ARTS
The Islamic World

VOLUME 3 NO 3 AUTUMN 1985
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Arab-Byzantine dinar AH 74-75 (AD 693-694).



Reverse



Obverse

Abbasid Caliph al-Saffah dinar AH 132.



Reverse



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(underside)

An Important Abbasid Rock Crystal Dish
9TH-10TH CENTURY

An Important Abbasid Rock Crystal Dish, 9th-10th century, of oval form standing on a low foot, with flattened everted rim, the exterior relief cut with a palmette at either end, with two medallions with a square enclosing a circle in between, the rim cross-hatched with a fan palmette at either end, *Iran or Iraq, 8.2cm; 3¼ in length, 4.7cm; 1-13/16in width, 1.8cm; 11/16 in height.*

This dish bears a striking resemblance in shape, size and decoration to a well-known rock-crystal dish in the Louvre (see illustration). The Louvre object was acquired in 1912 from clandestine excavators in Susa. A closely comparable, if less finely executed, version in jadeite was excavated by de Macquenem in Susa in 1928, and is likewise now also in the Louvre. The assured Susa provenance of the two Louvre dishes, as well as the alleged Iranian provenance of the present lot, suggests a West Iranian or Iraqi provenance for the group. More problematic, however, is the dating.

The Louvre's rock-crystal dish has been variously published as 'Greco-Byzantine' and as Sasanian, either 3rd-4th centuries or 7th century A.D. As there are no certain Sasanian objects of comparable shape or decoration, the Sasanian attribution remains to be proven. A priori the historical context raises the possibility of an early Islamic date, because in the fourth century Susa was razed to the ground by three hundred of Shapur II's elephants, and only partially reinhabited by the late Sasanian period; in the early Abbasid period, on the other hand, it was once again a flourishing city. The possibility of an early Islamic date seems confirmed by the decoration.

In the first place, the technique of relief-cut glass and crystal was characteristic of the 9th and 10th centuries. Secondly, three motifs – the spiral volutes with a small, flat-topped central boss, the thin oval cartouche with a raised spine, and the cross-hatching – appear on rock-crystal objects traditionally attributed to 10-11th century Egypt. One of the closest parallels for the volutes and the oval cartouche can be found on a flask in the



(side)

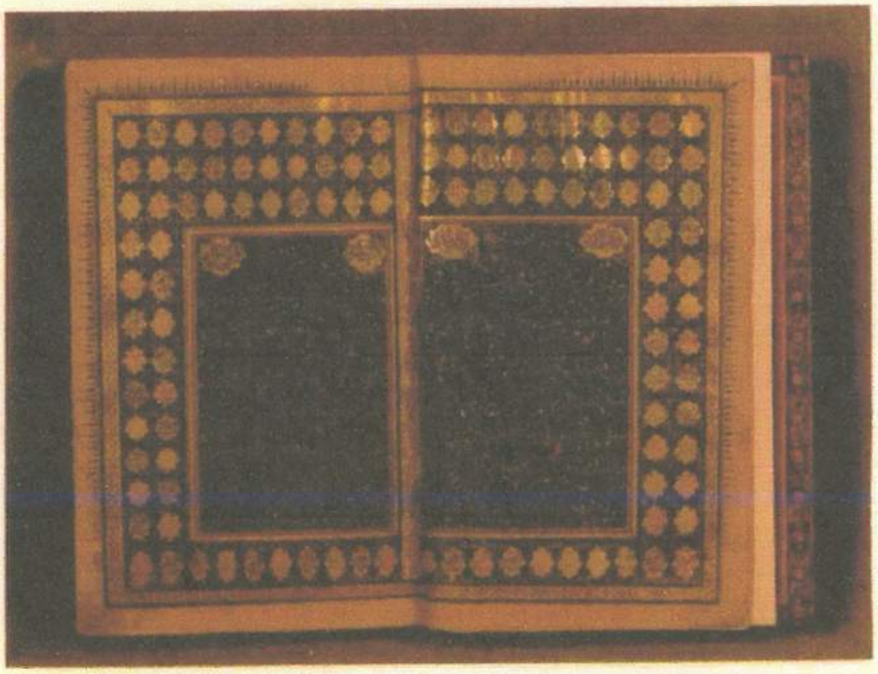
Freer Gallery, Washington, which on stylistic grounds has been regarded as one of the earliest 'Fatimid' rock-crystals, and indeed a pre-Fatimid, either Tulunid (868-905) or Ikhshidid (935-969), date has been suggested for it. Several other flasks, including ones in Essen, Quedlinburg, Assisi and the Victoria & Albert Museum, can in turn be related to the Freer flask. Cross-hatching can be found on other early Islamic rock-crystals, such as the 'Sacred Blood of Weissenau', and was a common technique in glass of the period.

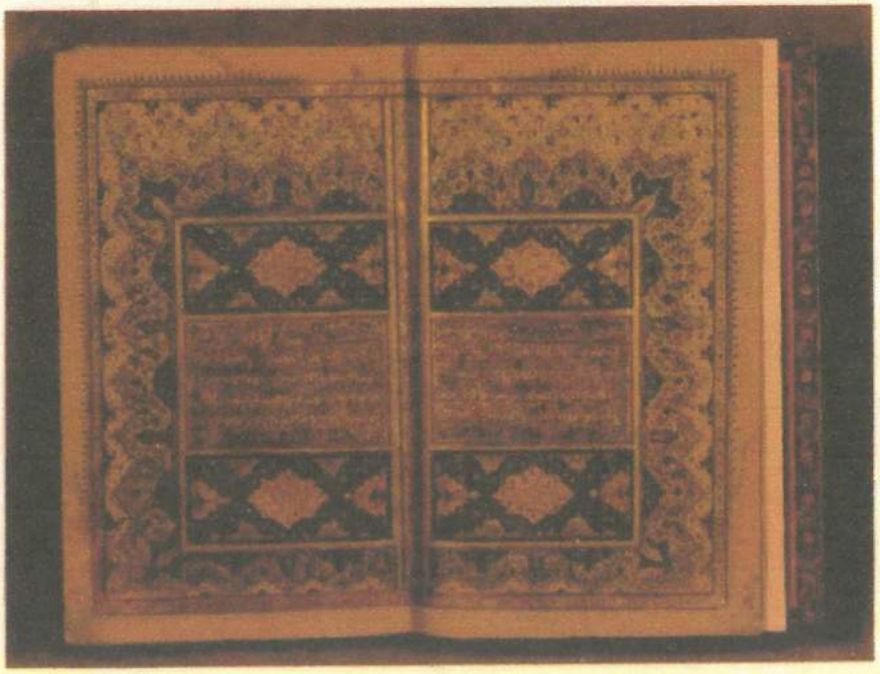
The decorative repertoire of the present rock-crystal dish and of its counterparts in the Louvre can, therefore, be linked more easily to objects of the Islamic rather than Sasanian period. As the drawing of its volutes is more fluent than those on the Freer flask, it may be one of the earliest known Islamic rock crystals. As regards shape, no precise Islamic parallels can be cited. However, an oval dish of relief-cut crystal glass, with similar proportions, but without the lip, was excavated at Samarra. Most important, however, is its likely eastern origin since it raises questions about the traditional attribution of all the surviving early Islamic rock-crystals to Egypt. It may prove possible on the basis of this Susa group of rock-crystals, and a few other rock-crystal objects found in Iran, to begin to identify a school of eastern Islamic rock-crystal carving.

Bibliography: Atil, cat. no. 13; Erdmann (1940) and (1951); Oliver (1961) and (1978), cat. no. 29; Survey, pl. 1438, C&D.

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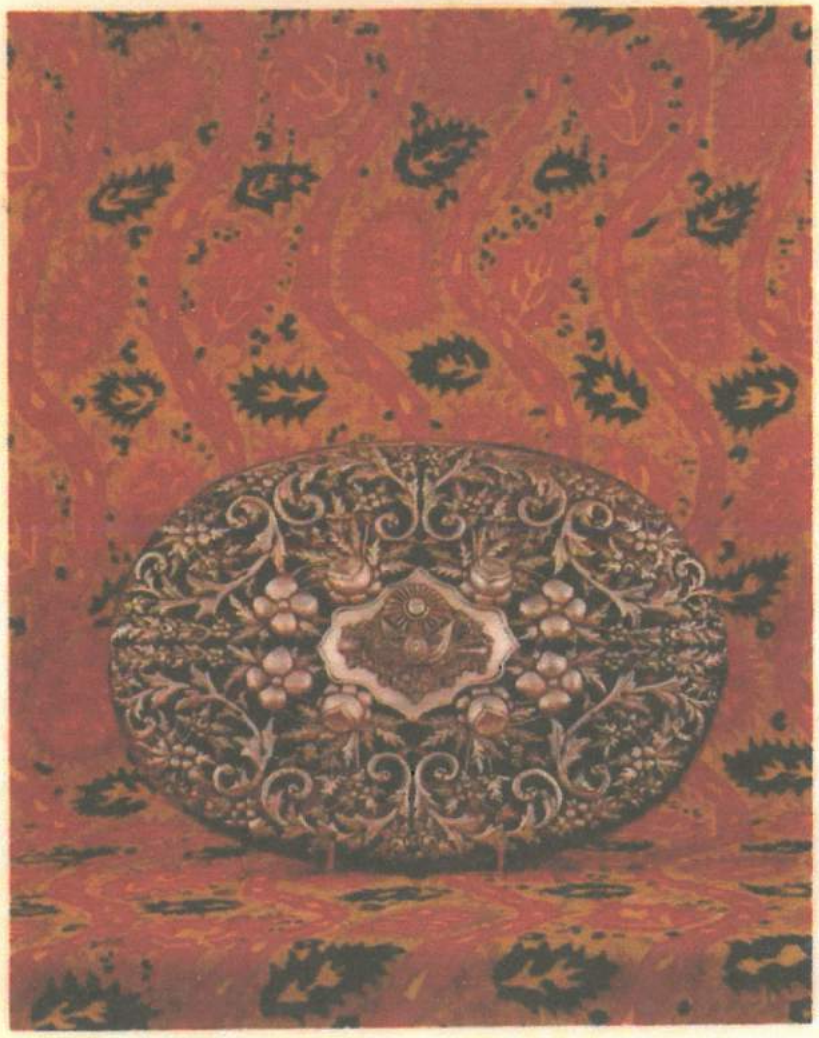
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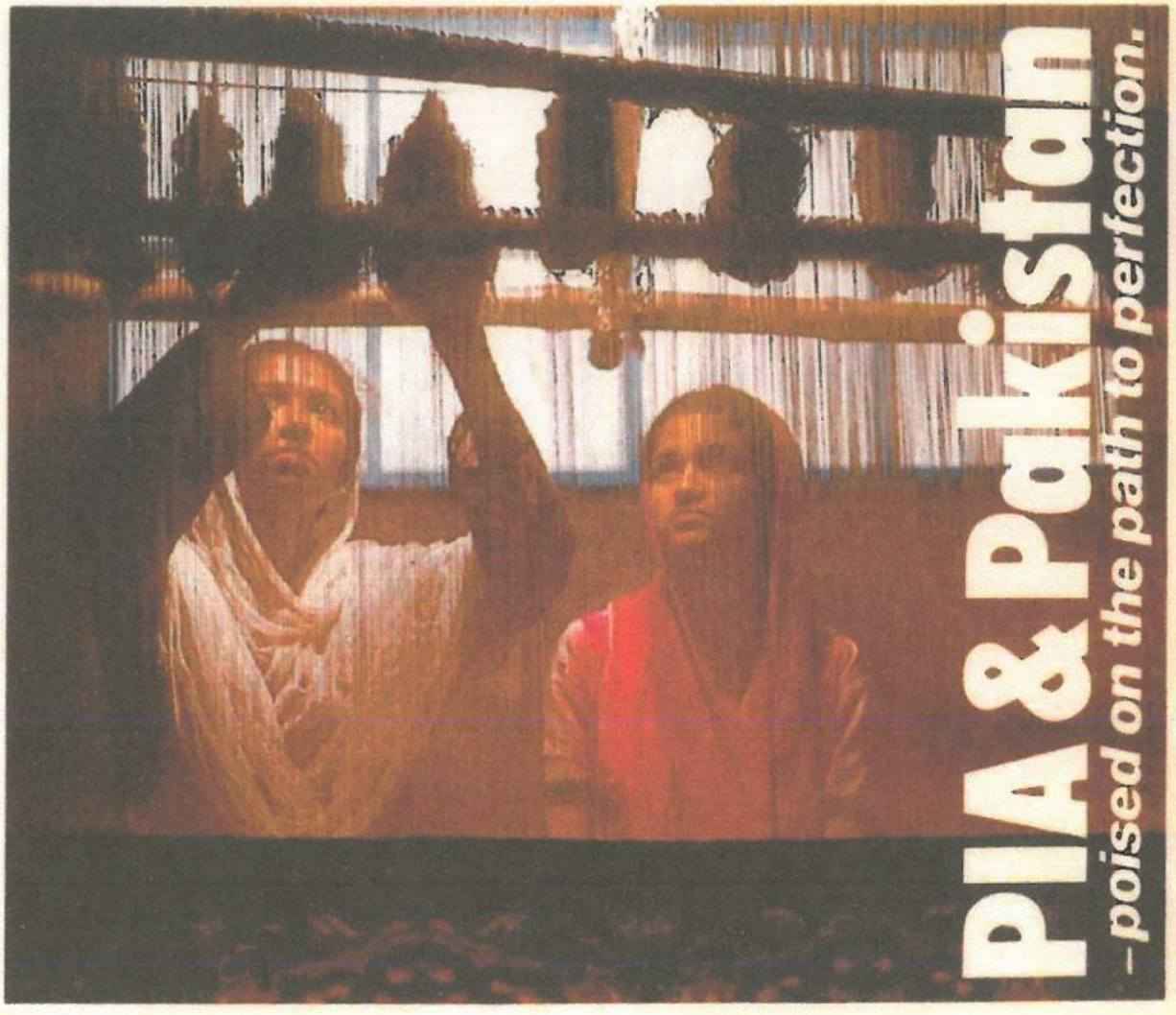
Important Turkish Mirror, tughra of Sultan Abdulhamid Yldiz Saray and L.Y.S. Coll (50 x 35 cm)

