It is a truism that every time an artist dies, so does a unique library. A study of the general arts policy of Indonesia regarding the handling of religious issues in the arts and the aesthetic experience could bring up some useful ideas for Malaysia too. Both Indonesia and India have succeeded in strengthening their traditional identity alongside the onslaught of modernisation.

A platform such as a biennial arts festival, funded by but artistically independent of the government, will help create a more healthy artistic climate. There is a need to decentralise artistic activity from Kuala Lumpur, so that the regional population can also enjoy the artistic experience. Equally important is the creation of smaller theatre venues, seating up to 500, rather than large ones. Facilities such as rehearsal space are also lacking and the high cost of renting lighting and audio-visual equipment is a problem for independent theatre groups, especially touring companies.

One of the most progressive moves initiated recently by the government is the abolition of the entertainment tax, which was a major obstacle for the development of Malaysian theatre. Finance is always a problem for the performing arts in particular, but perhaps more of a concern is the continuation of outmoded arts policies. These must be reviewed at the highest level.

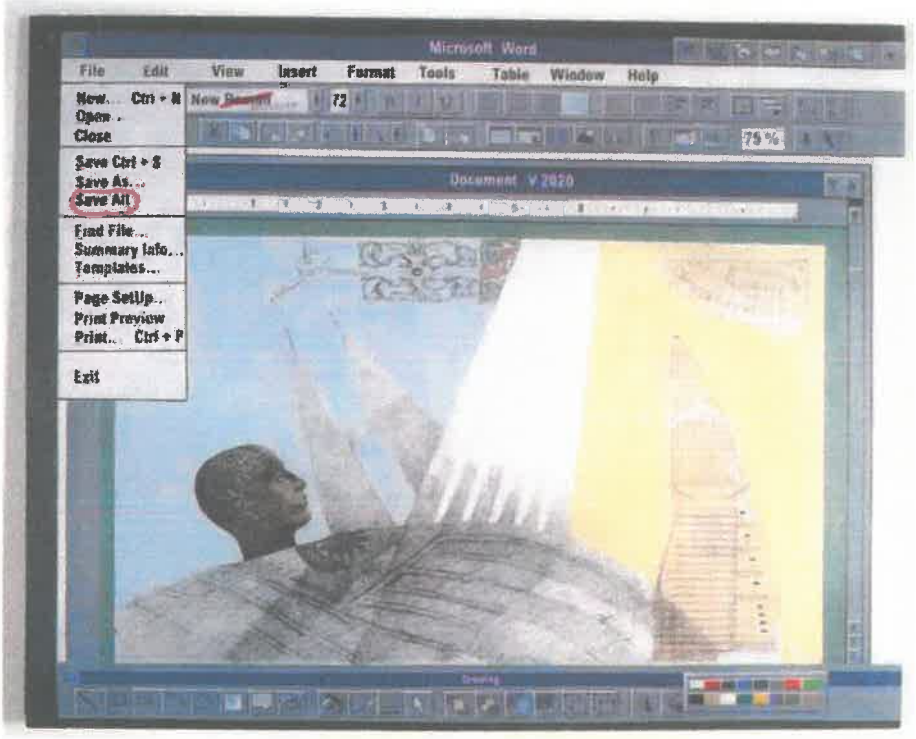
Extracts from a paper by Ramli Ibrahim, Artistic Director, Sutra Dance Theatre, presented at a Seminar in Kuala Lumpur in April 1996

There were also five consolation prizes.

Another arts festival, Pekan Seni Ipoh (Ipoh Arts Festival), was held in the Perak state capital, Ipoh from September 2-14. The aim of the organisers was to make Ipoh, noted for her tin mines, black pottery and gold/silver thread embroidery, centre for the arts and art-related activities featuring artists, poets, dancers, and traditional craftsmen. The festival was organised by the Perak Arts Foundation with public and private sector sponsorship. An art exhibition by about 60 artists, a traditional crafts exhibition, a theatre production, poetry readings, children's art competition and arts forums were among the highlights of the festival.

There has been close cooperation between performing and visual artists from Japan and Malaysia for many years. Malaysian performers and artists have collaborated in a number of projects with their Japanese counterparts and vice-versa. A recent dance performance at the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, for example, was a collaborative effort by Japanese and Malaysian dancers. Print-maker Juhari Said is another artist who visits Japan often. Recently he participated in the Japan-Asia Print Art Exhibition at the Fukuoka Prefecture Museum and held a solo exhibition of woodblock prints at the Miyabi Gallery, Fukuoka. Fukuoka Art Museum has also been closely associated with a group of Malaysian artists who have regularly held exhibitions at the Museum, which has a large collection of Southeast Asian art works. In fact they began their collection in the late 70's. The recent appointment of well-known Malaysian artist/art historian Redza Piyadasa on the acquisition board of Fukuoka Art Museum (Asian Art) is testimony to the high regard Japan has for Malaysian artistic expertise.





Opposite page: 1st Prize. Sylvester Jussem, *Art Form of Communication*. **This page, top:** 2nd prize. Adrian Dominic Ho Fuiken, *Makmur Kemerdekaan*. **Above:** 3rd prize. Rosli Zakaria, *Between Now and Tomorrow*.

Ethnology Museum Exhibitions

Among recent Islamic world presentations at the Ethnology Museum in Rotterdam, two stand out: one entitled "Arabic Characters", displaying the Museum's acquisitions of calligraphic art, and the other entitled "OpPositions", offering the work of 15 women artists from Islamic culture.

Over the past years the Friends of the Museum have built up a substantial collection of modern art from the Islamic world. The main emphasis in the collection is on works of art inspired by Arabic writing. There have been new additions following the unique purchase of 25 works of the well known Arab artist Dia Azzawi.



Together the works form a series entitled "One Thousand and One Nights", illustrating the tales from the classic collection of stories of the same name, the first European translations of which appeared around 1700. Without exception the artists in the exhibition are 'artistic nomads' - artists whose work expresses a cosmopolitan view of life, though they have deliberately chosen their work to reflect their ties with Islamic culture., with its rich artistic heritage. "Arabic Characters", comprising about 50 works, gives a wide-ranging view of current trends in calligraphic art.

The exhibition opened on 25 May 1996, and will continue until 17 November 1996.

The other exhibition, "OpPositions", is based on four themes which are developed in various artistic disciplines, by women visual artists, writers and fashion designers reflecting and responding to their Islamic background.
Millions of women throughout the world have grown up with Islam. Their lives are influenced by religious principles and by social rules and regulations. In the western world these women are depicted as inferior or mysterious beings, as the victims of their husbands, fathers and brothers or as victims of political or religious rulers. Many women do not fit this image.

The modern period and new relations between the Islamic and the western world are forcing Islamic women too to redefine their position and to develop their own forms of democratization and modernization, both within and outside the Islamic context.

Different women react in different ways to their cultural heritage. They create an individual and many-sided identity, as can be seen from the work of the fifteen women artists in *Oppositions*. The work of all these women is a highly personal contribution to Islamic cultural history.

The theme ***Veiled and revealed*** represents the vision of five women artists. One of them, Eynel Çelebi (Turkey) was inspired by the Assyrian culture of around 2000 years before Christ. She based her designs on scenes from ancient Assyrian reliefs. Çelebi was so intrigued by the invention of the pocket, which is attributed to the Assyrians, that she called her collection 'Pocket'. Another artist and designer, from France, Ece Ege feels a bond with Turkish history. In her winter collection for 1994/1995 she conspicuously uses elements of Ottoman clothing, as in the colourful applique work and the fine needlepoint. At the same time she does not cling to Islamic cultural history and her fashion is above all modern and wearable, 'otherwise it would just be fancy dress'.

In ***Desire and anger*** fragments can be heard from women's novels about sexuality. In Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1994), the young girl Fatima seeks her way among the women of her large family. Fatima asks many questions and tries to find out what makes a harem into a harem. Talking with her grandmother she discovers that: 'The harem is in your head'.

The theme ***Images and self-images*** shows developments in the visual arts.

The main source of inspiration for Khairat Al Saleh is the Islamic art of the book, rooted in Byzantine, Syrian and Hellenistic book decoration.

Al-Saleh, of Syrian origin and born in Jerusalem, lives and works in England. She regards herself as a neoclassicist, drawing on the immense riches of Islamic culture.'After passing of the Golden Age of Arab civilisation, a great darkness was ushered in as a result of conquests and political disintegration. Arab art was wrenched from the past into the present, missing an interval, a beat, a continuity. I am in search of that lost bridge, the rainbow'.

In the photographs by Addela Shazi Khan (England), who was born in 1970 in England, the artist examines her Asiatic-Islamic



background. Khan uses decorative elements derived from Islamic design. The refined, self-assured poses adopted by her models have their origins in the language of Indian dance. The female instead of being 'invisible', is given the central place in her work.

Artist Wijdan Ali from Jordan derives her aesthetic identity from modern Arabic calligraphy and thus also from her Islamic heritage. The calligraphic form of expression unites the legible value of letters and words with their optical, graphic abstract shapes. An important series in Wijdan's work is *Karbala*. Karbala is a town in Iraq where in 680 AD a bloody battle was fought. On the losing side only three women and a child survived: these women are regarded as heroines in Islamic history. The battle of Karbala is the epitome of the greatest human tragedy, standing for loyalty and betrayal, courage and greed, right and wrong. Wijdan says: 'Each era had a Karbala... Palestine, Bosnia, Somalia. I saw a hundred past Karbalas and fear a thousand more to come'.

In ***Keeping or breaking the rules*** the emphasis is on the mother-daughter relationship. Video artist Meena Nanji (Kenya) rejects the traditional role of women as dutiful daughters and wives and tries to find a place for herself against a background of social rules and religious conventions. Joss Dray (Morocco) photographed Arab women in Syria, Algeria, Iraq and Gaza and also in France and Belgium. Her photographs show the positions which the women adopt: within Islamic and western culture, as French and Palestinian women, as Muslims, political activists and Feminists.

The participating artists are:

Khairat-Al-Saleh (England), Wijdan Ali (Jordan), Addela Khan (England), Ipek Duben (Turkey, US), Nina Bouraoui (France), Fatima Mernissi (Morocco), Sahar Khalifa (West Bank),



Top: Hossein Zenderoudi, detail, *untitled*. Paris 1984. Linen and oil. Photograph by Tom Haatsen. **Above:** Ghani Alani, *Baghdad*. Paris, 1990. Ink on paper. Alani made this work in order to deal with his feelings during the Gulf War the time when his birthplace Baghdad was bombed. **Opposite page:** Joss Dray, Photograph, *'Zohra Hamra and her daughter Mounia'*, Belgium, 1994.

Alifa Rifaat (Egypt), Eynel Çelebi (Turkey), Ece Ege (France), Fatiha Elhajoui (Netherlands), Ghea Sukaarya Pangabean (Indonesia), Nejoud Boodhai (England), Meena Nanji (US) and Joss Dray (France).

The presentations were visualised and created by the Centre of Islamic Culture in cooperation with the Museum of Ethnology, with design and art direction by Saskia Meulendijks, La Meul studio's, Rotterdam. The exhibition, which concludes at the Ethnology Museum in September, will travel during 1997 to various educational institutions and museums in the Netherlands.







Top. Wijdan Ali, detail, *'Karbala II: Ha'*, Jordan, 1993. Above: Dia Azzawi, from the series *One Thousand and One Nights*, London, 1986. Coloured ink and paint on paper. In some of these works, the storylines of the famous book have been etched on the edges of the works. Above, left: Eynel Çelebi, drawing from her collection *Pocket*, Turkey, 1995.

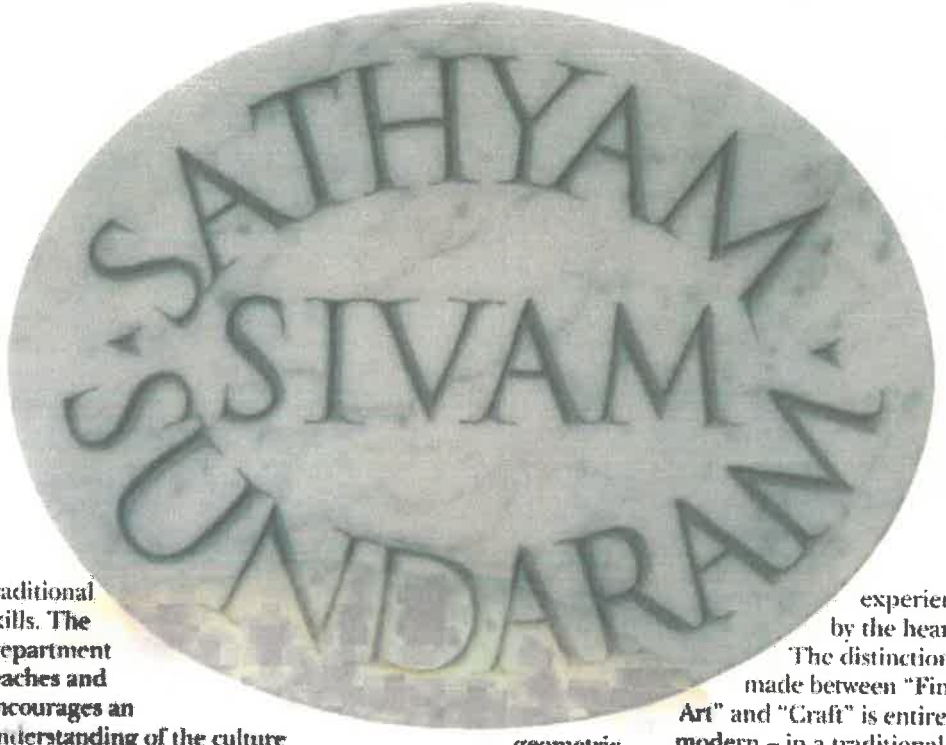
VITA Graduate Exhibition

The 1996 Summer Degree show of VITA the Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Department of the Prince of Wale's Institute of Architecture displayed work by five degree candidates completing their two year MA Courses.

With Professor Critchlow as Director, Paul Marchant as Deputy director and other specialist tutors, the department continues in its commitment to the teaching of both the theory and practice of the visual Islamic arts with the arts of other great traditions of the world.

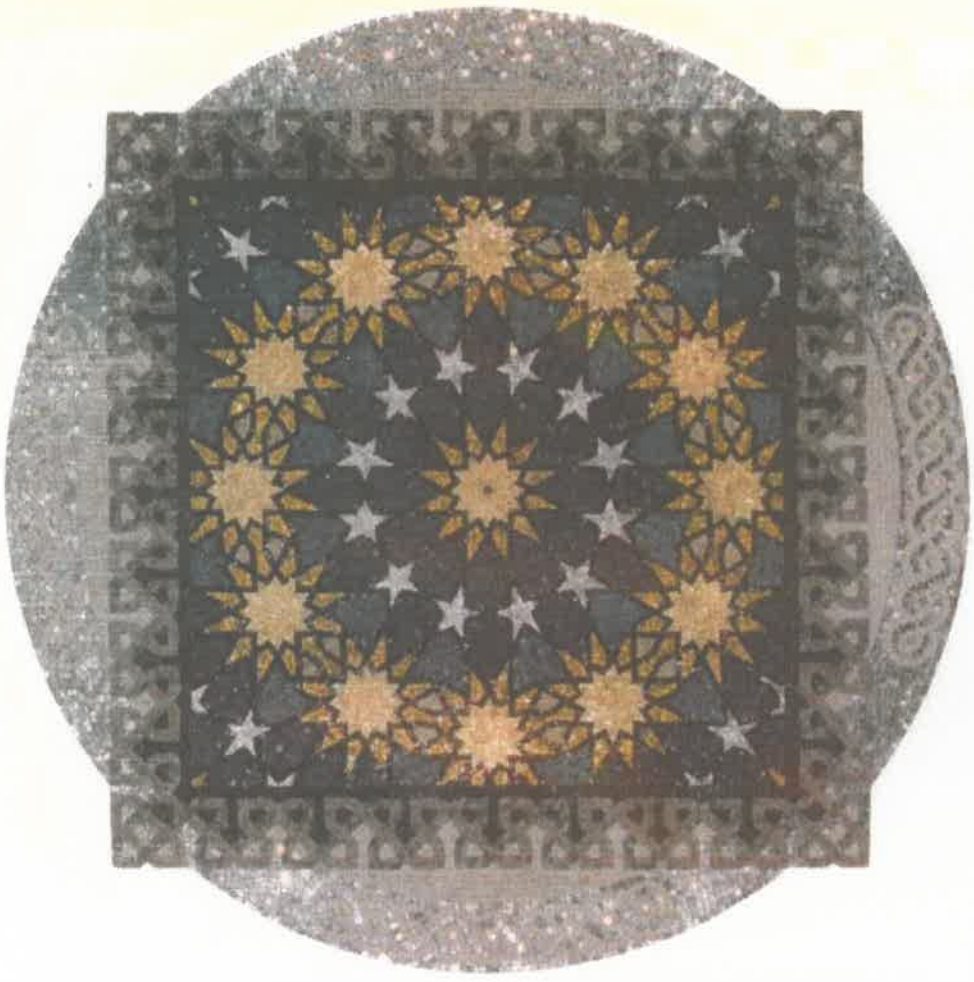
In the first year of the VITA course, all the MA students attend classes in a variety of traditional practical arts including geometry, Islimi (arabesque) and calligraphy (the three principal "languages" of Islamic art), as well as techniques shared by other traditions such as letter-carving in stone, architectural drawing, traditional painting techniques – for example gesso, pigments, gold-leaf and so on. The work on exhibition showed the individual responses of each student to these classes and the wide variety of techniques and crafts employed. These included Mark Mills' letter-cutting and lettering in stone and other materials; Una Goodman's ceramics and glass inspired by the Celtic tradition; Justin Hedley's panel painting in the medieval Italian tradition as well as ceramics inspired by early Islamic pottery; Stephen Windsor-Clive's mosaics inspired by Byzantine and Islamic patterns.

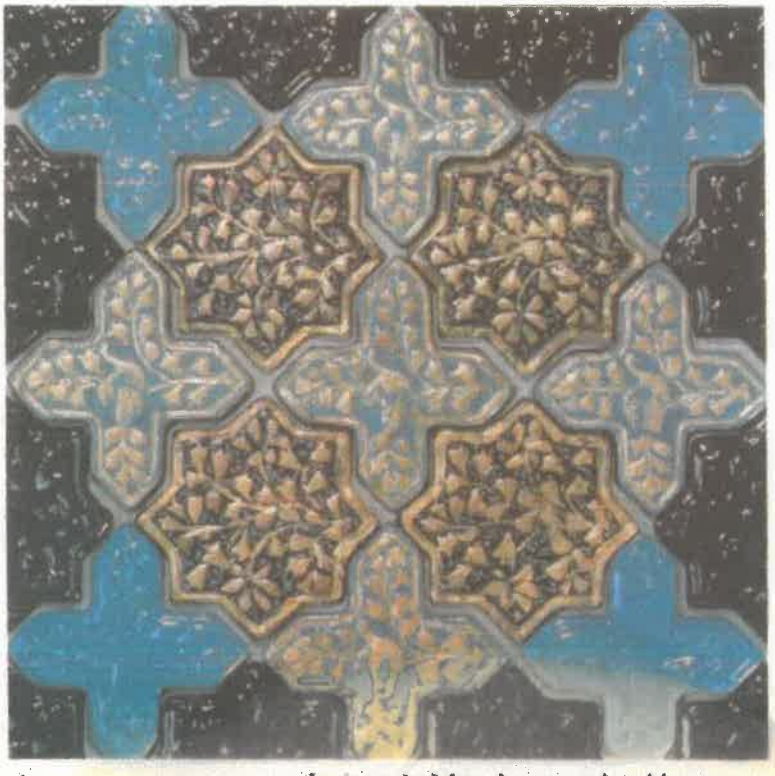




The wide range of arts and crafts practised by the VITA students all demonstrate an integrity, discipline and commitment to the values inherent within the traditional skills. The Department teaches and encourages an understanding of the culture and background of the traditional arts and the timeless values that they represent; the contemplative nature of, for instance, the careful execution of a geometric design is a lesson in itself showing that the resulting intricate and subtle pattern is not simply decorative but becomes beauty embodied by the human hand and thereby experienced by the heart.

The distinction made between "Fine Art" and "Craft" is entirely modern – in a traditional society an artist was someone who practised an art or a craft and, in the words of Rene Guenon, 'his activity was bound up with the principles of a much more





Page 75, top: Una Goodman, Red Earthenware Tiles. MA Course 94-96. **Bottom:** Mark Mills, Sanskrit Oval, Carrera white marble, letter art and painted. MA Course 94-96. **This page, above:** Stephen Windsor Clive *Marriage of Spirit matter*, mixed media on mosaic. MA Course 94-96. **Right:** Justin Hedley *Breath of the Compassionate*, marble, Venetian smaltoglass, river stones, glass, mirror glass. MA Course 94-96. Photographs by Tom Taylor.

profound order.'

The work of VITA Department demonstrates that students from different backgrounds and traditions can work well together, learning from each other's knowledge and experience, and, most importantly, through the study of the objective language of geometry, can understand the universal basis underlying the art and architecture of the great Traditions of the world – whether it is Islamic, Christian, Buddhist, North American Indian, Hindu and so on. Islamic art is predominantly concentrated on as it is one of the few remaining living traditions. Many people living in the mainly secular culture of the West who have lost touch with the sacred find great compensation and inspiration in the study of the sacred art produced by a spiritual tradition other than their own.

For further details please contact the VITA Administrator at:
The Visual Islamic and Traditional Arts Department
The Prince of Wales's Institute of Architecture,
44 Gloucester Avenue, London NW1 8JD
Tel: 0171 916 9740 Fax: 0171 916 9714

An Artist's View

On entering the Rebecca Hossack Gallery I instantly felt visually and mentally refreshed. A variety of pieces from flowing mosaic fountains to Byzantine landscapes presented a feast for the eye. Amidst the Kufic calligraphy were Sanskrit and Greek works as well as Celtic ceramics and detailed geometric grids, all lending a spiritual tranquillity to their surroundings.

The practice of Traditional Arts is a delicate balance between technique and theory. Skills such as geometry, arithmetic and Islimi here were incorporated with techniques like letter carving, architectural drawing and stained glass. Not only were these applied beautifully but adhered to discipline and showed understanding.

That these arts are learned and produced right here in London meant that these works are not only a reflection on a handful of students that were exhibiting, but also a credit to those who have taught them.

The influence of Traditional Arts, though often not recognised, is vast and still significant. These sacred skills should not only be prevalent but are a necessity for today. Traditional Arts stimulated a certain mathematical, cosmological and spiritual awareness, and were an integral part of society. As one of the students pointed out, these set the stage for movements like the Renaissance later in Europe. Vita, or life as the name suggests, was definitely inspiriting and elevated me.

Sadia Mir

20 Years of 'Art in Action'

JOAN CRAMMOND

Twenty years ago, a small four-day festival of Arts and Crafts held in the beautiful grounds of Waterperry House near Oxford, signalled the start of one of the most prestigious annual Art Festivals in Britain today, namely *Art in Action*. Its aim was not only to provide a showcase for some of Britain's finest young artists, but also to give them an opportunity to meet their public and for the public to meet them.

Since then, some 370,000 people have flocked to Waterperry to watch and talk with painters, potters, weavers, glass engravers, calligraphers, embroiderers, sculptors, metal workers, jewellers, print makers and woodworkers from all over Britain as they demonstrate the intricacies of their chosen craft and create their masterpieces.

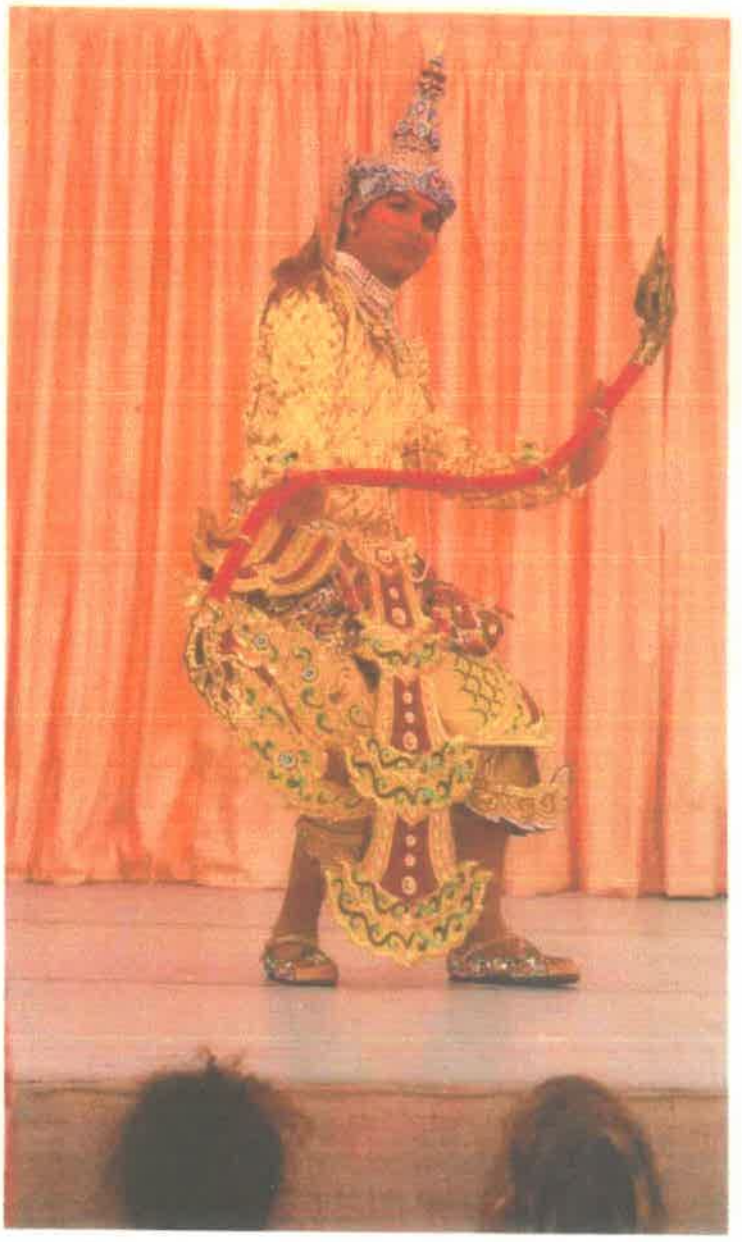
It is undoubtedly a stimulating two-way exchange. As one batik artist put it, 'What's lovely is when people share ideas and say "how did you do that?" And another artist remarked, "People like to meet the craftsman whose work they have bought and the artist likes to know that somebody is feeling as enthusiastic as they are and is enjoying the work."

This summer Art in Action attracted over 23,000 visitors to watch more than 250 artists and craftsmen demonstrate their skills. To celebrate the 20th year of this unique festival, the best artists and craftsmen who have demonstrated since 1977 were invited to return, and some interesting new demonstrators were also included.

As the Festival grew from its small beginnings, so more and more traditions have been drawn to it. For a number of years now artists have come from the East to demonstrate in the Eastern and Middle Eastern Pavilions. This year there were painters from India, Nepal and Japan, an Ebru (marbling) artist, a carpet maker and aromatherapists from Turkey, and jewellery, metal workers and glass blowers from Egypt. For the first time there was also a Russian Pavilion, with artists restoring illuminated manuscripts and icons, demonstrating gold embroidery, traditional lacquer art, violin making, sculpture and miniature carving.

Artists have also come from Holland, Belgium, France, Germany, Spain, Greece, Norway and Poland. The fine arts of Painting and Sculpture are strongly represented and English traditional crafts are also a popular feature, with demonstrations of lace and basket making, leather work, smocking, silhouette painting and a very English craft, the making of cricket balls!

This summer Copenhagen was designated the European Cultural Capital of 1996 and to mark the occasion Art in Action provided a platform for Danish bookbinders, potters, jewellers and glass makers, tapestry makers and furniture designers.



Burmese Dance performance

But Art in Action is not just a spectator event. Each day there are practical classes for both children and adults in such varied disciplines as copper enamelling, drawing, pottery, portrait clay moulding, silk painting and marbling, pyrography, batik, and oil, pastel and water colour painting. To introduce the next generation to the wonders of art, the 3 to 7 years olds are taught painting, collage, pottery, sewing, weaving, and dough modelling.

Amidst this feast of impressions, there are times when it seems necessary to stroll away from the pavilions and find tranquillity in the beautiful gardens which surround Waterperry House, or down on the banks of the river as it flows peacefully through the grounds. There is time, too, to enjoy a pancake, a meal or a glass of wine on the lawns – or to attend a talk on say 'Discovering Colour', 'Chinese Brush Painting', 'Zen in Japanese Poetry'or 'Indian culture'. And there is space to relax at a Mozart concert in Waterperry's ballroom or at a concert in the grounds; or to watch a performance of Indian or Burmese dancing, or T'ai-chi; to listen to Indian or Chinese music or to spend an hour or so in the open-air theatre. There is so much to take in that many visitors come on more than one day, taking advantage of the season tickets!

And what is the essence of all this activity? Certainly the need to preserve and nurture the techniques and skills of traditional design, so often tossed aside as of little or no account by modern trends. These centuries of

knowledge, quietly passed on from master to pupil, are food for the spirit. And the re-discovery of ancient methods is vital to enriching life today. In the last twenty years there has undoubtedly been a world-wide renaissance of the arts.

Perhaps this essence is best summed up by the Ebru painter from Istanbul, who has come to Art in Action a number of times. Of his own art he said: 'No two *Ebru* (marbling) paintings can be the same – the unique reminds you of the uniqueness of God. Ebru brings you to stillness and watching someone marbling makes you still too. In Islamic art it is not what you see through your eyes that matters, but things coming to your heart. The aim of art is to touch His uniqueness, this One."

The great discovery is that all fine art leads to the same, the One. In T'ai-chi both performer and audience find unity and rest. In Ikebana flower arranging both arranger and flowers join in harmony according to their nature - the fascination is that an active lady creates an active arrangement, a gentle lady a gentle one! Each is unique.

A weaver said: "If people are masters of their technique, it is a form of meditation. It is also very much about giving happiness to people."

A *Kumihimo* (Japanese braid) artist said: "It is a physical and mental combination of your action and thought, centring at one point to create something. I hope to show people that here is something wonderful, to make you stop and think, to reflect, to see beauty, to see a creation. I have to work. I cannot not work. It is food for my spirit."

The collector of traditional Middle Eastern embroidery, who has displayed different aspects of her collection on a number of occasions, was touched by the beauty of a small collection of fine work given to her some 25 years ago by a French friend, whose





Top: A weaver at work. **Right:** Peter Faulkner not only demonstrated how his traditional hide coracles are made – he took one down to the river to show how well it travels. **Opposite page, top, left:** Turkish Metal craftsman. **Top, right:** Carpet, Rug and Kilim Stand at the Pavilion. **Bottom:** Egyptian glass blower demonstrating his skills. **Page 80:** Turkish Ebru (marbling) artist explaining his craft.







grandfather had designed line fabrics for a famous Paris company. So fired by these fantastic scraps of embroidery, she set out to discover their origin, travelling alone through India and the Middle East, and most recently through war-torn Afghanistan, not to be acquisitive but to preserve these delicate works of art for future generations. She has published books about their history, so that the knowledge may not be lost.

The Turkish kilim and carpet specialist in the Islamic Pavilion researches old traditional designs and has them made by the same techniques, using pure hand-spun wool and vegetable and natural dyes. He said, "I see carpet making as an art. Satisfaction is in people finding them to be beautiful and making a contribution to their lives – making them happy."

All the artists declare that the four days they spend at Waterperry give them the opportunity to answer questions and thus formulate ideas that they would never otherwise consider. They return home stimulated and nourished not only by contact with the public, but also by their conversations with one another.

An Indian master sculptor, who came for a number of years, was full of praise for the work of a German wood carver he met in the Woodworking Pavilion and they exchanged information, tools and materials. This sculptor subsequently arranged for other Indian craftsmen to come to Waterperry, as he said "not for business, but to learn many things." And inspired by his experiences in England, he later organised stone-carving camps in India for young students to learn traditional carving.

Art in Action has become such a legend in its own time in the artistic world that there is now a waiting list of artists asking to take part and demonstrators are always delighted when they are invited to come back. Some artists, who were just setting out on their careers twenty years ago, owe their continuing success to the encouragement they received at Waterperry.

And visitors who have spent perhaps an hour or two watching someone skilfully turning a pot, or blowing a rod of molten glass into a delicate vase, or experienced the magic of seeing a print



come off a delicate wood engraving, or watched a man with the steadiest of hands write in perfect italic script, or, as one little girl did, come back again and again throughout the day to see the stages in the making of a tea pot, or who see a fine portrait appear out of a modest palette of oil paints, or watch a sculpture emerge from a large unwieldy lump of stone - they not only learn about the arts they are particularly interested in and acquire more skill themselves but they also come to appreciate and value the beauty of true craftsmanship and fine work.

These artists are making the heirlooms of the future and the visitors who buy and commission work are buying not only for their own pleasure but for the pleasure of future generations.

Huron University's Islamic Art Course

JOHN RUNNETTE

The London campus of Huron University runs a series of one-semester courses on Islamic Art and Architecture. These courses run every January. The series begins with a broad survey of the Arts of the Islamic world from AD 650 to 1250 focusing on the sources of Islamic art in Late Antiquity, and the emergence of a distinctly Islamic style in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. Geographical areas covered are Umayyad Syria, and Fatimid and Ayyubid North Africa, and the Central Islamic lands of the Abbasids and Seljuqs. Particular reference is made to architecture and architectural ornament and the applied arts of ceramics and metalwork.

The second semester course runs the following January.It begins with the rise of Chingiz Khan and focuses specifically on the court arts of Persia and Mughal India circa AD 1250 - 1700.The influx of ideas and materials from China is shown to provide the stimulus for a new style of painting which emerges under Mongol Ilkhanid patronage and is developed and elaborated upon by Timurid, Safavid and Mughal patrons.Of particular appeal to the students are the study periods in the Victoria and Albert Museum looking at carpets, ceramics and miniatures.

The third semester course, completing the series, looks at the rise of the Ottoman Turks in Western Asia and the conquest and occupation of the old Christian Byzantine heartlands in Anatolia.The course begins with the fall of Constantinople in 1453 and then goes back to trace the origins of the Ottomans and their rise from provincial obscurity to world superpower. Special attention is paid to the Sixteenth Century and the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent when Ottoman art reached a peak of technical and artistic refinement. Students again benefit from privileged access to the collections of the British Museum and V&A, and in particular the holdings of Iznik pottery and tilework.

This series of courses on Islamic art and architecture is unique to Huron University.The policy at Huron is to offer a number of specialized art history courses answering to the individual needs and interests of a broad range of students.The series of lectures on Islamic art reflects this policy and has proved popular with the young international audience. All three courses are taught by Edward Gibbs who also lectures and tutors on the SOAS/Sotheby's Foundation in Asian Arts Centre and at Morley College of Adult Education in South London.

Further details from:
Huron University USA in London,
58 Princes Gate,
London SW7 2PG
Tel: 0171 584 9696
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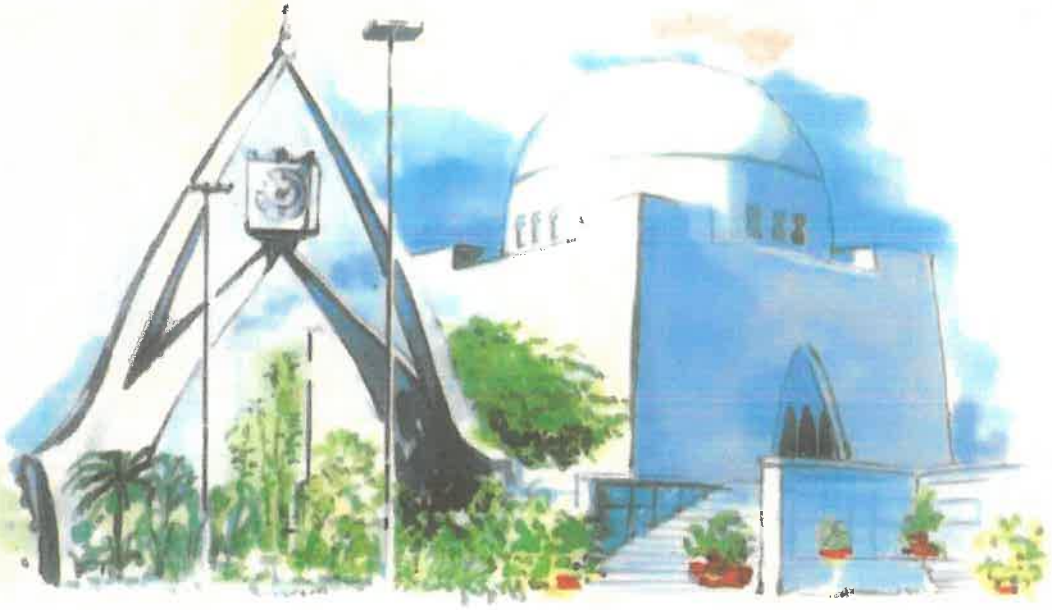
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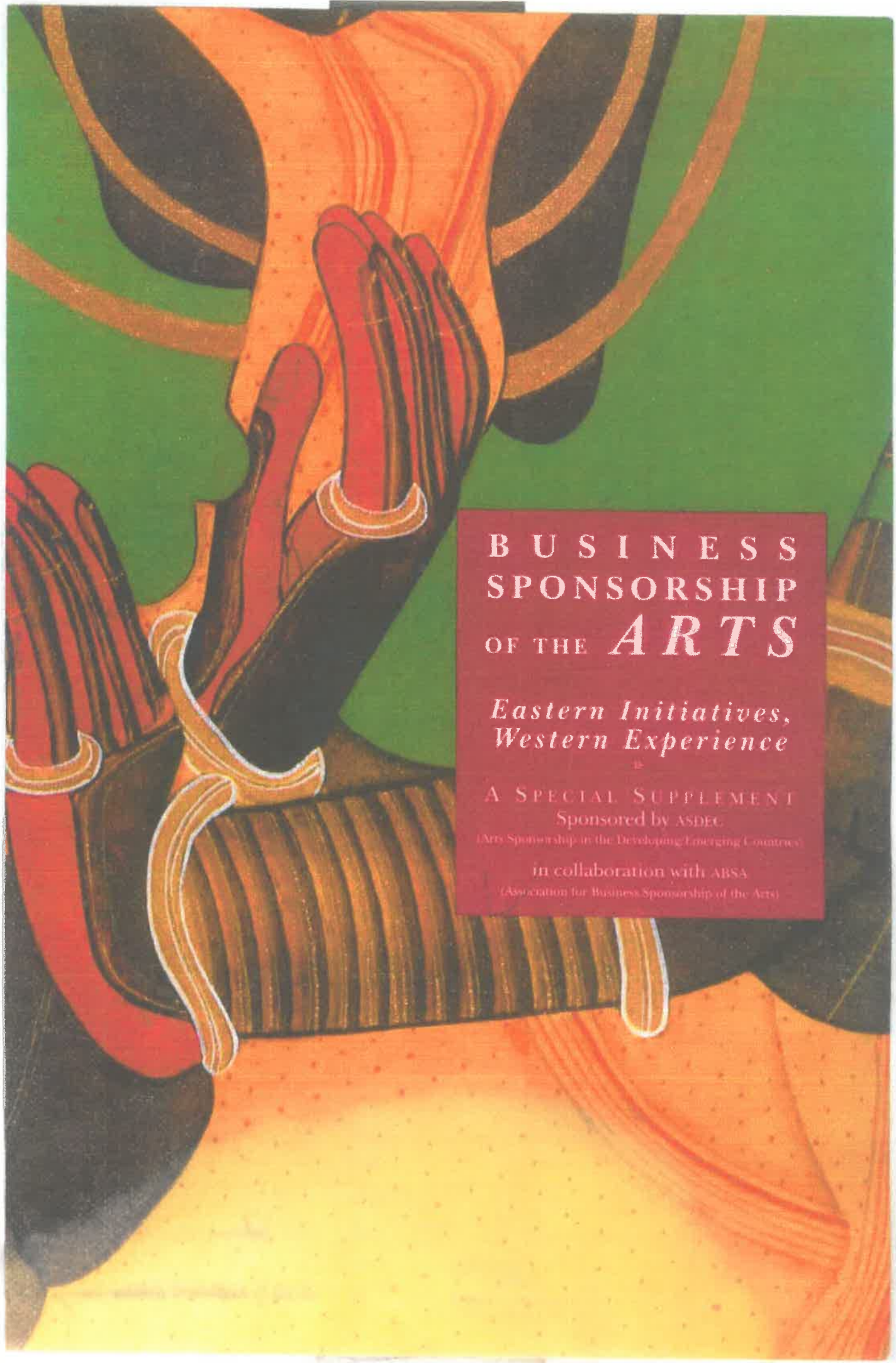


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ASDEC SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT
BUSINESS SPONSORSHIP OF THE ARTS:
Eastern Initiatives, Western Experience
Autumn 1996
Edited by James Parry

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Cover: T Vaikuntam, detail. Untitled. Acrylic on paper. 32 x 20cms. 1996. Courtesy CIMA.

INTRODUCING ASDEC

AZRA J AHMED

IN RECENT YEARS THE MOVEMENT FOR BUSINESS SPONSORship of the arts has gained considerable momentum in many countries of Europe, North America, Japan and Australasia. But in most countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America the concept is only slowly being introduced and accepted.

In a move to *monitor*, and where possible *promote* arts support programmes and projects in what have come to be identified in economic terms as "developing" or "emerging" countries, a study group has been set up in London as an independent entity: ASDEC – Arts Sponsorship in the Developing/Emerging Countries.

There are of course varying criteria to classify countries. The 1996 "World Development Report" published by the World Bank lists 133 countries as 'low income', 'middle income' or 'high income' economies. The majority (more than 100) are of course in the first two categories, and ASDEC initially plans to target these.

Contacts are being established with the more active art and cultural institutions and organisations, as well as leading individuals in related fields, in these countries. Information is being invited about their own current and forthcoming activities and projects, specially those in which they foresee and welcome corporate sponsorship, national or multinational. ASDEC aims to bring this information suitably to the attention of corporate sponsors that are known, or are likely to be interested in the projects.

ASDEC also hopes to be able to draw upon available research reports, databases etc of institutions like ABSA (Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts) in Britain, and counterpart organisations in other countries, that may be willing to share these on a reciprocal basis. This will help ASDEC in preparing and pursuing its own strategy so far as the developing/emerging countries are concerned.

As a first step, ASDEC has sponsored the publication of this 16-page special supplement on "Business Sponsorship of the Arts: Eastern Initiatives, Western Experience", and it wishes to acknowledge the collaboration with ABSA in putting it together. It also wishes to thank the London magazine *Arts & The Islamic World* for its production and distribution as a special supplement of the magazine's issue No 29. Early next year (Spring 1997) ASDEC plans to start publishing a quarterly *Newsletter*, copies of which will be available on request.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 15

EASTERN INITIATIVES

JAMES PARRY

ARE THE ARTS A LUXURY, THE PRESERVE OF A PRIVILEGED, AFFLUENT MINORITY? OR ARE THEY THE GENUINE expression of a community's culture and therefore relevant to each and every one of us? Regardless of which point of view one takes, the arts remain an obvious focus for commercial activity. Affluent sectors may be less than attractive in some respects, but their financial and political clout means that they must be a target for those working to promote commodities and services. Hitting that target can be achieved in a host of different ways, but it is increasingly clear that carefully selected and managed arts events can be an effective means of reaching the "movers and shakers".

YET it also makes sense for big (and, indeed, not so big) business to spread its commercial message to more than just the few. Corporate sponsorship for large-scale public arts events is an obvious way of doing this - it raises and defines profile, hopefully establishes brand identification and loyalty and, furthermore, encourages a positive engagement with the "audience". After all, the latter are consumers in terms of both the event itself and of the product being promoted, either directly or indirectly, by the corporate sponsor.

The flip side of the coin is additional funding for the arts, making the impossible an ever-increasing reality, and a public relations coup for the private sector which can pay handsome dividends. As economic growth in developing countries continues, especially in the "tiger economies" of South East Asia, the opportunities for arts sponsorship will continue to expand and, in an increasingly complex and sophisticated picture, the need for effective coordination will become paramount. Hence the need for ASDEC.

ASDEC has been established to work as a broker between business and the arts in the developing world. In some countries this will mean introducing ideas and policies that have hitherto received little local expression. In others however, productive relationships between government, the private sector and the arts world are already developing fast and in these cases ASDEC will work to strengthen and build on this progress.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival Revived

DATO' SABBARUDDIN CHIK



At his Press Conference announcing the revival in 1996 of the 1981 Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, the Malaysian Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Dato' Sabbaruddin Chik, emphasised larger private sector participation and increased public enjoyment of the arts. Excerpts:

The Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival (KLAF, 96), which has been held before in early 1981 and is being resurrected, has its own meaning and agenda. It will be held for a longer period of time to enable the amalgamation of a wide range of arts activities which will be carried out by various authorities and groups. In addition to showcasing the local arts, this festival will also highlight international activities most of which will be held here for the first time.

The aims of the KL Arts Festival 96 are: i) to provide opportunities for everyone in society to explore, enjoy and experience the arts; ii) to encourage the development of the national arts industry, iii) to encourage local and international tourism by promoting arts activities as another attraction, and iv) to project the image of Kuala Lumpur as an arts capital besides trade and industry.

The KL Arts Festival will be a biennial event. The 1996 Festival will be carried out as trial preparation for the KL Arts Festival 98 which will be bigger as it will be held in conjunction with Sukom 98 (Kuala Lumpur 98 - XVI Commonwealth Games). It is hoped that the participation of other Commonwealth nations in the festival will make Sukom 98 more meaningful and enjoyable.

Among the benefits and rationale for the festival are:

i) Arts Festivals which involve international participation usually involve high quality theatre productions. This level of quality will stimulate and provide an impetus to the imagination and creativity of our local artists to develop/heighten their own potential.

ii) Festivals like these will also pique the interest of the public and attract more people. Developing a keenness for the arts among the people is very important in maximising the numbers of the audience. It is our hope that the public who attend the activities of the KL Arts Festival will continue to be part of the nation's developments of the arts.

iii) Other than boosting the local arts industry, Kuala Lumpur needs international performances to boost relationships and the festival networks which will be mutually beneficial. Besides promoting understanding between the countries, it will also help in reducing the relative cost of inviting groups from other countries to Malaysia.

iv) An arts festival in Kuala Lumpur will have the potential to raise the number of tourists to Malaysia and also encourage local tourism.

We are confident that the expertise available can be managed by the privatisation of programmes or by the professional help and support of agencies which are involved in the needs of this festival. All this is very encouraging for the development of the arts. I hope that every member of the public will be able to benefit from the festival, as a participant, or as a member of the audience. To the artists and arts enthusiasts, I hope they will be able to express their creativity and gain more knowledge.

Together, let us enjoy the beauty of the arts.

THE PHILIP MORRIS ASEAN ART AWARDS

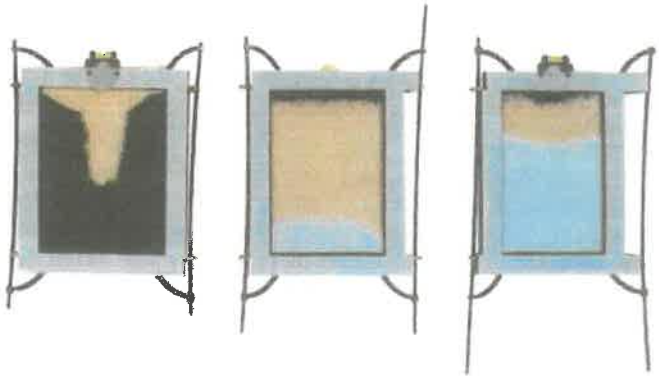
SHARIFAH ZURIAH ALJEFFRI

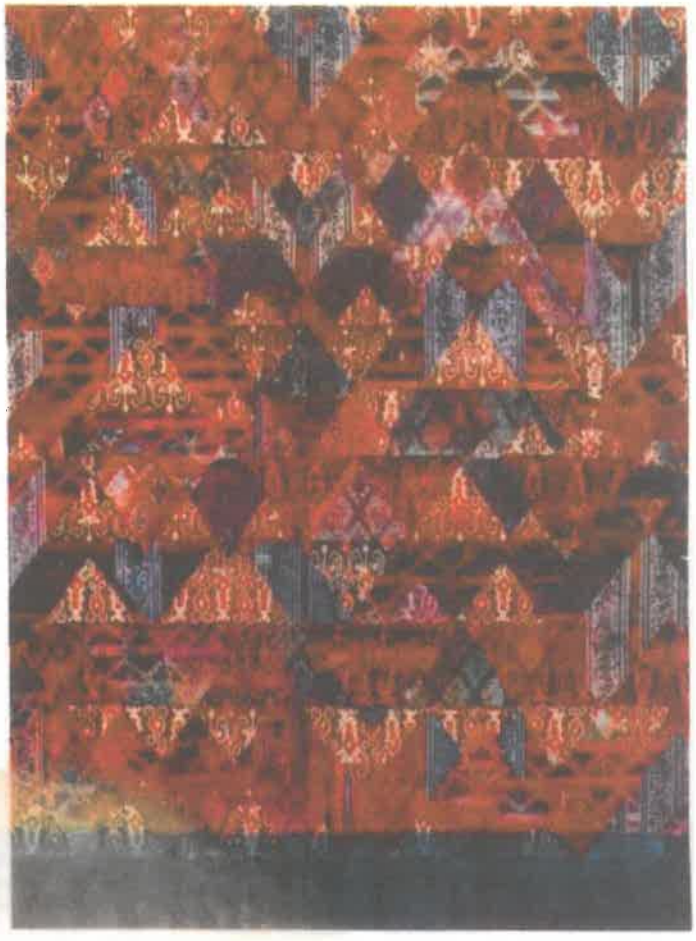
THE Philip Morris Asean Art Awards' two-tiered art competion (national and Asean levels) is in its third year: the first was held in 1994. For the first time, Vietnam, the new member of Asean, joined the other six members - Brunei Darussalam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, to compete at the Asean level.

The Malaysian Art Awards 1996 exhibition was held at the National Art Gallery in July as part of the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival. The tope five winning entries were Chew Kiat Lim - *ASEAN Strength & Unity*; Chuah Chong Yong - *Pre-War Building For Sale, The Gold Wash*, Fadzil Idris - *Rumahku Syurgaku* (My Home My Heaven); Fatimah Chik - *Unity in Harmony*; and Ramlan Abdullah - *Level Picture - Assimilation*. Each artist received US$5,000 and a trophy from the Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Dato' Sabbaruddin Chik on July 8. In addition 20 Certificates of Honourable Mention were awarded to the 6th-25th prize winners. There was a special award of US$1,000 given by the National Art Gallery to Ooi Kooi Hin for his entry entitled *It's So Quiet*.

This year, a total of 35 finalists from the seven countries competed for the Philip Morris Asean Art Awards in Bangkok, Thailand. The first three top positions went to Thailand, fourth and fifth









Clockwise from left 1: Chuah Chong Yong, *Pre-War Building for Sale the Gold wash*, Acrylic, 200 x 200cms. **2.** Fadzil Idris, *Rumahku Syurgaku* (My Home My Heaven), Mixed media, 150 x 164cm. **3.** Ramlan Abdullan, *Level-Assimilation* Mixed media, 60 x 120cm. **4.** Fatimah Chik, detail, *Unity in Harmony*, Batik, 120 x 150cm. Winners of Philip Morris Art Awards 1996.

were awarded to entries from the Philippines and Indonesia respectively. The nine judges who were from Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam had a difficult task in picking up the winners. They also made recommendations to award four Honourable Mentions – two entries from Malaysia and one each from Vietnam and Indonesia. The 35 winning entries will be on display at the National Gallery of Thailand until 31 August and will then be exhibited at the National Art Gallery of Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur in October.

The 'Best of ASEAN' 1996 comprising the top five winners and the four Honourable Mentions received their prizes from Thailand's former Prime Minister General Prem Tinsulanonda, Privy Councillor and Statesman on August 15 at the National Gallery of Thailand. The other artists received Certificates of Participation. Sakchai Uttitho (Thailand) came out first with his winning entry *Life Upcountry 6*; Vorakorn Metmanorom's *Yearning for the Return of Spirituality 1* (Thailand) was placed second; *Light of Asia* by Metha Kongsonthi (Thailand) won third place; fourth place went to Alfredo D. Esquillo, Jr (philippines) with his painting entitled *Dang Ligid-Krus*; and *Life 11, 1996* by Indonesian artist Sugeng Restuandi was awarded fifth prize. The four Honourable Mentions were presented to Chuah Chong Yong (Malaysia), Fadzil Idris (Malaysia), Nguyen Tan Cuong (Vietnam) and Agung Kurniawan (Indonesia). The five cash awards were US$10,000 (first prize), US$8,000 (second prize), US$5,000 (third prize), US$3,000 (fourth prize) and US$1,500 (fifth prize). Recipients of Honourable Mentions each received US$500.

The objective of the competition is to promote the highest standards of artistic creativity and expression within the Asean region. There are no set themes and the artists are given the freedom of expression to explore any subject or theme. The overall prize money totalling US$202,500 is the largest sum of money to be awarded in any Asian art competition.

Sharifah Zuriah Aljeffri is Honorary Regional Representative of the London magazine *Arts & The Islamic World* magazine in Kuala Lumpur.

WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES THROUGH THE ARTS

JACQUELINE VINCENT

Kuali Works is Malaysia's first all-women arts company, specialising in theatre, television and publications. The company's objectives are to conceptualise and organise high quality productions linking entertainment and education; and to source and express women's points of view and to include more women in the production process so as to improve their skills in new technologies. Following are some of the productions so far organised by Kuali Works:

VIDEO

Safe Sex video (Dec 94)
A short music video produced for World AIDS Day in support of HIV/AIDS awareness.

Theatre, Television, Publications

BLINDFEST (1-14 Jun 1995)
Organised by Kuali Works, in association with the Malaysian Association for the Blind, Blindfest was created to promote awareness of the blind amongst the Malaysian public, in line with national aspirations of being a caring society. Blindfest, officially launched by the Minister of National Unity and Community Development, was sponsored by Laud & General, Kuala Lumpur Plaza, the Australian High Commission, Pico International and the Star.

BLINDFEST included:

THEATRE PLAY

Colour Blind, written and directed by Karen Quah. A warm and funny play about a young, blind woman with special magical powers. The cast included Ida Nerina, Jit Murad and Paula Malai Ali.

PORTRAIT EXHIBITION

10 portraits featured 10 blind and low vision Malaysians who have achieved success in a variety of fields from education to business.

PRODUCT DISPLAY

This featured daily household items, educational aids and games designed for the Blind, including talking body thermometers, wrist watches and tactile chess.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES – POETRY, PROSE, ANYTHING GOES

Accomplished blind musicians shared the stage together with Malaysian performers such as Ramli Ibrahim, Jo Kukarhas and Andrew Leci from Instant Cafe Theatre company.

GUITAR TRAK

A music concert was held by world-renowned Australian guitar group, famous for playing a family of very different sized guitars.

LOUIS BRAILLE – INVENTOR OF BLIND LANGUAGE

An exhibition about the history of Louis Braille and how his system became accepted worldwide for use in many languages besides French.

THEATRE

Condomania (Dec 95)
A sketch written and performed by Karen Quah and Ann lee to entertain and educate Malaysians on the usage of condoms with regard to HIV/AIDS prevention. Held in conjunction with World AIDS Day organised by Pink Triangle.

THEATRE & THE ARTS

Sponsorship, Financial Management and Planning For the Arts – Seminar (17 Apr 96)
Organised in association with the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, the seminar was conducted by Kara Keller, Deputy Director, Finance & Administration, the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, USA.

MALAYSIAN ARTS INTO THE NEXT DECADE – SEMINAR

(18 Apr 96)
Organised in association with the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, the seminar featured:

YB Dato' Ismail,
Secretary General of the Ministry

Ramli Ibrahim,
Artistic Director,
Sutra Dance Theatre

Ann Lee,
Co-founder, Kuali Works

Krishen Jit,
Head, Theatre,
National Arts Academy &
Director, Five Arts Centre

Dr Ghulam Sarwar,
Lecturer, National Arts Academy

Eddie Khoo,
Poet & Art Critic

TELEVISION

TV Perempuan
(20 Apr -25 May 1996)
A series of 6 women-only workshops on television production including Writing, Directing, Acting, Camera/Lighting & Sound and Editing. Sponsors were Viewhunter, Verve Women Magazine, APV, Fringe Films & Megasama. The workshops were conducted by Ann Lee, scriptwriter, Lina Tan, Producer; Susan Lankaster, Actress & Presenter; Hadsin Hussin, Director; Han Chong Huat, Technical Director and Anne Foenander, Editor.

Forthcoming Productions:

THEATRE

Kuala Lumpur Knock-Out
(KL-KO) (6 - 10 Nov 1996)
A play about a young Malaysian girl who decides to take up boxing, and in particular, fight Mike Tyson.

THE ARTS AS A MARKETING TOOL

Speakers include Yg Bhg Dato' Ismail Adam (*Vision 2020 & the Arts*); Mr Colin Tweedy (*Business Advantages Through Arts Sponsorships*); Mr Liew Chin Choy (*Converting the Skeptics: The Success of the Arts in Singapore*); Mr Phil Fiebig (*Sponsorship Opportunities and Advertising Returns*); Ms Ann Lee (*Overview of Malaysian Performing Arts Group and Audiences*); Puan Faridah Merican (*What to Expect when Negotiating Sponsorship Packages*).

Jacqueline Vincent is Administrator, Kuali Works, Kuala Lumpur.

Eastern Initiatives

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

ONE country where the arts and business sector are already working well together is Malaysia, where a hugely expanding private sector and a thriving, multi-cultural arts scene clearly understand the benefits that can accrue from working together. A series of major arts initiatives is now in train, many of them underpinned by substantial private sector support, the scale of which is impressive by any standards. This year's linchpin is the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, launched in June by Dato' Sabbaruddin Chik, Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism. Due to run until the end of September, the festival is notable on many counts, not least its scale. It covers a vast range of activities, including dance, drama, visual art, crafts, cinema, photography, music and literature, as well as less obvious art media such as top-spinning and traditional cuisine. A formidable feat of organisation, involving all the key Malaysian state bodies with responsibility for the arts, has been matched by extensive private sector involvement. The motivation for so many businesses and corporate donors to become involved in the festival was indirectly highlighted by the Minister at the opening press conference:

> "The aims of the KL Arts Festival 96 are...to provide opportunities for everyone in society to explore, enjoy and experience the arts; to encourage the development of the national arts industry; to encourage local and international tourism by promoting arts activities as another attraction; to project the image of Kuala Lumpur as an arts capital besides trade and industry."

Arts, development, trade and industry – all in the same sentence, more or less. The links become ever clearer and it is an unwise businessman who disregards the arts as a vehicle for commercial expansion. Equally, those working within the arts world need to be realistic about the sustainability of an approach based on "art for art's sake". However worthy a notion this might be in an abstract sense, the bottom line remains this: without adequate funding, the arts cannot, and will not, develop and it is unrealistic (and undesirable?) to expect state funding to cover the full cost involved.

Again, the Secretary General of Malaysia's Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Dato' Ismail Adam, has made his government's position clear:

> "Arts can no longer remain solely as a food for the soul. The justification of its sustenance cannot only be that of 'heritage' and 'identity'. To realise its full potential, the arts also need to be looked at from various other aspects; the economic returns of public spending on the arts; the benefit in terms of employment; and the importance of cultural tourism and its contribution to the national economy...
>
> There has never been a better time for Malaysians to reassess our commitment towards the arts than now. Those involved in the arts must take the opportunity presented by the burgeoning economy of the country, the increase in available expenditure by Malaysians for leisure activities, the growing interest to invest in the arts by the corporate sector and the increase in the overall awareness of the arts. Apart from the need for more arts products, this situation creates a ripple effect in terms of employment and other related industries."

The Malaysian authorities are also aware of a further critical factor in arts development: the

A Vision for the Arts

DATO' ISMAIL ADAM

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The year 2000 will witness intensified efforts in the training of the workforce for the arts industry. To cite an example, the expanding Malaysian film industry is currently facing an acute shortage of skilled workers in the form of technical staff, writers, directors, actors and administrators. In the music industry, Malaysia needs more lyricists, composers, sound engineers, musicians, singers and stage managers.

Training of artists and art administrators is an area that also needs immediate attention. The Ministry itself has taken steps to set up the National Arts Academy two years ago and several local universities have been offering courses in the technical and the performing arts for the last few years. However, the coming up of performance venues like Panggung Negara and other state-of-the-art halls and conglomerates have made the shortage of trained administrative and technical personnel more acute. Thus it is very gratifying to note that non-governmental groups in Malaysia have begun to take steps to address the current situation by organising conferences and seminars on various arts issues.

The Government, i.e. the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, cannot be made the sole party responsible for the arts in the country. The private sector, non governmental organisations and individuals alike will be expected to play a major role in the arts in the 21st century onwards. Policies created will not have much effect if it is not taken up and shouldered by everyone. The recent injection of government funds into the arts must act as an impetus for the private sector to do likewise.

It does not mean that there should be an increased activity in the continuing trend of getting funds from the government. What the funds will be used for is to undertake long-term strategies to address the needs of the 21 century and that is the need for more formalised and specialised training for those involved in the art's.

Gone are the days when a *rebab* player played his instrument for the love of it, but the difference is that he can now make a living out of playing his beloved *rebab*!

The extracts are from a Seminar paper by Dato' Ismail Adam, Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism.

IHMCF: At last, Taking Physical Shape

ANN LEE

SIGNIFICANT changes for the better are happening in Malaysia concerning national interest in, and appreciation of, the arts. This is manifested in the rebirth of the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, a fast growing number of galleries, arts groups, smaller festivals, the first major allocation in the national budget for the arts (RM20 million), the building of the National Theatre - and, at last - the building of the Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation (IHMCF).

Much has already been said and written about IHMCF, which is highly unusual for not being a philanthropic gesture by a wealthy industrialist or businessman, but rather, created by a living artist for his contemporaries and future generations. However, it is worth repeating some general background.

First conceptualised in the 1960s, in a moment of homesickness by a young Malaysian painter during his first exhibition in New York, and initially launched thirty years later (by the Malaysian Prime Minister, Dato Seri Dr Mahathir Bin Mohamad), IHMCF has become a singular purpose for that painter and Sim, his wife. He is, of course, the now world-renowned Ibrahim Hussein, recently awarded the title 'Dato', although he is more familiarly known as 'Ib'. Ib and Sim believe that "the creative arts are not merely techniques or a profession, but humanity's most profoundly unifying force" and this underlies IHMCF's objective to be a major global arts centre, centred in Malaysia.

In the last five years, Ib and Sim have travelled the world to promote awareness of IHMCF and have 'pounded the pavements' leading to Malaysian corporate doors to seek financial sponsorship for IHMCF to take physical shape.

The results speak for themselves. While projected costs for completion of the building amount to RM12 million, so far RM5 million has been raised in cash and pledges in kind. Having resolved outstanding land issues since the initial launch, the first phase (some 22,000 sq ft) will now be built by mid-1997.

IHMCF is located on an eight hectare site in Langkawi, a holiday destination island situated in the Straits of Malacca and less than one hour's flight from Kuala Lumpur. Over ten modules, either 1600ft each or of 4 x 40ft panels, will be built, creating adjoining spaces to present work. Paintings and sculptures will not be permanent and so will be movable. The gardens and environment surrounding the two-storey building will also constitute available space. Phase II will include more rehearsal and studio space, accommodation and a restaurant.

Planning for the exhibitions and events to be held at IHMCF is already taking place. Ib has been a prime 'mover and shaker' in the Malaysian arts scene since the 1960s, organising arts events linking writers, performers and artists, and, more recently, having organised the first Asian Arts Festival (Bali, 1987) and the follow-up Asian Arts Festival (Cherating, Malaysia, 1988), both of which brought together over thirty artists in a multi-disciplinary environment and received full media coverage via regional press, television and radio.

IHMCF is highly likely to become a popular space for local and international artists to present and exchange their ideas and works. Indeed, internationally renowned artists, writers, performers, musicians, dancers, filmmakers and composers have already pledged assistance and contributions of their work. They include Thierry Vide, multi-media, light and sound sculptor from France; Per Arnoldi, designer from Denmark; Ben Okri, novelist and writer from Britain; Quincy Jones, musician, composer and music producer from the USA; Ramon Castellanos, industrial designer from Spain; Mexico-based sculptor Sebastian and glass artist Narcissus Quagliata; Yoshio Kitayama and Masao Yoshimura, sculptor-painters, ceramist Kempei Nakamura and filmmaker, artist Masuo Ikeda from Japan.

International, independent arts bodies and organisations are also keen to establish ties with IHMCF, such as the Cesar Manrique Foundation in Lanzarote, Canary Islands and the Macdowell Colony in the USA, which includes James Baldwin, Alice Walker and Aaron Copeland among its former writers and musicians in residence. Perhaps a most significant highlight of the progress of IHMCF is that, in the midst of all the "phonecalls and seeing people – something which I disliked so much before" – Ib has found the time to continue painting, and in fact has just completed an entirely new series of work, which will be featured in a forthcoming major exhibition. In addition, IHMCF is targeted to participate in a long term project of the World Arts Forum, loosely termed the 'Arts Olympics', which will gather 1000 leading arts practitioners to be gurus to young people who will produce work and then be judged for awards.

The scale and potential of IHMCF then is quite extraordinary and, ironically, despite the general awareness of IHMCF at home, few have caught onto the real possibilities of cultural exchange and artistic endeavour that IHMCF represents. Hopefully, this will change and as Langkawi continues to be a focus for development by the Malaysian government - it has just been announced that the first Langkawi International Festival for the Arts (LIFA) will be held December 17-23 1996 – IHMCF will become a permanent fixture in the physical and figurative landscape of Malaysia, Malaysians and all the arts around the world.

Ann Lee is Co-founder and Managing Director, Kuali Works, Kuala Lumpur.

possibilities that the arts hold for engaging the attention and commitment of the young. This is particularly pertinent in developing countries, many of which demonstrate a demographic curve that suggests that 50% or so of their current population is under 15 years of age. The arts, quite rightly, are regarded as a fruitful channel for youthful energy and so arts promotion in these circumstances needs to be tailored accordingly. As young people acquire greater purchasing power of their own, so the links with the corporate sector become ever more meaningful.

The KL Arts Festival carries a heavy emphasis on youth events, but there is another, more long-term, point worth making at this juncture: one-off, high profile arts events are all very well, but what means more in the long run is institution-building, the creation and development of the structures and bodies that can take the arts forward into the next century. Business can play a key role here too. One obvious way is by helping with the education and training of the personnel required to run the arts sector. The continued creation of new arts venues and organisations is not sustainable if there is a shortage of trained administrative and technical personnel.

The creation of arts institutions may be supported by the corporate sector, but it needs to be driven by the artists themselves. A good Malaysian example is the Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation (see box left), but it is clear that there is also a need for properly-focused and managed state involvement.

As part of the KL Arts Festival, and with the objective of highlighting the different ways in which the business and arts communities can cooperate, a seminar entitled "The Arts as a Marketing

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TWENTY YEARS OF ABSA

COLIN TWEEDY

In 1976 a group of business leaders decided that the time had come to tell British companies that they should sponsor the arts. Under the chairmanship of Lord Goodman, the famous lawyer and former Chairman of the Arts Council, the organisation was set up in a tiny office in Bath, a small historic town in the west of England. There was a staff of two, thirty founding members from the business community and sponsorship amounted to around £600,000. Twenty years later ABSA has fifty staff, ten offices and sponsorship has reached £84 million.

ABSA's founding fathers sought inspiration from the United States and particularly from the work initiated by David Rockefeller who in 1968 launched the Business Committee for the Arts in New York. Leading American companies such as IBM and Mobil had begun to sponsor the arts in Britain in the early seventies, so clearly the timing was right. However, one significant difference between US and UK style sponsorship was that while American companies were happy to be corporate philanthropists, British business required a commercial return. The role of the state in American arts funding had never been strong and therefore the business community had always understood that if they wanted an orchestra or an opera company, for example, then they had to pay for it themselves. In Britain and in the most of Continental Europe the role of the state was far more significant. Also, British taxation was not as generous in the early days in giving deductibility to sponsors.

So, although our inspiration came from America, we had to quickly adapt to a different environment. ABSA launched its Annual Awards for the country's best sponsors. The Awards are now in their eighteenth year and are themselves sponsored by The Financial Times. In 1984, the then Minister for the Arts, Lord Gowrie, asked ABSA to investigate the establishment of a matching grant programme to encourage businesses to sponsor. This scheme, now called The National Heritage Arts Sponsorship Scheme, or the Pairing Scheme for short, is managed by ABSA on behalf of the government department. The Scheme has been a phenomenal success and since 1984 the business community has contributed over £100 million in new money, matched by £40 million from the Government. The Scheme enables the sponsor to gain more benefits for their sponsorship as well as bringing a welcome influx of new funds to the arts. ABSA receives a fee from the Government for managing the Pairing Scheme, which has enabled us to open offices nationwide.

In 1989 we realised that cash alone was not enough. The arts community needed good managers as well as good artists. Again seeking inspiration from America, we launched Business in the Arts. This programme encourages managers in business to volunteer their time and skills to work in the arts, after hours and at weekends. The executives get a valuable insight into an entirely different area and the arts get free management support and new advocates of the arts. Business in the Arts has developed more and more into a training agency for the arts, opening the doors of management schools and company training courses to arts managers who could never afford such training otherwise. This year we launched the Board Bank to encourage business people to serve on the boards of arts organisations, becoming something of a dating agency for both sides.

ABSA has realised that it is not sufficient to focus all our attention on the business community. If the arts do not have the training and experience to work with business then the relationship is doomed to failure. In 1990 we created the ABSA Development Forum for the fundraising profession in the arts. We now have over 650 development professionals as members of this Forum and ABSA is looking at ways in which our work with the arts can be improved.

So twenty years on, ABSA's success has been to adapt to changing circumstances, but what does the future hold? Corporate structures, in the wake of the world recession, are dramatically changing. Decision-making, particularly on sponsorship, is no longer being made by a narrow band of senior executives in head office. Regional managers are taking their own budgets and they need to be inspired and educated, not only to the commercial value of arts sponsorship, but even more importantly, to their corporate role in society.

As part of our twentieth year celebrations we are launching the ABSA Foundation to develop the resources for a new strategy to take us into the 21st century. A new programme, pioneered by one of Britain's leading retailers, Marks and Spencer, will bring the arts directly into the workplace. This shows employees, often for the first time since they left school, the excitement and enjoyment that only the arts can bring.

ABSA is working closely with our Patron, The Prince of Wales, to develop the theme of creativity in society that should be shared equally by both business and the arts. Arts at Work will complete the circle of ABSA's first twenty years; initially we brought business to the arts and now through Business in the Arts and Arts at Work, we bring the artist to individuals in business. In order to ensure that business will continue to finance the arts we have to inspire individuals in business, throughout the company structure, to believe that the arts matter, not only to their country and local community, but also to themselves as individuals. That alliance, between business, society and the arts is ABSA's challenge.

Colin Tweedy is Director General of ABSA (Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts) in the United Kingdom.

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FT/ABSA AWARDS 1996

PAUL BROWN



THEY call them the 'Oscars for Sponsors' – the FT/ABSA Awards which recognise Britain's most imaginative and successful arts sponsorship projects. But instead of gaudy gold statuettes, the winners of this year's Awards received specially commissioned glass sculptures, created by the artist David Taylor.

On July 3, a thousand leading business people and arts professionals met in the imposing setting of the Globe Theatre – a reconstruction of Shakespeare's performance space which was, quite literally, still being built. 450 nominations were received for the ten categories of Awards, but the judges had filtered them to a shortlist of 40. Although each nominee had demonstrated excellence in arts sponsorship, only ten would need to clear mantelpiece space.





Above: The New Globe Theatre makes a spectacular setting for the FT/ABSA Awards ceremony. Extreme left: Colin Tweedy shares a joke with Sheena McDonald and Stephen Fry. Left: Her Imperial Highness, Arch Duchess, Francesca Von Habsburg presents the CDT Award Below: The Awards. Glass sculptures by artist David Taylor.

The first Award announced was for the 'Best Use of a Commission of New Art'. The winners were CDT, a design company who had sponsored the Tate Gallery's 'Art Now' exhibition space. The project allowed the Tate to exhibit a programme of cutting-edge work and broaden the audience for contemporary art. For CDT it was an opportunity to raise its profile with a target market and differentiate the company from its competition. CDT invested its entire 1995 marketing spend in Art Now, an investment which has paid handsome returns. In reporting the sponsorship, trade magazine Design Week labelled CDT 'a design company of rare intelligence'.

The Award for a First Time Sponsor was won by soft drink Lilt for its sponsorship of the 1995 Notting Hill Carnival. Its association with the event – the largest street festival in Europe – led to record sales and high brand awareness. The impact on the event was equally dramatic, with 1.7 million visitors enjoying the safest and best attended Carnival on record.



The sponsorship also benefited from an extra injection of Government cash by winning a Pairing Scheme Award. The Scheme, operated by ABSA on behalf of the Department of National Heritage encourages new sponsors to support the arts. For a first time sponsor it can match the support pound for pound. The Lilt sponsorship attracted the maximum Pairing Scheme Award available at that time –

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CEREC: EUROPEAN COMMITTEE FOR BUSINESS, ARTS & CULTURE

ANDREW MCILROY

In the UK, ABSA provides a link between the arts and business communities. Across the Channel CEREC, the European Committee for Business, Arts and Culture, acts as an umbrella organisation for the national equivalents of ABSA.

The early 1990s have been difficult times for the arts and business. Their meeting place, sponsorship or corporate patronage, has been subject to intense scrutiny and cynicism. Budgets have been cut, traditional, long term programmes have been curtailed and the thinking behind the arts business relationship has been questioned and reformulated a hundred times. The issue that must now confront all of us who work in this field is whether or not this period has been a positive one for private sector support for the arts.

CEREC represents and cordinates at the European level a network of 13 associations for private sector support for the arts and a growing network of interested and committed businesses. Our world, this network, has grown from a narrow interest in the techniques of sponsorship, into a wide and challenging debate about the role of the private sector (corporations, individuals, foundations) in supporting cultures, and the role of culture in supporting the economy.

In some countries, for example France and Germany, the need for private sector support for culture developed along rather different lines. Long standing traditional attitudes to the arts and their public role kept the business community at arms length. The use of the word *mecene* or patron in most European countries, indicates that the relationship between the arts and the commercial world is still characterised, and in many cases remains, as an arms length relationship. Terms such as "belief" "commitment" or "responsibility" feature more highly than "evaluation" or "return on investment". Around the CEREC table now sit proponents of the hardest edged marketing-speak and the widest conceived corporate philanthropy. In their discussions, and through their interchanges, a wiser and more embracing understanding is developing of how the private sector can and should affect the cultural world.

One of the most potent proofs of the end result of this review, is the fact that this year CEREC has presented, in collaboration with the Financial Times, an award for outstanding private sector support for the arts in Europe. The award recognised, for the first time, and in Europe's foremost economic newspaper, that there are many varieties of business support for the arts across Europe, with commercial or philanthropic motivations, and that every business and every arts organisation in Europe can learn from colleagues and peers in other countries. All the short-listed companies were involved in projects of great intrinsic value, and picking the winners was no easy task.

When CEREC was founded, it was believed that we were going to see many examples of European-wide arts sponsorships. These mega-projects did not materialise, except for one or two notable examples such as the NT Arts European Project and the programmes that are run by multinational companies such as AT&T. This does not mean that support for the arts was not and is not a constant feature in the communications armoury of the continent's best and most forward looking companies. Research over the last few years has shown that many, if not most of the great business names in Europe have arts support programmes in every European country where they operate. However in almost every case, these projects were initiated, run and developed on a local basis, with sensitivity to local needs. If the scaremongers about the European super-state want to see cultural specificity in action, they have only to look at the small and arcane world of arts sponsorship, where local cultural and commercial traditions are jealously guarded!

This cultural specificity has had one difficult by-product however, to which CEREC is currently trying to find an answer. The arts have internationalised, and with that has come the need to find finance from international sources. Unfortunately there has not been a corresponding growth in awareness of international fund raising techniques. Indeed, there are too few specialists in this field. Fund-raising depends on a network of secure and trusted contacts solid techniques and a clear understanding of need . In the international arena this becomes very difficult. CEREC and the network is trying to articulate some of the basic rules and systems for raising money for international projects. This is a service not only to the arts but also to the business world. The more that the arts in Europe understand the needs of their international business partners the better the relationship will be.

All across the world associations such as ABSA are springing up. In worst case scenarios they could be the result of panic, as the arts and government see the squeeze on public finance as having too few solutions. In the best cases, as exemplified by many of the national associations, the genuine desire for creative and committed partnerships between the arts and business is leading to dynamic relationships being created that are having a positive impact on the management of arts groups, the relationships of business to their local communities and the development of staff relations through involvement with specific projects. CEREC and its network continues to stress the cardinal rule, however, that the partnership between the arts and business must be supplement and not substitute. Governments cannot expect the business world to take over the duties of the public sector and indeed, arts cuts will discourage business from cementing and improving their healthy relationship with the arts.

The end result of the shakeout of the 1990s is not yet positive, but the signs are not wholly negative. Businesses know more what they want, and the arts are better placed to give it. The rhetoric of corporate responsibility has developed to a more mature understanding of the issues involved in being a responsible company with a long term commitment to society. Businesses are still too wary of saying that they believe in the future - short termism is the curse of the fund-raiser as it is of investment in training and education! The signs are there, however, that the corporate narrowness of some parts of the 1980s is expanding into a wiser understanding that business has a role to play in keeping the wheels of society turning. The essential oils of those wheels are the cultural institutions that have grown up both to reflect and challenge our societies. CEREC is playing a part as one of the mechanics of this process.

Andrew McIlroy is Secretary General, European Committee for Business, Arts and Culture (CEREC) in Brussels.

Further information from
CEREC
60 rue de la Concorde
1050 Brussels,
Tel: 32 2 512 6145
Fax: 32 2 512 5571

USA

BCA - (Business Committee for the Arts)

The Business Committee for the Arts, Inc.(BCA), founded in 1967 by David Rockefeller and other business leaders, is a national, not-for-profit organisation that works with business to develop and advance alliances with the arts.

BCA provides business with services and resources needed to develop strategic alliances with the arts that meet business objectives, foster creativity in the arts and in the workplace and enhance the quality of life throughout the United States and abroad.

Its members are businesses recognised for their alliances with the arts that benefit business,the arts and the community.

Consultations
BCA's professional staff works with representatives of its member companies to develop strategies involving the arts to meet the business objectives; review and evaluate existing alliance with the arts; explore ways to link the arts with advertising, marketing, public relations, community relations and human resources initiatives; identify local, national and international arts opportunities; identify other businesses interested in developing collaborative sponsorship with the arts; establish and evaluate corporate art collections and programs involving these collections; establish and evaluate employee programs, such as cultural matching gifts and volunteer efforts involving the arts.

Research & Publications
To guide its members as they form alliance with the arts, BCA provides research reports and position papers about business alliances with the arts. Recently published reports include:

- Why Business Invests in Arts: Facts, Figures , Philosophy
- National Survey of Business Support to the Arts
- Survey of Member Companies.
- Survey of Arts Organisations.

Conferences and Workshops.
BCA sponsors conferences and workshops throughout the United Sates for its members to foster discussions and the exchanges of information about business alliances with the arts.

International Network.
BCA links members interested in international arts sponsorship opportunities with business organisations worldwide through the international Network of Business-Arts Associations.

Business-Arts Data Bank
BCA maintains a data bank for the use of its members that includes information about arts organisations, sponsorship opportunities, the economic impact of the arts , as well as business, foundation and government agencies that funds the arts.

Advocacy Programs
BCA encourages business to form alliances with the arts through diverse natural advocacy programs. These include National Awards, advertising and media relations. BCA also supports a network of affiliated organisations throughout the United States to develop local programs which encourage business and the arts to work together to achieve mutual objectives.

Further details from: Business Committee for the Arts Inc.
1775 Broadway, Suite 510
New York NY 10019 - 1942
Tel: (212) 664 0600
Fax:(212) 956 5980

USA

ABC - Arts & Business Council

The Arts & Business Council Inc (ABC) a national organisation based in New York City, has been since 1965 the leader in helping non-profit arts groups from beneficial partnership with business. Its programs bring expertise, resources and leadership talent from business to the arts. Business benefits through meaningful volunteer opportunities for employees, improved access to arts resources, and an enhanced community through the presence of vibrant arts sector.

The council has shown major leadership in responding to changes in corporate philanthropy related to the arts, to emerging opportunities for expanded partnerships relationship between business and the arts, and to the overall impact on arts management created by these changes.

It has developed substantive publications and forums to educate both business and the arts about these changes and opportunities. All of this is achieved through cost effective, well-managed programs.

Business Volunteers for the Arts (BVA)
This dynamic program is the largest technical assistance resource for the arts in the US. Over 3,000 non-profit arts groups received free management consulting services from 1,800 businesses executives in 1994. Services are valued at $7million per year. BVA also creates new leaders as many BVA's join the board of groups they assist.

The model for BVA was created by the Council in New York City in 1975. Key components are an orientation program to prepare business executives for working in the non-profit arts sector and in-depth management assessments of arts groups requesting assistance. Careful matching of skills and interests, on-going monitoring, and activities to strengthen arts managements skills and provide educational programs about the arts also occur.

The Council coordinates the BVA/USA network of nearly 30 affiliates. It helps new cities start the program, provides staff training, and coordinates ongoing communication and the annual conference.

Other major activities of the Council include the following: Multicultural Arts Managements Programs; Arts Business Partnership Symposium: Natural Business Voulnteerism Campaign; Arts Leadership Initiative: Arts to Business Resources Bank: Publishing and Educational Activities, and annual Encore Awards.

Further details from:
Arts & Business Council Inc.
25 West, 45th Street No707,
New York NY 10036-4902 .
Tel: (212) 819 9287
Fax: (212) 819 9287

CANADA

CBAC - Council for Business and the Arts in Canada

The Council for Business and the Arts in Canada (CBAC) is an association of business corporations that support the arts through strategic community investments.

It provides the nation's most comprehensive up-to-date information on the state of performing arts organisations, museums and galleries across Canada through its annual surveys; advises on corporate practices regarding sponsorship, campaign participation, and investing in art.

It also advises on developing policies and programs that fit the unique aims and objectives of individual corporations; produces publications on fundraising, voluntarism and board governance; provides programs to encourage and support participation by business people on arts boards; and organises awards to recognise leadership support of the arts.

Further information from:
Council for Business and the Arts in Canada.
401 Bay Street, Toronto,
Ontario M5H 2Y4 , Canada
Phone 416-869 3018
Fax 416-869 9435.

INDIA: CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP FOR *CHAMATKARA*

RAKHI SARKAR

The Centre of International Modern Art (CIMA), set up in Calcutta in 1993 as a private sector initiative, is bringing to London (29 October - 15 November 96) a major exhibition sponsored by a group of business houses in India and the British Airways.



THE idea of *Chamatkara* as a possible theme for an exhibition grew from an earlier show held in Calcutta in 1995, entitled Fantasy. Dr Siri Gunasinghe, a reputed art historian and Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria, Canada, had contributed an essay for the catalogue where he used the classical Indian term to explain Fantasy. At that time the term was used in its widest context to include western ideas of surrealism and magic realism which have also played a significant part in contemporary Indian art. Appropriate works were thus selected to meet our specific curatorial purposes. From then on I became more and more interested with Chamatkara as an idea and the present exhibition is the fruit of that interest.

CIMA's search for a concept which would capture the genesis of an Indian metaphor in Contemporary Art began about four years ago. In a worldwide context, Contemporary Art has attained a global uniformity brought about, no doubt, by International Art Fairs/Exhibitions, television and satellite dishes. Yet, no matter how universal the art may seem the cultural overtones of each society remain distinct and significant. The more ancient the civilization, the more pronounced its nuances. The habits, rituals, beliefs and history of every culture have their own intrinsic expressions which find their way in its art forms. This has certainly happened in the case of Indian Contemporary Art and in order to elucidate this process, a brief examination of its history is necessary.

Contemporary Indian Art has always see-sawed between strong nationalistic impulses and equally strong western influences. British-style art academies instituted all over the country in the mid-19th century and imposing western training practices, had left an indelible mark on the artistic crop of India. The prevailing School of Naturalism in the West formed the core of all the training programmes at the cost of crushing local initiative and stylistic variations. This remained the general trend for the next fifty years or so. At the turn of the century, however, a group under the patronage of E B Havell (Principal of Calcutta School of Art from 1896), A K Coomarswamy (one of the finest scholars of Indian Art) and Margaret Noble (an educationist from England and a fiery proponent of the Indian Nationalistic sentiment) together with Abanindranath Tagore (nephew of Rabindranath Tagore) rose to alter the status quo. The new group, aptly called the Bengal Revivalist School, sought to revive indigenous colour and flavour and break away from the strangle-hold of western influences and quickly became the most influential and widespread art movement in the country. Bengal and Shantineketan in particular, grew to become the art mecca of India. Artists from all over came to seek the vision of their gurus – Abanindranath Tagore, Nandalal Bose and Guganendranath Tagore. A pure, authentic and unadulterated vision had been created from within.