Turkish embroidery, 17th century. 212 x 150 cm. Madame 'R' Coll.

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Typeset by Olympia Typesetters, London
Printed by Penshurst Press

Islamic Arts Foundation, London
ISSN 0264 1828

Published for the
Islamic Arts Foundation, London
by
New Century Publishers
5A Bathhurst Street, London, W2 2SD
Telephone: 01 402 1451
Telex: 262284 MONREF G Ref: 3307

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Single copy in UK. £7.50. Abroad $10.
Annual subscription for 4 issues:
In UK. £30. Abroad $40.
All rates include surface postage.
Air surcharge extra.

Arts and the Islamic World (ISSN 0264 1828), a quarterly magazine, is printed in London by Islamic Arts Foundation for U.S. $40.00 per year. Postage paid at Brooklyn, New York. Postmaster: send address changes to Arts and The Islamic World, c/o Medialink International, 191 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 112091. U.S. Mailing Agent: Medialink International, Inc.

10
Editorial

11
The New Face of a Nation as Old as the World: Modern Egyptian Art
Liliane Karnouk

19
Dubai to Host Major Islamic Art Auction
Stan Nelson

22
Profile: Karl Schlamminger

29
Islamic Art in the United States — A Special Supplement

Introduction
Carol Hotchkiss Malt

Appreciating Islamic Art
Lois Lamyá al Faruqi

The Teaching of Islamic Art in America
Oleg Grabar

The American Pilgrimage of Islam: Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions
Wendy M. Blazier

Architects in America Design for Islamic Cultures
Nadar Ardalan

Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Marilyn Jenkins

Islamic Art at the Freer Gallery
Esin Atil

Islamic Art from the Madina Collection
Linda Komaroff

Islamic Textiles: Art at the Textile Museum
Carol Manson Bier

The Corning Museum of Glass
David Whitehouse

Islamic Bookbindings of Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago
Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch

Worn Pathways, New Roads: Five Artists in America
Francis Harper

Contemporary Arab American Artists
Ann Burnham

Contemporary Islamic Art in New York
Layla S. Diba

81
Arts News

Arts Exhibitions

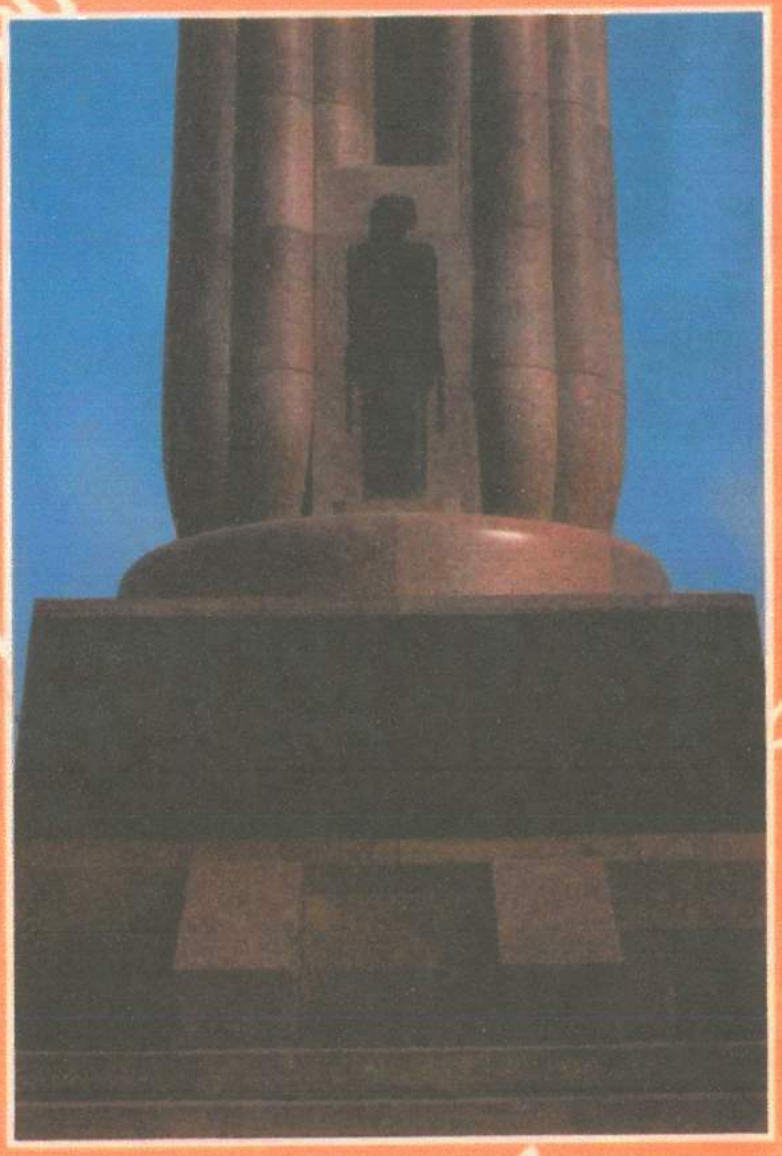
Cover
Textile fragment: Wool, tapestry weave, Iraq, Mid. VIII Century A.D.: Rogers Fund, 1950 50.83 (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York)

Editorial

The announcement of the trienniel King Fahd Awards for Design and Research in Islamic Architecture, open to "students of architecture and newly graduated architects all over the world", fills a major gap in incentives for the younger architects as distinct from those who have already "arrived" and their reputations established. The initiative taken by the OIC International Commission for the Preservation of the Islamic Heritage in premiating early promise also, as distinct from later performance, is to be warmly welcomed. The statement of purpose specifically states that the Awards have been instituted to encourage the discovery of the creative spirit and search for the formative principles of architecture inspired by the Islamic way of life. Topics for the Research awards may range from philosophy, history, theory, morphology and symbolism, to environmental response, materials, techniques, crafts and even to futuristic constructs of architecture and urbanism.

The 2nd International Seminar on Islamic Arts organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation in July threw up a number of ideas, two of which deserve special attention. One of these relates to the need for setting up a central reference archives as a data bank of information about Islamic art holdings in an increasing number of public and private collections in many countries of the world. The other concerns the state of art education in the Islamic world itself and the place of Islamic arts in the educational curriculum generally in most Eastern and Western countries. This, in the words of the Seminar President, Dr. Ezzèddin Ibrahim, "has had a raw deal in most parts of the Islamic world itself, and the teaching of Islamic art has particularly suffered in the process." In the West too, as he pointed out, "art syllabuses in most educational establishments have been understandably deficient in giving Islamic art the treatment and importance to which it is rightly entitled." Some of the questions he posed were: What is the place assigned to Islamic art in the existing syllabuses? What kind of textbooks on Islamic arts are available? To what extent the existing museums are, or can be made part of the teaching curriculum? What audiovisual material on the subject can be relied upon to open the mind and vision of the younger generation at various stages of their educational career? These are challenging and thought provoking questions, and should provide themes for the Foundation's next Seminar.

Our series of special supplements on various countries, regions and themes continues in this issue with one on "Islamic Art in the United States", covering historic Islamic arts in major museum collections of the eastern United States, and commentary on contemporary painting, film and design by Arab/Muslim Americans as well as Americans involved with Middle Eastern themes and cultural expression. The Guest Editor of this special survey is Dr Carol Hotchkiss Malt, who has extensively written on the arts of the Arab and Islamic world, and was until recently Director of the Arts and Culture Centre in Hollywood, Florida.