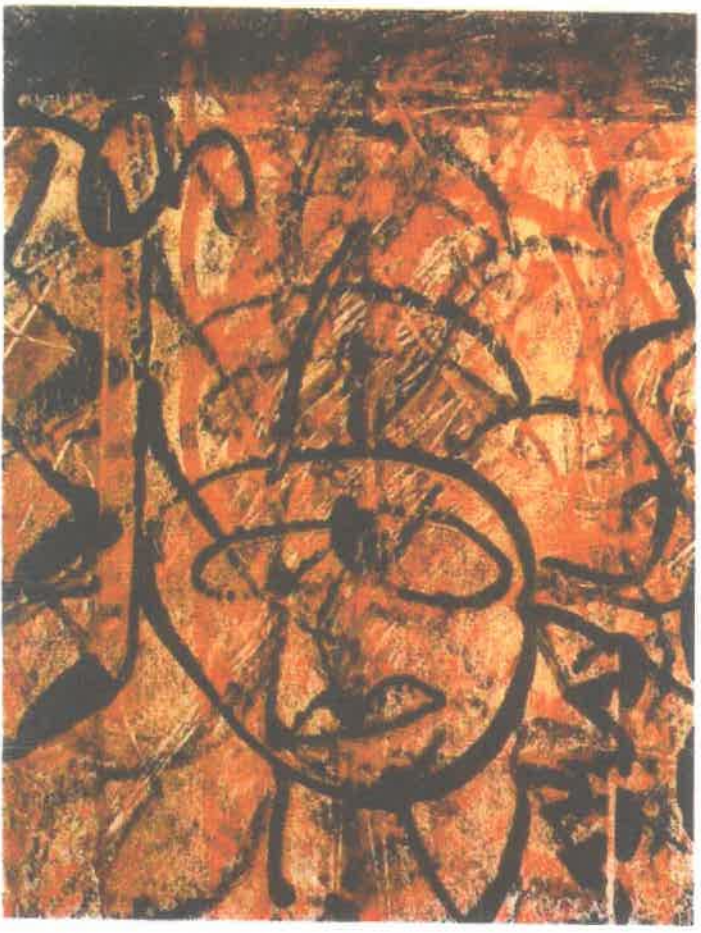


The 60's marked an exciting departure. Younger and senior artists alike, by now accustomed to freedom (Independence was gained in 1947) and firmly ensconced in democratic ideals and values, created a new identity for themselves, imbibing the spirit of optimism and boldness current in the air. From a closed captive mind they moved towards a freer form of self-expression. At the same time, the art colleges, keeping abreast of changing times improved their programmes and laid greater stress on technique and innovation. The upshot of all this change led to a period of hectic exploration such as never seen before. The search was finally over. A new vision emerged - a vision of perfect balance between the East and the West. The ensuing new artistic language born is alive today and one can now confidently say that Indian art has found its voice once again.

The concept of Chamatkara met our needs perfectly. It is an idea of ever-changing continuity cutting across time frames which is an essential part of the Indian psyche. Our main objective was to find an Indian metaphor for the art of our country and to put it against a backdrop of Indian aesthetics which is quite distinct from the rest of the world.

We have also attempted to show the parallel roles of the rational and the irrational elements which are integral to

Above: CIMA Gallery, Calcutta. Left: Jyoti Bhatt, *Embryonic Images*. Acrylic on Board, 107 x 61cms. 1996. **Opposite page:** J Swaminathan, detail, *text-De-coded*. Wax, oil, earth pigments on canvas, 56 x 81.5cm. 1993. Photographs courtesy CIMA.



Indian visual art. The strict rational element has allowed the artist to capture the essence of his subject matter which is drawn from the highly sophisticated abstract Vedic philosophy on the one hand, and the simple tribal vision on the other. This construct has led to the creation of an unique genre of iconography., abstraction and symbolism. The irrational element on the other hand, has permitted the artist to bend the rules of line and symmetry to create strange and wonderful designs and decorations. Another object of this show is to bring out the mythic imagination of the artist. The rich heritage of myths, legends, epics, idols, and icons have had a profound influence on our arts and it features prominently in this show.

The selected art works have been grouped in three main sections: Classical, Folk and Contemporary. The last has been further sub-divided into three segments: Myth and Fantasy, Abstract and the Confluence of the East and the West.

Apart from defining Chamatkara as a metaphor, the selected works also draw out the genesis of style in Indian visual arts, by virtue of certain lines, images and perspective, the sources of which we have highlighted. This explains our rationale for the inclusion of the Classical and Folk sections. They are there to create the context within which the contemporary works should be seen in order to get their full import.

Extracts from an introductory note by Rakhi Sarkar, Director, CIMA and Curator of *Chamatkara*.
Further information from:
Marie Clements
Communiqué Arts Publicity,
London
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Fax: 0171 700 5358

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JAPAN

Mecenat Kyogikai (KMK),

(The Association for Corporate support of the Arts)

The KMK organises seminars and workshops focusing on business and arts related issues reserved for member corporations and organisations. The Mecenat Introductory Seminar is held twice a year, targeted especially towards newly appointed personnel. In the corporate divisions responsible for Mecenat activities, case Studies take a closer look at the philanthropic activities of individual corporations. Day trips to galleries, museums, private studios of artists guided tours inside theatres invite members to the backstage of artistic and cultural facilities. Art Seminars are series of lectures designed around a particular artistic genre, proving in-depth knowledge shared by artists, performers, art managers and other related professionals. Occasionally special lectures and sympose are held by visiting arts administrations from abroad, some are open to the general public. This year, for the first time, seminars are organised in the Kansar (Osaka, Kyoto) area to enable participation of members residing outside Tokyo.

The KMK aims to foster international relationships with business arts associations around the world. As one of the major activities of 1995, the KMK hosted the International Mecenat conference 1995 in commemoration of fifth anniversary of its founding. The event drew 90 panelists and official representatives from 27 nations, and a total of more than 1400 delegates from around the world. Discussions concerning the prospects for cultural interchange institutions in Europe, and an invitation to the International Business Arts Associations Meeting hosted by the Business Committee for the Arts in New York are a few among the international activities throughout 1996.

Further information from
KIGYO MECENAT KYOGIKAI
(Association for Corporate Support of the Arts)
Yurakucko, Chyoda-ku
Tokyo 100, Japan
Tel: 03 3213 3307
Fax: 03 3215 6222

HONG KONG

Business for Arts

Business for Arts is a non-profit organisation which was founded by a group of businessmen in Hong Kong to encourage the business community to support the local arts through sponsoring arts projects featuring Hong Kong artists.

It encourages, assists and promotes the arts in all forms including mime, dance, music,painting, ceramics, sculpture and photography to enrich the cultural life of Hong Kong. It also aims to educate the business community to sponsor the arts, assist the arts in obtaining sponsorship for arts projects and to help fund and subsidise local and international cultural events featuring Hong Kong artists.

Business for Arts also assists local artists in "packaging" their talent in order to attract sponsorship and ensures the need of a business are attended to should it choose to assist the arts.

Enquiries are welcomed from companies and individuals who are interested in becoming Corporate Members of the Business for Arts.

Further information from:
Business for Arts, 23/Fl, Shui On Centre, 6-8 Harbour Road
Wanchai, Hong Kong
Tel: 2802-3008, Fax: 2824-1784

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Tool" will feature speakers from the Association of Business Sponsorship for the Arts (UK), Singapore National Arts Council and key corporate sponsors. One of those speaking will be Ann Lee, co-founder and managing director of Kuali Works, Malaysia's first all-women arts company, which is responsible for organising the seminar.

The key role played by women in developing countries is already recognised, but the use of the arts as a vehicle for their self-expression and independence remains relatively unexplored outside the West. The role of companies such as Kuali Works is therefore an essential component in the development of a confident and sophisticated artistic landscape.

Set up in 1994 with the objective of creating "a psychologically liberated, secure and developed society, with faith and confidence in itself...a society distinguished by the pursuit of excellence", Kuali Works has since worked to express women's perspectives through the arts, not just by working on high quality productions, but also by training women in technical processes that are more usually the domain of men. As an example of sound practice from which the rest of the community can benefit, this is exemplary and will hopefully set new standards.

It is clear that an increasingly sophisticated and pluralist arts scene is emerging in Malaysia. The direction this will take in future will be largely determined by the funds that are available to develop both the arts infrastructure – venues, training centres, coordinating agencies etc - and the skilled manpower, both performing and technical, that is required to run this infrastructure and 'deliver' the product'. The involvement of both state and private sectors is fundamental to this process and for individual arts companies and projects, success will depend on knowing how to tap the right resources and who to talk to. Hopefully these issues will be explored further at the *Arts as a Marketing Tool* seminar in Kuala Lumpur and refined through the work of ASDEC, both in Malaysia and elsewhere in the developing world.

James Parry is Development Director, ASDEC, London

KUWAIT

Corporate Sponsorship for Publication on Art and Architecture

Corporate sponsorship of the arts has been rather slow to get off the ground in the Gulf. Quite understandably, in the early days of the region's oil-generated boom, the business sector was concerned more with investing in the training of personnel and the establishment of infrastructure than in financing cultural or artistic initiatives. However, arts sponsorship is coming along, such as for the 1995 publication of an outstanding book on Kuwait's artistic and architectural heritage.

Funded by support from over 20 corporate donors, both national and multi-national, *Kuwait: Arts and Architecture* is a collection of essays compiled by Arlene Fullerton (the wife of a former British Ambassador to Kuwait) and Geza Fehervari (a former Hungarian Ambassador to Kuwait). It contains a scholarly and well written overview of Kuwait's cultural life and heritage, ranging from consideration of the early links between Kuwait and Europe (which go as far back as the 4th century) to the dramatic liberation murals that created such an artistic stir following the defeat of the Iraqi invasion forces in 1991. This is clearly a seminal work, and one that should serve as a useful regional model. The fact that it was produced with such extensive corporate backing augurs well for the future.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

£35,000. The upper limit has now been raised to £75,000. Lilt's sponsorship of the carnival was so successful that they are repeating their support this year.

Other Award winners include household names and major British businesses: BT, Scottish Power and Glaxo Wellcome. But one Award singled out a small business which had successfully sponsored the arts. Step forward Eric Kauth, owner of Albert's Music Shop in Guildford, suppliers of sheet music and instruments. The shop sponsored three concerts in three different venues as part of the Guildford '95 Music Festival, covering a wide spectrum of musical styles. They also loaned instruments for workshop sessions for young children, bringing the company's name to yet another audience. The sponsorship was considered a great success by all involved and resulted in a turnover increase of 25% and a much enhanced profile in the local community.

As the string of Award winners collected their trophies, they shared a common cocktail of emotions: surprise, delight and pride. The Awards are a public acknowledgement of the great good achieved by business sponsors of the arts, but they are just the tip of the iceberg of this expanding field. ABSA's research shows that businesses supported the arts to the tune of £83 million during 1994/95 in a variety of exciting and innovative ways. From corporate membership to brand sponsorship as well as help and sponsorship in kind, businesses have a vital role to play in the development of our nation's culture. The ABSA Awards also demonstrate that the benefits of sponsorship are mutual and that Britain's businesses need the arts.

1995 Financial Times/ABSA Award Winners

Best Use of a Commission of New Art CDT Design for sponsorship of the Tate's 'Art Now' Gallery.

First Time Sponsor
Lilt for sponsorship of the Notting Hill Carnival

Increasing Access to the Arts
Scottish Power for sponsorship of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra's commission of Eugene Skeef and Scottish Opera's free concert, 'Soundbites'

International Sponsorship
Roche Products for sponsorship of Oxford Orchestra Da Camera's

Bartok Concerts in Budapest and Oxford

Long Term Development
Amoco (UK) Exploration Company for sponsorship of the Welsh National Opera

Single Project
Glaxo Wellcome for sponsorship of Spanish Still Life at th National Gallery

Sponsorship by a Small Business
Albert's Music Shop for sponsorship of the Guildford '95 International Music Festival

Sponsorship in Kind
Choice FM for sponsorship of Ikon Gallery's exhibition 'Self Evident'.

Strategic Programme
BT for sponsoring a vast number of projects throughout th UK.

Youth Sponsorship
Bank of Ireland Group for sponsorship of the Nerve centre's Foyle Film Festival.

The FT/CEREC Award
Creditanstalt for sponsorship of Austria's 'Reading id Adventure' project.

Introducing ASDEC

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

ASDEC itself has been registered as a company limited by guarantee, aimed at highlighting arts support activities and projects in, and of interest to the developing/emerging countries of Asia, Africa and Latin America. It will lobby for substantial increases in state funding as well as popularising the concept of business sponsorship of the arts.

A long-term objective of ASDEC is also to identify and encourage innovation and creative endeavour in various fields of the performing and plastic arts, and stimulate a meaningful North-South dialogue in a global perspective.

It is clear that a great deal of creative work in these fields is going on in the developing countries but that there are rather limited opportunities for it to be presented and appreciated at various levels - national, regional and global. More importantly, the creative process itself requires an enabling atmosphere of patronage and appreciation in which it can find a fuller and richer expression.

Unfortunately the economic – arguably also social, political and ideological - circumstances in a number of countries tend to limit the extent and scope of state patronage of the arts. The gap needs to be filled by the corporate sector, national as well as multinational, as has been the experience of most of the 'developed' countries in the West. Indeed, partnership between business and the arts is seen to be mutually beneficial, and has come to be accepted as an effective and relatively neutral conduit enabling the creative artist to produce outstanding work in an atmosphere of economic and intellectual freedom.

In Britain, for example,where the Association for Business Sponsorship of the Arts (ABSA) was set up 20 years ago, sponsorship funds have gone up from £600,000 in 1976 to about £84 million last year (1995-96). In North America, where the movement for business sponsorship of the arts began a decade earlier, the progress has been even more spectacular; and in Western Europe too, there have been substantial increases in sponsorship funding for the arts from the business sector.

In Asia, Japan led the way six years ago with the setting up of Kigyo Mecenat Kyogikai (Association for Corporate Support of the Arts – ACSA), followed by Hong Kong, where the non-profit organisation, Business for Art, has been actively assisting the arts in obtaining sponsors for art projects.

In the light of these developments, it may be immensely useful for many of the other countries in the non-Western world to evaluate the experience and, where possible and feasible, benefit from the expertise already available, in evolving an appropriate strategy to address the relevant issues of arts patronage and promotion.

ASDEC plans to begin by setting up a database in London, with a number of correspondents in various countries, networking to carry out the proposed monitoring and promotion of arts support activities and prgrammes in the respectives countries.

The results of such monitoring will be published in *ASDEC Newsletter*, produced for broadsbased distribution, initially free of cost if suitable sponsors can be found to meet the expenses on producing and mailing of the first few issues. Due acknowledgement will of course be made to the sponsorship source for each of these issues.

The following institutional categories will be targeted as initial recipients of the *ASDEC Newsletter*:

* Leading arts and cultural organisations in Asia, Africa and Latin America, as well as some in the West which may express an interest in receiving it;

* Prominent business houses/individuals considered as active or potential arts sponsors;

* Important media personnel;

* Selected educational and research centres, art galleries, music and theatre groups etc, and individuals in these and allied fields engaged in, or visualising projects in which they foresee and would welcome corporate sponsorship.

The aim would be to develop the *ASDEC Newsletter* as a kind of a 'house journal' of the arts community, reaching a minimum of 5,000 recipients in the first instance. As to the format and content, the emphasis will be on arts funding and sponsorship news from - and of intertest to - the developing/emerging countries. Items covered will include what prizes, awards, scholarships, travel grants, exhibition facilities etc are on offer; which art and cultural events have been, or are likely to be sponsored; who are the key individuals, groups, institutions shaping and influencing the arts scene; and where to look for new arts events and activities, projects, trends, techniques etc. The first issue of *ASDEC Newsletter* is planned for publication in the Spring (March 1997).

As for funding ASDEC itself, a modest sponsorship contribution has been received to cover the initial expenses on its setting up. The cost of producing and distributing ASDEC's introductory publication "Business Sponsorship of the Arts: Eastern Initiatives, Western Experience" has been met by the London magazine *Arts & The Islamic World*. It is publishing and distributing the special supplement with its Issue No 29 – Autumn 96, as its own sponsorship contribution to ASDEC.

A future plan of action regarding the funding of ASDEC and its Newsletter will be developed in the light of response from the recipients of the introductory publication, and the forthcoming visit by Development Director James Parry to some of the South Asian and Southeast Asian countries.

Azra J Ahmed is Vice Chair, ASDEC, London.

ASDEC will appreciate receiving information about recent and forthcoming arts events, projects, publications etc and news about institutions and personalities, offering or seeking sponsorship funding. This will be added to the ASDEC database in London for possible inclusion in *ASDEC Newsletter*, though of course this cannot be guaranteed.

Communications may be addressed to the
Executive Director, ASDEC, 144-146 King's Cross Road, London WC1X 9DH.
Telephone: +44 171 833 8275, Fax: +44 171 278 4797



Ram Kumar: Untitled, mixed media on canvas, 66.5 × 97 cms, 1996

maps of nostalgia

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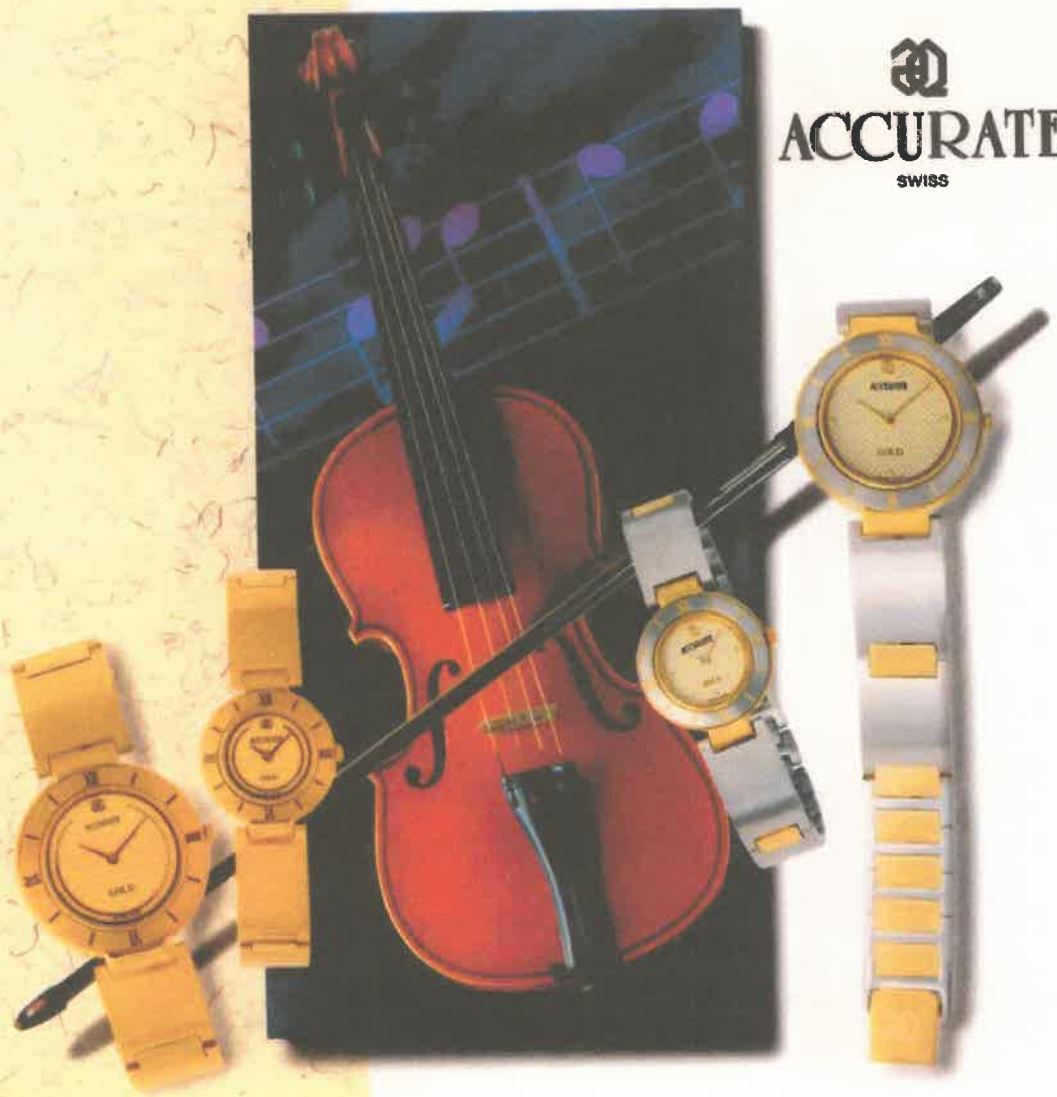
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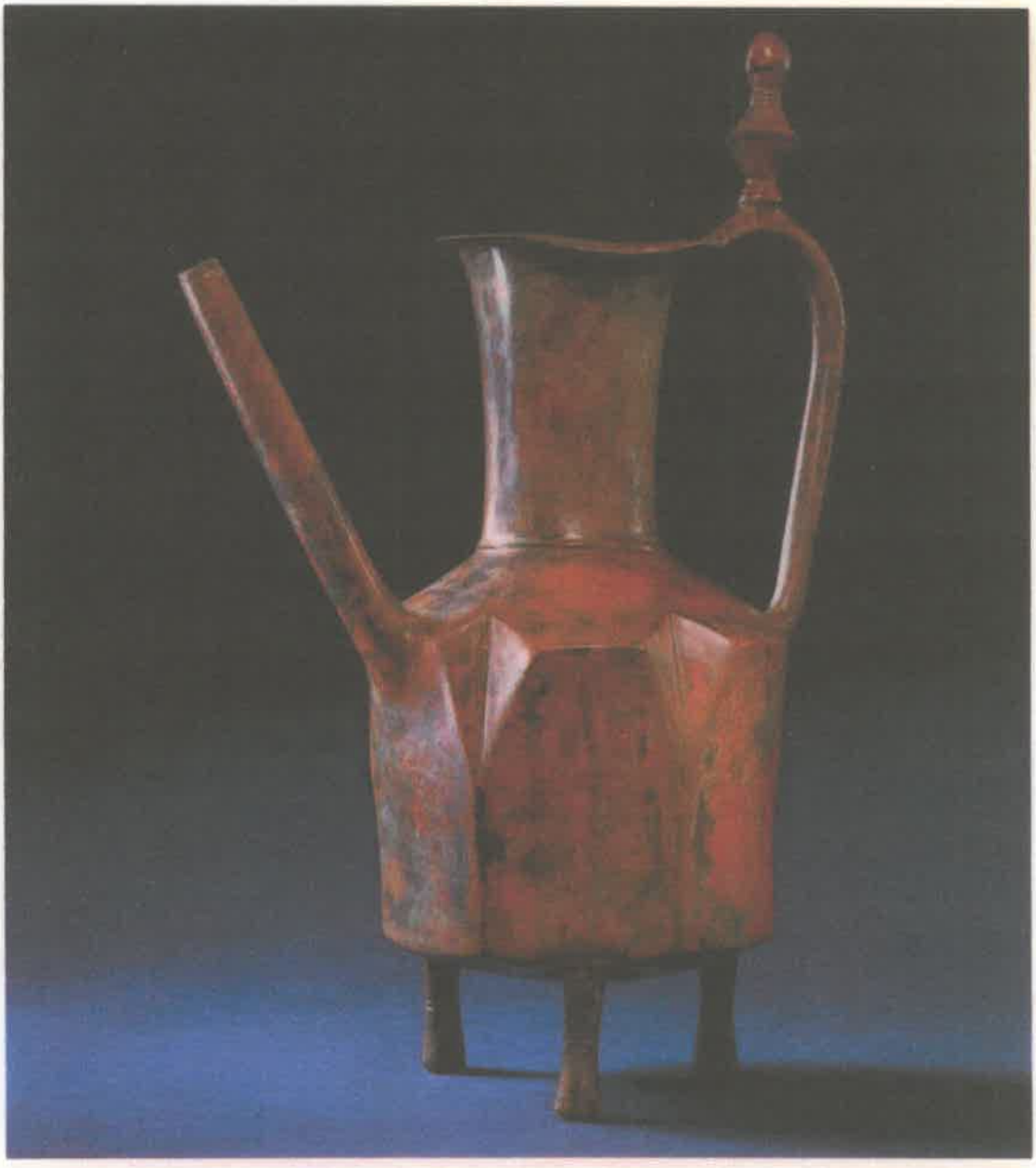
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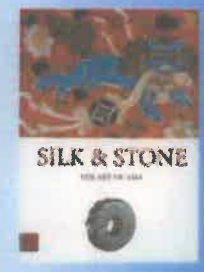
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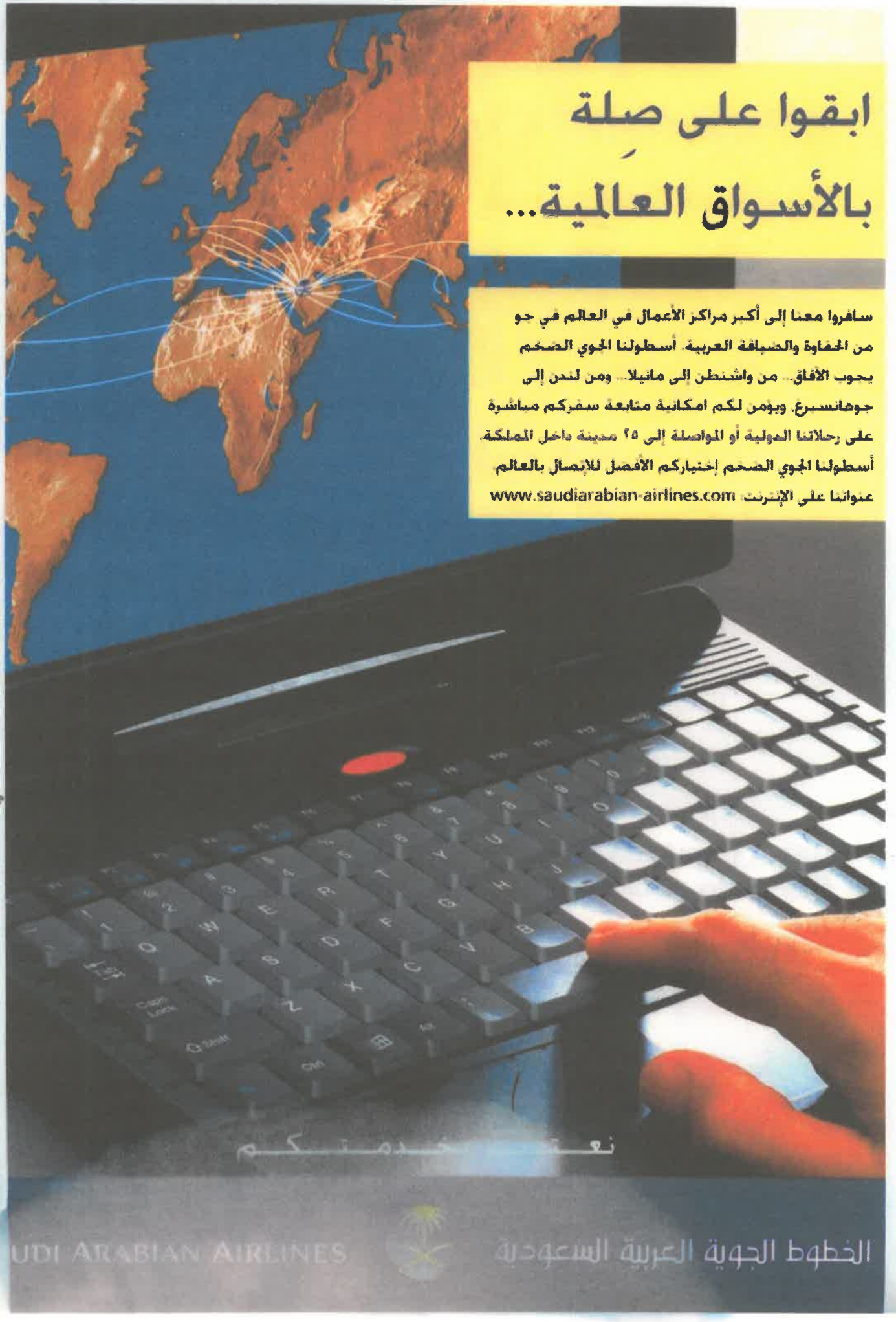


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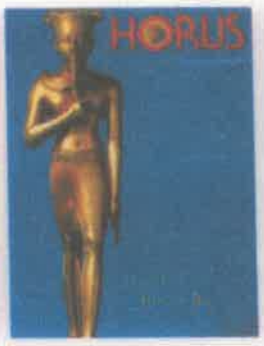
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Welcome
to the world of carpets and textiles

This issue hosts articles from some of the leading academics in the field. J.H.Terry brings you the latest news with his article on the Ashkhabad conference held in May. Parviz Tanavoli talks about the beauty and technical aspects of masnad - small weaves which once decorated the houses of the upper-class. Kristina Youso, research assistant at the Asian Art Museum of San Francisco, presents an article on the treasures of Mongolia. Completing the picture is news of the most recent events, exhibitions and auctions such as the much publicised Christie's auction in London for the wonderful sacred vestments of the Bernheimer collection. We then look at new publications and exhibition catalogues for the bibliophiles among you. Finally, in Chaykhané, Carol Bier presents one of the most recent purchases of the Textile Museum of Washington, referring to Tanavoli's article on masnad.



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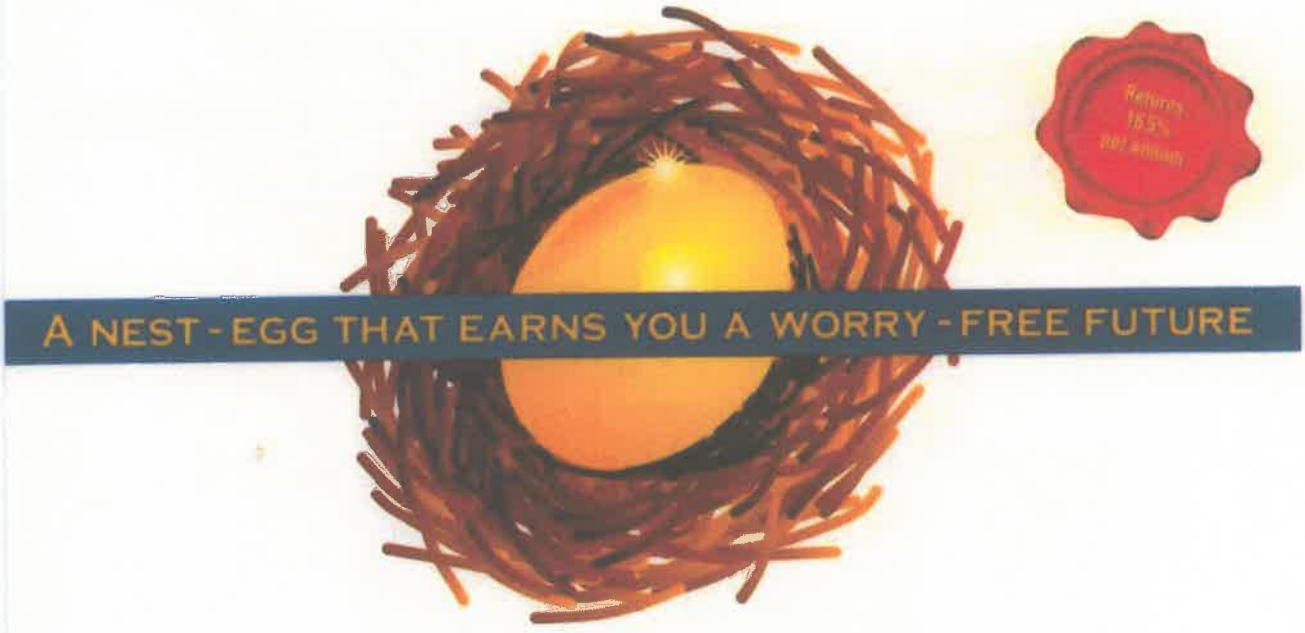
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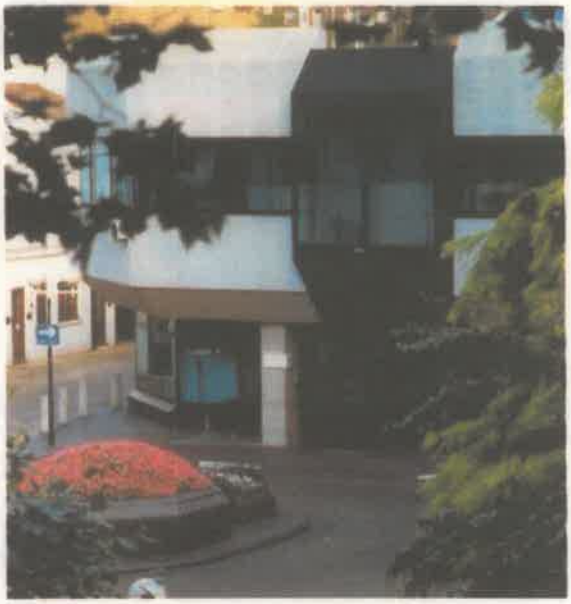
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EDITORIAL

It was 15 years ago, in the spring of 1982, that the 1st International Seminar on Islamic Arts, with participating scholars and artists from 23 Eastern and Western countries, mandated the Islamic Arts Foundation to publish the journal *Arts & The Islamic World*. There was no endowment, nor any start-up funds; it was envisaged that a voluntary editorial team, networking with professionals and academics in various countries, would explore the possibility of producing the journal as a self-paying publication.

Over the years it has been possible to put together 30 issues of the journal, including a number of "country" volumes and special "theme" supplements. Understandably, it has been subject to occasional delays in publication, and two or more issues have had sometimes to be combined to produce a special volume. Now, with millennium thoughts so much in the air, and with continuing support of a broad based international readership, we look forward to the journal's regular quarterly publication. The spring issue is already in your hands for 1997, and another three are on course for publication in the Summer, Autumn and Winter.

The special theme supplements have also opened up new avenues for an expanding readership in languages other than English. In response to reader suggestions regarding the journal's recent supplement on "Traditional Architecture in Dubai", an Arabic edition has been produced. It has been well received, and we are looking at other language editions as we go along.

.....

This issue includes another theme supplement, on " The King Faisal Foundation" in Riyadh, to mark 20 years of cultural philanthropy distinguished by valuable work by this institution in various fields. These include preservation of cultural heritage, promotion of research in education, science and the arts, and annual awards of the prestigious "King Faisal International Prize" in recognition of achievement and excellence worldwide.

.....

It is with deep regret that we announce the passing away of one of our eminent contributors of *Arts & The Islamic World*, George Sorley Whittet, who was only recently elected Honorary Member of the International Association of Art Critics, British Section. A former Editor of *The Studio*, he was author of several volumes, including the seminal work *Contemporary Artists* published in 1977, containing more than 100 of his wide-ranging critical essays.

He was specially helpful to younger artists and art critics; these included several from the Islamic world in particular and the developing/emerging countries generally, whose work he helped introduce to British and international audiences. Indeed he was a prime mover in catalysing the first London exhibition of "Contemporary Art from the Islamic World" at the Barbican in 1989. *Arts & The Islamic World* is closely working with his colleagues in IAAC to honour his memory in a suitable manner, and a modest contribution is being placed at the Association's disposal for this purpose.

Beirut Reborn

ANGUS GAVIN / JAMES PARRY

The overworked image of a phoenix rising from the ashes has been applied to inner city renewal projects in various parts of the world. It is perhaps more relevant to Beirut than elsewhere, in view of both the city's Phoenician origins and the scale of devastation that preceded regeneration of the central area.





International comparisons, however, run deeper than this. The influence of other cultures and of other urban regeneration projects from around the world has enriched the masterplanning process for the revival of Beirut's war-torn city centre. This openness to valid external influence is characteristic of Beirut, a great trading city that lies at a watershed of cultures and religions and has, throughout history, played a gateway role between east and west.

Masterplanning for the revival of Beirut's Central District made a false start shortly after the end of the war with a grandiose scheme that combined a beaux-arts, 'grand planning' approach with a 1960's infatuation for the motor car and the heavy road infrastructure that this engenders. Despite the necessity for widespread demolition and re-structuring in the war-damaged city centre, a second Master Plan, from a new team assembled by the consultants Dar Al-Handasah (Shair

& Partners) and now being implemented by SOLIDERE, shows a much greater sensitivity to the surviving and pre-existing urban fabric, and a welcome reduction in the impact of the highway on the city. The main conceptual development of the new Master Plan, with its inherent 'contextualist' philosophy, must be clearly attributed to the Dar team. However, much of the credit for pushing through a welcome downgrading of the highway network by the team's engineers should go to the French consultants, Sato et Associes, who acted as advisors to the Client in reviewing the work of the Masterplan team.

Throughout the process of evolving the new Master Plan, a cross-cultural debate continued, essentially between Anglo-Saxon 'contextualism', that sought to restore and rebuild the city from the 'bottom up', based on a careful appraisal of surviving fabric and an understanding of the 'genius loci', and a 'top down' approach that favoured the grand gesture, imposing new patterns of order on the city, in the continental European tradition. The French Mandate had left its mark on the city in this way, during Beirut's last major reconstruction of the central area in the 1930s, in the shape of the Haussmannian grid of radiating streets, focused on the 'Place de l'Etoile' as the symbolic setting for the Parliament building.

In the Beirut of the 1990s the Master Plan team held strong convictions that, in spite of the scale of wartime destruction and the need to provide a bold framework and future vision for the city's re-emerging role in the region, the plan should somehow deliver a message of cultural continuity and pluralism - not the imposition of a foreign order. The war had not obliterated the past. Where the fabric had been destroyed, the site's topography and historic views to sea and mountains revealed a pre-existing order. Other patterns and remembered places survived in the collective memory, and the great wealth of the city's archaeological heritage lay beneath the soil.

Belief in the inherent value of 'context' is at the heart of the Anglo-Saxon tradition in city planning - always distrustful of simplistic 'grand plans' that rarely seem to work. Cities are organic constructs of great economic, social and cultural complexity that evolve over time. The process of urban regeneration must be equally complex, multi-faceted and respectful of surviving patterns. This philosophy pervades the process of restoration and development that is now in hand in central Beirut. It is an approach that has struck a chord in postwar Lebanon and has gone some way to resolve widespread public criticisms of the early plans. It seems all the more appropriate in a postwar environment, where there is a need to re-connect a damaged and divided city, to deliver the message of continuity and help build a renewed national identity.

Three themes behind the reconstruction plan illustrate some of the new directions taken to avoid earlier temptations of 'grand planning' imposed on the city from above: those of the 'Social Arena', 'Competing Cities' and 'City Memory'. They express a more sensitive appreciation of the surviving heritage, of other aspects of the physical and social context and begin to stake out a renewed regional role for Beirut in the future, as a re-emerging world city of the Middle East. The first two concepts, those of the 'Social Arena' and 'Competing Cities', relate quite well to the two main stages of the project, identified in the phasing strategy for the Master Plan - the first extending to the turn of the century and the second for a period of some ten years beyond.

First Phase: The "Social Arena"

The main objective for first phase implementation of the Master Plan - up to the millennium - is to provide critical mass in and around the historic core, in both restoration and new development, in order to re-activate a city centre that has been virtually abandoned for a generation. The scope of this first phase is essentially local in character, focused primarily on the renewal of the national and metropolitan economies rather than on Beirut's reviving international ambitions.

The outcome should have a social dimension of great significance: the re-creation of the city's meeting point, a pluralist and cosmopolitan 'social arena' for all the Lebanese communities. Beirut's pre-war centre was an essentially unaffiliated zone of commercial and cultural interchange, that brought together a thriving urban merchant class of different religious and ethnic groups and the international communities for whom the city remained the undisputed centre within the Middle East for banking, commerce and tourism. The renewed city centre must re-create this 'social arena', and in so doing re-connect a city that has remained psychologically split since the war. In the long term the project may not succeed, either for Beirut or for the Lebanese as a whole, unless it achieves these primary social goals, making an important contribution to the postwar healing process, helping to rebuild a national and pluralistic identity and laying the foundations for Beirut's re-emerging role within the region.

There are three main features to the creation of the 'social arena':

Short-term activities

The first aspect is that of generating short-term or temporary activities in the city centre through a variety of short-life land uses, the trade fairs that now take place in the Exhibition Centre at Martyrs' Square, and other frequent cultural and festival events. The most powerful of these to date has been the concert given by Feyrouz, Lebanon's most celebrated singer, at the 1994 Beirut Festival in Martyrs Square. This was Feyrouz's first public appearance in the country since the outbreak of hostilities and marked the end of her long, personal campaign of silence against the war and its aftermath. Such activities are now attracting people back to the centre in large numbers and have begun to re-establish the location and its public spaces as the principal meeting point of the city.

Mixed use

The second aspect is that of following a 'mixed-use' policy in terms of target land uses. The city centre must be much more than a business and administrative centre, more than a conventional Central Business District that closes down at night. It must be active round the clock - like the well-loved centres of memorable historic cities, that combine the functions of business and shopping, residential and cultural uses, leisure and tourism in an environment that unifies the heritage with the new. Hence the importance, in this current phase, of completing the restoration of some 300 preserved buildings, of rebuilding the traditional souks quarter at the heart of Beirut of consolidating new development in office, hotel, commercial and other

uses around the historic core and of reviving the residential neighbourhood of Saifi as an inner city 'urban village'. In the long run it is housing and not business use that is planned to be the major land user in the Central District.

The combination of a balanced range of land uses including government, commerce, cultural and leisure facilities and housing should create a lively city centre of a rather traditional kind, drawing on a city-wide public and international visitors. Features of special importance for the early regeneration of the Central District include the strong commitment of government institutions, the city-wide attraction of the souks' retail and leisure activities, and the relaunching of the city centre as a major residential location that can eventually house a population of some 40,000. At the same time, the Central District will begin to establish itself as the prime location within Beirut for city hotels and international quality office use, serviced by advanced communications technologies and other new infrastructures.

Public domain

The third aspect of the concept of the 'social arena' is that of establishing a well coordinated public domain of streets and squares, landscaped areas and interconnecting pedestrian routes, that is altogether more extensive and of a distinctly higher quality than can be found elsewhere in Beirut.

In the traditional city centre the area allocated to public open space has been increased by some 25%; a pedestrian-priority zone has been established in the historic core; and a number of heritage and archaeological trails identified within the pattern of development. In all, the city centre will contain more than 30 new and restored public squares. Martyrs' Square, now open to the sea, will re-adopt its role as the capital's major public space and gathering point of processional grandeur. For the future, within the new area on reclaimed land, there will be a large public park, marinas and extensive seaside promenades. These combined public amenities will serve all the citizens of Beirut and provide the focal point and culmination of the whole city's waterside corniche system and its associated leisure, recreation and commercial activities.

Second Phase: "Competing Cities"

The second phase of development - beyond the millennium - will focus more on the international dimension: that of the role that Beirut has set out to re-establish as an important capital city and financial, communications, tourism and cultural centre within the Middle East and East Mediterranean region. This is a region that, for the time being, continues to suffer from political instability. However, after a peace settlement and in a subsequent era of regional integration, the city will be well placed, with its centre re-activated and new infrastructure in place, and the Lebanese well equipped to benefit from the opportunities that will arise.

A regional role

At the focus of an emerging service economy, Beirut will revive as a regional financial hub, but will forge a distinctly different role from that played before the war as the Middle East's premier banking centre. At that time the emphasis was on investing the region's surplus petro-dollars in the western economies. The scope for such investment is declining and is now being handled directly through the banking sectors of source countries - there is no longer a need for the intermediary of Beirut. At the same time the overall pattern is changing, towards one of inward investment into the region to finance reconstruction and the growth sectors in emerging economies.

The opportunity exists, therefore, for Beirut's evolving financial markets to act as an international financial centre, channelling global capital resources back into the region, thus reversing the city's pre-war role as a conduit for funds to be deposited in the financial markets of the West. Beirut's capital markets are already beginning to develop this role in helping fund Lebanon's postwar reconstruction programme. The process can be extended to resource similar reconstruction needs throughout the region and to help finance the economic development and integration that will accompany a peaceful settlement in the Middle East.