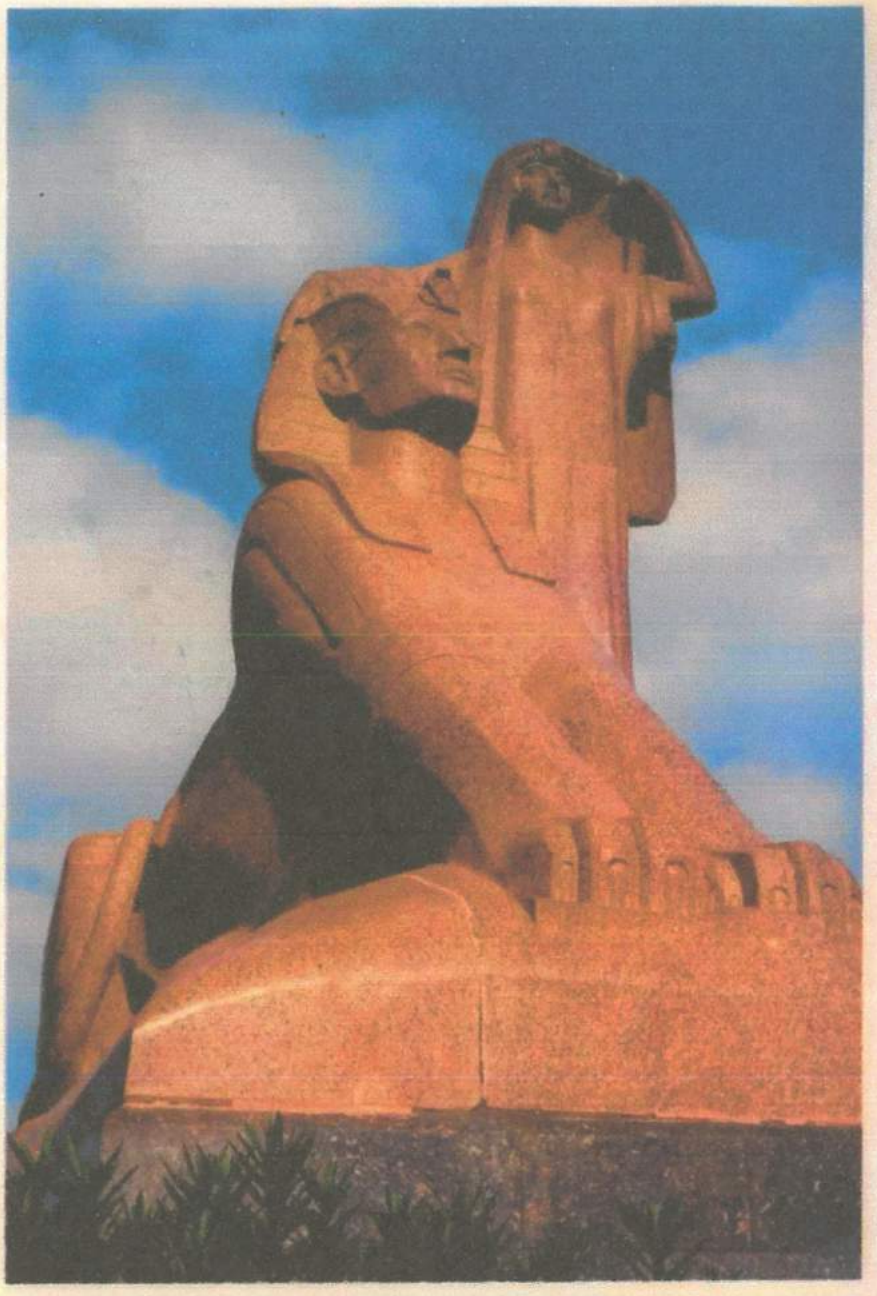
The New Face of a Nation as Old as the World

MODERN EGYPTIAN ART

Liliane Karnouk

Egypt is a land of polarities: a fertile black valley juxtaposed to arid sands, a temperate Mediterranean coast that dissolves into the African continent. Furthermore, Egypt is in the paradoxical situation of being both an agricultural oasis that has sheltered a traditional way of life for thousands of years and an intercontinental crossroads open to every cultural and political influence.

Previous Page: *Mahmoud Moukhtar, Monument of Saad Zaaghloul. Detail; Freedom and Homage to Agriculture. Bronze and Pink Granite, Cairo (photo Liliane Karnouk).* **This Page Right:** *Mahmoud Moukhtar 'Egyptian Awakening'. Pink Granite 1927, Cairo (photo Sobhi el Sharouni).* **Below:** *Mahmoud Said 'Prayer' oil on canvas 1935 (photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Opposite page top left:** *Ragheb Ayad 'Work in the Fields' 1934, oil on canvas (photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Top right:** *Ragheb Ayad, Detail 'Work in the Fields'* **Centre right:** *Mohamed Naghi 'Bread Breakers' 1932, oil on canvas, detail (photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Bottom:** *Mohamed Naghi, 'The Village', oil on canvas, Large format 1929 (photo Sobhi el Sharouni).*



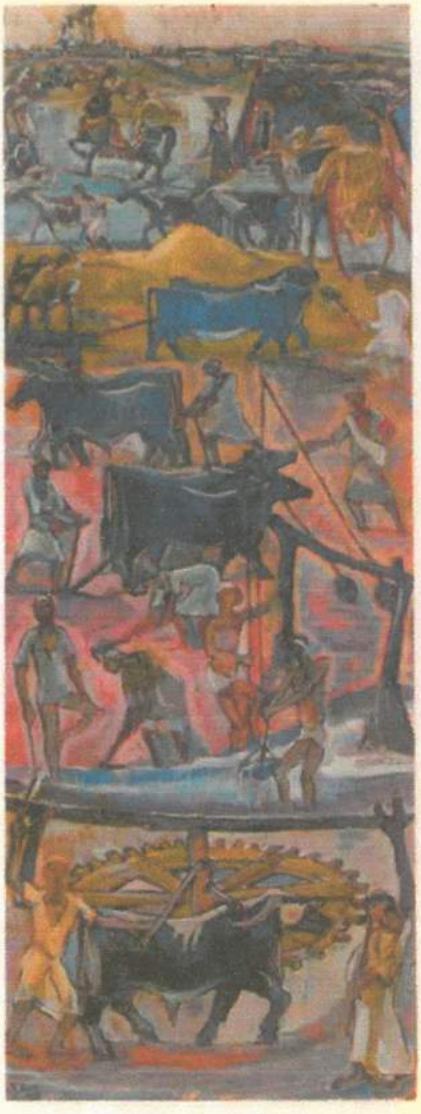


One of the most powerful symbols in Egyptian iconography is the common pictograph representing a pharaoh binding together the floral symbol of the "two lands". Apart from its explicit political significance, this recurring image also alludes to attitudes of tolerance and unity which were the pharaonic foundations of the Egyptian nation.

Today, Egypt is still a nation on two levels: a country included in the Islamic *ummah* and an Egyptian nation with its own distinctive character formed by a long history of successive civilizations – Pharaonic, Coptic, Arab and European. These paradoxes are why, even today, the pictographic symbol of the Egyptian leader collecting and tying a floral bouquet is still valid. The shapes and colours of that bouquet are all visible in the spectrum of modern Egyptian visual art. In this article, we will consider major representatives of three generations of Egyptians artists and suggest their contribution to this spectrum.

As a modern nation, Egypt – like all non-western countries who reached independence after a long period under colonial rule – has had to struggle to maintain a fundamental national character while searching for a new identity. During the nationalist movement of the 1920s led by Saad Zaghloul, a number of artists were to search for a representation of *shakhsia misriya* (Egyptian identity) in the context of international art. The statues and monuments of Mahmoud Moukhtar (1883-1934) are the outstanding symbols of this era.

Moukhtar's massive granite statue, "The Egyptian Awakening," today dominates the gateway entr-





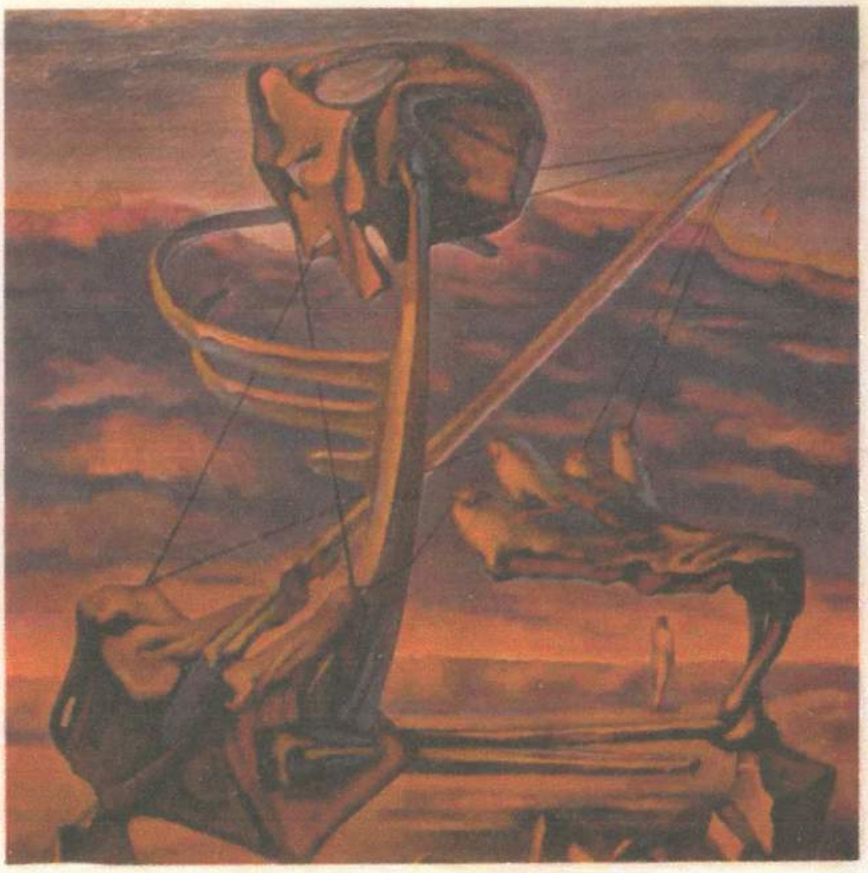




ance to Cairo University. It is an impressive neo-pharaonic composition, combining the simplicity of the Egyptian style and the plastic grace of French symbolic sculpture. The statue is composed like a hieroglyph and calls for an objective reading. It consists of two juxtaposed determinatives: a woman, unveiling, standing above a sphinx about to rise. For Moukhtar, the essential form of Egyptanicity is embodied in this woman, the *fellaha*, who can be read as three images: woman (beauty, art); peasant (the land, nationalism); unveiling (emancipation, enlightenment). The statue also suggests ideas expressed in many of Moukhtar's other works – essentially that the true face of the Egyptian nation hides, like the glory of past civilizations, beneath the desert sands and that, like the discovery of the treasures of King Tutankhamon in 1922, this identity masked behind the Ottoman veil must be exposed and offered to both Egyptians and to the world. Pharaonism was Moukhtar's ideal: it evoked a mystical past which was neither European nor Arab and found its social manifestation in the peasants' demonstrations for independence in 1919.

Mahmoud Said (1897-1964), a personal friend of Moukhtar's, was also his complementary opposite. Said was an Alexandrian and an aristocrat. His work reflects a rich and sensuous palette that depicts a range of anachronistic feelings in visually coherent images. Said gazes into the orient from beyond the curtain drawn by the European orientalist painters. His characters, ranging from mystics to courtesans, are animated by the same enigmatic sensuality found in the dissolving images of the *Arabian Nights*. If the elongated faces favoured by the painter recall the features of their ancestors from Tell el Amarna, the figures nevertheless are rendered with such chromatic contrasts that they are felt to belong to the Mediterranian environment. Here Alexandria is presented as a seaport from which colour and liberalism are transported by a refreshing western European breeze, and freely allowed to imprint the dusty ascetic Egyptian reality with a feast of luscious modulations.

That rejuvenating power was also attributed to the Nile flood. Ragheb Ayad (1892-1980) felt it in the seeds germinating in the black soil and in the vitality of the rural Egyptians.



The painter observed folk society in ceremonies, market gatherings, and experienced the native way of life as an insider. He allowed his brush to react spontaneously to voices, music or noise through bold lines and thick flat colours reminiscent of traditional Coptic painting. His expressionistic rendering of people in their environment is organized sometimes on horizontal planes lined up in strips which echo back to the frescoes of Beni Hassan. Ayad's work is earthy, emphatic and full of that distinctive humour rooted in parables and social satire, which distinguished his generation, and which appeared in a different form in the music of El Sayed Darwish.

Mohamed Naghi (1880-1956) also looked attentively at the people he portrayed in all their ethnic and social diversity. Naghi was an intellectual humanist who integrated ideas and impressions about Arab heritage and Egyptian civilization in thematic and historic paintings. He believed passionately in the social mission of art. His murals, which adorn several public buildings, depict figures either evolving slowly or frozen as in tableaux vivants. Each figure seems, however, to be standing for a multitude. The Fayoum-like quality of his portraits,



Top left: *Ramses Younan 'Nature Calling the Void' 1945, oil on canvas (photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Top right:** *Fouad Kamel, Composition 1958, Enamel on board (photo Sobhi el Sharouni)* **Above:** *Abd El Hadi el Gazzar 'The Green Cock', 1950, Tempera on board (photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Centre right:** *Abd El Hadi el Gazzar 'The Ordinary Life' 1954, oil on canvas (Photo Liliane Karnouk)* **Right:** *Abd El Hadi el Gazzar "Folk Tale' 1952, oil on board (photo Sobhi el Sharouni).*







his resort to compositions inspired by Coptic processions, his heavy and contrasted shading result in lyrical but sometimes oppressive effects. Naghy is a master of ritual, his paintings give the impression of endless ceremonies stretching from a deeply rooted past towards an unchanging future.

The nostalgic and yet self-assured optimism experienced by these pioneers of Modern Art (among many others) was disrupted by the political situation in Egypt and the confusion of wars in Europe. Since the artists were unable to visualize any overall course of events, they began to react individually to influences coming through the aesthetic and ideological trends crossing the nation before and during the war. From 1935 art noticeably changed.

The right to formulate self expression without any restriction, in other words freedom of imagination, was associated in the broader spectrum of political freedom. This was a major issue in the antifascist international front. Ramses Younan (1914-1966), Fuad Kamel (1919-1973) and other younger artists of that generation were unanimous in their support of that cause. However, they also took it upon themselves to challenge an academic art which was well-established and in favour with the ruling class, by allying themselves to the surrealist movement bannered by leftists such as Andre Breton and Diego Rivera. Later in the fifties they adhered to the Abstract-Expressionist style which dominated the American avant-garde. This new non-figurative adventure was partially justified by the closer re-evaluation of Islamic art theory and its non-representational orientation. The efforts of that second generation of Egyptian artists led to a shift from the representation of social and nationalistic themes to a world of inner search for creative individualism. The social implication of this development was the introduction of art pedagogy into the educational system.

It was in fact an art educator, the painter Hussein Youssef Amin, who founded the Group of Contemporary Art in 1946. Abd ElHadi El Gazzar (1925-1965), was one of its young members. A folk realist painter, Gazzar drew his themes from Egyptian magic symbolism, the popular arts or the low urban reality, and wove them into highly personal and bold compositions.



Right: *Hamed Nada 'Nationalization of the Suez Canal', 1956, oil on canvas (photo Sobhi el Sharouni)* **Below:** *Hamed Nada 'Street Popular Band' 1982, oil on canvas (photo Sobhi el Sharouni).*



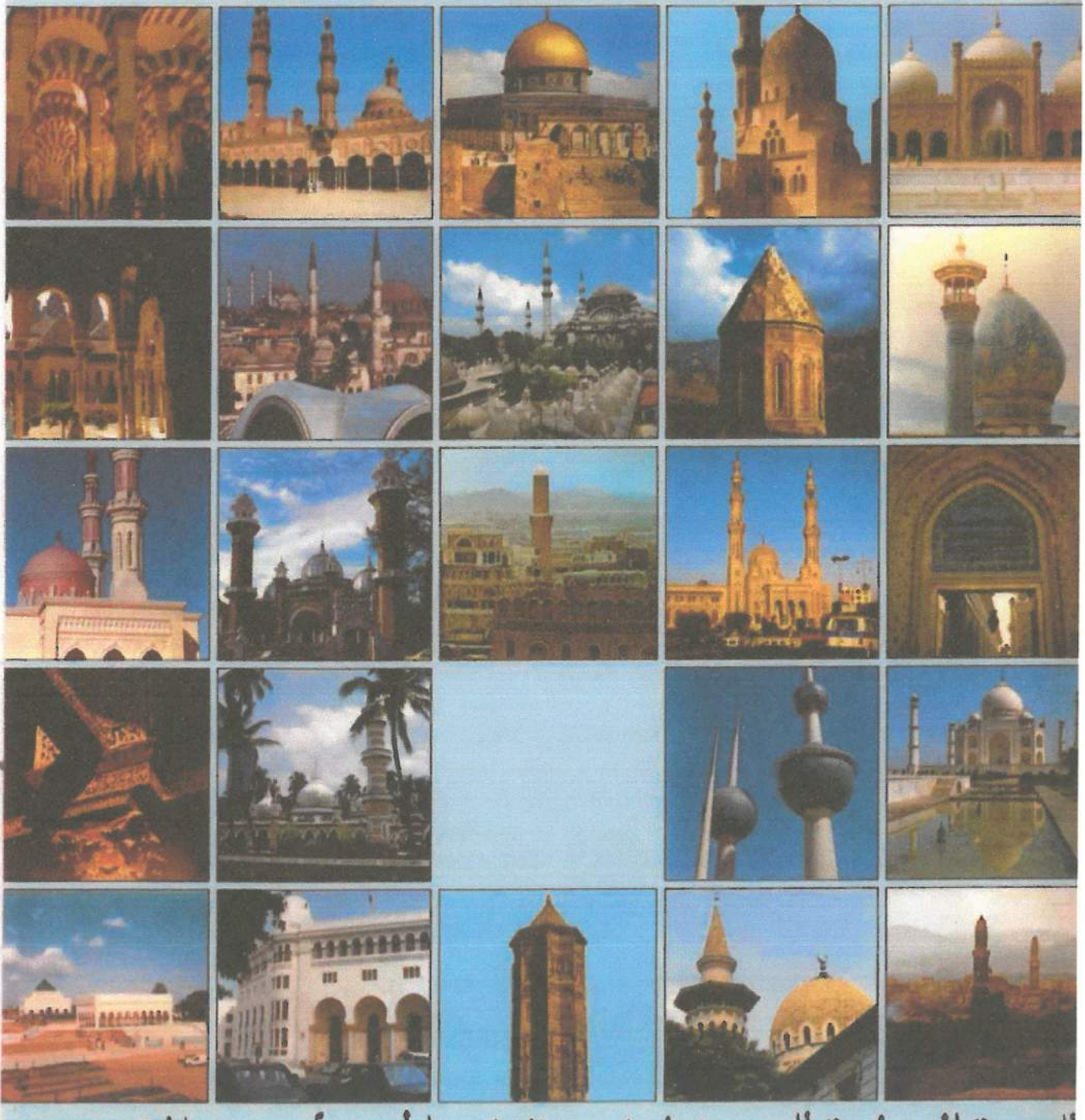
His imagery is not surrealist, it is supra-realist. Magic and science, religion and technology, the persistence of traditions and the hopes of the revolution: Gazzar explored them with great lucidity. His paintings emerge like a vision, and yet each one is loaded with messages. Their content, charged with philosophical and social statements, never cease to enchant and distrub. Gazzar's pictorial assurance and the intensity of each of his images mark him as the most original Egyptian artist. His short career not only demonstrated that a native modern art was born, but that Egyptian imagery was quite alive and well remembered.

The Group of Contemporary Art included another outstanding member, Hamed Nada (b.1924). His works recollect a total atmosphere where the material and the poetic environment are simultaneously evoked. His very own iconography, derived from ordinary subject matter, is manipulated with the structural freedom of magic folk tales. Nada exemplified the intellectual Third World artist because his inspiration is consciously assimilated into the perception of pre-literate man, who communicates through myths and signs. Nada's own "non-linear" space is comparable to Arab miniatures, but his shapes float like suspended puppets. Unlike the cubists who westernized African art, Nada Africanizes surrealism and gives it a refreshing social and aesthetic actuality rooted in Nubian and Egyptian cultural traditions.

The fundamental work accomplished by three generations of artists brought modern Egyptian art to world attention in the fifties. Finally five decades of experimentation had bloomed, a new plastic language evolving from native roots was born. The new flowers were knotted, Pharaoh was once again satisfied. What better tribute to the "shakhsia misria," than the comment of John Berger who visited Venice in 1958: "And then, there was the pavilion of the United Arab Republic (Egypt). Only occasionally do history and art correspond with each other as directly as they do here; but it remains a fact that this pavilion was the most affirmative and vital of all the 1958 Biennale. I do not, of course, mean that geniuses have appeared overnight in Cairo. What makes these works outstanding is that they affirm, they are not defensive treaties. Man comes before things. Their language is largely traditional, its sun-dried colours, its expressive use of decorative silhouettes, and its easy and unself-conscious simplifications deriving from traditional Egyptian art and design. Yet it is the art of the West that appears by contrast to be not only academic, but also in the context of the emerging 20th century world, finished, exhausted, outlived." (John Berger: *Permanent Red* 1962) ■

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Dubai to Host Major Islamic Art Auction

Stan Nelson

One of the biggest European style auctions of Islamic art ever held in the world — if not the biggest — is to take place in the UAE, at the Dubai International Trade Centre, in December 1985. Arranged and managed by Sotheby's of London, this event promises to create an outstanding focus on Islam in general and Dubai in particular.