In addition to opportunities in the financial sector, the process has already begun of international companies, dispersed during the war, returning to Beirut. Improving communications and the city's many inherent assets make it a natural choice for those conducting business in the Middle East and emerging markets in Eastern Europe. Beirut's revived city centre, with its new infrastructure capable of providing a quality and range of media, information and telecom services that few cities will be able to match, can offer an ideal location for the regional headquarters of such corporations.

Other sectors set fair for revival and continuing growth, once the region stabilises, are hotels and tourism. In limbo for twenty years, like many other areas of the economy, there is considerable potential for growth, both for business and tourist hotels. Once peace unfolds, Lebanon, with its natural and cultural assets, will become a preferred choice, linked with Syria, Jordan and perhaps Israel, for the development of high quality, regional tourism.

Distinctive assets

While the future may be open and optimistic, Beirut will nevertheless find itself challenged by other 'competing cities' of the region: much like the Mediterranean cities of the Renaissance era, competing for supremacy in maritime trade, or their modern European counterparts who challenge each other for finite markets of trade, information and services within the European Community. In order to succeed in such a competitive environment it is important to fully appreciate the advantages and the distinguishing features that Beirut may have in comparison with other cities of the region – the cities of the Arabian Gulf, Cairo, Tel Aviv, Damascus, Amman, Istanbul and others - and to recognize the domains within which these competing cities excel.

Beirut must identify and build on the distinctive assets that set it apart from these other cities and bring it favoured status: its climate, heritage attractions and the recreational resource of sea and mountains, the cosmopolitan character, language skills, training and entrepreneurial traditions of its people, first class international communications, flexible government and institutions that can respond to commercial opportunities. Additional assets attributable to Beirut's revived city centre include a truly comprehensive approach to planned reconstruction,



the wholesale modernization of the infrastructure and an extensive resource of prime land at the heart of the city, available for development.

This process of analysis of assets and opportunities is now taking place with continuing refinement, in order to define more precisely a future vision for Beirut: the vision of a world city of the Middle East, that can once again play its historic role at the gateway between East and West.

Heritage and "City Memory"

A third important theme that lies behind the Master Plan is that of 'city memory'. The concept of historical or 'city memory' developed out of a series of discussions with the first archaeologists who worked on the site and helped train the next generation of Lebanese archaeologists. They emphasized the historical and cultural significance of the city's Central District – site of the ancient settlement and origins of Beirut, and an area more or less continuously inhabited for 5,000 years.

The layers of history

The archaeologists defined a methodology for the excavation and interpretation of urban sites. Their perception is of historical evidence set down beneath the soil in successive layers. During excavation, these layers are unravelled, including their sometimes complex interpenetrations. Partly visible but largely concealed, Beirut's Central District contains the evidence of more than 11 civilizations. They reveal themselves in 'archaeological layers', often damaged by fire, war, earthquake and the processes of earlier reconstructions that have followed such disasters throughout history. Nevertheless, with the passage of time and civilizations there are always parts of the urban fabric, however damaged, that survive and influence the patterns of redevelopment that follow.

This perception of 'city memory' is not limited to the archaeology but includes the preserved buildings, townscape features, historic street alignments and frontages that provide a context for new development. It includes the names of streets, squares, city quarters and a nostalgia for remembered places, lost or destroyed during the war – such as the former shoreline of Normandy Bay and the Promenade des Français, now buried in the landfill. The concept can even embrace those events and anecdotes of the city's history that remain in the collective memory, such as the legend of St George, who fought the dragon outside the walls of ancient Beirut, so saving the king's daughter from sacrifice.

Cities as old as Beirut are thus the product of countless historical layers dating from ancient times to the present day. All such elements of 'city memory' are of great importance. Together they define the city's culture and identity.

"City Memory" and the Master Plan

The concept of 'city memory' has had an important impact on the Master Plan. By comparison with earlier plans the number of buildings to be preserved was substantially increased and over a third of the urban fabric in the pre-war city centre that survived the conflict has been retained. The Master Plan model shows, significantly, only the retained buildings and the new public domain as 'fixes'. The former alignments of the majority of streets have also been maintained and a set of regulations introduced – 'Streetwall Controls' – designed to promote the







Opposite page: New Housing in Saifi. **Above:** Hilton hotel **Extreme left:** Central District location plan. **Left:** Beirut Trade Centre **Page 24:** Souk Masterplan.

development of a traditional street form and scale. Other regulations and development control procedures have been devised to encourage a contextual approach to design in which new infill development is seen as integrating into an existing urban fabric, with retained buildings becoming placemakers, providing points of focus and reference such as Envelope controls for infill development in Saifi.

To display aspects of the archaeology and other 'layers' of city history, a series of 'heritage trails' are planned, threading through the new development. Three such trails emanate from Khan Antoun Bey Square, an important new public space that provides a link between the historic core and the new city on reclaimed land. One of these trails displays 5,000 years of Beirut's heritage in archaeological finds from many periods of the city's past. Another follows the line of the Ottoman Wall, the great stone breakwater of 1890 that now lies buried in the landfill. The third traces the lost, pre-war shoreline of Normandy Bay in the form of a linear park and promenade.

Archaeology and development

The archaeological investigations at the heart of Beirut have themselves become a subject of considerable international interest. Excavations have been carried out by teams from various Lebanese universities with foreign partners from the UK, France, Holland, Italy and elsewhere, and the Beirut Central District has become the largest urban archaeological site in the world. Both local and international committees have been established - the latter by UNESCO – to vet archaeological finds and recommend their retention, transfer or incorporation into new development, subject to final decision by the Minister of Culture.

However, issues of preservation of the heritage and potential clashes between development and archaeology raise passionate debate. Some have argued for widespread preservation of excavation sites that would turn much of the city centre into an archaeology park. But to 'preserve' in this way would mean 'not to reconstruct', denying the natural process of revival that has taken place throughout history; perhaps even thwarting Beirut's opportunity to fulfil its future role as a world city of the region.

On this issue, however, it is important to understand the difference between urban archaeology and the classical archaeological excavation that takes place on greenfield sites. In a city as ancient as Beirut the archaeological layers are much impaired, not only by recent development but by the inherent process of reconstruction that has taken place throughout the city's history. Structures have often been destroyed by natural or man-made disasters and succeeding civilizations recover and re-use materials from the site. It is extremely rare to find monuments intact or in a form sufficiently restorable to compete with those of the classical sites, such as Baalbek or Palmyra.

In central Beirut there have to date been several spectacular exceptions, including Roman and Byzantine remains, the Canaanite Wall and major Iron Age discoveries that establish the city's Phoenician pedigree for the first time. The search continues for remnants of Roman Berytus' celebrated School of Law. In such cases adjustments are made to the Master Plan and individual development projects to display the archaeology to best advantage. In general, however, apart from the multiplicity of recoverable small finds and salvageable mosaics, the archaeological layers are very damaged and are of greater interest as evidence of the city's history and urban planning than as monuments to be retained in situ.

Modern techniques of urban archaeology have been developed elsewhere, with this common situation in mind, and in the knowledge of commercial pressures that bear on urban sites. In Beirut, such methods have also produced the detailed mapping of different archaeological layers and a wealth of data, bringing to light many aspects of urban life from every era of the city's past. Much of this material cannot be preserved in situ. However, there are many opportunities to integrate it into new development or to bring it to life through modern techniques of interactive display, enriching in this way the city of the future.

As reconstruction proceeds the emphasis focuses on continual adjustment to the pattern of development to enable appropriate integration to take place of the archaeology and many other aspects of 'city memory'. All such aspects are recognized as important assets that will, in the future, set Beirut apart from other 'competing cities' in the region. And for the Lebanese, traumatized by a war that seems to have obliterated their past, and in search of a renewed national identity for the future, they offer the assurance of a rich and ancient heritage – solid ground from which to move forward to the new millennium.

Angus Gavin is Planning Advisor to the Chairman of SOLIDERE, the private sector corporation charged with the reconstruction of Beirut's war-damaged city centre, and formerly leader of the consultants' team that prepared the Master Plan for the area. He is also author, with Ramez Maluf, of a new book *Beirut Reborn: the restoration and development of the Central District*, Academy Editions, London, reviewed on the pages that follow, by conservation architect James Parry.

Project Fact Sheet: Beirut Central District

A major postwar reconstruction, city centre regeneration and waterfront development project being undertaken through the private sector.

Development agency: SOLIDERE, a joint stock company combining previous property right holders and new investors, established to undertake the reconstruction, fund and manage on the Government's behalf, construction of the infrastructure, sea defences and all aspects of the public domain.

Project area: 180Ha, comprising 100Ha of the former city centre and an additional 60Ha of land reclaimed from the sea, containing the wartime dumpsite of domestic waste and building rubble.

Total built-up area: 1 693 M2 including restoration (304 buildings) and new development, representing an average plot ratio of 5:1.

Land budget: 49% public areas including roads and open space; 51% development areas of which a quarter comprises retained buildings.

Target land use mix: 42% residential, 34% office, 12% commercial, 8% government and cultural, 4% hotels.

Out of the Ashes

I first visited Beirut in the summer of 1991 and was deeply moved by what I saw. No amount of horrifying news coverage of Lebanon's civil war could have prepared me for the utter devastation I found there. Whole sections of the city lay in ruins, blasted into fragments by fifteen years of shelling, bombing, shooting and, more insidious in its impact, neglect. Piles of shattered masonry, often many metres deep, were pitiful evidence of the desecration of one of the Mediterranean's most renowned settlements. As if the mangled wreckage were not appalling enough to contemplate, the tragedy was heightened by ghastly reminders of just how recently the fighting had ended: snipers' sandbags still in place in the gaping holes of gutted hotels and apartment blocks, areas cordoned off because of unexploded shells.

The area around Martyrs' Square, the focal point of the city's Central District, resembled photographs I had seen of 1945 Berlin . It was one big, devastated mess. Somewhat astonishingly, young men scrambled over the ruins touting photos and prints of Beirut in the late 1960's. The views may well have been of Chicago or Sydney for all the immediate similarity they bore to what was in front of me.

With characteristic Lebanese spirit, some entrepreneurial souls had already opened café-trottoirs amidst the rubble and these had become a fashionable spot to take one's afternoon citron pressé. Even so, it was difficult to imagine how the place could ever be brought back to the sort of life it had apparently hummed with twenty years before.

The tragedy seemed compounded by all these stories about Beirut in its heyday, this swinging, hedonistic playground, party venue of the Middle East. How could it ever regain this role, or any other role for that matter? After all, the world had moved on and had got used to life without Beirut. It was clearly not just a case of rebuilding the physical structure, but of redefining the city's status in a changed international environment.

And yet, amazingly, this is precisely what is happening. Evidence of physical reconstruction was already to hand on my return visit in 1993, when sites were being cleared and prepared for renewal. The work was piecemeal and rather lacking in context, but at least it was happening. The despair I felt in 1991 had evaporated in favour of a tangible energy and sense of conviction that now was the time to create a new Beirut.

Since then, things have moved on apace and the sense of renewal has been harnessed and driven to maximum positive effect. Much of the responsibility for this dynamism is attributable to Solidere (Société Libanaise pour le Développement et la Reconstruction du Centre-Ville de Beyrouth), a share-holding real estate company created in May 1994 with the objective of reconstructing Beirut's Central District. Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri has made the project a personal crusade and been instrumental in selling the scheme to the financial community.

The background to the project, details of the masterplan to redevelop the Central District and of the plan's individual elements have recently been published in a remarkably comprehensive work, *Beirut Reborn*. Billed as "the story of the master plan", this book is much more than simply that. As a lesson in how to present an urban conservation and development programme it is of exceptional value.

Three key words crop up repeatedly: renewal, restoration and development. They are of course interdependent and the plan lives or dies by them, especially as it in turn comprises a critical component in Lebanon's national post-war reconstruction programme. In many senses the plan represents an opportunity to reconnect Beirut: joining together divided communities within the city as much as the city itself with the outside world. The need to create a new social and economic arena for Beirut is paramount and designing the appropriate vehicle for such change is equally critical.

These aspects are well documented in the book and enhanced by extensive historical coverage and interesting international references to redevelopment schemes from which lessons are being drawn and adapted for local application. This global dimension is useful, especially as many of the problems faced by Solidere and the Beirutis generally are familiar elsewhere in the region: entangled property rights, uneasy interface between public and private sectors, squatting and illegal occupancy, inadequate (or, in Beirut's case, devastated) infrastructure.

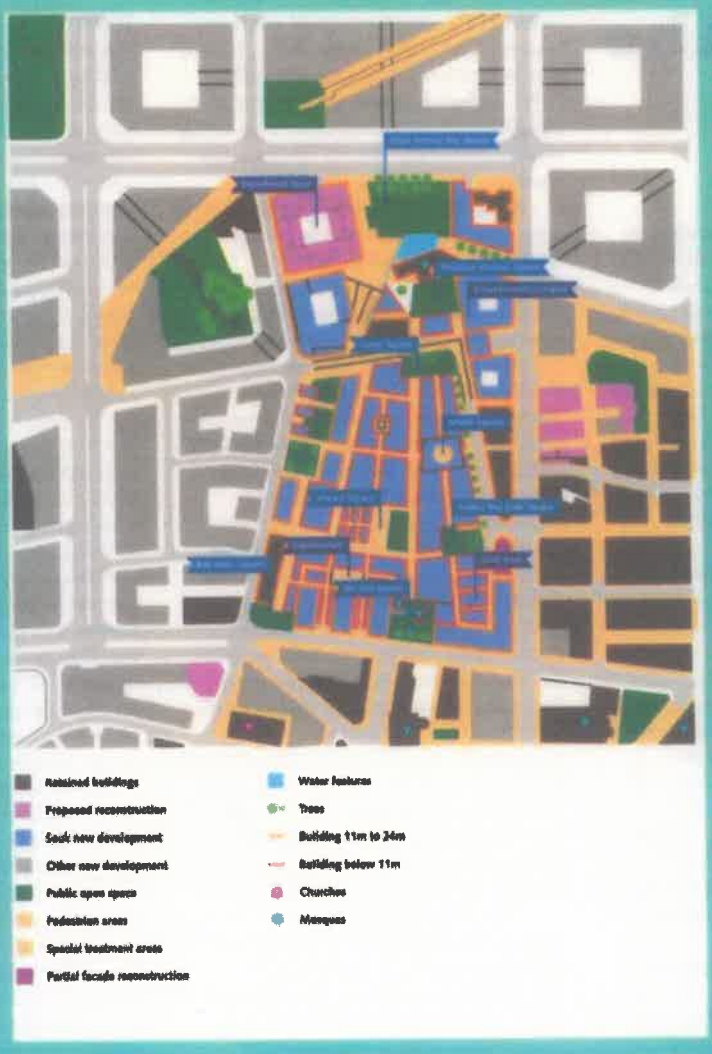
Of all these difficulties the land issue was potentially the most fraught. If this had not been resolved, any redevelopment plan would have been stillborn. The basic problem is that of ownership and tenancy. Any individual plot of land has hundreds of potential claimants (one celebrated lot in the suq area was revealed to have 4,750 fully entitled claimants!) and so securing agreement from all these people on intrinsically controversial redevelopment proposals was always going to be next to impossible. It was clear that a dramatic and imaginative solution was called for. Subsequently a valuation process was carried out, based on the idea of creating "stakeholders" in the regeneration process. Property rights were effectively removed in favour of controlling shares in Solidere, which was granted title to all development land save some key buildings. Only by vesting democratic control in the hands of one executive agency was there any hope of making the plan work. As an example of meaningful local empowerment this could serve as a crucial model for urban redevelopment programmes elsewhere in the Middle East.

Once the property nightmare was dealt with, the next problem was to devise an appropriate land use for the new Central District. There was obvious value in retaining the area's traditional mixed use pattern, subject to changing contemporary economic and social trends. Two features were identified of being of particular significance: the commitment of government institutions; and the re-establishment of the area as a major residential district. Together with enhanced retail/commercial activity and recreational use, these aspects should help ensure that Beirut's pre-war role as a major service centre is both regained and prepared for the next century.

Land use flexibility is a hallmark of the project and the plan does not prescribe land use – the range of permitted uses is unusually broad and planning constraints worryingly light, although more vigilant criteria are to be applied in what are called Special Policy Areas. Following the end of the civil war, historical and field surveys were carried out on the surviving building stock and 265 structures were listed for retention. These included those considered to be of historic or architectural value, most of which are located in two distinct residential quarters (Saifi and Wadi Abou Jmil) and in the city's historic core, now a demarcated Conservation Area. The pattern of small spaces in these districts is particularly precious and it is vital that the scale of these is retained as assiduously as the key historic buildings.

Their beauty lies in the whole, not necessarily in any particular individual merit.

Retained buildings amount to 30% of the fabric that survived the war. In addition, some townscape features have been salvaged, including fountains, statues and public stairs. These are to be used to maintain some degree of historical continuity and care is being taken to ensure that the surfaces and street furniture within the Special Policy Areas are of appropriate design and fabric. For example, research has been carried out into potential sources of the lanterns, brackets and decorative lamp-posts that adorned downtown Beirut in the 1930's. This French Mandate style was the one chosen to represent "historic" Beirut. As part of the programme to highlight Beirut's historic quality, three heritage trails have been devised, each originating in Khan Antoun Bey Square (which links the historic core to the new development on reclaimed land) and each reflecting different episodes in Beirut's history.



An extensive programme of archaeological excavations is also in progress and has received extensive media coverage. There have been no monumental finds to date, as the majority of archaeological layers are severely damaged, but the work has shed light on the richness of the city's heritage and brought into focus the potential dilemma between archaeological conservation and development: to what extent can survey and excavation work be allowed to hold up construction and development?

The future of archaeological sites in the development of new Beirut is to be decided on a case-by-case basis, with some preservation in situ and some incorporation into new development. A special archaeological zone covers the eastern limits of the Roman city and development patterns there will await the completion of excavations. Elsewhere, remains are not so secure and some conservationists have expressed concern that the impetus of the development process is so fast that it is difficult to gain the time required to consider such sensitive issues properly.

The effectiveness of such developmental controls as exist outside these zones (and, indeed, of the constraints within them) will be acutely tested in the next few months and years.

Beirut Reborn refers often to the ambition of a "grand design" and reflects this theme of grandeur in both its presentation and content. The format is indeed lavish, if somewhat reminiscent of an enlarged glossy annual report. Do not be put off; this book stands up to professional scrutiny and provides an unique insight into one of the most remarkable urban projects of the last two decades.

The construction of new landmark buildings (such as the Beirut Trade Centre), a dramatic new road network and a spectacular waterfront area will help re-establish Beirut as a key international centre. It also provides Solidere with a rare opportunity to create the environment for some truly original architecture and town planning on a scale unlikely to be repeated for some time. Yet there are greater challenges therein.

There were some, and I must confess that I was among them, who initially shuddered at the prospect of the brave, new city that is to emerge. Was the rush to modernise and impress likely to leave any room for the city's rich built heritage? We thought not.

So far at least, it seems we were wrong. Whilst some significant historic buildings have been demolished (and not always because they were too severely damaged to be repaired), the value of retaining others has been recognised and they are accorded some priority within the development plan. In terms of public relations, heritage is high on the agenda and correctly perceived to be both a potential money-spinner for the city and an environmental benefit for those living there.

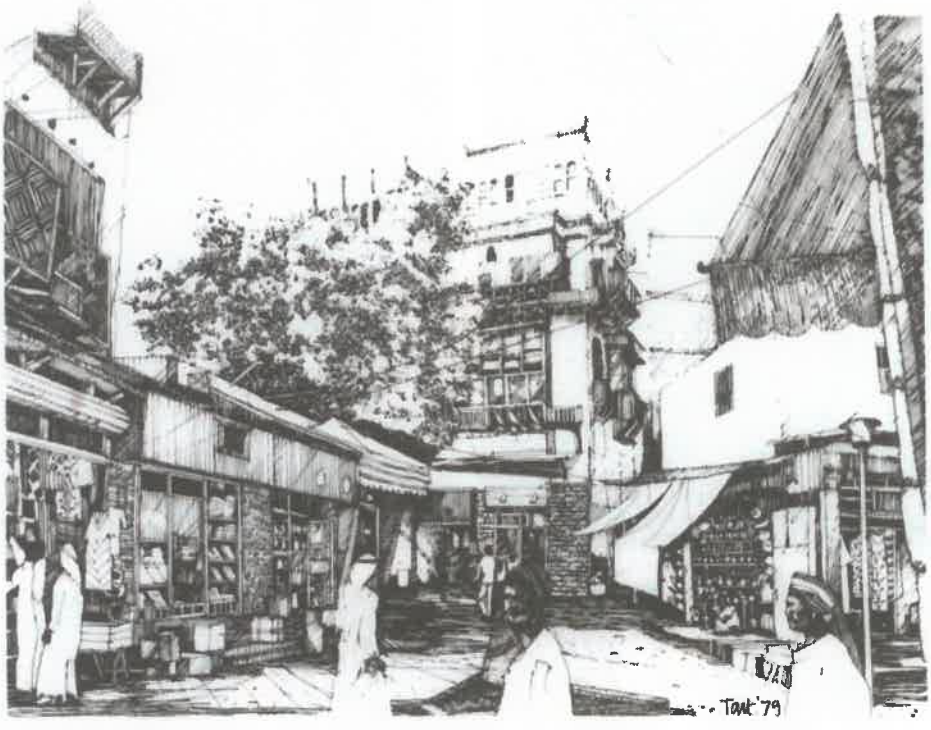
As well as providing some interesting options for achieving the tricky integration of old and new, the plan also focuses on the human qualities of the city, the importance in development planning of "remembered places" and the public realm, and of the need for this to extend beyond simple consultation into real engagement. In this respect there is some cause for optimism that the worst excesses of other parts of the Middle East - where the cult of modernity has been so severe that the old has been swept away in favour of the new - may be avoided.

The success of the Central District re-development plan will necessarily be gauged on many different levels. Final judgement on the ultimate success of the interface between old and new must be reserved for a few years at least, and weighed against the inestimable benefits to Beirutis in having a revived city in which to live, work and play. In the meantime, we can enjoy watching a phenomenal enterprise take place and muse on the fact that this is at least the fourth time in the city's history that its centre has been extensively redeveloped. Never before however has this been done entirely with private sector funding.

The Architecture of Old Jeddah

ROSIE LLEWELLYN-JONES

The old houses of Jeddah are a unique treasure in Saudi Arabia, where little has survived before the 1970s oil boom. Indeed, it is surprising that as many as 800 houses still remain in the area known today as Al-Balad, for until very recently, there was no heritage movement in Saudi Arabia, and little interest in preserving these reminders of an earlier way of life.



Jeddah, being the gateway to the holy cities of Makkah and Medina, is a place of immense antiquity. Even in pre-Islamic times it was the crossroads for land and sea-borne trade. Camel caravans carrying spices, frankincense and exotic goods, travelled the length of the Hejaz. Some of these cargoes had originated in distant China and had journeyed along the old Silk Road into India. From there merchant ships carried them to Arabia, and to the port of Jeddah, on the shore of the Red Sea, with its natural harbour. In the 7th century AD the injunction of the Prophet (PBUH) that a pilgrimage, the Haj, should be made at least once during the life of each Muslim, enhanced Jeddah's importance, for it was the port through which all pilgrims had to pass.

Early maps show a walled city, roughly hexagonal on the landward side, pierced by four main gateways. By the early 19th century, the population was estimated at between twelve to fifteen thousand inhabitants, with half as many again pilgrims and traders in transit. It was a cosmopolitan city, made up of many foreigners. There were Yemenis, Indians from Surat and Bombay, Abyssinians, Malays, Egyptians, Syrians, Turks, Armenians, Jews, and even a few Greeks bringing merchandise from Egypt. Jeddah was the chief conduit for coffee beans, shipped up the coast from Yemen and sent on to Egypt and Turkey. Fortunes were made (and lost) by speculators in coffee, for the price fluctuated, according to demand.

Successful traders used their profits to build tall, elaborately decorated houses within the safety of Jeddah's city walls, developing a particular style of architecture in response to climate and geographic conditions. There are also certain similarities to the multi-storeyed mud brick houses of the Yemen, and to the now vanished houses on Suakin Island in the Red Sea. Ironically, what saved the houses was the incredibly rapid expansion of new Jeddah outside the old city wall. Fifty years ago, when the walls were demolished to facilitate the motorised traffic in the Kingdom, the city occupied less than one square kilometre, with a population of 30,000 souls. Today it covers 580 square kilometres and houses more than 2 million people. Within a lifetime Jeddah was transformed from a medieval desert town into a sophisticated metropolis, that boasts the longest corniche in the world.

As the benefits of the oil money began to flow, the merchants of Jeddah simply walked out of their traditional houses in the old city and into new European-style buildings constructed on what had been, only months before, the sands of the desert and the sea shore. Many of the old houses have remained empty ever









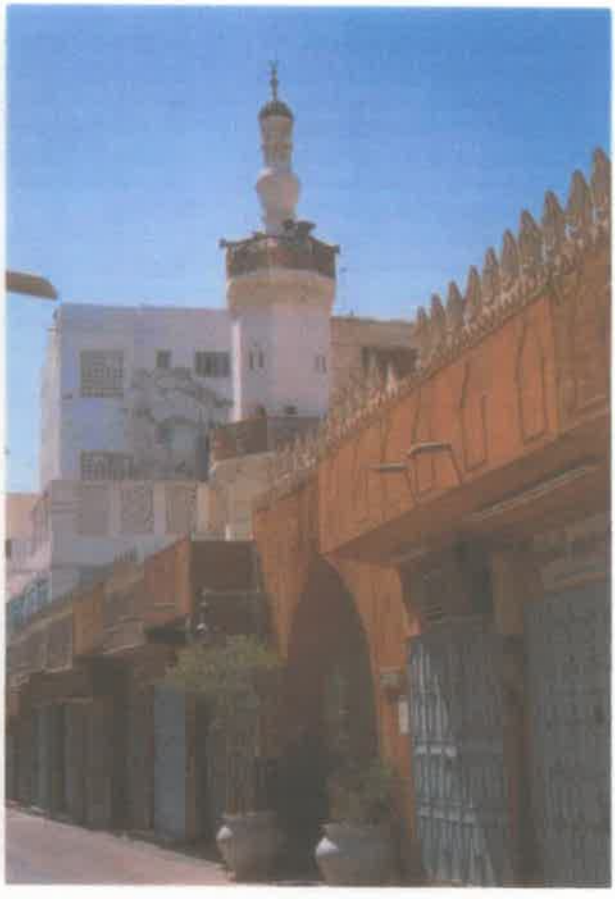
























since, shuttered and locked, while others were rented out to poor, immigrant families and small shop-keepers. Some were demolished, some simply fell down and others were destroyed by fire. Although the city walls have vanished, their ghostly presence still imposes restrictions in Al-Balad and the pattern of narrow, winding streets remains virtually unchanged. New building *has* taken place here, but there is little space for grandiose schemes. Most of Jeddah's recent development has taken place well outside, thus preserving large areas of housing built over the lest four hundred years. Walking through the quiet alleyways of the old city today, especially at dusk, is an enchanting experience, a visit to the world of the "Arabian Nights' Tales". The characteristics of the houses are quickly identified. They were built of coral, a surprisingly durable material, which was hewn into blocks and mortared together with pulverised coral and lime. A smooth plaster for exterior and interior walls was made from the same constituents. Imported timber, sometimes from India, was used to tie the external load-bearing walls together, and for interior fittings. The height of the buildings, a surprising five or six storeys, was a response to the unbearably humid summer heat. Before airconditioning, it was only at roof-top level that the sea-breezes could be caught, and even then, only on the north-west corner of the building. The thickness of the walls provided another defence against the sun, but the most ingenious device was the *rowshans*, beautifully decorated wooden windows that cling to the outside walls like beehives. Their purpose was, as the Arab name indicates, to admit light, but not heat. Cunningly constructed from small pieces of wood, the *rowshans* acted as a filter, between the outside, male-oriented world and the interior world of the women. Here they could sit and gossip with their neighbours across the narrow streets, so narrow that the *rowshans* nearly touched each other. Stands for the pottery jars that kept drinking water cool can still be seen at the base of some *rowshans*.

Inside, the rooms were richly decorated, often with painted designs on the wooden doors and ceilings. Cupboards with carved doors were let into the thick walls, and carpets were draped over divans and amongst Stairwells were at the centre of the house, and rooms led off them at every half-landing. In the large ground floor rooms the men would sit over coffee or a meal. Cooking was done at the top of the house, often in a shaded but unroofed area, again to maximise the coolest part of the building.

One of the finest of these old houses is the Beit Nasif, centrally situated on the old Souk, which boasted for years 'the only tree in Jeddah' outside its handsome doorway. Until last summer (1996), the Beit Nasif had been closed, victim of a bureaucratic wrangle, but it is open today as an ad hoc museum and exhibition centre to promote the architectural treasures of old Jeddah. Nearby is the Jeddah Historic Area Preservation Department, both run by Mr Sami Nawar, the Director. His enthusiasm and genuine love of the past is catching. Quickly he demonstrates experimental patches of plaster on the walls, using the old materials and methods. A register of craftsmen with the old skills has been compiled. Exquisite little models of different types of *rowshans* hang in the hall, and a small showcase contains among other artefacts, a pilgrims' record from the 1920s, listing the camel parties making the two-day journey to Makkah.

Across the street from the Beit Nasif an 18th century house, ruinous almost beyond repair, is now being restored. Its owner had felt demolition was the only option, until persuaded by the Preservation Department to think again. Gradually, using coral blocks reclaimed from buildings that were not so lucky, the walls are being rebuilt, floors relaid, and elaborate *rowshans* stabilised. Archaeological excavations are taking place nearby too, and a large underground cistern, with substantial coral arches, was found recently. Dating from the 16th century, it was rediscovered entirely through local oral tradition which had remembered where it lay, beneath Jeddah's paved alleyways.

The people of Jeddah are gradually realising their unique assets in a country with no history of the heritage industry. They are lucky that this realisation has come when it did. The last remaining mudbrick houses of the capital, Riyadh, are currently being destroyed for another shopping mall, in Makkah, extensive 14th century buildings were recently demolished to provide better facilities for pilgrims. All of old Taif, the summer capital, has gone. Almost as sad (for Westerners, at least), is the loss of artefacts connected with the recent past. The Riyadh Souk is full of unrecognised treasures including farming implements, finely embroidered costumes, Bedouin jewellery, and simple household items that furnished the traditional house, and are already irreplaceable, because they are no longer made. Mr Nawar's collection in the Beit Nasif, small as it is, is one of the first attempts to gather the evidence of a way of life that began to vanish only decades ago.

Luckily, the few heritage enthusiasts that do exist are proceeding in a pragmatic way, ensuring that once buildings are restored they are sensitively re-utilised. A photographic studio, and an artists' exhibition gallery have been established in two of the old houses. Texas trained Saudi architect, Dr Sami Angawi, recently rehabilitated one of the empty coral houses, turning the ground floor rooms into offices, yet at the same time retaining traditional features, like the palm screen at the windows, and a small, interior fountain. He has recently completed his own, new house, outside Al-Balad, but inspired by, and adapting features from the old city.

Dr Angawi is not alone in arguing that modern Arab housing does not have to be Western style housing. A small, but significant number of Saudi architects are starting to re-evaluate traditional buildings, and to consider what made them so suitable as comfortable desert dwellings. If their findings can be translated today into energy saving structures that need less expensive air-conditioning, then there will be fewer pastiches of unsuitable European buildings. There will also emerge a genuine indigenous architecture, together with the hope that old and new Jeddah can now begin to live harmoniously side by side with each other.

Dr Rosie Llewellyn-Jones studied Urdu at Soas, University of London, and is particularly interested in indigenous Islamic architecture, modified by colonial influences. Currently supervising women students at King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, she works for South Bank University, London.

The Dictionary of Art

IAN JACOBS / JANE TURNER / OLEG GRABAR

After 14 years in preparation The Dictionary Of Art *was officially launched at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York on 16th October 1996, and at the Banqueting House, London, on 23 October.*

Readers of this journal have already been informed of the extensive coverage given to arts of the Islamic world in an article written by Sheila S Blair and Jonathan Bloom (*Arts & The Islamic World*, Number 20, Spring 1991, pp.50-51, 75).

To mark the publication of this landmark reference work, we are publishing here three documents. The first is the speech made by Jane Turner, Editor of *The Dictionary of Art*, at the Banqueting House, Whitehall, in London on 23 October. The second is the speech given by Professor Oleg Grabar at the Metropolitan Museum. The third is a note on Islamic art in the *Dictionary*. Together they illustrate how the *Dictionary of Art* has succeeded in documenting the history of the visual arts of all the world's cultures. In doing so, it celebrates both the unique qualities and the extraordinary diversity of the works produced by artists throughout the centuries, while at the same time documenting the common threads which link the artistic cultures of peoples who at first sight might seem to be quite distinct.



Nicholas Byam Shaw, Chairman and Jane Turner, Editor at the Dictionary of Art's New York Launch. The Metropolitan Museum of Art on 16 October 1996.

Speech by Jane Turner

20 years ago, when *The Dictionary of Art* was originally conceived, I was a young American art history student in Paris, and it was then that I made my first visit to London, which was later to become my much beloved adopted home. If you stop to consider as I have, how profoundly the discipline of art history has changed in these two decades since I was a student, then I think you would agree that Macmillan Publishers couldn't have picked a more exciting time in which to prepare a companion to their highly acclaimed New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians.

When Nicky Byam Shaw, Chairman of Macmillan Publishers Limited, and his colleagues took the courageous decision in the early 1980s to embark on this 34-volume dictionary of the visual arts, they knew it was absolutely unprecedented [illegible] publishing project. Nothing of this sheer size and scope had ever been attempted, at least not from scratch. They also knew that in order for the *Dictionary of Art* to be successful, it would have to be different from other art reference books. It would have to address the needs of a modern audience – one far more sophisticated and [illegible] than even a few years ago. They realised too that this dictionary, besides being comprehensive in its coverage, would have to be completely up-to-date in its research. Art history has become a boom subject and for those interested in art and culture, there has never been so much new evidence to consider. Just think, for instance, how

many archaeological discoveries have been made in the last 20 years, such as the discovery in China two years ago of a group of terracotta female figures on horseback, the counterparts to the well-known army of standing male warriors excavated



Nicholas Byam Shaw, Chairman, The Earl of Stockton, President with Henry Luce III at the Dictionary of Art's New York Launch. The Metropolitan Museum of Art on 16 October 1996.

20 years earlier. The British daily newspapers are full of stories of ancient Roman remains being dug up in the course of building work in the City, but how many of you know that Japan's similar property boom led to 13,000 excavations in the year 1982 alone. And it's not just archaeological finds that are unearthed. Information continues to come to light about even the world's best-known artists, as will be appreciated, I'm sure, by those of you who saw the recent exhibitions at the National Gallery on Rembrandt or Michelangelo.

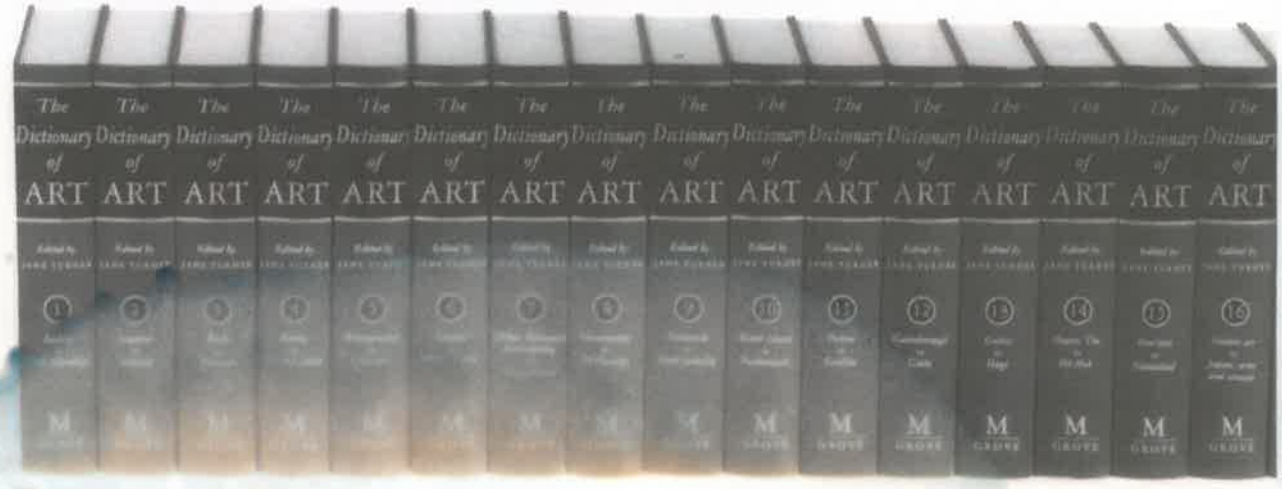
Of course new facts and opinions will always continue to emerge, but perhaps more fundamental to the way we now understand art are the changes that have occurred in the last 20 years in the way that it is studied. Art historians no longer look only at questions of connoisseurship, formal analysis and stylistic development, though these do continue to be important issues. They want to know other things as well – for whom, why and how a work of art was produced.

Besides a greater interest in context, there are whole new areas – including art forms, cultures and artists – that were once neglected but now attract the same interest as those subjects that make up the traditional canon of Western European art. The arts of India and the Islamic world, and of the peoples of Africa, are now finding their place in a more universal history of art, as well as in the exhibition schedules of institutions such as the Royal Academy.

All of these fundamental changes are reflected in the pages of the *Dictionary of Art*. The result is a reference tool that should take us well into the 21st century, one that is authoritative and up-to-date in both its facts and its approach, as well as in its range and balance of coverage.

In addition to reflecting changes in art history the *Dictionary* also reflects the consequences of the momentous political changes that took place during the late 80s and early 90s as we were preparing it. These global upheavals certainly added to the excitement and editorial challenge (and made quite a bit of extra work for us!) But they also enabled us to enlist the support of the entire worldwide art-historical community. Just think of it: 6,802 scholars from 120 different countries – this makes the *Dictionary of Art* unquestionably the largest and most ambitious international collaborative effort ever undertaken in the history of art publishing.

We had authors from all over the world, and texts arrived in no fewer than 30 different languages. But the majority of the editorial work was done here in London, in our offices on the Strand. It is thus a special pleasure to welcome so many of our local advisers and former staff members here this evening. For me personally, it has been an honour and joy to have been involved with this project as editor. I should also like to salute the firm Macmillan for its commitment to long-term publishing. But most of all, it is *you*, the hundreds of authors in tonight's audience, from the UK, as well as Italy, Spain and Scandinavia, who deserve the thanks and congratulations. The 34 volumes that you see here tonight represent



Islamic Art in The Dictionary of Art

The Dictionary of Art contains the most comprehensive coverage of Islamic art ever published in one source: "the greatest single accomplishment in the field of Islamic art-historical scholarship in the whole of the history of the subject," as Professor Robert Hillenbrand, of the University of Edinburgh, put it.

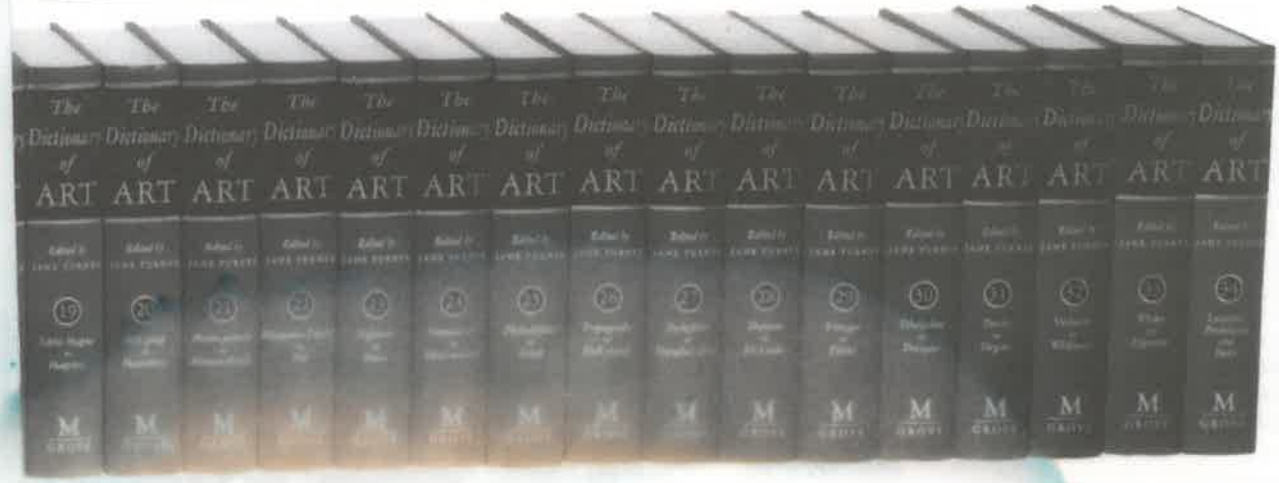
An in-depth survey of Islamic art, comprising over 400 pages with 250 illustrations, begins with an introduction to Islamic history, aesthetics, patronage, trade and subject matter. Art forms such as architecture, the arts of the book, metalwork, woodwork, ceramics, textiles, glass and crystal are thoroughly examined in over 300 specialized articles from the origins of Islam to contemporary times. *The Dictionary* is the first publication ever to cover so many forms of Islamic art in such extraordinary detail. For example, *The Dictionary's* section on the arts of the book is the only published source in which the interplay between calligraphy, illumination, illustration, bookbinding, paper, and printing can be seen as parts of a single story. *The Dictionary* also addresses such issues as patronage, collecting and connoisseurship, examining them together for the first time.

The Dictionary of Art places the discussion of Islamic artistic traditions in an interdisciplinary context. The hundreds of articles on Islamic art are complemented and extended by a major survey of Islam which provides background information about Islamic religious beliefs. This historical introduction is a masterful synthesis of some 1400 years of complex history and evolving artistic traditions.

Islamic art is examined in the Near East and North Africa, the Indian sub-continent, Central Asia, Southeast Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and Europe, including Spain, Sicily and Hungary. Individual artists are profiled in biographies such as Bagir, the foremost enameller of 19th-century Iran, and Mehmed Aga, Ottoman chief court architect in the early 17th century. In addition, *The Dictionary's* extensive cross-referencing and its extraordinary index allow the reader to trace the many intersections of Islam and other cultures, religions and civilizations.

The Dictionary of Art has initiated new research on virtually all areas of Islamic art. One notable strength is the coverage of Western Central Asia, which introduces the many discoveries of scholars from the former Soviet Union to readers around the world. Moreover, there is up-to-date information on such current issues as Islamic art in the 20th century, forgeries, methods employed for the scientific testing of objects, historiography, museums and exhibitions.

Some foremost scholars contributing to the coverage of Islamic art are: Chahryar Adle, J W Allan, Esin Atil, Marianne Barrucand, Eva Baer, Sheila Blair, Jonathan Bloom, Walter B Denny, Francois Déroche, Eugenio Galdieri, Oleg Grabar, Robert Hillenbrand, Richard Humphreys, A A Ivanov, Aptullah Kuran, B Marshak, Robert D McChesney, Bernard O'Kane, J M Rogers, Annemarie Schimmel, Eleanor Sims, Priscilla Soucek and Ye V Zeymal.



our collective achievement, and what a very remarkable achievement it is!