The founder of Sotheby's was Samuel Baker, a bookseller who, in the year 1744, held his first auction and sold the library of an English nobleman, Sir John Stanley. The price that was obtained for this whole collection of books was just £826. Some 250 years later, in 1983, Sotheby's sold a single book for £8,140,000. This was The Gospel of Henry the Lion, a twelfth century German hero who was related to Richard the Lionheart and King John of England. It was not only the most expensive book ever sold at an auction, but also realised the highest price ever paid for any work of art.

In the international art world Sotheby's is recognised as an innovative organisation, pioneering specialist sales, estimating what the seller could actually hope to obtain for his goods in an auction, and making fine art an international business, by setting up salerooms in Britain as well as abroad. Indeed, moving with the times, and making full use of modern technology, it was Sotheby's that took the lead in using satellites for the transmission of bids across the Atlantic during a sale. And Sotheby's is still the only saleroom to have held auctions simultaneously in five cities - New York, Dallas, Los Angeles, London and Paris - by television link.

But perhaps the fact about this remarkable company which will hold greatest interest for our readers, is that Sotheby's was the first saleroom to organise sales devoted exclusively to Islamic art. This specialisation has been an important development over the past 12 years, and its growth is due to many factors.

Oil money must head the list; the Arab world has the wealth to generate collections, and collections must, above all else, be attractive to those with available funds and a desire to maintain and develop all of the material aspects of cultural heritage.



Jack Franses

But if money is important, it is not everything. Another major influence is the lively and inquisitive nature of well educated and interested peoples of Islamic countries who seek to strengthen this cultural heritage, to identify with their ancestry and roots.

Islam has a history like none other, colourful, strong, vibrant; with traditions, diversity, creative wealth and artistic capability centred upon a whole host of experiences with a single ideology. It is the culmination of all of this that will



bring Islamic art to the forefront, and it is this tremendous history which has caused the opening of so many new museums and foundations throughout the Arab world.

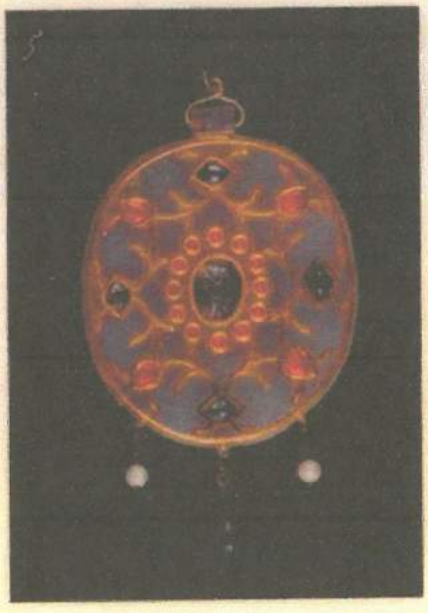
The demand for Islamic art has never been so great and, as a result of this, new collections, and new collectors, are constantly emerging. The potential for trade is literally unlimited, yet Arab families whose fortunes have for long years been built upon the philosophy of buying only to sell, are now buying to keep, because the need to become a part of this vast cultural inheritance is deep within us. Consider the treasures of the recently opened National Museum in Kuwait.

Here is displayed an exhibition loaned from the collection of Shaikh Nasser al-Sabah and his wife. Amassed over years, this is comprehensive illustration of the Islamic people's cultural history, which gives a real insight into every period and every conquest. But it was not gathered from purely Arab sources. Much of it was purchased in London, and a large proportion passed through Sotheby's salerooms before being re-instated in Kuwait. The same could be said for other collections in other museums that have now been opened in Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Qatar, and other Islamic states.

Because of its interest in matters Islamic, Sotheby's had to find an expert to lead this specialist department. The man appointed was Jack Franses, an authority on carpets, textiles, and tapestries, and this is the man who directs the activities of Sotheby's in this field, which means managing the events such as the twice yearly sales of Islamic art.

It is therefore fitting that Jack Franses is the man who will direct the December auction in Dubai. And it is Jack Franses who will be working day by day, from now until December, to ensure that the whole operation goes smoothly.

"This is to be the world's biggest event of its kind" he says, "and the interest in it will be quite tremendous. Obviously, the organisational aspects have had to be most carefully considered, but we are working in conjunction with another specialist company, World Trade Promotions, who has long experience of Middle East affairs, and an in-depth knowledge of just what is needed to make sure that everything goes right throughout the event."



"This sale of Islamic art will take place over three days. It will actually comprise three evening auctions, with viewing periods each day, and special 'ladies only' viewing hours in line with Arab traditions, and for the first time ever, we will have more than 300 lots of Islamic art on sale, much of it totally perfect despite its antiquity."

"There is no doubt that the eyes of the international art world will be closely focussed on Dubai, and we will do everything we can to ensure that this is a memorable sale which will reflect well upon our host nation and its people. The standing of Islamic art is now at its highest, our endeavour will be to underline how right it is that this should be the case. After all, there is no art in all the world that has the same history, the same diversity, the same quality, or the same respect. Material items may be for sale, one's culture surely cannot be, though its fame may certainly be spread."

The feeling which Jack Franses has for Islamic art would be hard to match. He has immersed himself in learning his subject, and derives a genuine pleasure from the objects which pass through his Islamic department at Sotheby's.

Each item, in auctioneering terms, is 'a lot' and, with over 300 to be auctioned at Dubai, the event is expected to realise several million dollars. The aim of the auction is to realise the best price possible for any lot according to the value placed upon it by the buyers or bidders.

An auction operates virtually on an opposite plane to the way market trading is done in the Middle East. In a normal Arab market the seller asks one price and the buyer offers a lower price, until an agreed final price is reached.

In an auction the auctioneer suggests bottom price for the lot, then the bidders indicate the price above this bottom or starting price to which they will go. One lot may be subject to perhaps fifty offers, each rising in price, the lot goes to whoever made that bid.

However, when the auction is being run as strictly as a Sotheby's sale, there may also be sealed bids put in by people who do not actually attend the sale, but do know what piece they want, also there may be telephoned bids, or buyers in the audience acting as agents for others.

A full scale international auction



Previous page: *A 'Polonaise' silk and metal thread rug. 17th century 207 x 136 cm.* **Inset:** *A Mughal Jewel — encrusted, Gold, Polychrome Enamel Bangle, 8cm diameter.* **Above:** *A fine and unusual Mashad Amoghli carpet, 380 x 285 cm.* **Centre Left:** *A Mughal Pale Green Jade Pendant, 8.2 cm.* **Top Left:** *Wajihid dirham of Muhammad bin Yusuf, struck at Oman, dated AH 334.*

such as the one planned for Dubai is a most exciting affair, and each evening will provide a great deal of pleasurable entertainment for those who attend, even if they do not actually buy anything at all.

As a free port Dubai is a natural location for such an event, and Jack Franses and the people from World Trade Promotions, as well as other members of staff at Sotheby's have been making arrangements for handling the vast sums of money involved, for clearing bank drafts and cheques, and for insuring the purchases, packing and transporting them.

They have also been making sure that the whole organisation will come together so that both the buyers and the sellers are properly served, no matter where they are on the day the auction is held, no matter how they bid, and no matter what they buy or sell.

As to the items that will be placed before them, what better person than Jack Franses to summarise them?

"The world has never seen so worthy a collection of Islamic art being offered for sale under one roof," he says. "Islamic terrain stretches from northern India westwards, embracing in its history Samarkand, Bokhara, parts of Mongolia, and sweeping across Iran, Turkey, Arabia, and crossing Africa through Egypt to extend through the northern lands and up through Spain.

"Imagine the treasures which such a culture can create, in manuscripts, rugs, carpets, textiles, and furniture. Imagine the works of art, the jewellery, the arms and armour of historic military glory, the coins of commerce, the stamps which linked Islam to the world, and the paintings, Islamic and European, which caught and held the flavour of their time.







Above: *A Kirman Millefleurs Prayer Rug, 218x 155 cm* **Centre right:** *A pair of Qajar Gold and Enamel earrings.* **Top right:** *Abbasid dinar of Harun al-Rashid, dated AH 170, the earliest gold coin to bear the name of the Caliph himself.*

"From precious metals to ceramics, from the world's finest weaving to the most intricate arts of self-adornment, from paintings which act as windows on a world long past, to artifacts which show the day to day life of a rich and colourful pageant that was and is Islam.

"This is, I confess, another auction, but it is also a very special and significant auction indeed. It is an auction that the world will seek to attend, and an auction that will bring Islamic art to a position that it surely deserves, in a location that will certainly do it justice.

"At this auction the world will be able to see just how Arab inspiration has led jewellers to greater elaboration over many centuries. As the world's greatest traders the Arab nations observed all that the world had to offer, and then worked to improve upon it using their own particular skills. Now it can be seen that the range and breadth of Islamic jewellery is immense.

"At this auction the world will be able to marvel at the richness of Islamic carpet and rug designs, to see the myriad knots which seem beyond the capability of any other part of the world. To witness the strength of colour, the intricacy of patterns, the sheer richness of the materials woven with such consummate dexterity.

"At this auction the world will be able to see examples of the coinage reformed by Abd al-Malik in AH77 gold dinars, silver dirhams, and copper fulus. Coins which became miniature historical documents, and which give a new view into the history, religion, economics and calligraphy of the Muslims.

"All of this, and much, much, more is what this remarkable auction is intent upon providing.

"For Sotheby's, and for our associates, it is a very exciting occasion indeed with a tremendous backcloth against which we hope to achieve real success.

"But in truth, there is a much broader philosophy at work here. By virtue of this auction Sotheby's is entrusted with far more than the material value of the exhibits. We are also becoming entwined with the very soul of Islamic art, and that is a concept that has become of very real importance to us.

"I have the feeling that it will prove of very real importance to all of our friends in Islam too. To those who take part it will doubtless become immediately apparent, but I see the importance as spreading even beyond that, for by virtue of this auction we are underlining the importance of Islam to the art world, we are bringing it under the spotlight of wider world with a greater audience, and we are ensuring that what is shown represents the very best.

"That is what we seek to do, that, I am convined, is exactly what we will achieve. What more can I say than 'see you in Dubai on 3, 4 and 5 December 1985'." ■

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

P R O F I L E

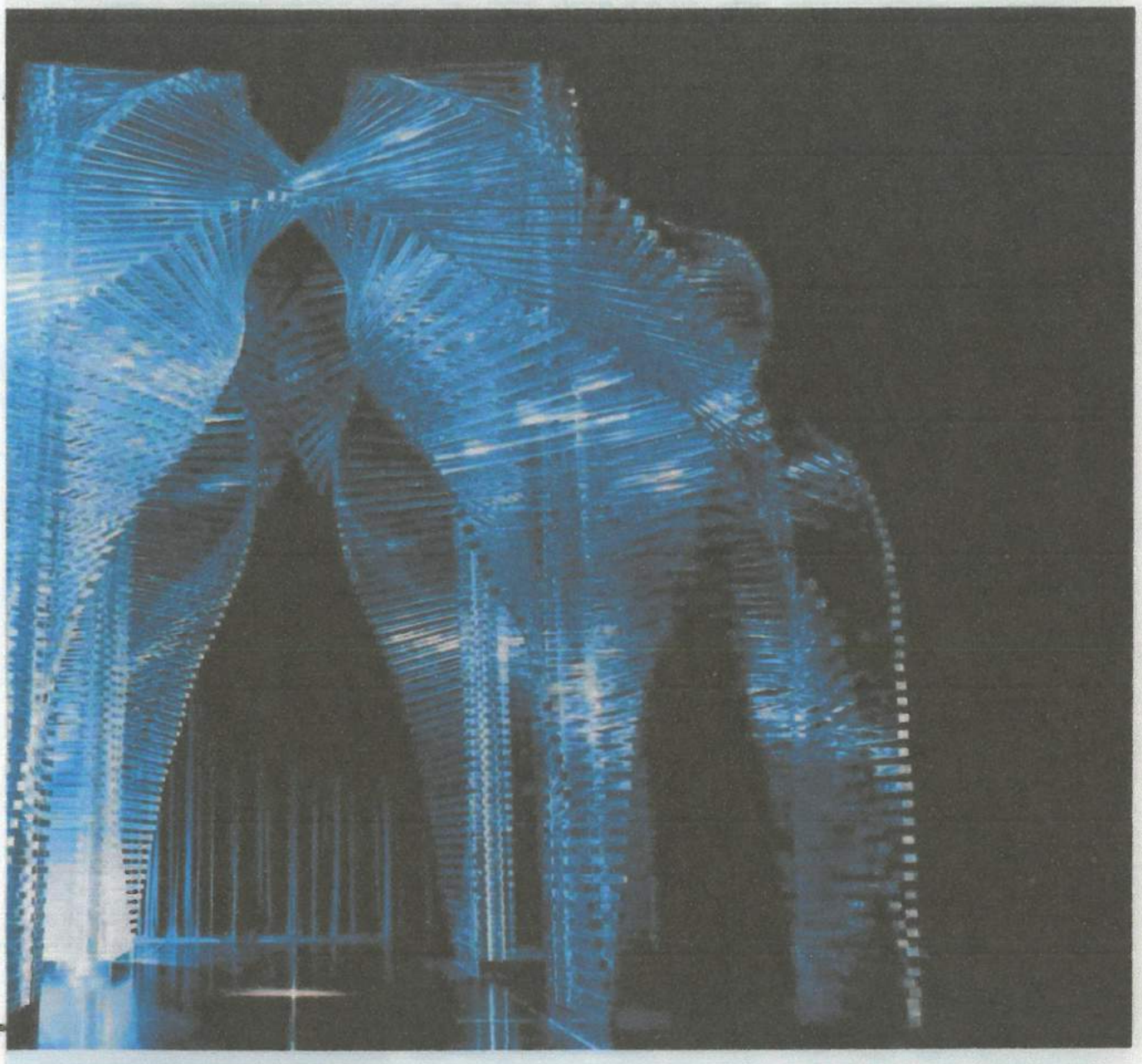




Karl Schlamminger

"There exists an unbreakable bond between the Word — specifically the words of the Arabic Qur'an — and the very form and structure of Islamic architecture", argues Karl Schlamminger whom the late Prof. Henry Corbin honoured by writing the introduction to the catalogue *Crptomorphosis*. Karl Schlamminger, he noted, "has the impression that he is sculpting time and stabilising its progress by giving it a perceptible shape in simultaneity. Stabilised in this manner, time becomes space. Time is our enemy because it destroys and discards all forms in its progress. Space is our friend because it enables us to assume all our visions and to have them simultaneously present. Karl Schlamminger leads us toward a perception of the world that anticipates the liberating dawn of days without dusk."

Born in West Germany in 1935, Karl studied at the Munich Academy of Fine Arts, and in turn taught at the Fine Arts Academy in Istanbul and at the Faculty of Fine Arts, Tehran University. He has recently completed a different kind of an assignment, designing and decorating the Ismaili Centre in London. He firmly believes that calligraphy is the central artform in Islam. "If not calligraphy, then architecture. And Islamic architecture without calligraphy is virtually impossible." He is unhappy that Western historians of Islamic art have often considered calligraphy a minor art and when it appears on a building, it is usually called 'architectural detail' or 'ornamentation'. This error, he says, is due to a misunderstanding of Islamic cultural patterns and religious symbols "which are so deeply rooted that Muslims have rarely bothered to articulate them". He points out that the link between calligraphy and



architecture "may not yet have been forged in the time of the Prophet, because the presence of the Word in the Messenger himself was too immediate to require outward expression. But Islamic architecture has developed, like Islamic culture in general, under the sign of the omnipresence of God's Word."

Arts and the Islamic World invited him to explain how can one meet the challenge of combining the aesthetics of traditional Islamic design with the contemporary architetural vocabulary of a building like the Ismaili Centre in London? His answer follows:

It goes without saying that such a synthesis is desirable; what remains is the difficulty of avoiding pastiche, and of creating what may be called a valid and modern Islamic philosophy of design.

Starting with the outer entrance hall of the Center I developed a scheme of blue lines which repeats like a leitmotiv throughout the building, from the floor pattern to the pool to the calligraphy and so on, and continues as a theme [Persian: *Mozou*] that unifies the building's interior. The carpets, the doors (which are in the form of lattices), the great chandelier, the curtains, the prayer-hall with its perforated plaster screen, the tile, the marble, the skylights, the doors to the prayer hall, all these elements are bound together into a unified design.

Each space and surface of the Center was pre-planned to fulfil a certain purpose. There is nothing hasty or haphazard in such planning, and the kind of detailed execution needed to meet these purposes






Previous page: *Karl Schlamminger, Dome structure, "Tchahar-Taq", plexiglass 360x360x360cm square as basic element, Cooper-Hewilt Museum, New York.* **Bottom:** *Symbols and Logotypes, designed by Karl Schlamminger, from left to right, The Aga Khan award in Architecture; Aga Khan award alternative; National Gardens, Tehran; Pardisan Gardens, Tehran; Bou-Ali Sina University, Hamadan; Avicenna Institute, Hamadan; Transplant; Iranian National Blood Transfusion Service.*

Right: *Stainless steel, brass, and plate glass, detail of handrail on the mainstairs.* **Below right:** *Corner of the Ismaili centre.* **Below:** *View by night, highlighting the Islamic mood of the architecture.* **Middle right:** *The fountain pool in the Entrance Hall in white marble, brazilian blue granite and inlaid stainless steel.* **Middle right below:** *The tile designs and teak benches of the lift halls.* **Far right:** *Detail of the main stairway chandelier.* **Far right below:** *The geometry seen from below of the balconies of the two upper floors.*





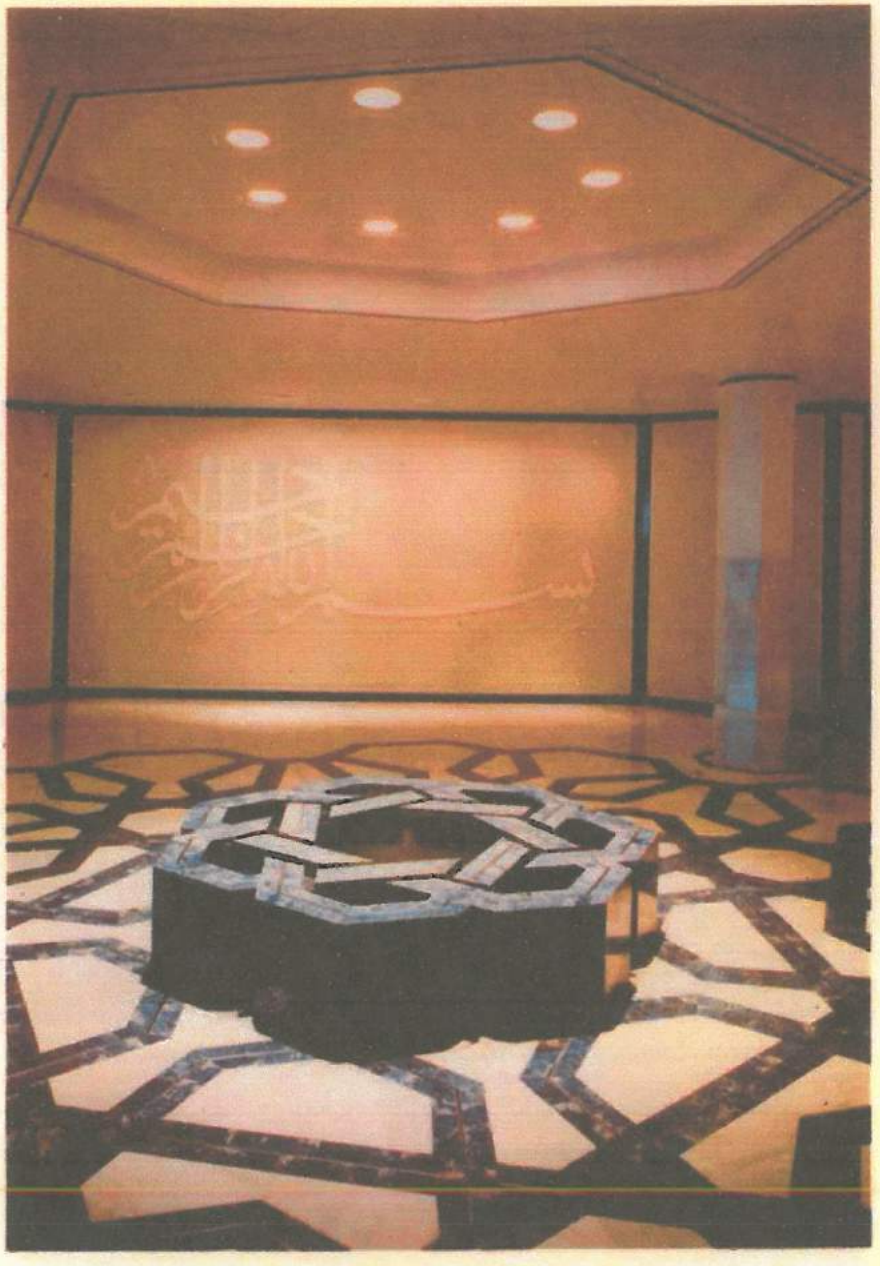
demands time and care. The designer's work is to react, or to answer these purposes.

By using the word *answer* I am employing the metaphor of language, and thereby implying that design, like language, demands a coherence and continuity of spoken word, syntax and semantics. One does not usually change languages in the middle of a sentence. But, there exist certain concepts which are expressed in their perfection only in certain languages. If you wanted to communicate such a concept you might use a word from Latin, or Greek, or English. But *everyone* must be able to understand this word, just as Persians - for example - use and understand words in Arabic when they wish to express a religious or mystical meaning. Language in effect filters meaning through one's subjectivity into the world of objective discourse; and a foreign language does so in a very specific manner.