Speech by Prof Oleg Grabar:
I am speaking on this occasion as one of the ten godfathers who were called quite a few years ago to serve, I suppose, as guardian angels during the long gestation period of the *Dictionary of Art*. We were not (at least I was not) often consulted, because of the extraordinary team Jane Turner managed to assemble and, except for half a dozen opinions given during the course of writing, our (or my) main function came at the very beginning, when fundamental decisions, were made about the structure of the Dictionary.

These discussions in the meeting rooms of some Boston hotel still resonate with me as moments when we were made to come face to face with a host of ideas and opinions usually put aside or hidden under the rug during most of our professional lives, and with incompatible choices, for instance about the equilibrium to maintain between countries and periods. Others will have to judge the appropriateness of the decisions made, but it is reasonable to assume that godfathers are proud of their stand on this score. One can be proud of the world's books. The size and the weight are impressive, the pages are [illegible] and the black and white photographs are numerous and of good quality, the colour photographs insufficient and oddly distributed (a common criticism of most books), the indexes are numerous and elaborate, the bibliographies are overwhelming, the sections, sub-sections, paragraphs and sub-paragraphs are a bit distracting (there are over 400 of them in my own field of Islamic art). But the overall effect of the work is that it is endowed with all the capacities it will ever need to face the onslaught of seekers of knowledge and information. And I can just imagine how the *Dictionary's* immune system is ready to make mincemeat of all those who will fail to find in it whatever they were looking for. It *is* there and you will learn to find it.

The godparents can also be proud of the *Dictionary's* content. Not in the usual way of a knowledge that there is a lot of it and that most of it is unknown to most of us (but it is never the same things that are unknown to the same people). Rather in the much more original way in which it reflects the complexities of the world of art today in at least three ways that are not part of the traditional canons of art history and criticism.

One is that the whole world is [illegible] present, as between jade [illegible] and the wonderful descriptions of Chinese techniques and several pages on highly Anglo-Saxon "James", there lies the Buddhist monastery of Jamalgarkhi hitherto unknown to me and a lengthy essay on the arts in Jamaica, hardly the stuff of even advanced courses in the history of art. The *Dictionary* was meant to be and is indeed truly universal in its coverage and has distributed its pages according to the reality of the world and of its history, not according to some pre-established artistic canon.



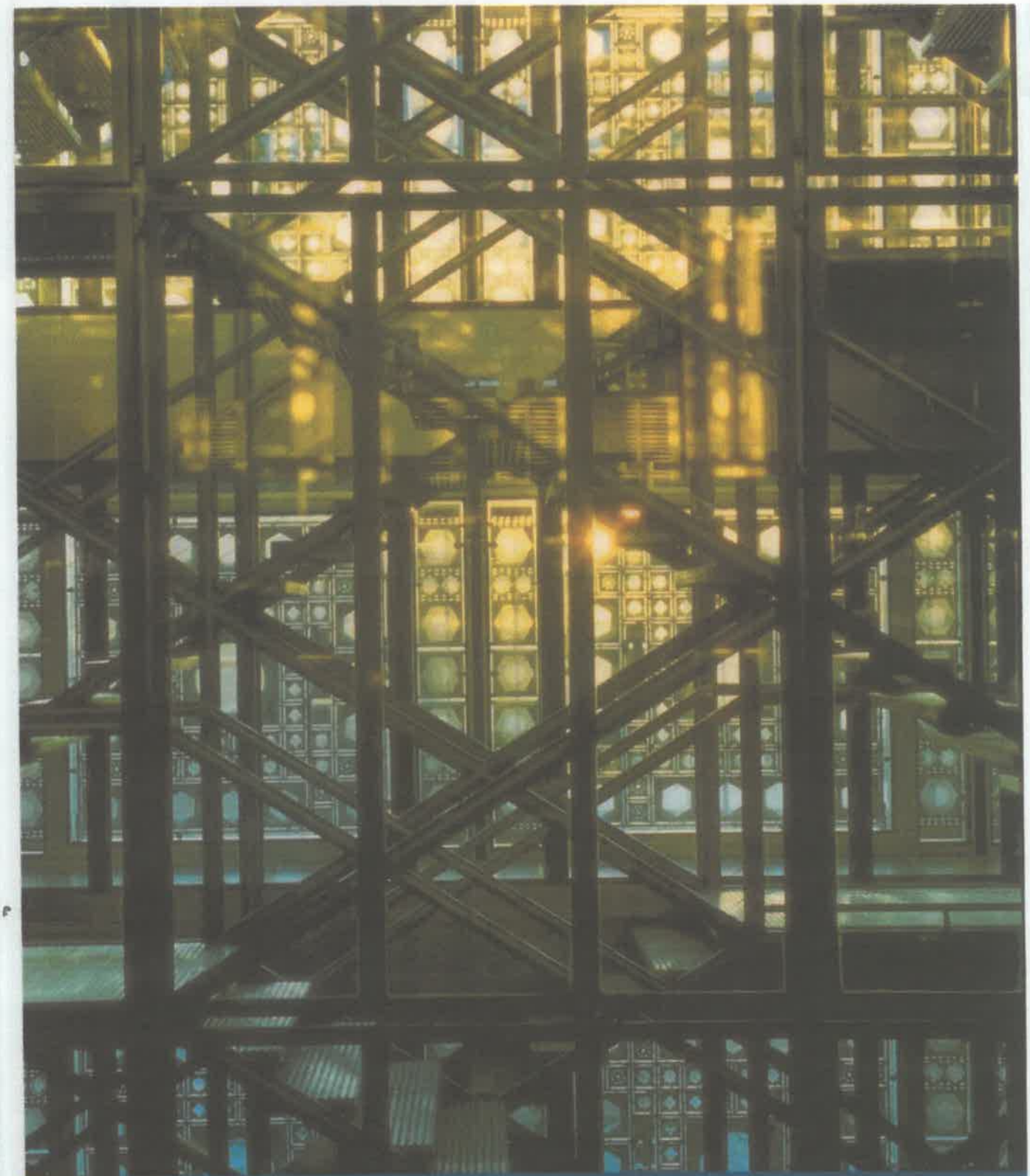


Above: Oleg Grabar, Professor of Islamic Art, School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University. Above, left: Nicholas Byam Shaw, Chairman.

The second way of reflecting contemporary artistic directions is that the presentation of artifacts and works of art is always accompanied by sections on patronage, historiography, collecting, and so on, in other words with full acknowledgment of the vast contexts of the work of art.

And the third way is the recognition that to deal with the arts is also to deal with ideas and that ideas are expressed in words. There are, therefore, entries devoted to the sometimes permanent and sometimes faddish ways in which we see the arts and deal with them.

Universal, contextual and intellectual, the *Dictionary* is certainly much more than any of its godparents imagined. But it is throughout – in what it says, in how it says it, and in how it looks – an homage to artistic creativity itself, to paraphrase Baudelaire, these "passionate cries which roll from age, to age and come to rest at the edges of eternity." The *Dictionary* has captured that edge and proudly proclaims that art is technique, taste and thought, and that it is present everywhere and in everything that can reflect the yearnings of men and women for pleasure, for reflection and for beauty.



IMA: Arab World Institute in Paris

MOHAMED BENNOUNA

IMA – Institut du Monde Arabe – opened in its new premises in 1987. In an interview, its Director General, Dr Mohamed Bennouna, explains the role of this "cultural bridge" which epitomises a constant dialogue between two worlds. Also introduced here, on the pages that follow, are two major IMA exhibits, one on Arab Medicine and the other on Sudan.

People sometimes make no distinction between the Arab World and the Islamic World. How do you define the Arab World?

A: Indeed, there has been a mix-up. I believe it is essential to clear this point. Very often, the Arab World is reduced to a religion, Islam.

Although the religious heritage plays a crucial part in the Arab culture, especially the Arab art, many Arabs are not Muslims and 90% of the Muslim community is non-Arab.

It is difficult to give an accurate definition of the Arab world. From a geographical point of view, the Arab World has been constantly changing, comprising people from different races and cultures. Once restricted to the Arabian peninsula, around the Red Sea, the Arab World has gradually included Northern Africa (Maghreb) and the Middle East. In the 8th century, Southern Europe was under Arab rule, and Spain remained part of the Arab World until the 15th century.

Finally, it appears that the main link between so many different people is a common language, Arabic. Even if Ibn Rushd was born in Spain and Avicenna in Persia, they have both written in Arabic that was once the universal language for science, technology and philosophy.

Why do we use the expression 'Arab World'? Is it a world within a world?

What we call the 'Arab World' is actually a very eclectic mix of several worlds linked by the same language. But far from being withdrawn in their own culture and way of living, the Arabs have always been open to the rest of the world. They have, for instance, been acting as intermediaries between the East and the West, thanks to their skills as navigators. Aristotle's philosophy has been introduced in Europe through Arab translations, and many Arab words are used in European languages (algebra, zero, zenith etc.). And this is the aspect we wish to emphasise here, at the Institut du Monde Arabe. The shape of our building – a ship – reminds the visitors of the role of the Arab World as an intermediary, taking culture, science and technology from one end of the world to the other.

What is the Institut du Monde Arabe and what purpose does it serve? How was the project initiated?

A: After the economic crisis of the 1970s between the West and the Arab countries, a financial co-operation was inevitable. The West got more and more aware of the existence of a powerful Arab identity. This is how the idea of a cultural partnership, essential to understand the inner mechanism of Arab thought and society, was gradually introduced in France.



On 23 June 1980, 19 Arab countries and France approved the statutes to build a 'cultural bridge' (pont culturel) between the two shores of the Mediterranean. Libya joined in 1984, followed by Egypt and Palestine in 1989.

Opened in its new premises on 8 December 1987, the Arab World Institute aims to promote cultural exchanges and to develop a better knowledge of the Arab world, especially through its language and civilisation. It also undertakes the function of informing the Arab population settled in France, which constitutes an important proprtion of the visitors.

The architecture of the Institut du Monde Arabe also reflects this. The building itself is one of a number of ambitious projects, initiated by President Francois Mitterrand's Government including the Bastile Opera and the Louvre Pyramid. It was designed by a group of architects, Jean Nouvel, Gilbert Lezenes and Pierre Soria, to reflect both Arab and Western cultures. The southern facade consists of steel shutters, reminiscent of the *mashrabiyah*, that open and close according to the degree of daylight. This modern use of Arab geometry is based on the principle of the

diaphragm. Located in a traditional area of Paris, the Institut du Monde Arabe epitomises a constant dialogue between two worlds. And this is also the significance of the sculpture by Mona Saudi, a Jordanian Arab artist, in front of the southern facade, symbolising co-operation, friendship, mutual respect and understanding.

What are the main departments of the Institut du Monde Arabe?

A: Basically, the IMA is built around the museum and the library.



The "Museum of Museums" is constantly enhanced by large collections from its founding countries. A hundred and eighty objects have been entrusted to the Institute for three years by Syria and Tunisia, for instance. These objects, which include the rarest archaeological pieces as well as the most contemporary creations, complete the IMA's permanent collection; and there are guides to show visitors around. Ceramics, ancient costumes, bas-reliefs,astrolabes etc retrace the history of Arab-Islamic civilisation. At the heart of the museum, the shafts of light from the inner patio provide natural lighting.

The library, a transparent spiral tower in the shape of a ziggurat, has over 50,000 books and 1,200 periodicals not only in French and Arabic but also in English, German, Spanish and Italian. Readers are free to help themselves from the shelves. The audio-visual centre (Espace Image et Son) is located on the lower ground floor. It offers 15,000 slides and some 400 documentaries, arranged by theme and renewed every month.

In addition to these departments, various symposia, series of conferences, and a 'Chaire de l'IMA' answer the need to explore the destiny of Arab societies through their relationship with Europe. Eminent specialists are called to discuss subjects such as 'Law and Religion in Islam' or 'The Arab World during the Oil Years'. To get even more information, a CD-ROM provides a constantly updated data bank.

The Institut du Monde Arabe also appeals to a larger public, through the 'Seances de l'IMA', poetry recitals, concerts, musicals etc, where visitors can discover popular as well as contemporary music. The third in the series of Arab Cinema Biennial's took place in June 1996. For the centenary of Tunisian cinema, the Institute held a Festival with over 60 full length films. A Euro-Arab Book Fair is also held every two years.

Classes to learn Arabic as a means to understand the culture are available, and we publish a quarterly *Al-Mukhtarat* for learners of Arabic at all levels. We also publish two other reviews: *Mars*, a trilingual (French-Arabic-English) which appears twice a year, is aimed to help researchers to find out more about the Arab world and relies on the help of an international network of research institutes that have recently formed an association called ICMA, and our main publication, a quarterly named *Qantara* (bridge, in Arabic), which aims to introduce or familiarise the French public with the Arab culture.

What's on?

A. These days - and until 3 March 1997 - we are having a unique exhibition on "The Caliph's Medicine", which brings together many rare objects and manuscripts. This exhibition is in perfect harmony with the aim and message of the Institute which, on the one hand intends to show and to emphasise the specificity and grandeur of the Arab civilization, and on the other hand endeavours to explain and interpret that Arab culture has been an essential element for the building and the construction of the culture and civilization of the West. That is to say, the Arabs cannot be positioned outside of what constitute the contemporary trends of the Western way of thinking.

What next?

A. A huge exhibition on *Sudan: Kingdoms on the Nile*, opens its doors on 4 February until the end of August 1997. It is the first time that an exhibit of such importance has been devoted to a country which is at the same time the largest and yet the least known of the Arab world, specially on the Continent. This exhibition presents Sudan from pre-historic times until the introduction of Christianity and Islam in the country. For this exhibition, objects have been brought together from African, European and American collections. The exhibition at the IMA is visualised as a large archaeological excavation in which the objects and the statues are displayed.

Dr Mohamed Bemouna was interviewed in Paris by Sakina Haider.

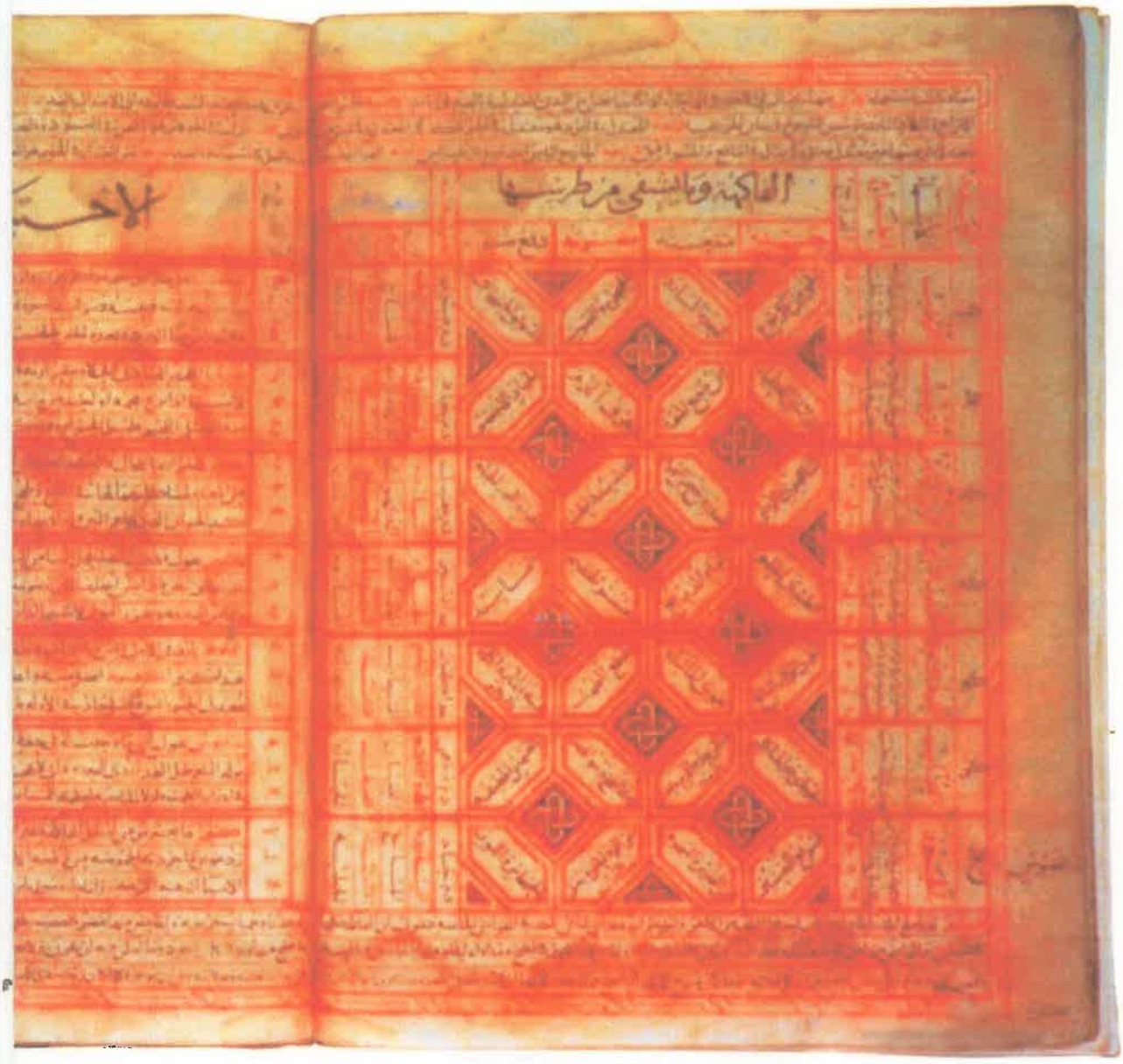
Arab Medicine:
A Forgotten Heritage

An exhibition entitled "Medicine During the Times of the Caliphs" opened at IMA in Paris on 20 November 1996 (until 2 March 1997). It was held with the collaboration of the Bibliotheque Nationale de France and in partnership with the Figaroscope et Science et vie Junior. Following are extracts from the exhibition catalogue:

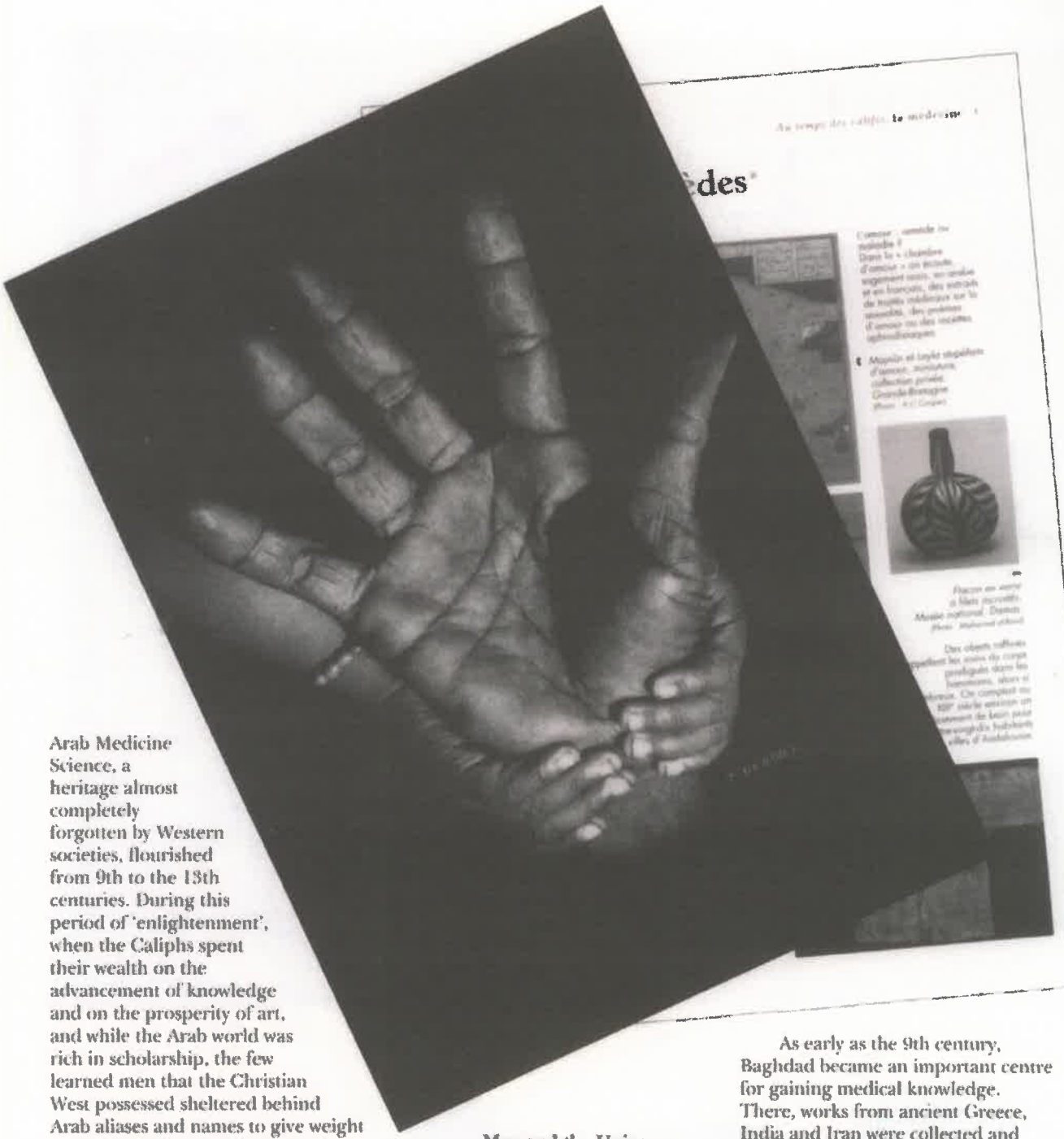




Left: Waistcoat, talisman, second half of 17th century. H.51cm. Paris Collection. Photograph by P Maillard. **Above:** Manuscript Ibn Butlan. 13th century. British Library Collection. Photo courtesy British Library. **Opposite page, left:** Jar. Iran 9th-10th century. Collection of Kuwait National Museum. Photo courtesy Kuwait National Museum. **Right:** Ceramic Vase. Iran 12th century. Collection of Gemeentemuseum. Photo courtesy Gemeentemuseum.







Arab Medicine Science, a heritage almost completely forgotten by Western societies, flourished from 9th to the 13th centuries. During this period of 'enlightenment', when the Caliphs spent their wealth on the advancement of knowledge and on the prosperity of art, and while the Arab world was rich in scholarship, the few learned men that the Christian West possessed sheltered behind Arab aliases and names to give weight and credibility to their theories.

The aims of holding such an exhibition are to promote the understanding of Arab Medicine through the work of these exceptionally gifted scholars who contributed towards it, to probe into their concept of Man, to explore the methods used over the centuries to preserve good health and to cure, to understand a system of health which prevailed during that period, and above all, to admire the formidable works which bear witness to the tremendous knowledge shared by these scholars.

Man and the Universe

With the benefit of sharing a common language, which was Arabic, a unique know-how, together with an unprecedented sophistication, flourished throughout the empire. Different schools of thoughts spread from Spain to the far corners of Afghanistan. The grace of the columns and the magic of icons, where pillars are decorated with representations of the elements and parables of man, this is how we perceive the relationship between Man and the Elements as they were expressed in the medicine during the times of the Caliphs.

As early as the 9th century, Baghdad became an important centre for gaining medical knowledge. There, works from ancient Greece, India and Iran were collected and translated:

'Poets are the princes of the words,
Physicians rule over the body,
The eloquence of the former pleases the soul,
The dedication of the latter cures the sick'.
Ibn-Sina 980-1037

The Room of the Keys

The vision that man had about himself in relationship to the universe and towards the elements (earth, air, fire,water) and their states (hot, cold, wet, dry) can all be experienced,

while standing under the dome in the 'hall of the keys'. This is where one can observe the true origin of these 'states' or 'moods', whether they were positive or negative, whether the temperament of a person was related to the 'bile', the 'lymph' to 'anger' or to 'melancholy'. These findings influenced medical practices over the next few centuries.

The Garden of Remedies

The knowledge about man and his temperament were the guidelines for the therapeutic prescriptions, whose elements made up a luxurious 'garden of remedies', thus reminding one that in this civilization all the senses were mobilized and their health was synonymous with well being and enjoyment.

At the centre, there is an enormous path: the 'table of remedies' comprises an impressive medley of animals, plants, minerals, precious potions, spices and aromatic preparations. Food and drink, perfumes and ointments were prescribed along with drugs.

Around this table, various spaces represent the several ways in which to take care of the body, the art of diet, sexuality, astrology. In those days,surgery was an integral part of Arab medicine whereas in the Latin world, this practice was left to barbers.

Diagrams of human anatomy, surgical instruments, instruments for ophthalmic examination, all form part of the ultimate remedies in this garden. Very fine and highly sophisticated objects are all reminders of the great care and superb treatment received in public baths or *hammams*, which were very popular.

During the eighth century, there was one public bath per 90 inhabitants in the towns of Andalusia.

In the astrology office there is a large selection of talismans as well as a collection of manuscripts and horoscopes. Arab medicine paid great attention to the movements of planets and stars.

Hospital: Jewel of Arab Medicine

A staircase leads to the hospital – the jewel of Arab medicine. A whole visual spectacle underlines the originality of these establishments, the concept of which was thought of eight centuries before it manifested itself in the West.

These hospitals sprang up from the wish to see care and attention dispersed to the most deprived sections of the society. They also combined the art of putting medical theory into practice. Sponsored by important financial sources,these hospitals were the outcome of a need to provide good quality care under an organized and controlled system.

Renowned medical researchers and physicians worked in these hospitals, which in turn provided highly sophisticated treatment free of charge.

The architecture of these hospitals bears witness to the grandeur of the rulers. Patients were treated within a pleasant and highly functional environment; the treatments were then complemented by lectures and instructions given to the patients and consultants to help them achieve speedy recovery.

The hospitals had well stocked libraries, with a large collection of reference books and ancient manuscripts. In the libraries experienced practicioners delivered lectures to future doctors.

The Library

The most spectacular part of the exhibition is probably the library; this is a real treasure containing pages from original manuscripts, belonging to collections from all over the world. Works from some of the greatest scholars of all times like Avicenna, Rhazes, Averroes, Haly Abbas, can be admired there; they are all written on gilded paper.

One can read and listen to French to passages from their work. Side by side, along with dissertations written in Arabic, there are pieces in Syriac, Greek, Sanskrit. These were all translated as early as the 9th century.

The library is the meeting place with the formidable figures which graced the history of Arabs throughout the countries. These exceptional men were well-versed in several sciences; they were brilliant mathematicians and philosophers, engineers and musicians, poets and astronomers.

Whether they were Persian like Avicenna (Ibn-Sina), Andalusian like Mainomides, whether they were Muslims or Jews, or even Christians, like the Iraqi, Ibn-e-Butlan, they all expressed their views in one common language, i.e. Arabic.
All these scholars enjoyed the protection of the rulers who, in turn, held them in high esteem and were extremely proud of their achievements.

The medical knowledge of Arabs was built up from the studies in medicine from ancient Greece, Iran and India. The translations into Arabic of these manuscripts have saved them from being lost.

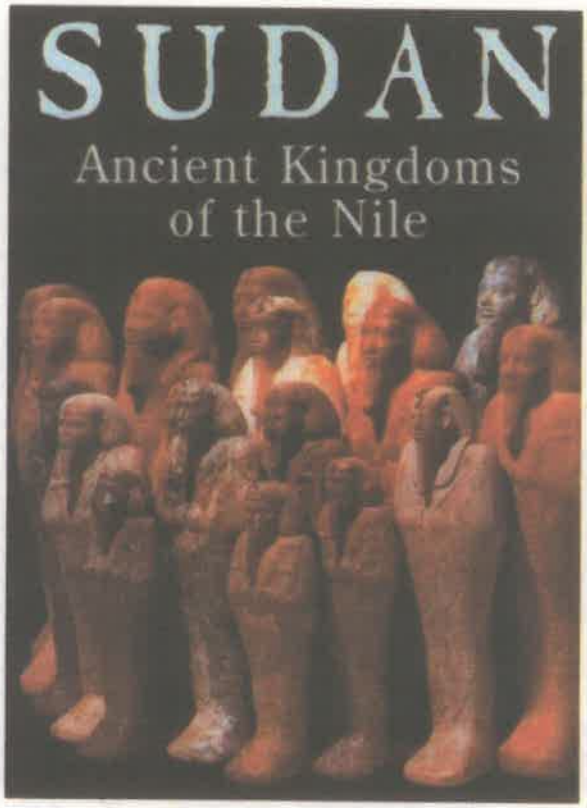
Towards the end of the Middle Ages, the medical knowledge of the Arabs was passed on and translated into Latin, Hebrew, Persian, Turkish and Indian languages.

In this way, the West rediscovered its original Greek medicine, which was further enriched and improved by five centuries of intense research, criticism, theory and practice.

Extracts from the exhibition catalogue translated from the original French by Farida Baig.

Sudan: Ancient Kingdom of the Nile

"The Sudan is naturally African and decidedly Arab". IMA President Camille Cabanna underlines in his Foreword introducing the volume *Sudan: Ancient Kingdom of the Nile* published by Flammarion to coincide with the IMA exhibition with the same title (4 February - August 1997): the first major presentation of its kind to be seen in Europe.



He adds: "Set at the confluence of the White and Blue Niles - where the great river is doubled - the capital city is tripled. It is a place of exchanges, made up of three towns: Khartoum, Omdurman, and North Khartoum. This is the urban version of the parable about the Other and the Same. The Sudan is clearly multi-faceted and complex. To match this diversity of freality, there is an air of monolithic hugeness. These are the paradoxes that this exhibition on the Sudan at the Institute du Monde Arabe aims to explore".

Emphasizing that "Few museums can boast collections that are solely Sudanese and few universities offer courses specially devoted to Ancient Sudan", he concludes: "Our knowledge in this area is still imperfect, with some areas unknown. This is the case for the – still incomplete – deciphering of the language of Meroe, of which 'the variety of preserved inscribed monuments is so great that we can assume both knowledge and use of writing for a significant portion of the population'. Yet we still cannot translate it today.... In these conditions, attempting a major exhibition on the Sudan was a long shot. But the risk paid off, as a visit to the exhibition or a look at this catalogue shows. We owe this success both to the curators of the museums in Africa, America, and Europe who agreed to part with some of the finest exhibits in their collection for the occasion, as well as to all the other specialists, university professors or researchers, museologists and archaeologists who gave us the benefit of their knowledge. We take this opportunity to thank them all."

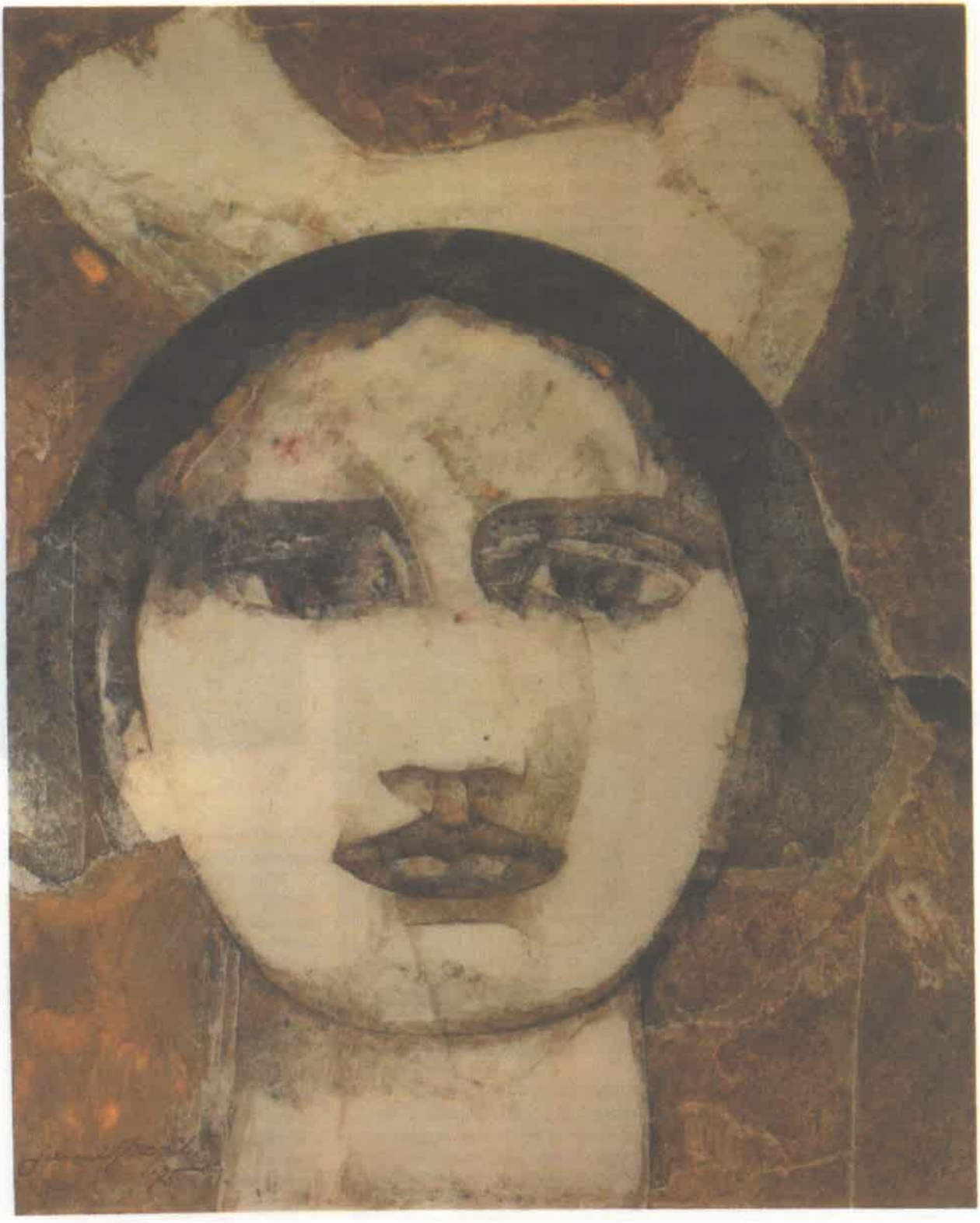
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Jamil Naqsh

TYABA HABIB

Shy, reclusive and astonishingly prolific, Jamil Naqsh, still in his 50's, has won wide acclaim as a painters' painter. His work deserves to be better known and appreciated wider afield.

Jamil Naqsh was born in Kairana on the bank of the River Jumna, in a family of Muslim landed gentry where, together with prayers and fasting, Persian and Urdu poetry, classical music, pigeon and kite flying, chess and *shikar* were the preoccupation of old and young alike. This was the most romantic region of the South Asian subcontinent, abounding in ancient temples, stupas and Mughal monuments, where Urdu ghazal and Hindi geet reached their zenith, where the sufi and yogi, following their different religious disciplines yet shared a common beatific vision; and where Mughal and Rajput miniature painting flourished for centuries.



Then came the partition of the subcontinent and the birth of Pakistan, his new home. Jamil was not alone in this migration and uprooting. Every thing was in a state of flux. Change was the order of the day – a world away from the stability and continuity of life in Kairana where the passing centuries seemed to have affected no change in the way of life or culture. It was the end of Jamil's age of innocence, growing up at the age of nine in a grim struggle for survival.

But was it? Lahore on the bank of the river Ravi had always rivalled Delhi and Agra in the splendour of its art and architecture and was the home of the great painters, poets and novelists of the subcontinent. Its romantic association with Noor Jehan and Jehangir, Salim and Anarkali, its museum with a wealth of Mughal and Rajput paintings, its Lawrence Park, race course, and particularly the walled city with its old world atmosphere, filled him with wondrous joy and determined his future vocation. It provided him with the trinity of his symbols or significant forms: woman, pigeon and horse – woman as the most precious gift of the Divine Artificer to man; pigeon as a bird of freedom and romance; and finally horse as an embodiment of strength and grace and the legendary companion of man. In short, human soul in love and ecstasy.' It was therefore natural for him to drift into Lahore's Mayo School (now National College of Art), and into the orbit of Ustad Haji Sharif who made his own paint, paper and brush and copied the old masters meticulously in the age-old tradition.



Mayo School of Art was founded during the last century by the British and followed the British academic style or the Bengali revivalist tradition. Even though Amrita Sher Gil had blazed a new trail in the 1930s and Zubeida Agha in the '40s had introduced the latest concepts of Western art, it was left to Shakir Ali to change it drastically. Indeed to the ardent youngmen gathered around him in awe and admiration, Shakir Ali was a modern-day Socrates and Marco Polo rolled into one. He had visited the great centres of Western art, and his success fired the imagination of the younger painters in Pakistan who started aping current 'isms' at the cost of neglecting their own heritage altogether. Form has a vital relationship with spirit, which is eternal, and so all over the so-called traditional societies, transition to modernity is fraught with risk. A thoughtless union of Western norms and methods with Eastern art could



be as incongruous in painting as a marriage between Western pop and Eastern classical music.

Unlike his fellow students Jamil was not taken by the master's passion and advocacy of the contemporary Western art, which he decided was not for him. He had to go back to his own roots for inspiration and guidance. For him, art, though universal, stems from the soil and landscape of a country and is as holy as its religion. Its function is to create unity and harmony and not conflict and division. The Western artists depict their fears and hopes by breaking and restructuring their compositions in creating what is often described as unified tension.

So began Jamil's sojourn in the world of art. Later he left Lahore and embarked upon an extended pilgrimage of the historical and artistic sites of South Asia from Nepal to Sri Lanka, and Bengal to Baluchistan. His teacher, Haji Sharif was unhappy, but Jamil told him, 'I shall be known as your student and not that of an institution of brick and mortar'. As tradition demanded therefore, his early miniatures were signed 'Pupil of Haji Sharif'.

Jamil painted all things miniature, figurative and semi abstract. He experimented with many a theme initially focusing on woman, pigeon and horse. Also calligraphy. And regardless of the theme or the medium, all his works reflect the discipline of the miniature artist. He has no preference for the medium of expression either. He is equally comfortable with oils, watercolour, pencil or crayon. Paper or canvas is all the same to him. He approaches surface as one would a new beginning.

Most Eastern artists are said to paint with their 'mind image' and not directly from nature. This is true also of Jamil Naqsh, who goes one step further and, as Michelangelo had no problem in releasing a figure from its stone [illegible] chipping away the outer trappings, Jamil simply stamps his total vision on the canvas without making any changes or alteration during his process of painting, his brush seldom going astray.

For Jamil, beauty must have an organised form , but not too regular or too similar. There must be slight deformations in the shape so that parts are not like the whole. Each element is repeated, everytime a little differently, particularly when it comes to abstract art, for all abstract art is 'fractal', coming as it does from equations and nature. His treatments on canvas and on opaque washes with oil on paper are immediately recognizable as his signature textures. In order to make a significant contribution to the world of art he has to remain true to his own genius rooted in his own part of the world. This could also be described as a 'unified surface tension'.

Jamil seldom exhibits his work in art galleries. He meets his visitors at his own home which he has built himself, brick by brick, and furnished with loving care and a characteristic eye for detail. It has a choice selection of miniature paintings, his own, as well as those of his pupils and distinguished contemporaries; also antiques, brick-a-brac, the deep shine of rosewood floorings, the patina of old rugs, art albums and books. There is a clear view of the sky through the branches of trees and a variety of plants which seem to grow in and out of the building itself and are alive with the fluttering and cooing of his beloved pigeons.

Of course the pride of his house is his studio, reminding one of the words of Keats, 'My imagination is my monastery and I am its monk'. That is the sanctuary to which Jamil retires when he works, shut off from the rest of the world, doing what he likes best: working day and night, stopping only to rest! As he himself once wrote:

'Life's unending monotony
was unbearable.
But I accepted the pain
and began to live with it.
An oyster feels the agony
caused by the grain of sand.
But it covers the pain,
layer upon layer,
creating a thing of beauty,
Thus I paint.'....

Jamil is known as a painters'

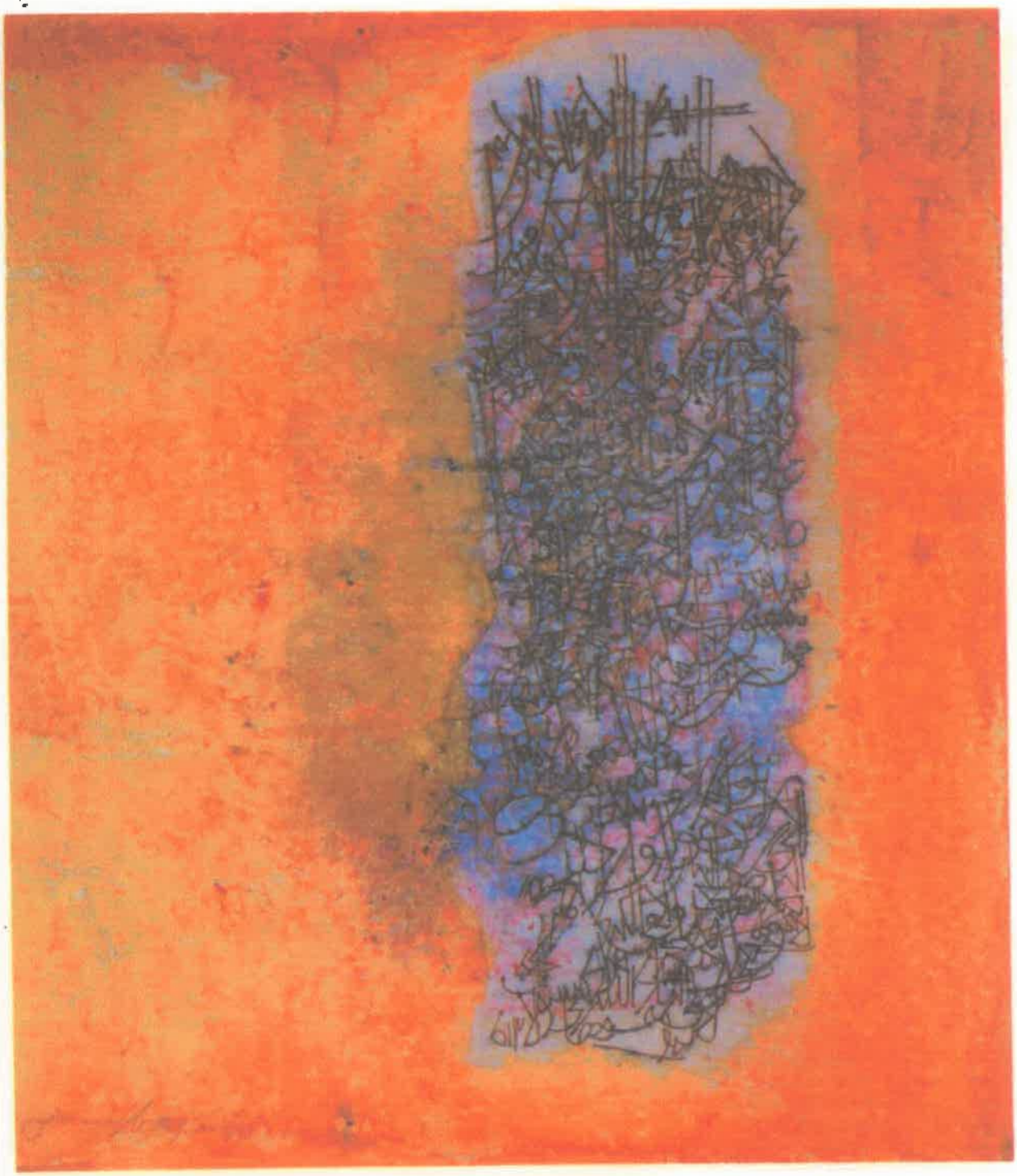














painter, for he is a cerebral artist who delights in a disciplined hide and seek interplay of the various elements of his compositions. Yet he is as popular with the lay public as he is with the critics, like the great Urdu poet Ghalib whose metaphors and symbols are not always easy to understand. The secret is plain – he touches the soul because he paints with his soul, no matter what form or shape it takes. According to Jamil it is the creative urge of the exploring mind that matters. 'The bark may be dead but the tree is alive as long as the sap is there. It only needs more attention and therefore change of subject or style is not important.