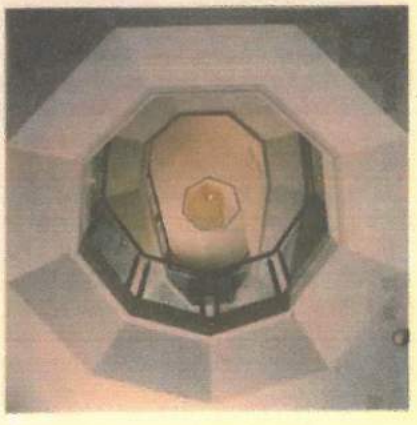
I cannot today attempt to design and re-create a sixteenth century mosque (like, say, the Ibn Tulun) in the middle of London. Such an imitation would paradoxically fail to attain even the status of a "real copy" (as the souvenir sellers so charmingly label their banal wares). The impulse to worship the architectural past must be transformed into a genuine and contemporary aesthetic impulse; so just as we use a single foreign word when we want to be *exact*, we must use a traditional design-vocabulary which has been filtered through contemporary modes of expression.

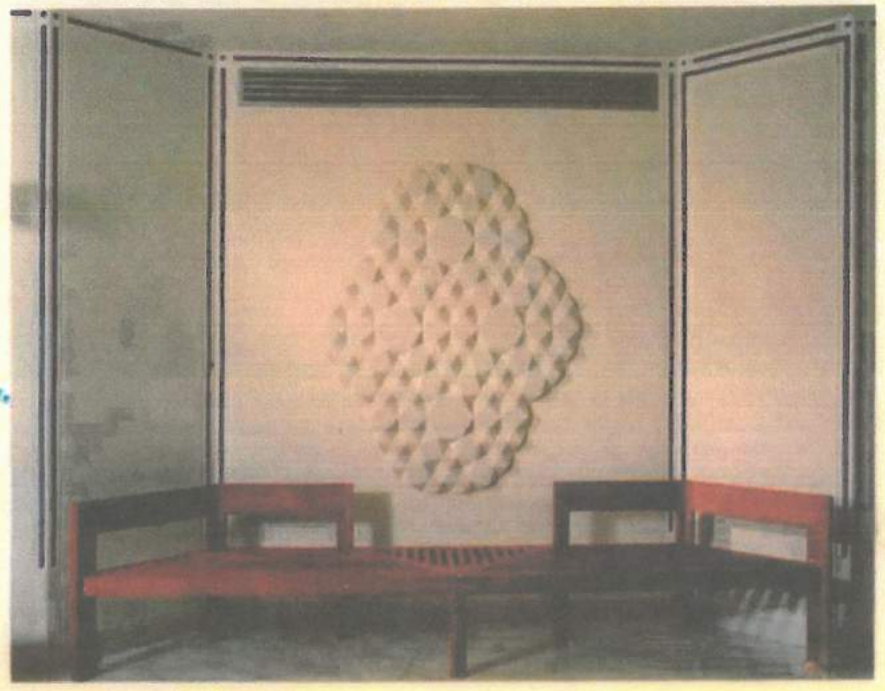
In order to do this, naturally one must know the aesthetic tradition of Islam, the whole cultural history of the inner life of the Islamic "house-







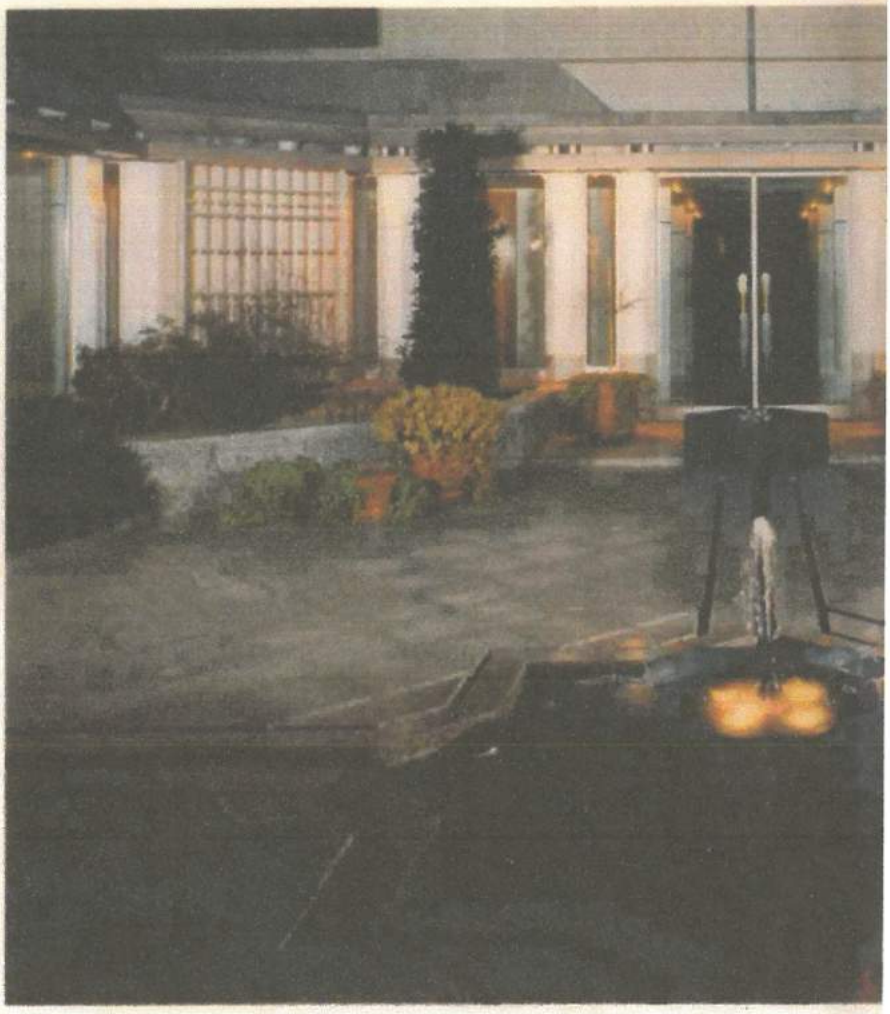


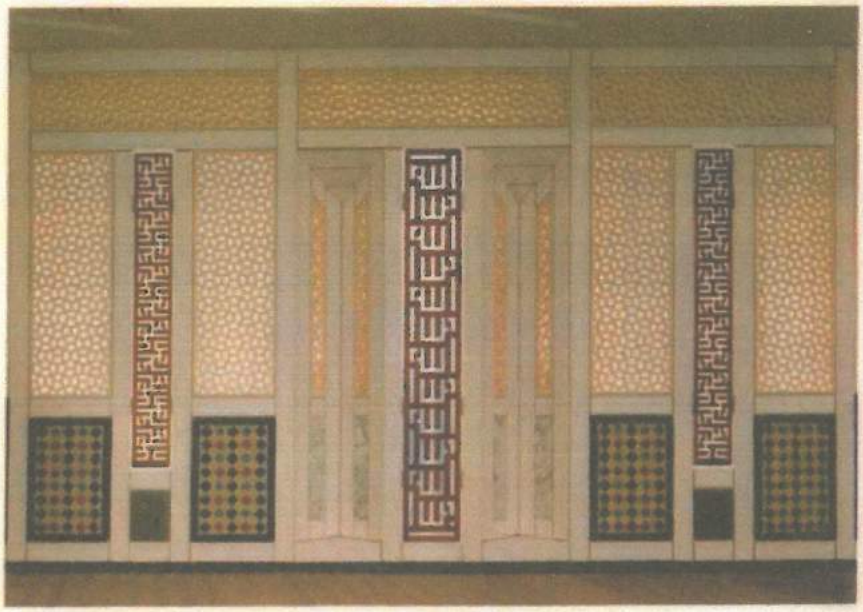


hold", life in general with all its social conditioning both sacred and profane. We cannot - or must not - deal with the reproduction of something we have already seen, but with the filtering of essential Gestalt-elements of Islamic culture and their transformation into technical, social and religious realities of the present.

The floor of the outer entrance hall, for instance, has an open-ended pattern in heptagonal form which rises at the focus of the room to create a fountain; such a pattern in such a space is of course a completely classical Islamic response — but I have never heard of a heptagonal pattern anywhere in Islamic architecture. The number seven of course symbolizes for Ismailis the values of its essential philosophy — but has never been used in an architectural context. Here the







sevenness of the design is no superficial effigy or naturalistic picture of an idea, but – as always in Islam – is expressed in geometry (literally: measurement of the earth).

The line pattern is rooted in tradition also through its colour, cobalt blue or lapis lazuli, which for Islamic alchemists and artists symbolized serenity and contemplation, the unclouded paradise of the heavenly sky. The blue motif is used in different ways throughout the building, and its repetition defines each wall and ceiling as an especially negotiated detail of the building - not merely an outline but a structuring element that interconnects the whole interior as a network.

On one wall of the entrance hall appears a "Bismillah" which represents - as in all Islamic lands - the word which has become *image*, which has created a unity of spirit and symbol, just as Qur'anic recitation creates a unity of sound and meaning. Rumi says: "Letter, sound and meaning I destroy and throw away, since I can speak to you without these things."

The Arabic language with its gutteral and explosive sounds, is for me a strongly onomatopoeic language, using the whole spectrum of sound, primordial and intuitive; and the art of Arabic calligraphy continues this mysterious quality with its multiplicity, complexity and interpenetration, its interlacing warp and weft. What it "says" is not always obvious, since its ordering in space can create varying interpretations of its meaning (for example by breaking the line of words into an overlying and repetitive pattern, a statement

Top left: *The bay windows that overhang the deeply recessed west entrance.* **Top and Top right:** *The roof garden showing the central fountain connected by radial channels to the four corner pools.* **Above:** *Panelling on the west window wall of the Prayer Hall, incorporating marble, tile and plaster lattice panels with vertical teak panels in rectangular calligraphy. The names Allah, Mohammad and Ali are tobe read in the light space beween the task members.* **Right:** *Figure of polished bronze, wood casing. (Hidden and released) height 50cm.*











can suddenly be re-read as question).

Again, the patterns of the carpets represent a kind of geometry which rise out of Islamic tradition. The manifoldness or manyfoldedness of the pattern is rooted in one master-pattern which is varied by raising or emphasizing different parts of the pattern for different spaces. That is, it is always the same pattern, but now accentuated, now concealed, now open, now closed, and so on. Thus the pattern on the stairs and the patterns in the rooms share a common language in their basic structure but have different modes of expression in their different spaces.

This suggests an essential element of geometry which I like to call the endless well of creativity. Within its laws everything is concealed (verborgen). The creative act is the revealing (entbergen) - as Heidegger says - in order to make enclosedness (Geborgenheit); geometry is a dialectic of container and contained. The creative mind "steals" the pattern out of the geometrical universality; one fetches out the pattern, one grasps it or takes it — and the possibilities are endlessly manifold. The pattern is so spread out as to be invisible, yet simultaneously present: potential in the apparent chaos of formlessness.