Life and death, time and eternity, transience and permanence, agony and ecstasy evoking the fluctuations of human condition, are what Jamil's creative resources are summoned to grapple with in his quest for portrayal of the luminous image of reality. With poetry in his heart, he reaches out, infuses into the painting a cosmic sense of space and time, a sense of the oneness and infinity of the universe. That is why his pictures come alive with a Buddha-like serenity.

Over the last decade or so there has been a proliferation of art galleries all over Pakistan and although neither the gallery owners nor their customers, with few exceptions, are very knowledgeable about art, the public interest is on the increase along with their interest in learning more about the art of painting. Jamil and his contemporaries have all made a mark for themselves on the art scene in Pakistan. But they need to be appreciated by Western critics who often dismiss Eastern artists by labelling their work as derivative. This attitude cannot be dismissed as a 'hang-over' of their colonial past because they did help the native artists, writers and scientists to achieve international recognition and reward.

As stated earlier, authentic oriental artists have always viewed their work with a devotional attitude. So does Jamil. He likes to build bridges between the two worlds and he is best qualified to do so by his antecedents, with a firm grounding in his faith and traditions, who has drunk deep at the fountain of western learning.

Where else one could find a more striking example of the synthesis of the myriad old and new concepts and styles shaping the contemporary visual language than in the work of Jamil Naqsh, who was born in Kairana, grew up in Lahore and has settled down in Karachi where 'the

A Tribute to the Supremacy of Letter

HAMEED ZAMAN

Reviewing Jamil Naqsh's recent calligraphic exhibition for The News International, art critic Hameed Zaman noted that "The much misunderstood recluse artist, Jamil has suddenly decided to expose his creations in all its variety and manifestations, offering his art for the critical assessment and evaluation before opening a new chapter of his creative self". Following are some of the extracts from his review, reproduced here with his kind permission:

Jamil Naqsh has since long been a figurative painter, particularly since he had adopted woman-pigeon theme, painting several scores of variations showing his remarkable sense of juxtaposition of a single equation, with different permutations and combinations: a very difficult exercise in monochromatic schemes. His drawings are the hangover of his miniature period; and having attained a lot of confidence, he manoeuvers his lines on large panels, displaying his creative perception and curvilinear sense.

"In his calligraphic panels, big or small, he has treated alphabets in terms of their form, acknowledging their pictorial value, mostly emphasizing their simplicity of forms or highlighting their pictorial patterns or manipulating them for the sake of creating patterns . At times, he takes sufficient liberty with forms, shapes, structures or volumes of the characters. He has simplified the verticals and horizontals, each letter accommodating the other within a given scheme of rhythm and flow, without having crowded the panel, thus giving an openness to their movement and spatial placing. There prevails an atmosphere of ease and fluency, bringing a soothing uplifting touch. His organization of characters in right/left and up/down arrangements make a fascinating visual, showing linear strength of softness of the letters.

"Movements and dynamism are two characteristics of the Arabic script that Jamil has exploited with a sensitive sense of design. Here letters are either elongated or shortened, spread out or squeezed to obey the perception of the artist. At times they are elaborated with sensitive swirls and loops. Jamil's calligraphic panels are not paintings, as in the case of Sadequain where external elements are generously added. With Jamil, letter is supreme and demands its position, becoming an integral part of the overall design. The letters do not allow any distracting elements within themselves, nor do they share in-built picture sequences with any added factor. In a sense Jamil, without disturbing the purity of the letter, maintains the flow and fluidity of his brush through consistent control.

"His free use of Arabic 'Naskh' and Persian 'Taliq' is a beautiful attempt to give new garb to 'Nastaliq'. In fact, what makes Arabic script so successful from the artistic and decorative point of view, is its fully developed dimensions. It is not simply because of its vertical warp and horizontal weft which establishes an automatic equilibrium but more importantly, because of vertical and horizontal emphasis. It can be radically altered without disturbing the balance and rhythm. This in-built strength of alphabets has been judiciously and creatively exploited by Jamil.

"For many critics and connoisseurs, calligraphy is an end by itself. It cannot be muddled with. Its pristine principles must not be violated. However, the visual manifestation of the Holy Quranic verses have their own hidden decorative merit and to that extent, any violation of purity is not acceptable".

Creating a mix of both East and West, Jamil Naqsh moved forward and after an in-depth study of lines in the Arabic calligraphy, used them not for their divine or spiritual connotations but purely for their fascinating and inventive forms which, as elements, opened new vistas of creativity. Their horizontal and vertical existence is given relief by the circle or semi-circle and how logically they seem to be inter-linked.

"Jamil never uses pen while drawing: instead his brush, pin-pointed and never wavering, chisels the line for precise thickness, moving forward like a tight-rope walker performing a balancing act till he hits destination. 'Writing' wrote Dr Annemarie Schimmel 'is Muslim's most precious heirloom.' The primacy of the word in Islam is reflected in virtually universal application of calligraphic writing, which, like music and painting,began in religion and acquired divine grace with the passage of time.

"Jamil is using Arabic characters as a vocabulary of forms. His is a secular exercise, treating letters strictly as form and nothing else, using interplay of lines, texture and tone."

"Highlighting the painterly quality without adding any external element he shows his respect for the purity of letters, making patterns of infinite variety, almost every letter heading towards the central mass: letters attracting or deflecting each other. Here movement is generated by the sweeping brush strokes. The overlapping letters form a quality of weightlessness and transparency."

"To me his treatment of surface in varying order of density and the emerging mesh of the cursive script presents an expressionistic canvas."

winds of change' came from both the Arabian peninsula and the British Isles'?

It is a matter of some concern though, to art lovers in Pakistan, that Jamil's work has not been seen and enjoyed more widely abroad. Recently a group of his friends and admirers got together to establish a Foundation which organised a number of exhibitions of his new work in Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi; and hopefully some of these could also travel overseas.





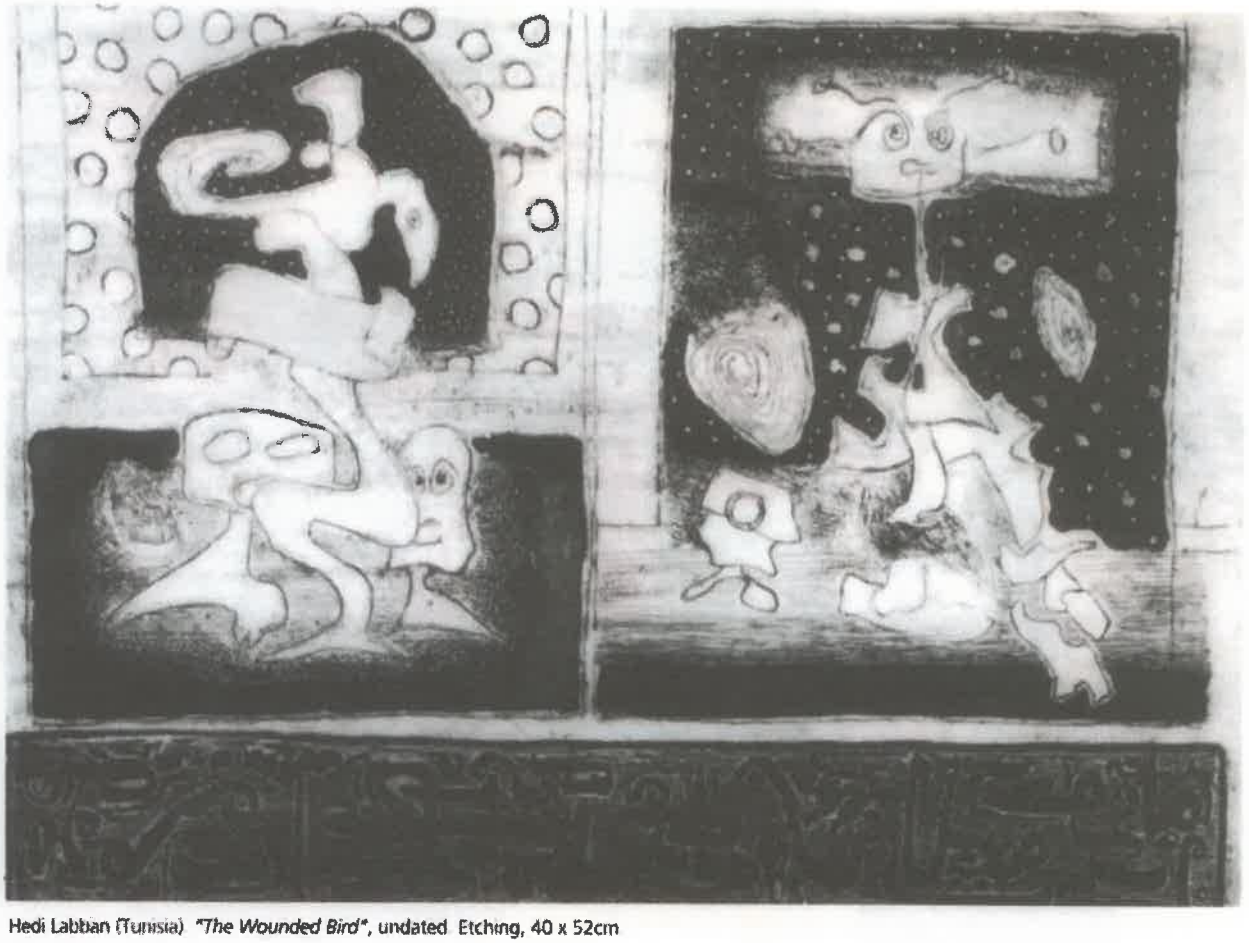




Right to Write

An Exhibition of Contemporary Islamic Art in the United States.

WIJDAN ALI



Hedi Labbian (Tunisia) *"The Wounded Bird"*, undated Etching, 40 x 52cm

The opening of "The Right to Write: Modern Works from the Collection of the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts" on July 15th 1996, coincided with the Centennial Olympic Games and was held at the Dalton Gallery of Agnes Scott College in Atlanta. A symposium with the same title was organised by the College on September 27th and 28th to accompany the exhibition which closed on October 16th.

"The Right to Write" comprises fifty five works executed by forty five artists from seventeen Islamic countries. The artworks represent the calligraphic school in contemporary Islamic art which has developed after World War II evolving from the art of classical Arabic calligraphy, the Calligraphic School of Art al-Madrassa al-Khattiya (Al Farq

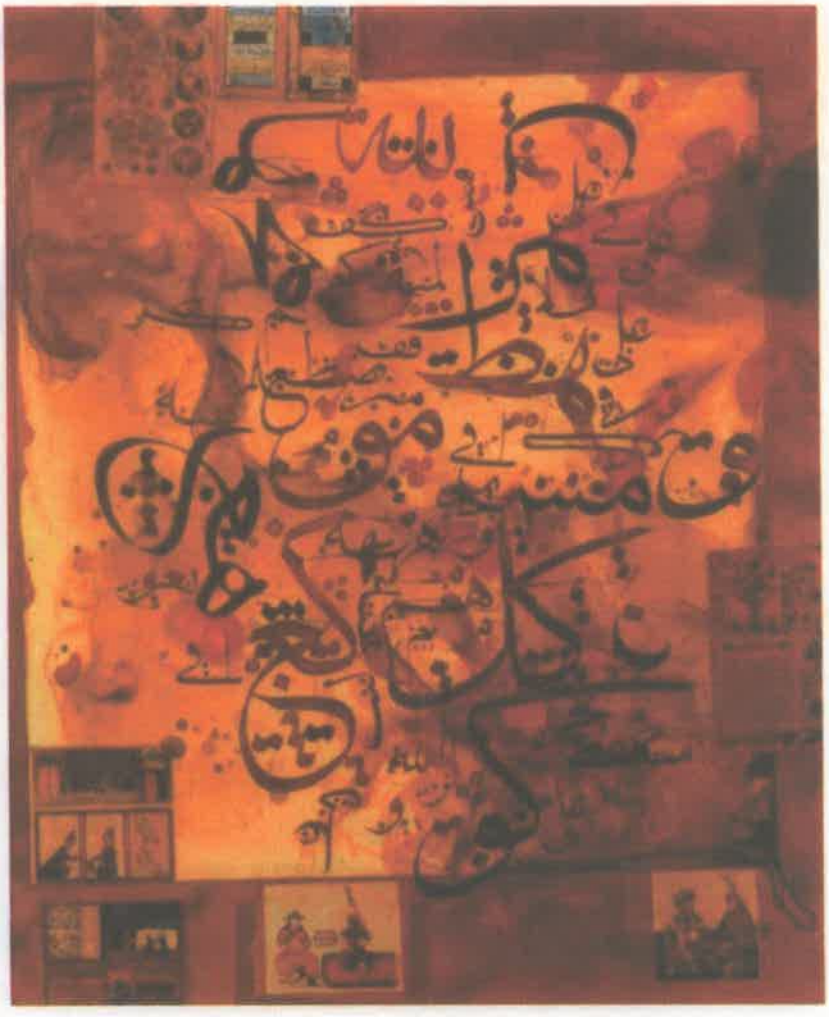
includes calligraphic painting and three dimensional work as opposed to the art of classical Arabic calligraphy, and employs modern media and technique. It unites the legible value of letters and words with their optic and graphic abstract shapes, allowing artists to ascertain their work as contemporary Arab and Islamic, yet within an international artistic framework.

The works in the exhibition are divided into four parts. The first "Pure Calligraphy" comprises works by Etel Adnan (Lebanon), Erol Akyavas (Turkey), Kamal Boullata (Palestine), Wasma Chorbachi (Iraq), Ali Omar Ermes (Libya), Leila Kawash (Iraq), Esama Khaldi (Palestine), Ahmad Moustafa (Egypt), Rami Mourad (Egypt), Issam El-Said (Iraq), Samir Salameh

(Palestine), Ahmad Shibrain (Sudan), Parviz Tanavoli (Iran), Osman Waqialla (Sudan) Wijdan (Jordan) and Hossein Zenderoudi (Iran). These works are composed only of letter-forms that make up both the background and the foreground of the composition. The main component within this category is the Arabic alphabet which forms the entire subject-matter and composition.

The second group is "Abstract Calligraphy" by Yussef Ahmad (Qatar), Shakir Hassan Al Said (Iraq), Burhan Dogancay (Turkey), Mahmoud Hammad (Syria), Abdulla Hariri (Morocco), Ali Hassan (Qatar), Jumana el-Husseini (Palestine), Khalid Khreis (Jordan), Rafa Nasiri (Iraq), Mehdi Qotbi (Morocco), Hinat Saleh (Iraq), Khaled Ben





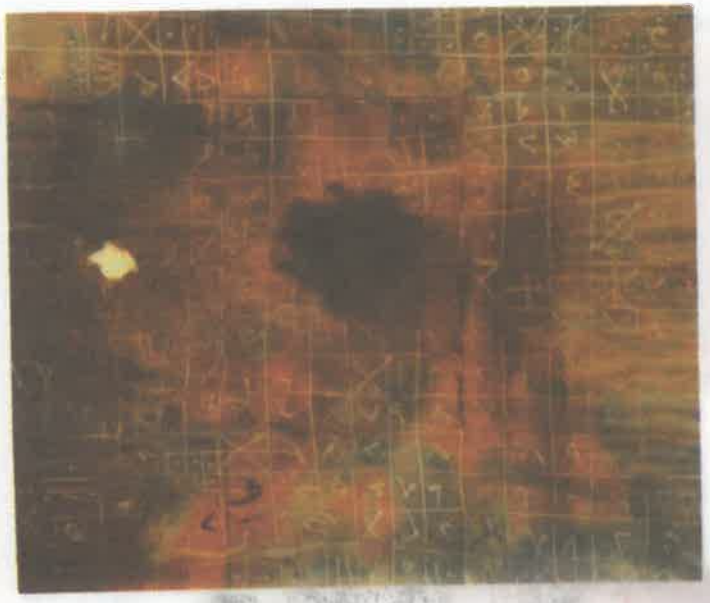




Top, left: Burhan Dogancay (Turkey) *Untitled*, 1972. **Acrylic on canvas, 127.5 x 89.5cm. Right:** Erol Akyavas (Turkey) *"Hem Bana"*, 1993. Enamel, **76 x 63cm. Above, left:** Parviz Tanavoli (Iran) *"Heh"*, undated. Bronze, 17x5 x 5cm. **Above:** Abdullah Hariri (Morocco). *Untitled*, 1988. Mixed media on paper, 35 x 50cm.









Top, left: Osman Waqalla (Sudan) *Untitled*, 1991. Watercolour on paper, 58 x 41cm. **Top, right:** Hussein Zenderoudi (Iran) *Untitled*, 1990. Etching, 59 x 79cm. **Above:** Shake Hassan Al Said (Iraq) *Untitled*, 1992. Mixed media and collage on paper, 79 x 87cm. **Above, right:** Wasma Chaabane (Iraq) Untitled, 1993. Glazed ceramic plate. 21cm. diameter

Slimane (Tunisia), Mahmoud Taha (Jordan) and Ahmad Khalid Yusuf (Malaysia). Here the artist exploits the visual aesthetic aspect of the Arabic letters as a structural element in the composition by divesting letters of both form and meaning.

The third group of works falls within "Figurative Calligraphy" which consists of shapes made up entirely of writing. This form of calligraphic art was always popular among the Peralans and Turks whose zoomorphic and human calligraphic forms are well known in Islamic art. It is represented by Ameena Ahmed Ahuja (India), Husain (India), Hassan Massoudy (Iraq), Khairat Saleh (Syria) and Vladimir Tamari (Palestine).

The fourth group is 'Calligraphic Combinations' where sentences, words and letters are used in conjunction with other components to create a work of art. Legible and illegible Arabic script forms part of the composition, while the rest is made up of either pictorial and figurative shapes or expressive symbols. The artists denoting this style are Aziz Ammoura (Jordan), Chant Avedissian (Egypt), Yassir Duwaik (Jordan), Abdel Basit Khatim (Sudan), Rachid Koraichi (Algeria), Hedi Labban (Tunisia), Malsoon Qasimi (United Arab Emirates), Nirmala Shanmughalingam (Malaysia), Laila Shawa (Palestine) and Saleh Abu Shindi (Jordan). Most of theses artists are concerned with socio-political themes which deal with humanitarian, social and political issues.

When this exhibition was being prepared, its curators were only concerned that the works of art should inter-relate to form a cohesive and complete show. They ended up with a most stimulating and broadbased collection from 17 countries, which is proof that the Contemporary School of Calligraphic Art, prevalent throughout the Islamic world, is a well established art style on its own.

After Atlanta the exhibition will open at the Chicago Cultural Center on April 5th, 1997 before going to Minneapolis and Boston.





Top: Ali Hassan (Qatar), "Letter No." 1991
Mixed media on paper, 120 x 110cm
Right: Nirmala Shanmughalingam, Malaysia
"Beauty" 1994, Acrylic on canvas
76 x 97cm

Seyed Alavi

COLIN WOOD

The Iranian born installation artist Seyed Alavi creates works which transform the exhibition space itself into sculpture. He has exhibited throughout the United States, most recently at Franklin Furnace in New York, The University Art Museum Cal. State Long Beach, SITE in Los Angeles, The Museum of Santa Cruz County and San Francisco's Capp Street Project.

His public art projects include *Words by Roads* in Oakland, *Poetry Garden* in San Francisco, *Selected Words* in San Rafael, *Neptune's Gate* in Manhattan Beach, and *Forgotten Language* for the City of Palo Alto. The following conversation took place on November 29, 1996 at his studio in Oakland, California. Colin Wood is a writer living in Los Angeles.

"Poetry is that light substance, winged and sacred." Plato

COLIN WOOD: *Seyed, you've described your work as "visual poetry". What do you mean by that?*
SEYED ALAVI: Art, for me, is poetry.

CW: *What was the poetry of Garden of Secrets?*
SA: The totality of its experience. The piece was about the process of letting go of the lower self, which is a limited understanding of self our – name, our family, our job – and connecting to the higher self, which is limitless.

CW: *Do you want the viewer to experience this process through your work?*
SA: Yes I do. So I try to create a setting where the viewer can be inspired to look inward and see parallels between the inner place and the piece itself.

CW: *How did you do this in Garden of Secrets for example.*
SA: In *Garden of Secrets* there are lots of elements adding up into a kind of metaphorical journey, the most immediately accessible being the text around the house, a line from a poem by Mahmood Shabistari, which the piece was designed to interpret.

The house is left empty, save for the Truth.
For in a moment the world has [illegible]
Then you, rid [illegible] self, [illegible]
And are united to the Beloved.
Union is yours when this dream world
Fades and dies away.

The World Mirror by Mahmood Shabistari

Shabistari uses the image of house cleaning for the process of losing the lower self so that once the house is empty you experience this infinite self, this infinite being. The house encloses a fountain and has walls of translucent rice paper with no entryway The text was written with melted beeswax and allowed to drip down and harden into rivulets. You can see butterflies inside the house and hear the fountain. It's a kind of magical centre that attracts you with sights and sounds but that you can't enter physically without altering your being. There are also butterflies – three thousand of them – on the ceiling and walls of the space around the house. And because this piece is located in a museum within a library, used pages from books of Sufi poetry to make the butterflies; so as you read you may not know the entire poem but can get a sense of it from a few lines. On no level you can imagine the space as a garden with a house in its centre that's a hatchery of winged language. Also, the butterflies were dipped in beeswax; and depending on how long I held them under, some wings got burned darker than others. Classical Sufi poetry uses the metaphor of the moth and the flame for the relationship of the lower to the higher self. The moth is attracted to the flame and is annihilated by it. Also, beeswax is what candles are made of, so this connection, though it is a little more refined, is still accessible – if you were from Iran or knew Sufi poetry you might see it more quickly.

CW: *What is the role of text in your work?*
SA: For me, text is just another element in the large composition. Also, I come from an Islamic culture, where language is the primary medium of expression in all the different arts – there is text on fabrics, on ceramics, on metal work, on jewellery, on architecture. Text is a painted form, and language in Islam is associated with the Koran, the word of God, and has a sacred quality not found in the West.

CW: *My feeling of your work is that it speaks on its own behalf, not yours.*
SA: That's my hope. A long time ago I heard a quotation from Henry David Thoreau: "I want my writing to be as clear as the water to see through without my being in-between in any "way". That became my motto.

CW: *So what finally occurs is transparency.*
SA: Transparency in the sense that my *being* is not there. Art today is so much about ego, about signature, that it often hardly matters beyond the person who signs it. What is a Picasso worth without his signature?

CW: *So in the same way that ego limits self, you remove yourself from the piece to make it limitless. What similar understanding did you bring to Remembrance that you brought to Garden of Secrets?*
SA: Thematically, the two are similar in that both talk about the process of annihilating the self. *Remembrance* is about the relationship of a single drop to the ocean: when it falls into the ocean we call it the ocean. In essence it *is* the ocean.

CW: *For me, Remembrance was a temple: a blue pool with a poem at its bottom cut from mirrored glass.*

And there you are suspended, motionless,
Till you are drawn
the impulse is not yours –
A drop absorbed in the seas
that have no shores
First lose yourself,
then lose this loss and then
Withdraw from
all that you have lost again –
Go peacefully,
and shige by stage progress
Until you gain
the realms of Nothingness.

Attar from *The Conference of the Birds*









Above, top left: "Remembrance"; water, tiles, mirrors, text, motion sensor, drip system. 30 x 75 x 12ft. 1996.
Above: "Remembrance"; detail. Water, tiles, mirrors, text, motion sensor, drip system. 30 x 75 x 12ft. 1996.
Above, left: "Here"; detail. Fountain, glass & fairy tale. 30 x 20 x 25ft. 1992.
Left: "Departure Room"; detail. Jars, photo transparencies, tinted water, wood. 7in H x 3in D.
Opposite page, bottom left: "There is no place like here"; honey, clay jars, wine, soil. 20 x 40 x 5ft. 1994.
Bottom right: "Flowing Light"; detail. Wood, candles, text, honey. Table 3 x 12 x 32in. 1994.

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absorbed
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...ochre walls with arabesque patterns of purple chalk; drops falling into the pool like rain, breaking the poem into lights that flickered on the ceiling and walls. I liked that the drops began only when I entered the room.

SA: I tried to create a contemplative environment: you enter and leave the noisy world behind. Sometimes I try – and it's difficult and more subtle – but I try to make the architecture analogous to yourself, so you enter yourself. The house in *Garden of Secrets* was in the centre of the space so architecturally it referred to the heart: a house within a house. In *Remembrance*, before the viewer enters, everything is still, like the quiet self. But when this stillness is interrupted from outside, it causes the self to lose its focus, its clarity.

CW: *But it turns into beauty.*

SA: You say it as though it shouldn't.

CW: *I mean that beauty can arise as much from disruption as from tranquillity.*

SA: I think of it more as you can't know "on" unless you know "off".

CW: *In the way the wall pattern comes off it you brush against it.*

SA: Yes, I wanted to heighten the awareness of the temporality of this life. The pattern on the surface is so beautiful, so seductive, but it's so temporal that it's almost gone.

CW: *You said earlier that language in Islamic culture has a sacred quality. Would you describe your work as sacred?*

SA: I don't know what sacred means. It's a loaded term, like love, religion, God. I'd have to redefine it before I used it. If you call what a scientist does in his search for answers to questions such as, "What are we made of?" "Who are we?", "Where do we come from?", "Why are we here" "Where are we going?", "What is the purpose of life?", and so on – if you call that sacred, then I'd say yes, what I do is sacred, or I *hope* for it to be sacred. I like to see myself as a scientist, with my primary question being "Who am I?" And this question isn't independent of any other. You can't ask "Who am I?" without considering the time, the space, our origin and our destination. They come together in one bundle, they're interconnected: "I'm connected to this life, how was I created?" "Who made me?" "Is there a creator?" "What's the creator like?" Once you get into this realm, the questions multiply. And that's the realm of poetry.

THE ROYAL ASIATIC SOCIETY

SUMMER LECTURES 1997

Empire and Identity: Ruler and Realm in Early Asia

Tuesday at 5.30pm (tea 5 pm)
April 22 - June 10

April 22
Professor Francis Robinson, F.R.A.S.,
Royal Holloway,
University of London
Empire and Identity

April 29
Dr Julian Reade, F.R.A.S.,
British Museum
Imperial ideologies in the Ancient Near East (ILLUSTRATED)

May 6
Dr David Morgan, F.R.A.S., S.O.A.S.,
University of London
Was the "Mongol" Empire a Mongol empire? (ILLUSTRATED)

May 13
Dr Richard Fynes,
de Montfort University
Riding in the Chariot and Sacrificing the Horse: aspects of empire in Ancient India (ILLUSTRATED)

May 20
Dr Colin Haywar, S.O.A.S.,
University of London
"Turco-Mongolian Kingship" from the Ottoman perspective (ILLUSTRATED)

May 27
Dr Maria Brosius,
Queen's College, Oxford
The idea of Kingship in Achaemenid Persia (ILLUSTRATED)

June 3
Dr. John Villiers, F.R.A.S.
Power, Kingship & Statecraft in Southeast Asia, 6th-16th century (ILLUSTRATED)

June 10
Dr Jessica Rawson,
Merton College, Oxford
From Kingdom to Empire of the Ch'in: was the First Emperor an emperor (ILLUSTRATED)

Venue
Wellcome Institute Auditorium,
183 Euston Road, London NW1
Nearest Tubes: Euston, **Euston Square**, Warren Street, **Russell** Square

Autumn Islamic Art Sales

PATRICIA JELLICOE

With the interest now being shown in the Contemporary art of their countries – as evidenced earlier at Christie's – Sotheby's added two sales of Contemporary Art, Turkish and Indian, to their October Islamic Sales.

The former was incorporated in their Turkish Art sale. On 11th October and preceded by a selection of European paintings, drawings and prints including a fine LEOTARD of 'A Gentleman in Turkish dress smoking a Tchibouck'.

The last dozen IZNIK dishes from the two sides of the family owning the Lagonico Collection sold earlier by Sotheby's, sold extremely well, the highest "Hammer price" for one being £66,000. A large panel of 8 IZNIK tiles from the Shrine at Eyup, TURKEY, c. 580 AD sold for the hammer price of £50,000, their authenticity backed by their having been exhibited in 1903 at the "Exposition des Art Musilman" in Paris.

A large TOMBAK (copper-gilt) dish and cover with a design of a scrolling vine bearing flowers and grapes, c. 1800, sold for £75,000. (estimated £10-15,000). A pair of monumental brass candlesticks sold for £25,000.

Decorative objects sold very well, including a splendid Ottoman painted room from Syria c. 1800 and several painted parcel-gilt and painted gilt wood Turban Stands (Kavakluk).The enchanting collection of gold and enamel ZARFS with their porcelain cups and one without its cup, made in the 19th c. in Geneva, most sold in pairs, did extremely well, as did 8 enamelled Zarfs of differing metals and including 1 QAJAR enamelled cup. A prize sale was of course the diamond-set gold and gilt metal 19th c. Scribe's set from Turkey.

In the Islamic Sale, two KUSHAN objects of superb quality sold very well: a KUSHAN lustre Ewer dated 1261 for £60,000 (Hammer price) and a Lustre bowl dated 1217/18 for £45,000 (Hammer price).

The Carpet Sale was an outstanding success while showing that buyers looked for good condition and good design – a fine 16 x 9 ft carpet sold for £120,000 plus commission); a pair of DAGHISTAN runners for £21,000 and a STAR KAZAK rug for £31,000.

In the Oriental Manuscripts and Miniatures Sale of the 16th October, a Persian Qajar painting c. 1770-80 signed by Muhammad Zaman of "The women of Egypt amazed by Yusuf's beauty swooning and cutting their hands as they peeled oranges, while Zuleykha hands an orange to Yusuf,"- estimated at £12-18,000, sold for £78,5000. Two further Qajar paintings c. 1840 of "Yusuf being sold in the marketplace" and "Khusrau spies Shirin bathing," were sold for £23,000 and £17,250.

An important mid 16th c. SAFAVID miniature of a dappled blue stallion from a royal stable and from a royal album, painted by Kamal ad-Din Husain, son of Husain the Illuminator, Tabriz, sold for £41,000.

A leaf from a royal Mughal Album of Shah Jahan with a portrait of Mahdi Quli Khan by Ram Das – identified and attributed in Shah Jahan's hand, (on the reverse calligraphy by Mir Ali), c. 1655, sold for £32,200. A leaf from the Emperor AKBAR'S manuscript of the HAMZA NAMA, depicting Khwaja Umar, master spy and friend of Hamza, escaping at night from the camp of the European infidel MUHZUQ, aided by the traitor ZANKAVA, c.1570, also sold for £32,200. The HAMZA NAMA, the first great undertaking of Akbar's reign, is the principal cornerstone of early Mughal painting and is one of the most innovative of all oriental manuscripts.

Of 3 QUR'AN selections the first was a most important KUFIC script section on vellum from North Africa or the Near East c.900 AD, a superb example of early medieval Qur'an production, with all the elegant grandeur of the Kufic script and the simple but effective use of gold floral and geometric illumination. It sold for £133,500. Two others, both in illuminated Arabic on paper, were from Mamluk Egypt and c.1399-1412 and the late 18th c., respectively. Hers both were in fine contemporary tooled and stamped leather bindings, the second bearing a dedication in the name of Sultan Barquq. They were sold for £32,200 and for £36,700 respectively.

From the 19thc. library of the first Marquess of Dufferin & Ava, who was Viceroy of India from 1884-1888, a complete copy of the SHAHNAMA (Book of Kings) one of the most important of all 15thc. Persian illustrated manuscripts, was sold at Sotheby's on 16th October for a staggering £315,000 to a London dealer, fierce competition having raised the price for more than double the highest estimated. A classic Persian epic by Firdausi written in the 11thc, the SHAHNAMA relates the myths and legends of the ancient King of Iran. This copy was painstakingly and beautifully executed by the scribe Jahangir, who signed and dated his work 1437. It represents a peak period for Persian art and includes 58 miniatures, all of them untouched and close to their original state.

The Oriental Manuscripts & Miniatures Sale topped the £1 million mark at £1,035,187.

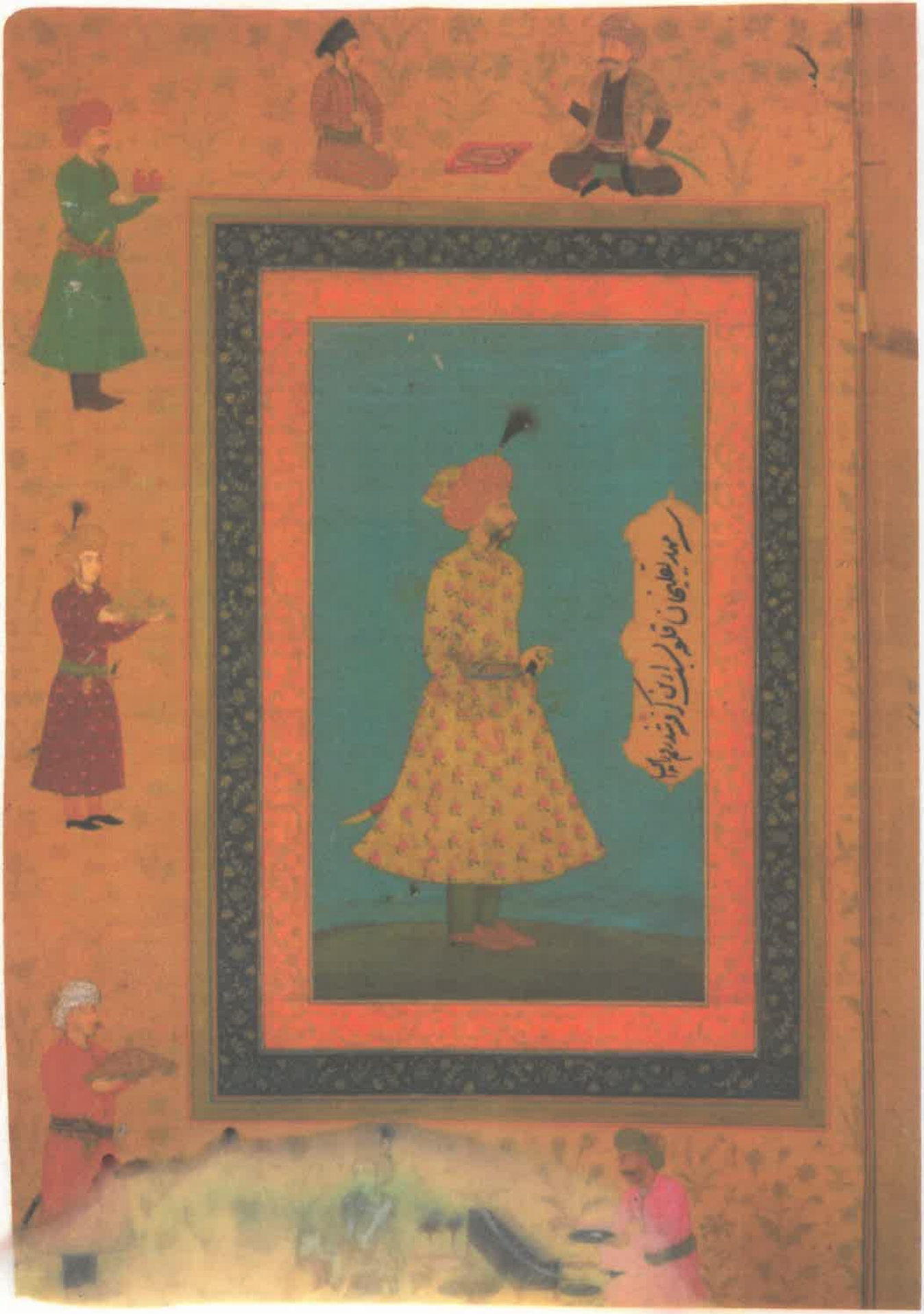
Christie's

The contemporary Indian art sold successfully as it had done previously. The best of the Indian miniatures sold well, – a leaf from the "Moscow' BABURNAMEH for £13,000 (estimated £8-12,000).

Single leaves seemed to sell better than complete Qur'ans, unless Qur'ans are particularly unusual, such as the YEMENI example which was inscribed in the colophon as having been written in MOCHA in AH 1184.

Almost all the scientific manuscripts sold well. A notable price was paid for a manuscript on chess in very good condition and very beautiful with its green script and gold titles and diagrams. Another good price was achieved by the CHINESE version of DALA'IL KHAYRAT ("The Pilgrim's Guide to Makkah"), whose pictures of Makkah were most amusing with pagodas forming the minarets.

The highest price for a manuscript was for a remarkable horoscope dating from just before the









Top, left: An Ottoman Embroidered Wrapping Cloth (bohca) Ottoman Empire, 17th century, the linen ground worked in silk in couched and running stitches. 104 x 108cm. Sold for £12,650.
The word bohca derives from the Arabic and means 'a package'. Bohca were used in all aspects of daily life in the Ottoman household. They formed a decorative protective wrapping for clothes and bedlinen in storage or for taking clean clothes to the hammam and were also used for presenting gifts. In the 19th Century they were in addition used as table and tray cloths or as decorative throws over furniture. The present lot is unusual for the pomegranate palmettes seen between the more classical alternating tulip heads. **Above:** Seker Ahmet Ali (1841-1907) A Mountain Scene with Peasants, signed and dated in Turkish l.r., 1870, oil on canvas. 112 x 159cm. Sold for £31,000.
Left: The Turkish Sale. A Polychrome-painted wood interior, Syria, circa 1800. Sold for 199,500

Opposite page: Oriental Manuscripts & Miniatures. An illuminated album leaf with a portrait of Mahdi Quli Khan standing in court costume in a landscape, identified and attributed in Shah Jahan's hand and set within a border with further related portraits of courtiers. Sold for £32,200

Mongol invasion of Balkh (1219 AH), the miniatures of which were particularly interesting as they related closely to architectural ornament and also to Mina'i pottery, both of exactly the same period. The Sale had a wide and varied selection of miniatures, with many more than usual dating from the early periods. The strongest price was made by the best of the five pages from the 1341 SHAHNAMEH.

IZNIK Pottery performed extremely well, every lot finding a buyer, many going for above the top estimate – the highest being £72,000 (hammer price) against an estimate of £50-60,000. It was most encouraging, as it was to see new buyers.

The recent appearance of a number of intact KASHAN lustre pieces first served to increase prices sharply, but further pieces dampened interest later on.

The CARPET SALE was the best Christie's have ever mounted from mixed owners. A separate Catalogue of 32 exceptional Turkish and Classical carpets – almost all of which were completely fresh to the market and looked magnificent when on view in the rooms – generated an enormous amount of interest with concomitant very strong prices. A Damascus carpet from Syria of the second half of the 16th c. was the top seller at £240,000; the second was an Anatolian of the late 16th-early 17thc which sold for £65,000. The second part of the sale in the regular Catalogue also did very well.

The combined Carpet Sale sold for a total of around £1.75 million, with a sold rate of over 90% – certainly a reward for the enormous amount of work involved in the Bernmeimer Sale of eight months previously and its resultant publicity.

DAR AL-ATHAR AL-ISLAMIYYA

CULTURAL SEASON 1997

January, 6
DR MUHAMMED MUSLEM
National Museum Allepo
Five Kingdoms Discovered in Syria from the Middle Bronze Age

February, 17
DR PHILIP MANSEL
Historical and Biographer
Sultan Abdul Hamid II and Yildiz Palace 1876-1909

March, 3
MR MANUEL KEENE
Curator
The Al-Sabah Collection
A Group of Ghaznavid and Ghurid Glass Roundels and Some of their Implications

March,10
PROFESSOR VASSILIOS CHRISTIDES
Professor of Arabic history
University of Ioannina, Greece
Ships in Arabic Poetry and Islamic Illuminations in Medieval Times

March, 17
DR TAREQ SUIELIM
Assistant Professor of Islamic Art and Architecture
American University of Cairo
The Mosque of Ibn Tulun in Cairo

March,31
DR LEILA BADRE
Museum Curator
Archaeological Museum
American University of Beirut
Canaaanite and Phoenician Beirut Finally Discovered

April,7
PROF TADEUSZ MAJDA
Curator of the Oriental Arts Department
National Museum, Warsaw
The Ottoman Provincial School of Miniature Painting "A"

April, 14
DR ABDEL T ADAMOVA
Oriental Department, The State Hermitage, Russia
Persian Art in the Collection of the Hermitage

April, 21
DR PETRA MARTIN AL-AWADHI
Researcher in Philosophy, Kuwait
The Study of Aesthetics and Islamic Art

April, 28
PROF DR HERMANN JUNGRAITHMAYR
Vorsitzender, Institute fur Afrikanische Sprachwissenschaft
Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universitat, Germany
Ancient Egypt and Africa: Common Roots

May, 5
DR STEFANO CARBONI
The Metropolitan Museum of Art II, New York
The Mausoleum of Ibn Sulayman al-Rifa'i in Cairo

May, 12
DR SABIHA KHEMIR
Islamic Art Historian, London
Wood-carving from a Palace of Fatimid Cairo: the Coptic Connection

May, 19
MR MARC BARETY
First Councillor
Embassy of France, Kuwait
The History of the Alphabet

May, 26
DR ANNA CONTADINI
Curator of the Islamic Collection
The Chester Beatty Library, Dublin
The Art of Painting in the Islamic World in the Chester Beatty Library

The lectures will be held at Abdullah Al Salem Theatre, Midan Hawalli, near Al Shaab Leisure Park at 8PM on Mondays. For information call Tel. No.2400992

Thames and Hudson

With this issue AIW is starting a series of publisher profiles highlighting recent and forthcoming titles of special interest to the Islamic World. Jamie Camplin is Thames and Hudson's Editorial Director; Trevor Naylor is the Sales Manager.

Thames and Hudson pioneered illustrated books on cultural themes, aimed at a worldwide audience, in the 1950s. Since then, it has become widely recognized for the high quality of the editorial content, design and printing of its many publications. The frame of reference for the programme is all world civilizations (more than 1000 titles are kept in print), but the publishing house has been particularly concerned in the last few decades to widen the understanding of non-Western cultures.

Consequently, in its Islamic programme, the aspiration is to try to produce books that are of sufficient substance and reliability to be useful within the Islamic countries themselves, but also to continue the process of educating a Western audience about Islam and – in particular – the various arts associated with it. Two influential publications of this kind, both first published in the 1970s but still in print, are *Architecture of the Islamic World*, edited by George Michell and *The World of Islam*, edited by Bernard Lewis. Two other long-established backlist books are *Islamic Calligraphy* (Safadi) and *Islamic Patterns* (Critchlow). In addition, Thames and Hudson is responsible for selling the publications of the British Museum Press, including such introductory books as *Islamic Art* (Brend), *Islamic Designs* (Wilson) and *Islamic Metalwork* (Ward).

More recently, in 1996, Michael Barry has produced a major study of *Colour and Symbolism in Islamic Architecture*, while the growing Western popular interest in Islamic inspiration for contemporary design is exemplified by Herbert Ypma's *Morocco Modern*, published in October 1996. Also in the Autumn 1996 list was *The Illuminated Manuscripts of Medieval Spain*, focusing on the Mozarabic style – an extraordinary combination of Islamic, Carolingian, Byzantine and Visigothic art – dating from c. 900-1100.

One subject of especially wide public interest in many countries is the Islamic association with carpets and other textiles. Thames and Hudson has made a substantial contribution to this field with books at many price levels and including *Oriental Carpet Design* (Ford) and *Kilim: The Complete Guide* (Hull and Luczyc-Wyhowska).

In Spring 1997 a monumental new reference work is being added to this list, Peter F Stone's *The Oriental Lexicon*. With the aid of more than 600 drawings and illustrations, this offers precise identification of regions and ethnic groups, detailed explanations of names and terms referring to designs, motifs and symbols of pile rugs and flatweaves, and profiles of specific rugs of historical significance. Production terminology and the retail trade are also included.

Looking forward to later in 1997, and emphasizing the continuing interest in Islam today as well as in the past, is *The Mosque and the Modern World*, a major study by Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan. It features over 70 projects, ranging from work commissioned by wealthy private individuals and Muslim communities to local government authorities and imposing State Mosques. They include mosques in traditional styles as well as strikingly modern designs in which the latest materials and construction techniques are used. Illustrated with over 400 photographs, plans and elevations, this book – with its invaluable lists of technical data – will be of immense value to students of architecture, but also an essential source to all those interested in the outward and physical expression of Islam in the modern world.

Lastly, a completely new and up-to-date introduction to *Islamic Arts and Architecture* by Robert Hillenbrand is in preparation.

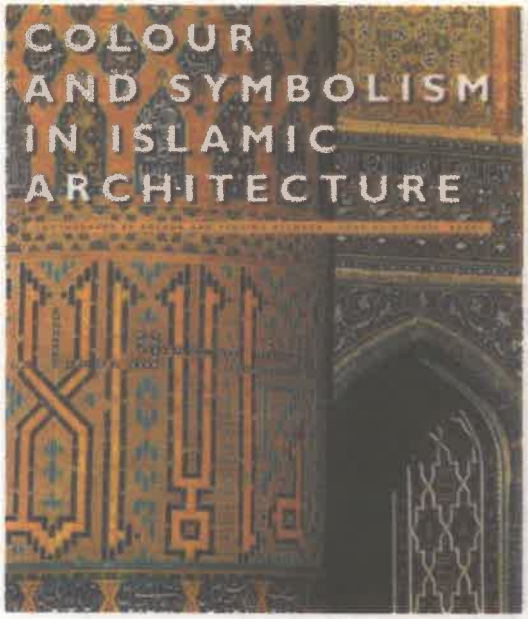
Because of its worldwide sales network and because it is able to draw its authorship also from across the globe, Thames and Hudson continues to develop close contacts with cultural institutions and museums, and is frequently asked to edit, design and produce publications based on major art collections. It is to be hoped that – in the future – these collaborations will develop further with Islamic institutions of all kinds.

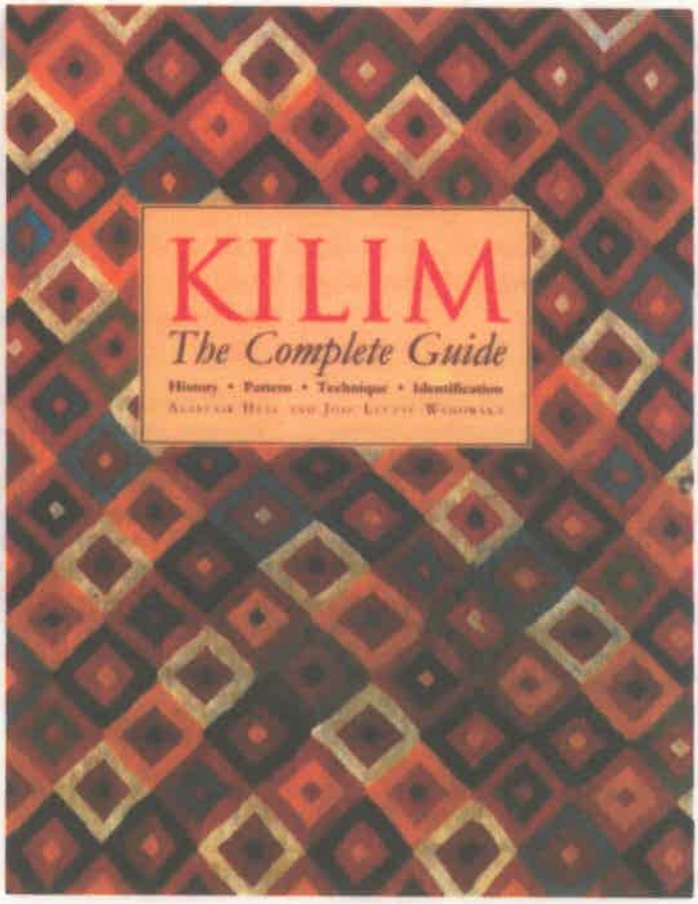
JAMIE CAMPLIN

The Sales View

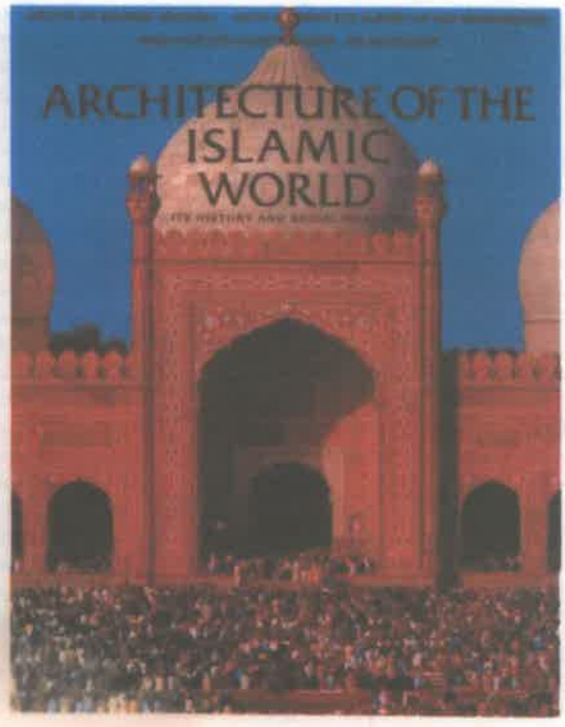
Thames and Hudson has a long and close relationship with the booksellers and book distributors of the Middle East, North Africa, Iran and Asian Islamic countries. Our publishing programme's diverse coverage of the arts and cultures of these societies has been a natural introduction to their great trading centres and has led to our books being a regular sight in the shops, hotels and gift shops of these regions.

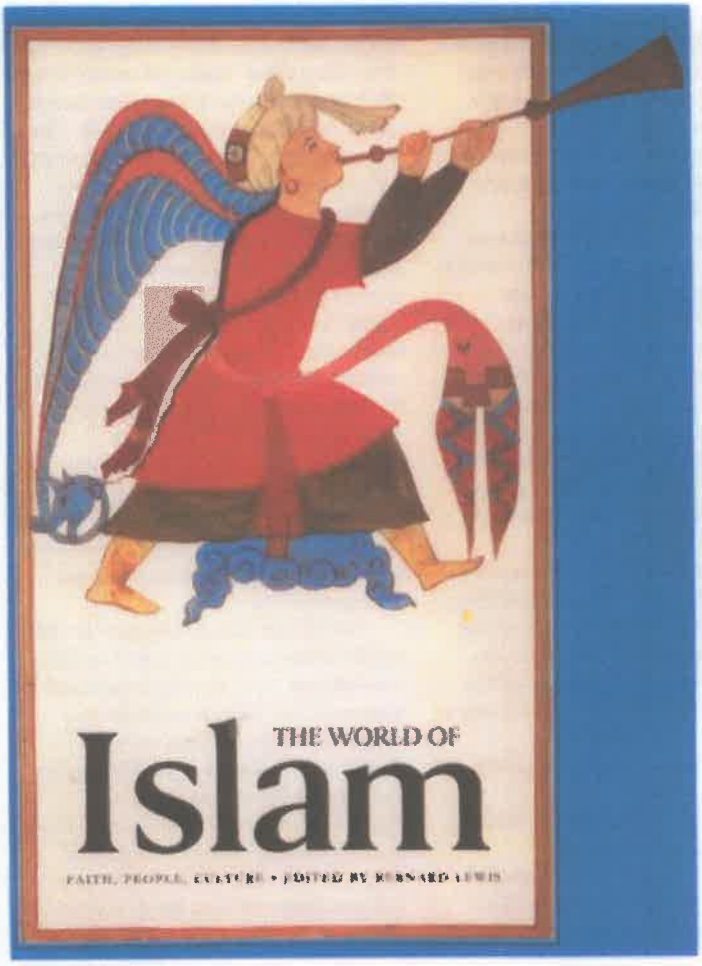
It is a particularly enjoyable cycle to work within. Take, for example the great carpet makers and dealers of Istanbul. Their traditions are celebrated and explained in titles such as *Kilim: The Complete Guide*, a book which unravels the secrets of these beautiful objects for the potential buyer, but is also a thorough resource for today's carpet weavers. Consequently, we sell back to the industry, whose work is featured, copies of a book on a topic central to their own culture. It is at this point that the distinctions between our businesses begin to blur: are we dealing books or are we trading goods? Unquestionably we are, trading goods. The structure and order of the normal bookseller-publisher relationship are

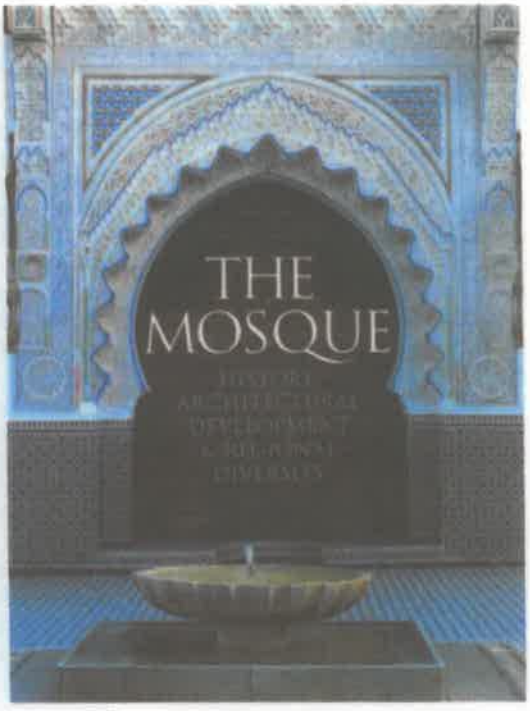

COLOUR
AND SYMBOLISM
IN ISLAMIC
ARCHITECTURE

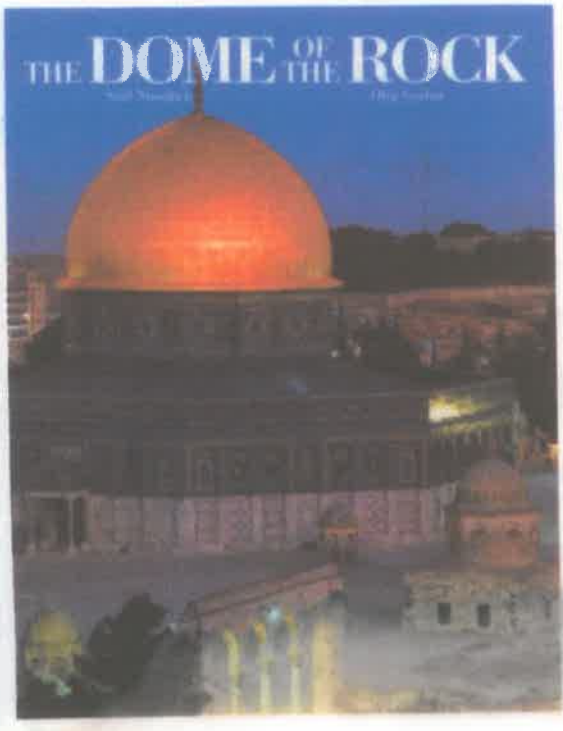

KILIM
The Complete Guide
History • Pattern • Technique • Identification

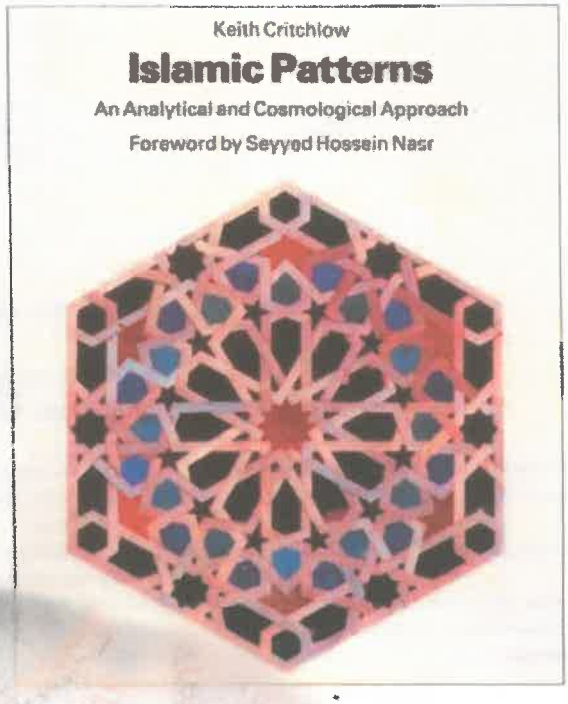

Islamic art


ARCHITECTURE OF THE
ISLAMIC
WORLD


THE WORLD OF
Islam


THE
MOSQUE


THE DOME OF THE ROCK


Keith Critchlow
Islamic Patterns
An Analytical and Cosmological Approach
Foreword by Seyyed Hossein Nasr

abandoned. And a series of bids and counter-offers begins, and thus selling a book to a carpet seller becomes an exact copy of trading in carpets themselves. Delightful, but dangerous!

If all this begins to sound like the fanciful, Western Orientalist dream, it remains true that Thames and Hudson's profile in the Islamic world is founded on two things: the ongoing, carefully selected and beautifully produced programme of new books on the regions' arts and traditions; and the endless cycle of visiting and dealing face to face with Booksellers in almost every Islamic country in the world.

What began as a straightforward selling arrangements have become, in many instances, organic relationships which generate not only book sales and turnover but new ideas for the next year and years to come. It is a fact that in the Middle East generally there were only, in the 70's and 80's, a small number of Western publishers who invested heavily in travelling to this region, in establishing close trading and personal relationships, and in committing time and resources to a specific range of titles for those clients. We were one of these and now Thames and Hudson is, in illustrated publishing, the number one brand in the market.

These early ventures into markets untouched by most trade (as opposed to textbook) publishers have borne fruit both in terms of developing a loyal and growing range of customers, and in furthering our own understanding of the markets and their needs for the future.

This year will see publication of the major new book called *The Mosque and the Modern World* by Renata Holod and Hasan-Uddin Khan, mentioned by my colleague Jamie Camplin. (Khan's previous title *The Mosque* was one of the most popular books we have yet published and it succeeded greatly in highlighting to the world at large the tremendous variety and beauty of one of Islam's key artistic traditions, its architecture). This new title focuses on recent trends in Mosque building and as a wholly different topic it will lead us into new areas of trade, too. Architects, banks and patrons of the arts in Islam are all justly proud when their work is noticed and the conversations that result will surely lead to more projects, more understanding and more new friends.

We have seen our Islamic publishing grow in content, extent and variety, but in contrast to the incredible political and economic changes of the Middle East and South-East Asia, it is a deliberately balanced and carefully built list. One might think that thirty or so years of travelling these countries would leave little scope for the future, but nothing could be further from the truth. The opening up of the new Central Asian economies (the Silk Route) is very exciting; countries whose traditions enable them to originate carpets and many other marvellous objects remain untapped for now but most mean new opportunities and new books for Thames and Hudson. The rapidly expanding Islamic economies in South-East Asia, the burgeoning Westernization of the Indian economy, the movements towards non-oil based economies in the Gulf, all offer two-way opportunities to move our list forward and to increase trade and (through books) mutual understanding.

One thing will not change. In the midst of these economic and social revolutions, the arts, traditions and beauty of the Islamic heritage is a constant which all these cultures revere and celebrate and which those outside the Islamic world can appreciate. Our books enhance the understanding of these things for non-Muslim and Muslim alike and will continue to do so long into the future.

TREVOR NAYLOR

THE ART OF JORDAN

Treasures from an Ancient Land

EDITOR: **P Biernkowski**

Foreword by
Her Majesty Queen Noor Al Hussein of Jordan

The Middle East has always been a volatile yet crucial region of the world. At its hub Jordan has been a major communications and trade centre since ancient times, in contact with the great empires of Egypt, Assyria, Persia and Rome.

Here for the first time in paperback is an attractive and accessible introduction to the country's diverse and fascinating cultural heritage.

The volume opens with a concise introduction of Jordan's history and archaeology. In each subsequent chapter a leading scholar describes and outlines the development and variety of particular art-form. Fully illustrated with two hundred illustrations, most of these in colour, this book provides the ideal introduction to the art and heritage of Jordan.

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INDONESIA

Bayt Al Qur'an / Museum Istiqlal

Construction work is in progress in Jakarta on an ambitious museum project to house the monumental Mushaf Istiqlal and Islamic artefacts from all over Indonesia.





Indonesia has been infused with the light of Islam (*nur Islam*) since the first centuries of Hijrah (621 AD). At that time, the highly syncretic culture Majaphit was at its height, crowned by the Sumatra Sirivilaya and Javanese empire. Islam gained firmer foothold when those empires were past their prime and showed signs of decay after nearly 1000 years of rule. The society lost its faith, values and hopes. In this confusion Islam showed the new light and was spontaneously and peacefully accepted. Islamic teaching spread all across the Archipelago and gained converts overnight.

In the 15th and 16th centuries, all coastal city-states embraced the True Teaching from Aceh on the northwestern tip of Sumatra, in Malaka which straddled the all-important straits of the same name, Banten in West Java, Demak-Pajang-Mataram dynasties in Java, the Great Gowa-Tallo confederation in South Sulawest, up to the twin Ternate-Tidore kingdom which owned Maluku, the spice islands.

The rising power of the Dutch and their subsequent colonial rule somehow checked the progress further inland. It was only after independence in 1945 that Islam as the foremost social power gained back its dominant position. Already in the early years, the *Ummah* together with the government managed to build the biggest *masjid* (mosque) in South East Asia, the Istiqlal Grand Mosque. Through many financial difficulties, and political turmoil in that period, work continued and eventually, the *masjid* was officially opened in 1978.

Indonesia remains true to the Independence Charter as a secular state, but Islam is inspiring and guiding people's decisions and activities. The majority of the population (almost 90% of the 200 million) is Muslim, yet this position has never been used against other religions and beliefs. All state-recognized religions and beliefs are encouraged and protected, thanks to the tolerance and deep understanding of the Indonesian people. Islamic outlook and values tend to be increasingly popular, exploring ways and means to keep them meaningful by reviving and revitalizing the concept of *Ilm* and *Ijtihad*, as

these two aspects have proved and promised better life quality for the people.

Right now, Indonesia is building *Bayt al Qur'an* (House of the Qur'an) which is due to be opened on the 20 April 1997. The aim is to foster the study and preservation of the Qur'an by Indonesians and all mankind, as is commanded by God. The House will be a monument for the Indonesians and an example for the world, of the richness and beauty of Qur'anic traditions in Indonesia. The main collection will house the recently finished al Qur'an Mushaf Istiqlal, the nation's pride. This Mushaf was initiated by the President himself and its first writing was performed at the opening of the Festival Istiqlal in 1991. After four years of hard work, this beautiful large-size Mushaf which was decorated with colourful illumination inspired by the ethnic heritage from all regions of Indonesia, was finally finished. Happily, it coincided with the nation-wide celebration of Indonesia's 50th year of independence in August 1995. This second Festival Istiqlal in 1995 was inaugurated with the finalisation of the monumental large-size Mushaf Istiqlal.

Beside the Istiqlal Mushaf, Bayt al Qur'an will also house its collection of illuminated Qur'an manuscripts from every period and region of Indonesia.

Another collection will comprise many items made in the Qur'anic spirit, from ancient writings on lontar leaves to modern printed volumes of Qur'an manuscripts and Qur'anic *ilm*; household utensils and furnishings; artistic works related to Qur'anic activities; recordings of Qur'an recitations at nation-wide competitions held annually; tools for proof-reading of Qur'an editions and translations; and media for the teaching of the Qur'an, etc.

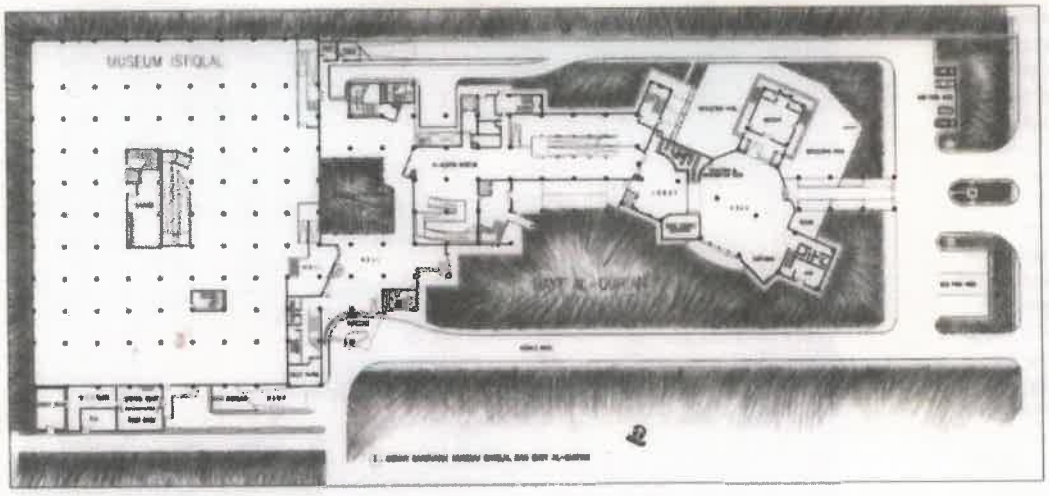
To complete the House and to give a wider perspective on Islam and Islamic life in Indonesia, a big museum is being attached to the Bayt al Qur'an: the Istiqlal Museum. The initial collection will include selected materials exhibited during the two festivals. Of course, the curators of the Museum will have to work hard to build upon this scanty foundation in time for the opening ceremony.

The site itself is an oblong lot, orientated north-south, just beside the entrance to the BIMP ("Beautiful Indonesia in Miniature Park"). Visitors have to pass the site along the entrance avenue, take a u-turn and only then can approach the site. Only visitors coming out of the BIMP will be able to directly approach the building complex.

Considering this arrangement, the architect decided to put special emphasis on a focal attraction for visitors to the BIMP.

The focal attraction is a *masjid*, symbolizing the core of the community. This smallish building is strengthened by the massive and high curtain wall of the main building. To make it attractive, the curtains are made of trellises of Islamic pattern or calligraphy. The oblique angle to the avenue gives a perfect opportunity to impose the building arrangement: the mass is aligned to the orientation of the *qibla* which is due slightly to the north-west in Indonesia. Hopefully the design will impress the visitors entering the BIMP complex.

Entering the site, visitors will be greeted with a row of high arches leading to the entrance of the museum. One has to cross an artificial pond beneath the high arches, which is intended to soften the entrance. On entering, facing an almost solid mass of calligraphic trellises as a surprise effect, the surfaces are rendered much more colourful and variegated, and one has to slow down, adjusting to the 'personal' space of the interior. Into the entrance hall, one finds several leads that bring one to the *masjid* proper, the library upstairs, the shopping rows or directly to the exhibition hall.



The building consists of four floors and one semi-basement. Overall floor space is 6,300 sq. meters. The first floor, covering an area of 1,900 sqm, consists of a main hall with a connection to the *masjid*, cafeterias, souvenir shops and book shops along the entrance to the main exhibit. As the exhibit floor is one meter lower than the hall, it is connected with a grandstair and ramp for the handicapped.

The second floor, about 1200 sqm, will be a continuation of the main exhibit at this floor. The 1.500 sqm third floor will house the library, an open reading room, a Qur'an laboratory, and research rooms. A grand balcony opens up to the vista of BIMP. The fourth or top floor consists of class rooms and office spaces and a 400 sqm. Conference Room with its own hall. Total floorspace is 1,000 sqm.

Separated with a plaza behind, one can approach the building of the Istiqlal Museum. Alternately, one can proceed directly form the parking space to the Istiqlal Museum behind the mass of the Bayt al Qur'an building. As it is located behind the Bayt al Qur'an, the building maintains a demure appearance. The block consists of three floors and one basement, with a total floorspace of 11,000 sq.m. The 6,700 sqm basement and semi-basement may be used as exhibit halls, services, parking and an entrance hall. The first floor, 1,800 sqm, is a continuation of the exhibit spaces, plus a couple of exhibit support spaces. Offices, library and other facilities will be in the second floor of the same 1,800 sq.m. The top floor, the third, is a multipurpose room with audio-visual facilities.

UAE Newsletter

The Dubai World Trade Centre, which has emerged as one of the leading sponsors of art in the UAE, inaugurated its Al Multaqua Exhibition Suites, with a retrospective exhibition of the paintings of the renowned Lebanese artist, Wajih Nahle.

There is a mysterious touch in many of Nahle's paintings. This is obvious in his 'movement of calligraphy' and more so in his acrylic paintings which are a synthesis of intellectual play between harmonising forms and movement, resulting in a rich and colourful luminosity

Nahle is constantly on the move, having studios in as far flung cities as Beirut, Riyadh, Paris and Beverly Hills. He has held over 30 solo exhibitions, and participated in more than 40 group shows. His works, which include large murals, paintings and tapestries, are in the King Khalid International Airport of Riyadh, the Metropolitan Museum of Modern Art, New York, the Great Palais de Champ Elysses and the Museum of the Arab World Institute, Paris, besides a number of palaces in the Middle East and private international collections.

Nahle (60) grew up in Beirut and studied art in the studio of the famous Lebanese artist, the late Moustafa Farroukh, from 1948 to 1953 and frequented the studio of the late Omar Onsi, one of the great masters of aqua-colour in his time. Nahle says: "It was Farroukh who inspired me to seek out treasures of Islamic and Oriental art instead of aping the West. That was when I toured Syria, Turkey, Egypt and other Arab countries, and befriended the Lebanese artists who returned after studying in Paris, Rome and Madrid".

Nahle made his debut as a solo artist in 1962, and today ranks amongst those few artists who have enriched and continue to enrich the local and Arab plastic arts.

The idea of Nahle's exhibition in Dubai was born when he came with the Lebanese Caracalla Theatre Group during the Dubai Shopping Festival early in 1996. The Dubai World Trade centre invited Nahle to return to the city and do some paintings inspired by the local heritage and culture. A studio was set up for him when he returned in May, and Nahle worked 18 hours a day to create some unique works.

Nahle's earlier works at the exhibition featured large arabesque compositions with Arabic calligraphy of verses from the Holy Qur'an, rendered in relief in gold and silver. His later oils on canvas had a wealth of calligraphic expression blended into a modern and poetic interpretation, with spontaneous brush strokes - in a 'movement of Arabic calligraphy'. Nahle decided what form the letters should take to suite his compositions. It is in the 'movement' that Nahle is unparalleled in the Arab world.

Nahle's acrylic on canvas paintings, which are his latest works, reveal an ecstasy of imagination which quivers with spontaneity – a style which is a hallmark of Nahle. There is a touch of mysticism in many of them with titles such as 'Ecstasy, 'Infinity' and 'Mysterious Whisperings'. These have been rendered in a colourful palette of pastel hues with a skill Nahle has acquired that gives a transparency to his paintings making them light and airy. There is a fascinating movement in his paintings, many of which are in an abstract style. Commenting on them, the French art critic Andre Parinaud calls Nahle 'the most figurative of the abstract artists and the most abstract of the figuratives'.

Earthly Icons

Entering the world of Fateh Moudarres is an exciting adventure. He is one of the. founders of contemporary art in Syria. He paints the sound of singing; the good and the bad; love and pain; anger and strife, facing the violence and injustice in the world – full of contradictions of life. Moudarres is a witness of the vitality of culture in his country, and has enriched the Arab art world leaving a particular and distinguished presence in the history of Syria art.

The Green Art Gallery in Dubai, run by Myla Atassi and Anna Dabbagh, held an exhibition of the paintings of Moudarres which included some of his more famous paintings – "The witness and the shot", dated 1983, and "The Document of Sorrow", circa 1996.

Born in Aleppo, Syria in 1922, Moudarres studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Rome from 1954 to 1960. In the time immediately following his studies, he was associated with the artistic and cultural society in Italy, where he practiced the use of new methods of expression. Looking at his creative works since then, we notice that he keeps questioning the soul and mind, and the legends that are part of it. His paintings depict the huge internal strain, yet they take the shape of earthly icons. His strong use of colours – deep reds and blues – is riveting.

Moudarres is critical of art that is a direct copy of what you see around you. He calls it 'plagiarism'. None of his landscapes, for example, drawn from the country-side in Syria, are of the picture postcard variety. 'While nature inspires, one should not duplicate it on canvas', he argues.

Moudarres spent a number of years in the UK, where he worked at 'looking beyond what the eye can see', and later taught at the University of Damascus. He has held a number of solo exhibitions in Damascus, Rome, Munich, Paris, Germany, Washington DC; and his works can be found in museums, homes and private collections in many countries. Moudarres is also known for his literary works such as 'Stick of Minti', a collection of stories which has been translated into many languages; and collections of poems – "The Oriental Moon on the West Coast" and "The Object Time" – written in collaboration, the former with Sharif Khazandar, and the latter with Hussein Raji.

Eastern Passion

Although well known in the United Kingdom, Farah-Jackson have a big following in the Middle East. Their work features in the royal collections of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Bahrain as well as the National Museum of Jordan, the British Museum and Musee Institute du Monde Arabe, Paris. The Green Art Gallery in Dubai held an exhibition of their paintings and limited edition prints.

Rima Farah and Kevin Jackson first worked together in 1978 for a London studio. In 1984 they started their own studio Farah-Jackson. Farah, born in Jordan, graduated from the

Cambridge School of Art in 1977. British-born Jackson obtained a Master of Arts from the Chelsea School of Art in 1976.

Inspired by the warmth of the Middle and Near East, the Farah Jackson partnership is based on the combination of creative, technical and artistic skills. Strong in architectural themes, the works feature doorways and balconies, tiled floors and carpets, rugs and beads.

The works have been rendered in varying techniques that include paper textures, embossing and print making with use of such materials as sand, sawdust and gold leaf to achieve the desired effect. Rima Farah, who was in Dubai for the exhibition, said "I love working beautiful objects into paintings", referring to the various subjects of her prints.

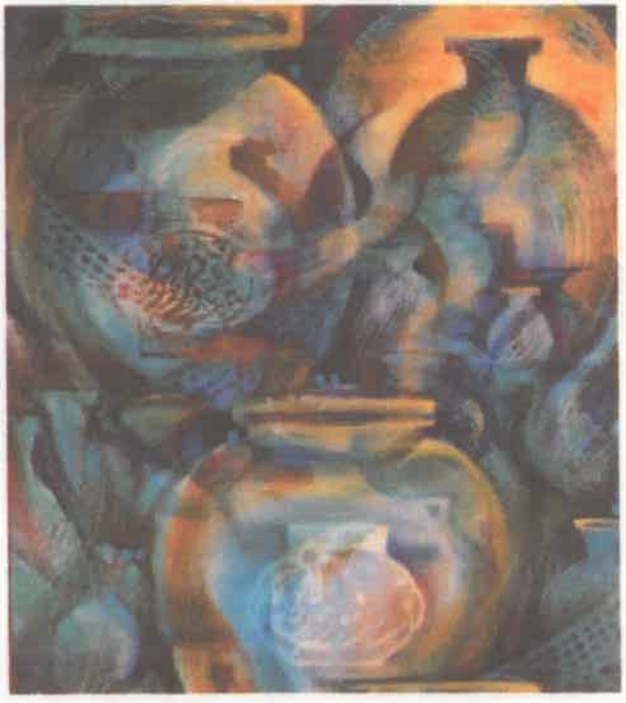
The exhibition also had some interesting paintings on canvas but with similar themes. "That is because my fascination with the East is very strong whether it is with India, Jordan or far away Indonesia," said Farah, who travels as often as she can to Spain, Morocco and Turkey to keep that link alive. Ancient Eastern cultures have so much in common, whether it is in Mexico, or Casablanca or Egypt.

Dubai International Arts Centre

The winter exhibition of the Dubai International Arts centre included almost 600 works of the members. This international organisation has over 850 members from 50 nationalities who are mostly amateurs. The Centre offers a number of art courses which include painting in a variety of mediums, sculpture, pottery, photography, creative calligraphy, silk and porcelain painting, embroidery and many more, with instructions by some of the leading artists from the expat community.

The paintings in the exhibition were judged by the famous Lebanese artist, Wajih Nahle, who awarded the first







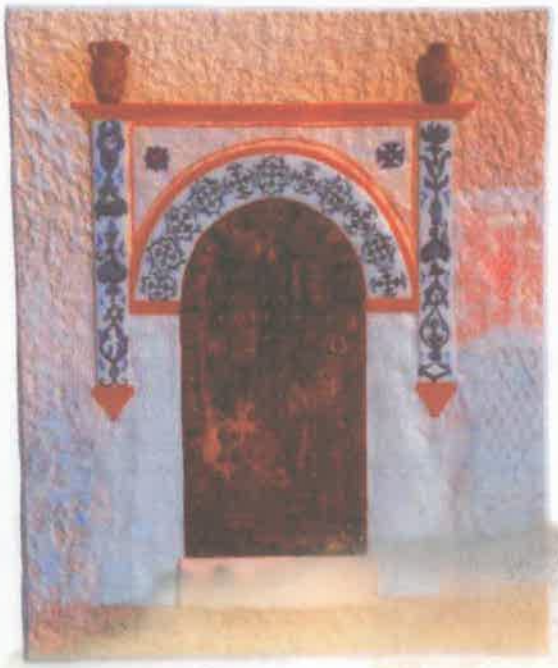
Above: (l to r) David Shepherd, HH Shaikh Hasher Al Maktoum and HRH Prince Michael of Kent, at the opening of Shepherd's exhibition at the Dubai World Trade Centre. Left: Mrs Tina Ahmed. Detail, *Light Source*. Acrylic on canvas. Winner of Nahle Award. Below: (l to r) Prof Saleh Lamie Mustafa, Abdullah Al Shaibani, Director of General Projects Limited and Rashad Bukhash, Head of Historical Building Section.











Top, left: Wajih Nahle, *L'experience creatrice*, acrylic on canvas. Top, right: Portrait of Shaikh Rashid, late Ruler of Dubai by his granddaughter Shaikha Hessah al Maktoum. Above, middle: A painting by Fateh Moudarres. Above: Fateh Moudarres in his studio. Left: A painting by Farah-Jackson.

Lisbon's New "Meeting Point of Civilisations"

"The building we will see here will be yet another vital element in the permanent dialogue between our cultures, a meeting point of civilisations, where proposals can be discussed in a quiet and mutually enriching debate", remarked Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio at the Foundation Stone Laying Ceremony of the proposed Ismaili Centre in Lisbon, set in a landscaped park, with exhibition space, an amphitheatre, classrooms, and offices as well as facilities for religious and social activities.

The design concept of the Centre draws upon and synthesises Portuguese building tradition and Islamic design philosophy, binding Islamic architectural values and the heritage of the Iberian Peninsula to contemporary building technology.

President Sampaio emphasised that "By its very conception and design this work testifies to the re-encounter between East and West, between Islam and Judaeo-Christian tradition, between the two equally rich legacies that moulded and forged Peninsular civilisation. All this the architects of today have interpreted in a contemporary fashion, functionally and philosophically adapting the design to the aims pursued by the Centre. Its very location in a cultural space such as the University Campus underlines its symbolic value and constitutes a further enhancement of the city of Lisbon."

Speaking on the occasion, His Highness the Aga Khan said that the ceremony had a very special meaning "because it marks much more than the foundation of a place of gathering for the community. Dedicated to the preservation of spiritual values, the promotion of social development and the enhancement of intellectual discovery, the Centro Ismaili will seek to contribute to the enjoyment by citizens of Lisbon, and visitors alike, of spaces and buildings whose inspiration will aim to empathise as well as expand our cultural horizons."

"The space the Centre will create in the midst of this historic city," the Aga Khan said, "will serve as a bridge linking and enriching various cultures of Europe with others of Africa and Asia as it draws upon associations both from within and outside the Portuguese-speaking world."

"Lisbon, Portugal and Portuguese culture" he said, "are already intimately familiar with Muslim culture and have been for a millennium. We see the mark of Islamic tradition in many realms of Portuguese culture in its architecture, in its language, in its music, so that this Centre should never seem alien or out-of-place in Lisbon."

Earlier, in his speech accepting the Freedom of the City of Lisbon in a ceremony at the City Hall, the Aga Khan recalled that "While Lisbon and I share the fact of a Muslim past, it is particularly meaningful that it is in its built environment that we find the historical links that provide a bridge to the present. Standing here in this magnificent hall, I am reminded by the medallion of Gil Vicente above us of this renowned 16th century satirical playwright. In one of his most well-known plays, *Comedia da Rubena*, Vicente includes a very popular medieval song of the troubadour tradition, *Qalbi Arabi*. The troubadour pined nostalgically for an Islamic past. Today, a contemporary historian reminds us that whilst much of the Islamic

Centro Ismaili, Lisboa

The Ismaili Centre in Lisbon draws upon Islamic architecture and the heritage of Iberian Peninsula in a contemporary language of construction technology.

COURTYARD

Courtyards and cloisters, central themes of the design, are evocative of the great Portuguese monasteries and the Alhambra. Spaces are organised so as to provide an exquisite balance between indoor and outdoor areas. Transition between a courtyard here and an enclosure there is effected through a doorway by shifting of axes or change of level.

The programme for the Ismaili Centre follows a tradition of merging social, cultural and religious activities in one ensemble. The design seeks to create the right ambience for different functional requirements, e.g. a lively social gathering in one courtyard or the security needed for prayers in another enclosure.

GEOMETRIC PATTERNS

Geometric patterns are an important feature of the design. They have decorative as well as symbolic connotations. They express the philosophy and spiritual concerns of Islam. The doctrine of cosmic unity, 'where one is a part of the whole', reverberates through Islamic patterns in ceramics, alabaster and carpets. The supporting walls of the prayer hall are designed as a geometric lattice in prefabricated granite stone elements. The facade design is based on modern stone fabrication and construction techniques combined with the analytical power of contemporary computer software.

GARDEN OF PARADISE

The entrance courtyard is designed to welcome the visitor on the principle of *Charbagh* (quadrangle garden) with flowering plants and running water. The gardens are endowed with the spiritual and ecological values. The aim is to transfer the mood of the visitor from the external stress to the inner calm.

FUNCTIONAL USES

The Centre complex encompasses multipurpose spaces for exhibitions, cultural functions and educational activities as well as open amphitheatre and landscaped park. It includes an exhibition hall, classrooms and a prayer hall. It will also house the principal office of the Fundacao Aga Khan.

prize to a work titled "Eastern Zaire '96" by Mounir Laqqis, an engineer by profession, which was inspired by the famine in that country. The Nahle Award went to Mrs Tina Ahmed for her acrylic on canvas composition titled "Light Source". The prizes in the other categories were given to the following: Pottery – Sanae Yoneda, Textiles – Nighat Akhtar, Photography – Sylvia Burkby, Painting Pastel – Paul Flaherty, Children's Section (4-8 years) – Adiya Gokarn and (9-13 years) – Giselle Omanian.

A number of budding artists from the ruling families of the Emirates also exhibited their works. Shaikha Hessah Maktoum Al Maktoum, daughter of Shaikh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE, and the Ruler of Dubai, paid a tribute to her late grand father Shaikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, Ruler of Dubai, with his portrait. Shaikha Azza Al Qasimi, daughter of Dr Shaikh Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, member of the Supreme Council and Ruler of Sharjah, had a pair of calligraphic works titled "Wonder of Egypt", as did her cousin Saswan Al Qasimi, with an abstract in pastel entitled "Masks". Incidentally all of them are students of Mrs Tina Ahmed.

Saleh Lamei

The Egyptian architect Saleh Lamei Mustafa, whose restoration of the Great Omari Mosque in Sidon, Lebanon, had won the prestigious Aga Khan Award for Architecture in 1989, was in Dubai in December 1996 for a series of lectures on restoration organised by the Dubai Municipality for its personnel of the Historical Buildings Section.

He also attended the opening of the restored Shaikh Saeed Al Maktoum's residence in the Shindagah area of Bur Dubai. He said "It is gratifying to note that the authorities are making efforts to restore the architectural heritage of Dubai. It was through these projects that UAE nationals and visitors can have a glimpse of the past, and learn to appreciate it. It would also be a good idea to take lessons from other countries in the Arab world, with centuries of history, which have restored their architectural heritage to its former glory.

Lamei is the Director of the Centre for Conservation and Preservation of Islamic Architectural Heritage in Cairo and a member of the International Council for Monument Conservation in Paris. As a member of the UNESCO team for monument conservation, Lamei has also been involved in several projects in Saudi Arabia, Syria, Bahrain, Oman and Sarajevo. Some of his projects have been in the West Bank, Palestine, which he considers his major achievements.

Arabian Horses

The Sharjah Department of Culture and Information organised an exhibition of 150 art works depicting Arabian horses at the Sharjah Art District to coincide with the visit of the delegation of the World Arabian Horse Organisation to the UAE. The exhibition displayed paintings and photographs by four Arab and foreign artists, namely Ms Jaqui Jones from Britain, Kamal Al Mualem from Saudi Arabia, Ali Al Mimar from Iraq, and Rik Van Lent Junior from Belgium.

Hisham Al Mazloum, Head of the Art Directorate said, "The Arabian horse represented the civilisation and the pride of the nation, and was the means by which the Arabs reached many European countries, carrying with them their culture and sciences. Since the Directorate is committed to highlighting various aspects of Arab culture and heritage it had decided to hold this exhibition".

The artists who took part in the exhibition have developed a passion for Arabian horses. Ms Jaqui Jones is based is based in Newmarket, the very heart of English racing. Her love for horse racing was evident in her oil, pastel and water-colour renderings. Some of her patrons include the Royal families in Dubai and England. Jaqui's latest works were also produced on silk shawls and jackets.

Kamal Al Mualem is a member of the Tuscany Riding Club in Florence while Rik Van Lent Junior is attracted to the Arabian horse and prefers to observe and photograph the wild-life. Ali Al Mimar paints horses along with other symbols of Gulf heritage. The palm trees, falcon and the deserts are common features in his works.

A numbers of activities were organised by the Directorate, which included an outdoor workshop by the members of the special Art Group of disabled artists in front of the Sharjah Art Museum, when they also sold souvenirs and copies of the art works displayed in the Museum to the public.

Caracalla Group

The renowned Lebanese dance group Caracalla, regaled the audiences in the Abu Dhabi National Theatre and the Dubai World Trade Centre Hall with spectacular performances based on the history of ancient Carthage. The plot of the play revolved around different aspects of Elissa, the queen of Carthage, who ruled the country which is now Tunisia.

The performers in colourful flowing silk costumes danced to the tune of oriental music composed by four leading Lebanese song writers, against the backdrop designed by Wajih Nahle.

David Shepherd

Prince Michael of Kent inaugurated a three-day exhibition of the David Shepherd Private Art Collection at the Dubai World Trade Centre's Al Multaqua Exhibition Suites. The exhibition featured paintings of wildlife, nature, English scenes, steam locomotives and military campaigns. A painting of the Arabian leopard, especially made for the occasion was also on display. The painting was later auctioned and was bought by Shaikh Hassan of Qatar for an undisclosed amount.

The proceeds from the auction and sale of 50 limited prints of the painting were given for conservation to various organisations. Shepherd's realistic, life-like paintings emphasise beauty of nature and highlight the importance of conserving wildlife and nature. He said,"The conservation of wildlife and awareness of the consequence of neglect are matters of the deepest concern to all of us who are supporting the initiative of Dubai".

This was the first time that the collection was taken out of England. As a small boy Shepherd collected books on Africa and in 1949 he left the UK for Kenya in the hope of becoming a game warden. He was politely told he was not wanted. The Slade School of Fine Arts in England rejected him as having no talent. It was by good fortune that he met Robin Goodwin, a professional painter who specialises in portraits and marine subjects. Shepherd started his career as an aviation artist and owes a great deal to the RAF which flew him all over the world to paint aircraft pictures for them. In 1984, the David Shepherd Conservation Foundation was set up to focus on Shepherd's own conservation efforts both in the UK and abroad. To date, some £2.7 million have been raised by the Foundation.

MALIK A OMER









Top: The Lisbon skyline seen from the area where the Centro Ismaili, Lisboa (Ismaili Centre, Lisbon) will be located.
Above, left: President Jorge Sampaio of Portugal and His Highness the Aga Khan in front of the plaque commemorating the laying of the foundation stone of the Centro Ismaili.
Above: President Jorge Sampaio, HH the Aga Khan and Prince Amyn Aga Khan being shown the model of the Centre by architect Raj Rewal.
Left: The Mayor of Lisbon, Mr Joao Soares presents HH the Aga Khan with a golden key after granting the Aga Khan, the Freedom of the City of Lisbon.

past may have been abandoned, "there are still many Alis, many Bassams and many Fatimas." As many of you know Ali and his wife, Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet, are among my earliest ancestors."

He added: "Centuries after *Qalbi Arabi* was first recited in the 1970's, a Portuguese poet and Arabic scholar adopted the name of this song as the title of an anthology of Andalusian Muslim poetry. It is perhaps not so coincidental that the space for cultural interaction that I hope to create in the Centro Ismaili, together with my fellow *Lisboetas*, will draw some of its inspiration from Andalusia."

The proposed Ismaili Centre will be an 9,800 square meter complex on a site nearly twice that size. Conceived by the distinguished Indian architect Raj Rewal (responsible for, among other projects, the Asian Games Village, the Institute of Immunology, and the World Bank Building in New Delhi), the project will also involve the Portuguese architectural firm Frederico Valassina Arquitectos.

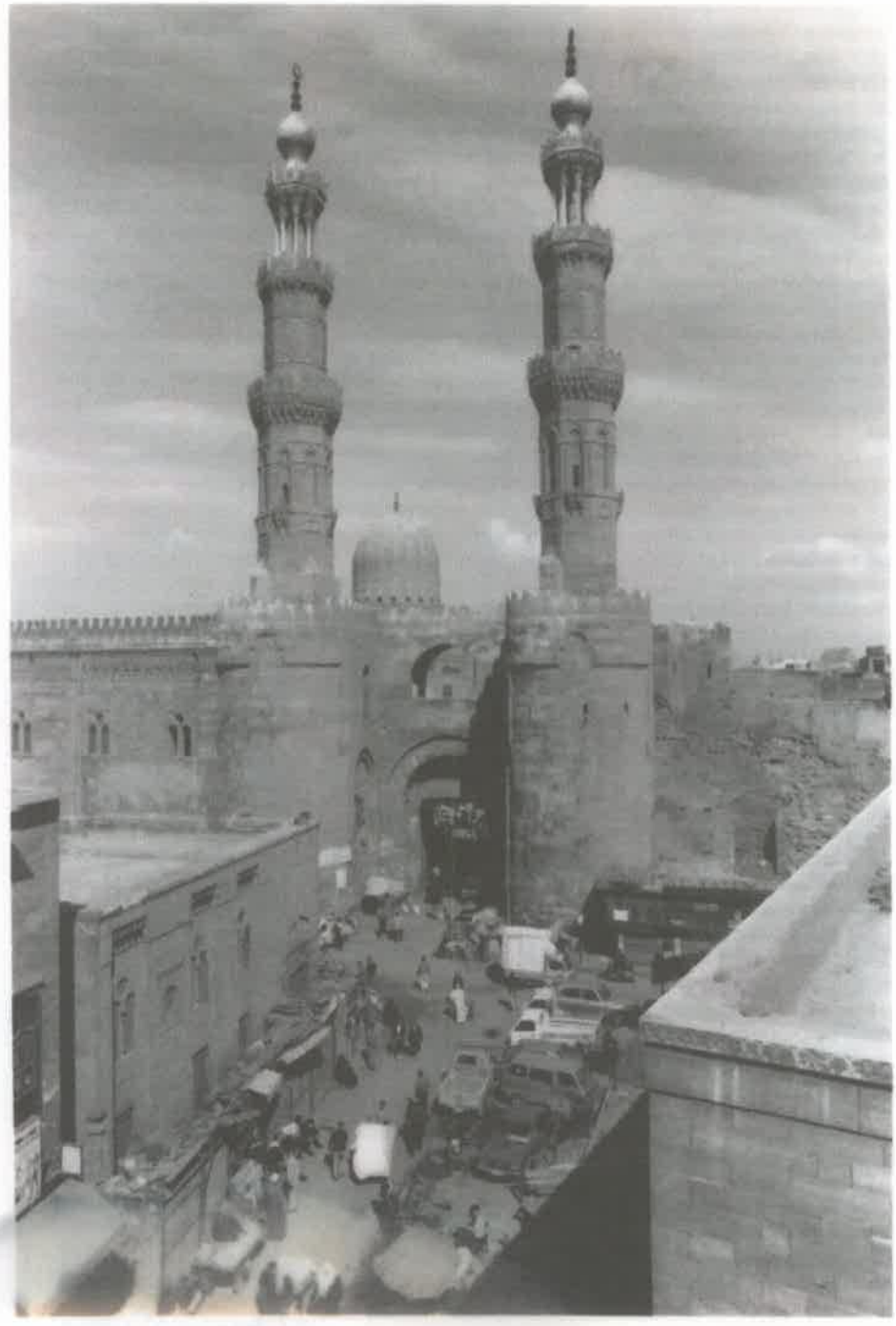
Cairo Newsletter

Has Egypt deserved the title of the cultural capital of the world, bestowed on it by UNESCO for the year 1996? Certainly a great deal goes on: cultural events organised by the authorities, activities initiated by foreign sponsors; and above all private and popular artistic expression which is sometimes at odds with the powers that be, but nevertheless continues to take root and and flourish with irrepressible vitality.

For the last two decades conservation and restoration of the country's heritage from 5,000 years of history are taking precedence over excavation and new discoveries, though every season brings its dramatic archeological revelations and work goes on up and down the Nile Valley, the Delta, the Red Sea and Mediterranean Coasts and Sinai.

In the Valley of the Kings at Luxor the New Kingdom tomb of the sons of Ramses II (KV5) has been found to be a hitherto unsuspected labyrinth of chambers and corridors, while in the Valley of the Queens the beautiful wall paintings of Ramses' favourite wife, Nefertiti, has been meticulously restored. The tomb of Seti I is being cleaned and restored, and one by one the dozens of private tombs which honeycomb the western hills of Thebes are being cleaned, repaired and supplied with lighting and protective glass. The whole area now has better access and facilities for the thousands of tourists which arrive by the busload every day of the year.

On the east bank the tall pillars of the forecourt of the Luxor temple have been temporarily dismantled and will be remounted on concrete drums – a technique arousing some controversy. Further north much work is being done in the 60 miles of pyramid fields between Giza and Meidum, usually thought of as Old Kingdom necropoli but in fact containing evidence of constant use throughout every period of



Bab Zuwayla Cairo. Photograph Patrick Godeau / saif

ancient Egyptian history. Several sites in the Delta are under investigation.

The outlines of Ptolemaic Alexandria are being reconsidered as French divers comb the sea bottom around the fort of Qait bey and the Eastern Harbour for clues to the foundations of palaces and temples, rescuing sunken statues and masonry in the process.

Christian monuments are receiving their share of attention. The Saint Catherine Foundation, an international society for the preservation of the famous St Catherine's Monastery founded in the remote Sinai mountains in the 6th century AD in the time of Justinian, was launched in London in June under the patronage of Prince Charles. Unusual rainstorms have caused flooding; stonework and precious manuscripts have suffered water damage. The new Society's first priority will be the restoration of the roof. Meanwhile angels and saints are emerging from layers of smoke and grime on the church walls of another very old monastery, that of St Antony in the Red Sea mountains. Experts from Rome have just begun this work and will continue for two years. The funding comes from the United States.

Efforts by Egyptian and international teams to safeguard Cairo's splendid Islamic heritage continue with German, French, Spanish, Italian, Polish and lately American participation. The Bohra sect from India has made its own contribution with lavish if somewhat controversial restorations of Fatimid monuments from 10th and 11th centuries.

The nagging problem of the water table is being addressed if only sporadically. No overall master plan for conservation has ever been followed and other expensive plans and recommendations have been shelved or ignored. Work is of course tainted by budgetary considerations.

The Egyptians tackle about six restorations per year. Foreign missions patiently pursue individual projects and do excellent work, but when the money runs out and the project is more or less completed, the key is usually handed over. Nothing much happens with the building, and the ubiquitous dust begins to settle in again.

This accusation cannot be levelled at the Bayt Harawi, a lovely Mameluke house behind the mosque of Al Azhar, restored under the supervision of M Bernard Maury from Aix-en-Provence. Groups of architectural students from the University of British Columbia have held classes there for two seasons and recently there has been an art exhibit, and an Anglo-Egyptian Concert of medieval and modern music held in the austerely beautiful courtyard. M Maury has now turned his attention to another house, the Bayt Simnati, built in the 1790's and used for three years as headquarters for Napoleon's team of *savants*. French engineers from the Metro have drained out the ground water and made a coffer-dam around the foundations. If all goes well the house will be ready for the bicentennial of Napoleon's arrival in Egypt in 1998, but again the problem arises: what exactly can it be used for?

The Americans have joined in the fray. With funding from USAID, they are implementing plans for area conservation around the famous landmark of Bab Zuweyla, the formidable 11th century city gate, which with its cluster of surrounding monuments including three mosques, a *sabil-kuttab* (school and water fountain), a *wikala*, (hotel) and traditional markets, is redolent with the very essence of Cairo's history.

The current Ministry of Culture has effected a great many improvements and renovations of Cairo's contemporary cultural venues. These include the new Opera House (actually built by the Egyptians) now nine year old and functioning regularly; the Museum of Modern Art, and the less formal Hanager Gallery for temporary exhibitions and happenings. Egypt's largest collection of 19th century European art is now housed in the meticulously renovated mansion of Mr and Mrs Mohamed Mahmoud Khalil in Giza. Two other grand old houses have been turned into libraries in Giza and Zamalek, while the Aisha Palimy House, (Akhnaton Gallery) and the Monasterly Palace on Rhoda Island have been spruced up.

Festivals of Arab poetry, story telling, music, film and experimental theatre have been held in these various venues with international participation. Though well-intentioned, many of these events have been marred by unprofessional scheduling and partiality on the part of the judges; and there is a general feeling that resources could be used more effectively.

Nevertheless both government and independent groups of actors, artists and musicians have competed successfully in international events abroad, such as those organized in Paris by the Institut du Monde Arabe, the International Theatre Festival in Amman where Hassan Geretly's theatre group won resounding applause, and the Venice and Seoul Biennales. A previously unknown painter, Hoda Lutfy, just won the first prize at an art fair in Marseilles. New York City is staging a celebration of 100 years of Egyptian film. In the near future there will be the Cairo Biennale. The Alexandria Biennale has sadly fallen by the wayside thanks to bureaucratic squabbles.

At home outstanding art exhibitions have included a big retrospective of Gazbia Sirry, now Egypt's leading woman painter, whose career has spanned the years since the 1952 revolution. Her early style was boldly figurative and inspired by a warm empathy with the common people. She received many awards scholarships and travel grants and her style became increasingly abstract. Hassan Soliman, staunchly independent of government patronage over the years, is at last reaping the rewards of his stubborn refusal to accept any favours. He has found his own market among middle class professional Egyptians, who understand figurative art and also want value for money. His show of forty paintings of a single popular alleyway at the Extra Gallery in Zamalek, sold out the first evening.

The Extra, Mashrabiyya, Kaarim Francis and Berlin galleries now lead the way in reaching out to a new fashionable clientele with shows by established painters such as Margo Veillon (still going strong at nearly 90), Baghori, Adam Henein, Adli Rizkallah, Anna Boghighian and Adel el Siwi as well as nurturing a younger generation of aspiring artists.

A definite resurgence of figurative and narrative painting is discernible but as one critic aptly remarks "many of the younger generation are stuck with a style that has to cover up for the fact that they can't draw and don't know how to construct a picture"– even if they want to, which one senses they do. Thanks to a government dictum back in the 70's which forbade life classes in the art schools, they are baffled by anatomy and perspective, and take refuge in vague abstractions.

Whatever the discouragements and false trails, there is plenty of talent around which, if carefully cultivated, can and does produce wonderful things.

Elizabeth Rodenbeck

Two Thousand Years on the Silk Road

The museum of Ethnology in Rotterdam has announced plans for hosting a wide-ranging exhibition (15th February - 10 August) of treasures from Uzbekistan which comprises more than 300 objects, including unique manuscripts, ceramics, metalwork and textiles.

Uzbekistan, a new country with a rich, centuries-old history, lies at the heart of Silk Road, the traditional link between Europe and Asia. Over the past 2000 years many people have passed through this region, driven by economic interests or survival instinct, by curiosity and a yearning for adventure. These travellers, from various cultures along the Silk Road, inspired local craftsmen and artists.

The exhibition entitled "2000 years on the Silk Road: Treasures from Uzbekistan" aims to present the rich culture which resulted from these encounters. The *piece de resistance*, according to the museum announcement, is the collection of nineteenth-century silk cloaks, often woven by the Ikat technique, in exuberant colours and a rich variety of motifs.

From the classical period (extended from before our era to the seventh century) splendid gold jewellery can be seen, some of it decorated with Greek motifs. Strikingly depicted is the Chinese watch-tower, of which so many once stood in real life along the Silk Road. Hindu sculptures can also be seen alongside magnificent coffins decorated in the ancient Persian tradition. Iranian, Chinese and Indian influences can be recognised on centuries-old silk fragments and four ivory weaving shuttles are more than 2000 years old.

From the seventh to the nineteenth century the Islamic dynasties ruled the region that is now Uzbekistan. In the Islamic world it was the duty of the ruler to stimulate the arts. The conqueror Timur (1336-1405) took this task most seriously: his capital of Samarkand was reputed to be the most beautiful city in the world. The exhibition brings together fine wooden panels decorated with classical Islamic motifs and other architectural fragments from Samarkand. In the view of experts the multicolour tiles from Central Asia are among the finest examples of ceramic art.

Nineteenth-century culture shows particularly clearly that the heritage of the Silk Road was preserved and allowed to evolve over the centuries. Typical Central Asian features manifesting a mingling of culture still exist, for example in the Hindu-Buddhist 'infinite knot' combined with the typical Iranian depiction of young deer, or the realistic Turkish manner of depicting animals of the steppes combined with floral motifs in an arabesque style. A large number of objects come from the culture of nomadic horsemen: clothing, boots, bags, riding breeches, weapons, horse-cloths and magnificently decorated saddles. The colourful susanis, wall hangings of silk and cotton, were originally used to decorate the tents.

The Russian revolution heralded the definite start of modern times. The Uzbek tradition was preserved, however, in the ancient towns, the museums and in private collections.

Historical and Modern Images

The objects in the exhibition will be accompanied by the unique photographic material depicting life in both ancient and modern-day Uzbekistan. The prospective traveller will find information about present day life along the Silk Road. The Museum of Ethnology will also offer visitors an interactive programme based on great explorers such as Marco Polo and Sven Hedin.

The exhibition has been created by the Linden Museum in Stuttgart; the renowned architect Jowa has made a new design for Rotterdam. The catalogue (in English and German) contains an abundance of photographs and detailed background information. The objects come from museum collections in Uzbekistan, Germany and Britain and a number of private collections. It is the first time that most of the exhibits will be shown in the Netherlands. The exhibition has been made possible by the sponsorship support of Diamler-Benz AG.

Related Events

During March 1997 Museum Theatre de Evenaar will offer a wide variety of informational programmes, guided tours, films and concerts on the theme of the exhibition. Three concerts have been arranged which will form part of a 'Musical Journey along the Silk Road'. Dariush Tala'i, Nureddin Razavi and Madjid Khaladj from Iran will give a concert of classical music from Iran, the cradle of classical music in the Arab world. The Dutch ensemble Farabi (formerly Calgiya), under the direction of ethno-musicologist Wotiter Swets, will present a specially compiled programme of traditional music from Central Asia. Finally the Ensemble Samarkand from Uzbekistan will play the *Shashmaqam*, the Uzbek variant of the *maqam* widespread throughout the Arab world.

The Museum Restaurant 'Zenne' will present a number of dishes from Uzbek cuisine, which is closely related to that of Turkey.

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THE MUSLIM ALMANAC

The People, Cultures and History of Islam

Editor: Azim A Nanji

There are many challenges to producing an Almanac which focuses on adherents to a particular religion and civilization, rather than a specific national, racial or ethnic group. In the case of Islam the challenge is unique in that the conventional Middle Eastern-centred view of Muslims has more often than not resulted in stereotypical perceptions which belie its universality. Therefore, this volume seeks to be representational and not stereotypical in approach. It tells the story of Islam and its peoples, cultures and history across time and space, as a global experience. The story of how Islam was spread throughout the world is one of the most fascinating pages of human history. This expansion has encompassed an intellectual and cultural as well as moral and political engagement. With the passage of time, however, state and political borders were redrawn and the form and nature of authority and rule has changed. However, the inroads made by Islam became a viable part of the cultural and religious fabrics of all these realms.

Muslims, it can be said then, have many voices, embedded in differing cultures, speaking many languages in which to express their commitment to the faith and its practices. The sensibilities of each culture will help determine how Islam is practised, without compromising the heart of Islam itself.

Islam is a religion rich in intellectual history and philosophical inquiry. Through history, adherents of Islam have been instrumental in developing fields of medicine and other sciences as well as expanding philosophical debate and advancing fields such as mathematics. It should also be remembered that Muslim philosophers brought Plato and Aristotle back to the attention of the Western world after years of neglect by Western intellectuals and philosophers. Islam as a religion has challenged and encouraged its adherents to explore the riches of the intellectual process.

Islam is a religion of men and women. Contrary to stereotypical misrepresentation, Islam does not oppress women nor hold them in less esteem than men. Many misconceptions about the view of women are often based on cultural considerations rather than Qur'anic dictates as claimed. Women, such as the Prophet's first wife, Khadija, later Aisha, as well as his daughter, Fatima, were an integral part of the establishment and growth of Islam. The role of women throughout Islamic history is one of diversity and significant contribution.

Muslims have produced a vast literature by writers, male and female, who have sought to record their thoughts, perceptions and feelings. From religion to history, philosophy to poetry, non-fiction to fiction, Muslim writers have written from a foundation embedded equally in their home culture and their faith. Whether exploring the most mundane moments of life, literature has provided Muslims all over the world with a forum from which to examine those questions most important to their lives, families, and culture.

The history of Islam encompasses a commitment to their built environment, the quality of daily human activities and the expression of the imagination through the arts and architecture. The heritage of Islamic civilization in this regard represents a major contribution to the cultural legacy of the world.

Finally, a work such as this must walk the fine line between academicians and those with a broad interest in exploring the subject matter. Each text is only a starting point for an exciting journey in any of a myriad of subjects. Bibliographies are placed at the end of each article to encourage those who wish to participate in deeper study.

The integrated approach of this volume covers every aspect of Islam. Written by a team of leading international scholars, it provides an authoritative perspective based on the latest research and offers a comprehensive view of fifteen hundred years of Muslim history portraying its richness and vitality among diverse regions, cultures and times.

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Vision 2020 and the Arts in Malaysia

Following are extracts from the keynote address delivered by the Secretary General of the Malaysian Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, Dato' Ismail Adam, at "The Arts as a Marketing Tool" seminar in Kuala Lumpur on 16 October 1996.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the organizers for their effort in putting together this Seminar, the third in a series by Kuali Works in 1996. I sincerely hope Kuali Works and Akademi Seni Kebangsaan will continue to work together in future for the benefit of all those involved with and interested in the arts in the country.

In his article, "Malaysia: The Way Forward", Prime Minister Dato' Seri Dr Mahathir stated:

"Malaysia should not be developed only in the economic sense. It must be a nation that is fully developed along all dimensions: economically, politically, socially, spiritually, psychologically and culturally... By the year 2020, Malaysia can be a united nation, with a confident Malaysian society, infused by strong moral and ethical values, living in a society that is democratic, liberal and tolerant, caring, economically just and equitable, progressive and prosperous, and in full possession of an economy that is competitive, dynamic, robust and resilient."

I quote this paragraph as I consider it the very core of Vision 2020. It is also very pertinent to the discussion this morning as the statement clearly outlines the direction that the country should be heading from today.

The realization of the Vision is based on two very important factors. First is that Malaysia must be a fully developed country in all aspects including the arts. Development must not be base purely on the absolute primacy of technological and economic growth. Rather, the arts must emerge as an industry that is able to support, accompany and influence economic and social development of the country. A fully developed arts industry will be able to provide a multitude of career opportunities that range from anything that is directly related to creative work to those that involve technical know-how.

The second crucial factor of Vision 2020 is the creation of a united nation. This is an area where we in the arts must play a leading role. Creative works as interpretations of history and reality have never been more needed. The current inundation of social problems, which I must say is very alarming, presents most strikingly the absence of a very essential ingredient among our society. The number of people who are missing the sense of belonging to a community is growing, a scenario made worse by the pressures of a modern world that becomes more specialized and compartmentalized each day. The most important contribution that art can make in the realization of Vision 2020 is to bind the people of Malaysia into one united society regardless of religion and ethnic origin.

It would be a very narrow view to consider the role of the arts as merely to accumulate and promote the various manifestations of our people. If we consider that the arts, above and beyond their most familiar forms and established genres, represent the sum total of the distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features characterizing a given society, then it is the human activity as a whole that must be viewed through this prism. Therefore for the arts to act as an effective tool in promoting unity among Malaysians, we in the arts must coordinate and strengthen our activities. We must reach out to the society to consolidate together a cultural identity that is accepted as truly reflective of the nation.

The government, non-governmental organizations, national and local arts organizations, the private sector, in other words every Malaysian, must be involved with the pursuit of making Vision 2020 a reality and not act as a mere bystander. Each of us has a part to play. Arts in the year 2020 must be self-perpetuating and able to develop at par and alongside economic and industrial development. Malaysia must follow the successes of other nations that have successfully built up their arts industry. In Britain, income generated by theatre alone is greater than income generated by the automobile industry of that country. Businesses like food and beverage outlets, advertising, product merchandising and hotel and car rentals, benefit directly from the influx of domestic and international tourists when the theatre season opens. Australia has a similar success story and a large proportion of the country's work force are involved in the arts.

What exactly is an arts industry? To put it very simply, it is the whole structure of providing services that fulfil the needs for and supply of creative expression and manifestation. Similar to other industries, the element of profitability is taken into account. Profitability in the arts industry does not always refer to actual profit made by 'selling' the end product, as sometimes no profit is made. Profitability also includes payment received for services rendered by the suppliers of the creative process.

Examples of elements of an arts industry are the creation of all things that are popular, for example from songs and dances to television series. Television itself uses cameramen and technicians with knowledge of various camera techniques and lighting fixtures, stylized dialogues written by scriptwriters, sets and props designed by trained designers, seamstresses to sew the costumes and a host of other specific tasks requiring specialized skills.

If the current development in the arts persists to the year 2020, I foresee arts and culture flourishing in Malaysia. In the last five years, we have seen a very welcome upsurge of interest in the arts. Attendances to theatre performances have increased, orchestral performances are usually standing room only, and academic discourses like the one held today are on the rise. But this seemingly overnight evolution did not arise by itself. A lot of monetary investment by the government, in the form of building of infrastructures and grant giving to arts organizations, have acted as catalysts for greater awareness of arts and cultural matters in the society.

The development of the arts provides the opportunity for a thriving arts industry to emerge in Malaysia, an industry which can provide a

multitude of job opportunities. There is a dearth of trained technical staff. The same goes for stage managers, marketing officers and others directly related to a performance: music arrangers, choreographers and set designers. There are also numerous other areas like advertising, manufacturing and packaging and the service industries that require a work force with a background in the arts. The potential of the arts has definitely not been fully explored yet. Today RM9 billion is derived from the entertainment industry alone. I personally believe that the arts will be a major industry 23 years from now. I believe that the importance of creativity in the society's daily activities will translate into increased job opportunities which will provide high economic returns.

I am very pleased to note that the number of non-governmental organizations involved in arts related activities has increased in the last five years. Activities by NGO's will complement and strengthen programs already conducted by the Ministry. I hope that many of the programs that have been carried out today, for example the Kuala Lumpur Arts Festival, will help shape the people of the 2020 era, besides becoming major artistic events of the country. As Malaysians become more affluent and more conscious of the arts, and as more space is made available, demand for artistic creations will be on the rise. Due to this increased demand, I foresee that more professional theatre companies with full-time staff will be set up. The demands and expectations of a 2020 society will ensure quality productions. The high expectations will require the creative staff to be highly skilled, supported by effective managers.

All these and more will garner interest among Malaysians. It is not impossible for Malaysia in general and specifically Kuala Lumpur to emerge as a premier arts center of the South East Region. If from today all of us, whether from the private or public sector, take steps to coordinate our activities and market them as a solid package, the arts can be a crucial 'pull factor' for tourists to Malaysia.

There are also other areas that are still largely unexplored, for example arts merchandising and the export of Malaysian productions on a commercial basis. The arts will continue to be a powerful tool in promoting tourism. All of us at one time or another, have been tourists ourselves. And all of us appreciate the fact that a visit becomes more memorable when we experience some of the culture of the area. As tourism in Malaysia is already an established major contributor to the country's GNP, its continued growth will mean an increasing number of tourists that will be wanting to savor the local art and cultural scene.

The government's emphasis on the importance of the arts in the development of the country is reflected in the formation of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism in 1987. Since then government investment in the industry has increased by leaps and bounds. To mention a few well-known examples of monetary investment is the building of various cultural centers and space: the RM195 million Panggung Negara Taman Budaya Negeri – Taman Budaya Negeri or State Culture Centers (one for every state), and the setting up of Akademi Seni Kebangsaan. Apart from infrastructure development, funding in the arts has also increased substantially. The result of this can be seen by the increase of productions and arts related activities that are either directly funded, or receive varying degrees of partial funding from the Ministry and its agencies, including the Malaysian Tourism Promotion Board. I trust that most arts associations, arts companies and individuals in the arts, have at one time or other received monetary or administrative support, or both, from the Ministry.

However, the thrust of the Ministry is not only on infrastructure development and giving of financial aid. As of 1997, the Ministry hopes to start a systematic and regular training program which can help fulfil the need for professional workers for the arts industry. I am sure that most of you realize the impact of the next 24 months. 1997 will witness the completion of two big performing spaces being built by Petronas and Telekom. 1998 will see Panggung Negara being completed. Combined, the three venues will have a seating capacity of 4000, supported by a myriad state-of-the-art technological equipment and facilities. The number of technical staff and the level of technical skills presently available is grossly inadequate to even form a skeleton work force for each of the these venues to be completed in 1997 and 1998.

I believe that more of such venues will be built by the corporate sector. Many more complex and technologically superior spaces will be made available for the arts in the year 2020 and beyond. For Malaysia to emerge in the forefront of the global arts scene and for us to be able to fully utilize our space and facilities, our space will first have to be properly manned and maintained. Apart from technical skills, other areas are of equal importance and need equal attention. Stage management administration, ticketing, marketing, front of house and all other related professional skills are areas that we have to seriously look into. The development of human resource is thus a priority area for the Ministry for the next few years.

Through a systematic and regular training program, artists and all those involved in the arts will be given the opportunity to increase their level of skill and exposure. Not all those involved in the arts can be accommodated in the Ministry's training program, but it is my hope that those who will be given the chance to participate in the Ministry's programs will act as catalysts and instructors to the others in the same field. It is my personal wish to see that by the year 2020 Malaysia will have an adequate number of skilled and professional work force.

As I have mentioned earlier on in my speech, the realization of Vision 2020 can only be achieved if each one of us play our part. The private sector especially, must play a more aggressive and meaningful role in arts development of the country. The Ministry, or the arts NGO's, cannot do it by ourselves. In view of several remarks made by the Prime Minister and his Deputy in the mass media about the need for the private sector to plough back some of their profits into the society by sponsoring the arts, I strongly urge the private companies to support the development of the arts in the country.

The announcement of a RM50 million special fund during the 1995 Budget Proposal Speech raised a lot of hopes and expectations among arts organizations. The Ministry has received numerous inquiries and requests for financial assistance as a result of that announcement. A budget has been set aside for films. To cater for the other art forms, the Ministry will be requesting a separate grant. However, I must stress here that if the Ministry is given any special grants for the arts by the government, it serves only as a 'shot in the arm' and not as a regular feature in the Malaysian arts. Overall government spending in the arts has increased tremendously in the last 10 years. Although the bulk of the increase in allocation is spent on infrastructure facilities, it still represents an

increase in public funds spent on the arts.

The government cannot be expected to meet all the needs and demands for monetary assistance from arts organizations. As much as funding for the arts is increasing, so too is the number of arts organizations in the country. There are numerous new arts organizations that desperately need assistance from the government, most of them outside the affluent cities of the nation. I wish to stress the pertinent role of the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism. The Ministry's responsibility is as a policy maker. The Ministry's role is to provide artistic impetus and an environment that support the arts. It is not and it cannot be the role of the Ministry to provide funding for all artistic endeavors.

To be fair to the corporate sector, several major banks and companies have financed arts activities. This year alone, several theatre productions, art exhibitions and orchestral performances had the luxury of being sponsored by the corporate sector. However, the instances are too few and definitely far between. In most cases, sponsorship came only after months or even years of persuasion and tons of paperwork by the arts organizations. Even then, most sponsorship becomes a reality only because the key players from both parties are personal acquaintances.

This scenario has to change. The corporate sector must support the government in providing a healthy environment for creative works. The process of achieving the 2020 vision in the arts needs the corporate sector to be more open and willing to spend money on the arts. For art organizations, the economic progress of the country presents many challenges. Firstly, the increasing availability of space for creative works. This fact presents an interesting paradox. The availability of space allows the expression of more creative works, but on the other hand, arts organizations need to be equipped with people that can handle the larger space and increasingly complicated equipment. Otherwise, the numerous halls being built and the many more spaces that will be available in the years to come will not be fully utilized. On the other hand, the emergence of more space will require more creative works to be staged. Should art organizations not take up this challenge, the venues will either be used for purposes not at all related to the arts or will be filled with performances from international guests.

Although I foresee an increase in corporate sponsorship for the arts, the crux will be on arts organizations to present quality proposals and results. The corporate sector will be more stringent in their selection of art forms and potential organizations to be funded, not for the lack of funds, but for the image that sponsorship will bring to the company. I am sure these topics will be discussed today before the end of the day. What can arts organizations offer the funders in return for their sponsorship? Publicity, image of the company, educational programs for the employees; these and other forms of returns to the company will have to be thought of as companies become more selective and demanding.

A matter that needs serious research by arts organizations is an audience research. Although it can be seen that the number of arts audience is increasing, especially in the last 5 years, how effective have been the marketing strategies in getting new audiences? It may be the case, for example, that the various 'cyberspace' entertainment establishments are gaining 5 times more new audiences in a year than the arts have in the last 5 years. So what are our strategies to attract this 'cyberspace' generation, a generation of affluent society that has access to the global information and entertainment super highway. We must give this matter a serious thought as technological advancement has its own paradox, the negative element being to isolate humans from one another as there is no need for any real interaction amongst them.

Several factors which have come into place in recent years have directly promoted arts and culture in the country. The recent abolishment of tax for theatre productions in Wilayah Persekutuan have I am sure brought cheers to groups in Kuala Lumpur. The RM 50 million allocation for film announced by the Deputy Prime Minister in his Budget Speech is another plus factor which will help the film industry. The Ministry itself had its allocation for grants to arts organizations increased by 100% to RM 1 million. For corporate sponsors, proceeds made to the Akaun Tabung Amanah will be exempted from tax.

Vision 2020 outlines the destination that all of us must head for. Like other sectors in the Malaysian economy, the arts have a crucial role in realizing the vision. We must take stock of the situation and plan how we should proceed in the next 23 years preceding Vision 2020. The arts help define our nation's identity. Through the arts, we nourish the soul and identity of a nation and we become one.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that arts sponsors and arts organizations have a big role to play in Vision 2020. We must promote social changes in the process of creating a united society with strong community values. Any social changes to be made or encouraged must be accepted by the whole society to be meaningful. Strong community values must be imbued in the hearts and minds of all Malaysians as this will lay the foundation for the creation of a truly united nation.

These are issues for all of us to think about. I offer no answers as there can be no one solution to the matters discussed. What is important is for all of us to communicate and work with each other to ensure that we in the arts do our fair share to fulfil Vision 2020.

I would like to end my address today by again quoting Dato' Sri Dr Mahathir:

The great bulk of the work that must be done to ensure a fully developed country called Malaysia a generation from now, will obviously be done by the leaders who follow us, by our children and grandchildren. But we should make sure that we have done our duty in guiding them with regard to what we should work to become. And let us lay the secure foundations that they must build upon.

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Glasgow Plans Festival of Islamic Art and Culture

The Department of Performing Arts and Venues of the Glasgow City Council has announced plans for a major celebration of the arts and culture of the Muslim world (June 1997-January 1998).

Entitled *Salaam* (Peace) the presentations will comprise a folklore project, a road art project, a number of films showing the work of Muslim film-makers working in the UK, and five exhibitions including the following:

Open Sesame
(Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove – May 1997 to January 1998) is visualised as a large scale exhibition displaying a treasure-trove of cultural, ethnographic and arts objects from the Muslim world. Most of the objects will be from Glasgow Museums' own collections and will be on display for the first time. The geographic range of exhibits from Morocco to Malaysia, their religious significance and their cultural and artistic importance speak for the depth of the Museums' collection.

Pilgrim of the Pen: Ghani al-Ani, Master Calligrapher
(Art Gallery and Museum, Kelvingrove – June to October1997) would highlight calligraphy, the most highly rated art form in Islam as it perpetuates the sacred Arabic letters and language of the Holy Qur'an. Ghani al-Ani, born in Iraq, but now resident in Paris, is one of the last masters of his craft integrating technical skill with his own personal style to demonstrate the art form's enduring power and expression.

'The Veil in Islam: Myth and Reality' (August to November 1997): The West often regards the veil or 'hijab' as a negative symbol of Islamic fundamentalism or of female submission and eroticism. In tackling this controversial subject, the exhibition intends to expose such ideas as myths and hopes to convey the diversity and complexity that surrounds the issue of the veil in the Muslim world today. (St Mungo Museum of Religious Life and Art)

Europe in India: Mughal Paintings and their European Prototypes
(The Burrell Collection – May to August 1997):
On loan from the British Museum, this exhibition displays Indian paintings produced under the direct influence of European prototypes, primarily the Mughal school of the 15th - 18th centuries together with book bindings and ivories from Goa.

Contemporary Muslim Art
(Glasgow Gallery of Modern Art – June to September 1997): three contemporary British artists from Muslim backgrounds will exhibit their work in Glasgow's newest museum. The Gallery of Modern Art will also run a series of workshops with members of the local Muslim and non-Muslim communities. The project is aimed at a wide audience with particular appeal for young people.

The Folklore Project (2-16 August 1997) will be based in the Gallery of Modern Art. Using their festival exhibitions as a dramatic backdrop, this performance programme over a two-week period will highlight the depth and diversity of stories from Islamic cultures throughout the world. Tales told in music, poetry, prose and dance will unfold in the early evening, bringing to life the heritage and traditions of countries as far apart as Indonesia, Morocco, Senegal, Egypt and Pakistan. There will also be a 'Mushaira', a poetry event particularly popular in Pakistan. The word itself means 'he who writes, recites' – a poet reading his own work aloud in company. These are popular and a regular feature of the Muslim community in Glasgow. Attending the event will be a number of young Glasgow writers, including Muslims with an interest in writing and performing. The project will be led by a well-known writing practitioner who has an interest and knowledge of the mushaira tradition.

The creative writing project and performance will find a natural place within the folklore element of the festival. Presented in association with the Gallery of Modern Art it will take place within the high-profile, city-wide programme planned by Museums and Galleries and the Department of Performing Arts and Venues. Tickets for all events would be offered at a flat rate of £2.00, encouraging maximum access to all projects and from all sectors of the community.

The Road Art Project
(6 June to December 1997) aims to enhance the festival's presence in the city and generate a sense of the immediate and fun. Glasgow Museums and the Department of Performing Arts And Venues will co-ordinate the decoration of a European single-deck bus and a small commercial van mirroring the vibrant and colourful style of the decorated transport of Pakistan. The bus, to be provided by a local company, will act as a temporary exhibit and is due to tour between the six proposed exhibitions in Glasgow's Museums between May and December 1997. This public art bus service will run on a daily basis and be offered free of charge to passengers and schools wishing to visit the participating exhibitions and galleries. The van will be added to the city's prestigious collections, not only as a static and permanent exhibit but quite literally as The Department of Glasgow Film Theatre, as appropriate to the wishes of the participants.

The project **Film in Focus** is intended as a cinematic introduction to the Muslim world. The elements of the project combine to represent a broad cross-section of interest, ability for and by the Muslim community in Glasgow. The project has the potential to develop a momentum for future work in Glasgow and to bring the focus of the work and talents of Muslim community, and particularly Muslim women to the fore.

The Creative Project
At the centre of the project is a design and making package where Muslim women will create costumes for a music and dance production. Every element of the creative process will be informed by traditional skills but with a real sense of contemporary Glasgow. The work will eventually be performed and filmed in the Gallery of Modern Art and screened on the final day of the project.



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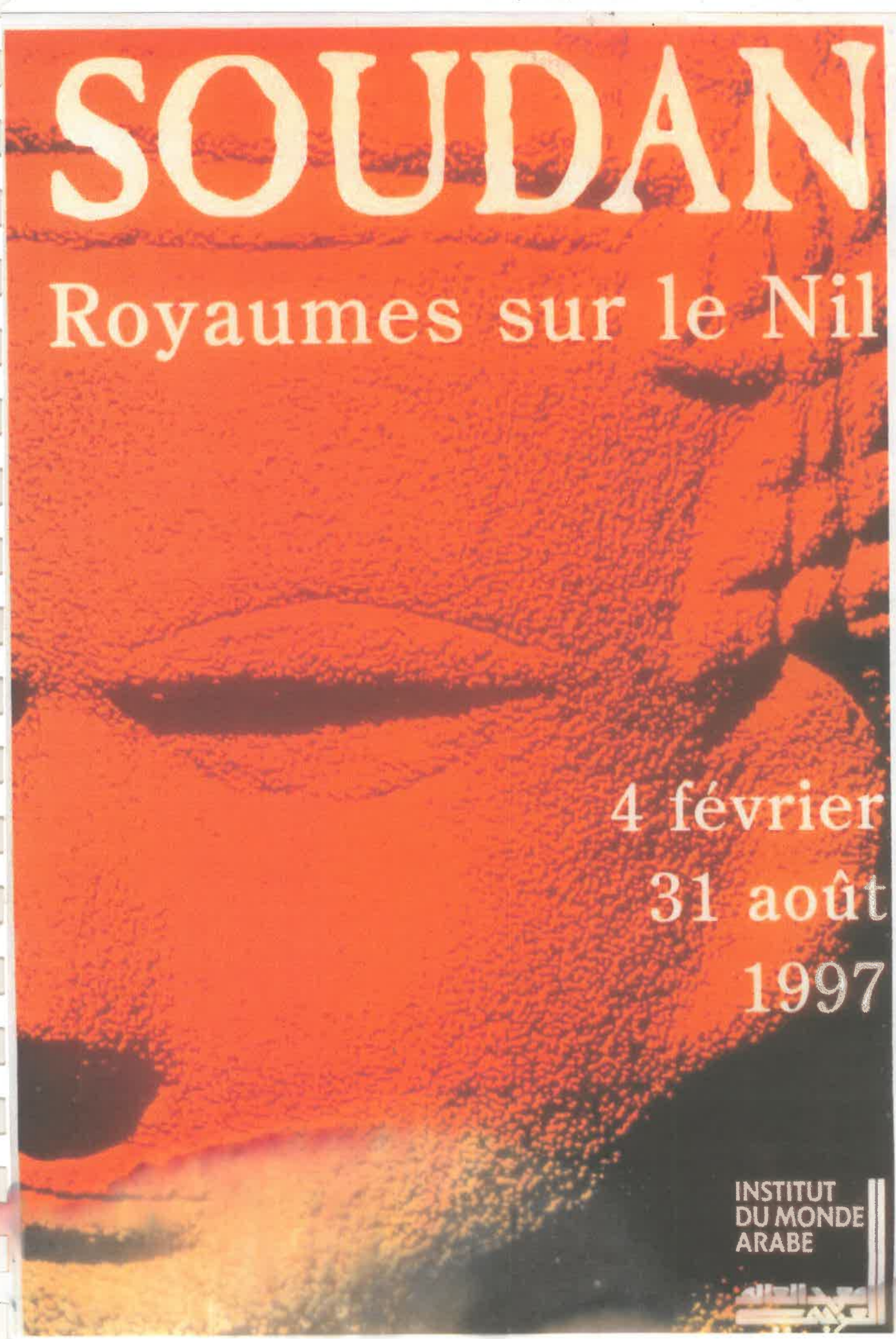
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