In the prayer hall two of the materials used suggest the element of *Fire*: two "fired" materials, stone (marble) and ceramic tile. Stone is geomorphic fire; tiles are made by man-made fire. In alchemy fire is the element of transformation: earth becomes a substance of the utmost density; minerals are melted on the tile to produce colour. Fire makes amorphous material *noble* in alchemical terms. All these processes are ordered *within* the principle of chaos, just as human perfection and imperfection are both essential aspects of creation.

The prayer hall has three entrances. This too is no random solution to a purely structural "problem" but rather stems from the traditional idea that the door or gate has a meaning, and that it is necessary to preserve this hierarchy of entrances in order to save those rituals of entering which suggest the relation between unconsciousness and consciousness. Hierarchy is not a matter of mere pomp and show, but a deeply useful concept; and so I believe we must pay special attention and give form to those doors and gateways beyond which one discovers a different world; to pass through them is tantamount to an initiation.

The glass-shaded lamps of the chandelier and those in the prayer-hall needed special attention as well, because I came to understand — after extensive research — that light, in both the philosophical and practical sense, was for ancient man the result of burning that which most precious. Oil for lamps symbolized the self which is transformed through fire; one can discover traces of this idea in such disparate sources as the Qur'anic verses on the Niche for Lamps, and the Greek myth of Prometheus. In ancient mosques conical glass-lamps hung from the ceiling; the lower part of these glass reflectors ended in a glass sphere which I at first mistook for a purely decorative element. But after experimenting with these reflectors I came to understand their essential meaning. They magnified the light of the burning oil downwards, thus reversing the behaviour of fire in its natural state, which radiates upwards. Thus, on practical level the lamps caused the body of the oil to blossom downwards onto the pages of the worshippers Qur'an; while on the symbolic level they recapitulated the very origin of the Qur'an itself, a "downward radiation" of the Divine Word, the Divine Light.

Of course, oil lamps are simply not feasible in twentieth century London. Imagine the problems: raising and lowering the lamps to fill them and clean the soot; the oppres-



Left:*Revealing, wood, 180cm, 1985.* **Below:***Helix, plexiglass, 620cm 1974.* **Right:***Incence burner, burnished bronze, 270cm, Museum of Contemporary Art, Tehran.* **Below right:***The hidden and the revealed, wood, height 180cm, 1984.*







sive heat, the fire hazard! But not only would oil have been impractical, it would also have been banal, like the souvenir-sellers "real copies". Again, we kept the essence of the traditional lamps — but not the mechanism.

Another use of light which is "traditional" and yet not a reproduction of the past is the device by which direct daylight is softened and diffused into the prayer-hall through curtains and lattice-work, through a patterned calligraphy-perforated wall which veils the "real" structural wall. The screen thus serves as a sort of membrane between the outside and the inside; light enters, as it were, by the principle of osmosis. It reminds me of the *Hadith* which says that man and all creation would be annihilated by direct exposure to the Divine Light; and so God in His mercy veils it with the 70.000 veils of Creation.

I cannot close this article without mentioning those who shared in an essential way in my work on the Ismaili Center: my partner Thomas Weil who was engaged in this project to the same extent as I was; Neville Conder was the senior architect, and although it is usually very difficult for a senior to accept a new person on a project already under weight, Neville showed not only a generous spirit but also a great integrity and deep understanding of the whole project. Finally there is the question of the client. it is very important to know who you are working for. If a client lacks understanding and sympathy it can hold back or even destroy the creative task, but if the client is himself creative and understanding he can enhance the actual value of the finished work. The idea of the "patron" was understood in Renaissance Europe, but is now generally only a nostalgic dream in the life of an artist. In the Islamic world however some true understanding of the creative relation between client and artist still survives; and in the case of the Ismaili Center I was fortunate to work for a patron and a community who perhaps understand so prominent and powerful a mystery better than anyone else. This played no small part in what I consider to have been an essentially successful and innovative project: work which was also pleasure.■

ISLAMIC ART IN THE UNITED STATES

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Guest Editor in the U.S.A.
Carol Hotchkiss Melt

Co-ordinating Editor in London
Azra J. Ahmad

Introduction
Carol Hotchkiss Melt

Appreciating Islamic Art
Issa Lamya' al Faruqi

The Teaching of Islamic Art in America
Oleg Gruber

The American Pilgrimage of Islam
Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions
Wendy M. Watson

Architects in American Design for Islamic Cultures
Nasser Arooian

Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Marilyn Jenkins

Islamic Art in the Freer Gallery
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Islamic Art from the Mathers Collection
Linda Komaroff

Islamic Textiles : Art at the Textile Museum
Carol Monson Bier

The Corning Museum of Glass
David Whitehouse

Islamic Bookbindings of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago
Gabor Kheirallah Bosch

Islamic Art in Always, Many Roads
Priscilla P. Soucek

INTRODUCTION

Carol Hotchkiss Malt



Above: *'New Land' Helen Khal* **Previous Page:** *Detail*

This special American edition is designed to speak to many people, to address many issues and hopefully, to satisfy many needs. It represents a monumental undertaking, a first of its kind. We have structured it to be meaningful and comprehensive in its reflection of America, yet are well aware of the talent kept from inclusion by limitations of space and time. No one publication could, in concept and scope, describe major American museum and private collections as well as diverse visual and performing arts production in just one issue. Hopefully, this is the first of several special editions concerned with Islamic art and Muslim artists which will serve to introduce the museums, collections, professionals, galleries, scholars and visual and performing artists who live and work in the United States.

The curators, scholars and professionals who were invited to contribute to this project were enthusiastic. However, during discussion of the topic and the scope of each article, several issues became paramount: first, if we were to make an important statement, and if we were to give an accurate picture of collections and activities in this country, we must speak to the present as well as the past; second, the scope must also be multidimensional and include as many of the artistic disciplines of the visual and performing arts as possible; third, we would have to confine ourselves geographically to the eastern United States. In addition, we needed to respect the limited exposure to American collections, trends, interpretations, motivation or methods of some of our audience.

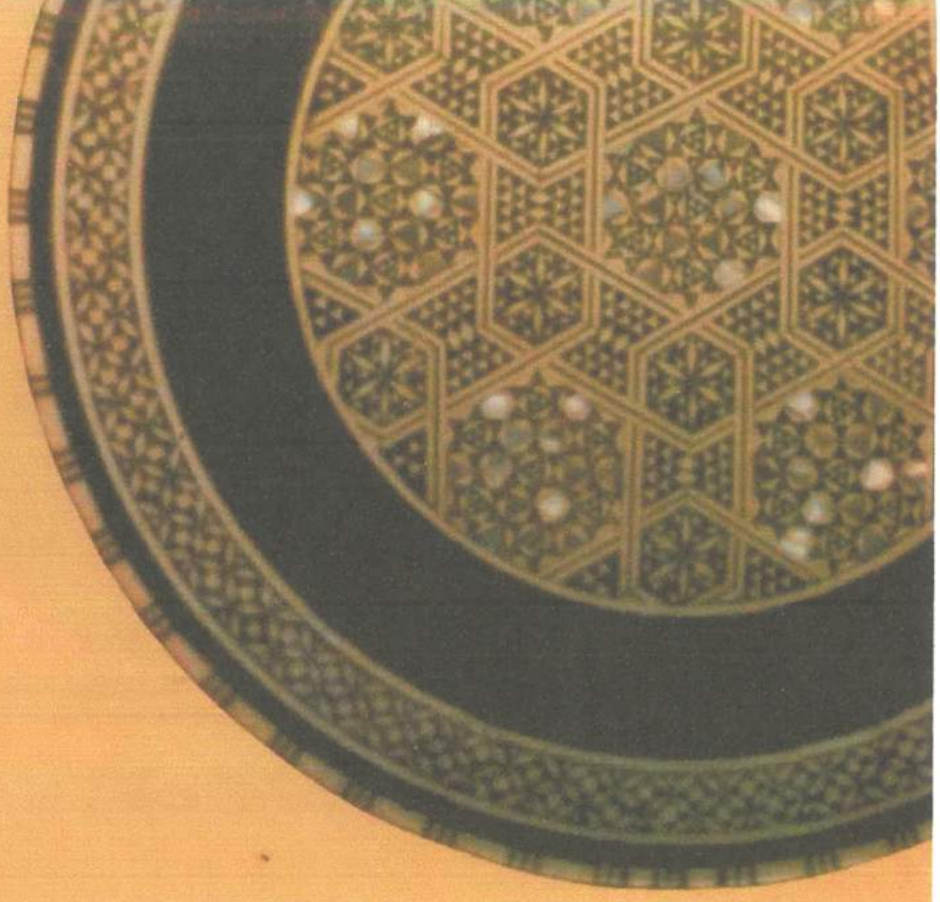
Obviously, an introduction which could set the stage for understanding the common denominator of Islamic art was needed. Dr. Lois al Faruqi's article on "Appreciating Islamic Art" filled this objective. It gives the reader a perspective from which to begin an exploration of the contemporary production in America and a standard from which to appreciate and understand those historical objects in public and private American collections. This introduction prepares the reader to examine each contemporary artistic product in its proper context, for no creative endeavor should be interpreted in a vacuum, and we must be aware, even sympathetic, to the American setting, to the influences of the American location and put this in perspective with the needs, objectives and visions of the artist.

Recently in America, there has been a dramatic rise in interest in Islamic culture. The reasons are many and involve not only artistic appreciation through museum productions but also socio-political and economic ones. Earlier periods in American history record significant Arab and Muslim immigration, beginning in the 19th century. It occurred in several waves: 1875 to 1912; 1918 to 1922; 1929 to 1938; 1947 to 1960, and 1967 to the present. Those arriving initially were predominately from Greater Syria, and they settled mainly in the cities of Detroit, Chicago, New York and Boston and in California and Ohio. Their impact on American culture was minimal and their formal cultural and religious organization was slow to manifest itself. For instance, the earliest recorded group of Muslims who organized for prayer was in Ross, North Dakota, in 1900. Later in 1919, an Islamic Association was established in Highland Park, Michigan, followed by another in Detroit, Michigan, in 1922; however, the first building actually designed as a mosque was in Cedar Rapids, Michigan in 1934. Now, in contrast, there are over 400 mosques and Islamic Associations in the United States, but there are no definite data on the number of Muslims in America, most of whom are non-Arab. Estimates have ranged up to one-half million.

Concerned for the literary and performing arts more than the visual arts, these new immigrant citizens formed cultural clubs and founded newspapers and journals rather than galleries and museums. By the late 1920's, there were several publications in major cities: the *Syrian Press of Boston* (later the *New Deal Press*); the *Surta el Jedeeda* (1910); *El Fatat Boston; Al Rasul*; the *Merat-ul-Garb* (1899), and *Al-Hoda*. But by far the publication of literary excellence was the *Syrian World*, which was begun by Salloum Mokarzel in 1926. This publication contained poetry, plays, fiction and essays and included works by Philip Hitti and Khalil Gibran while also publishing works by talented unknowns. A recently published history of these early citizens is contained in *Taking Root Bearing Fruit*, published by the ADC Reports, Washington, D.C.

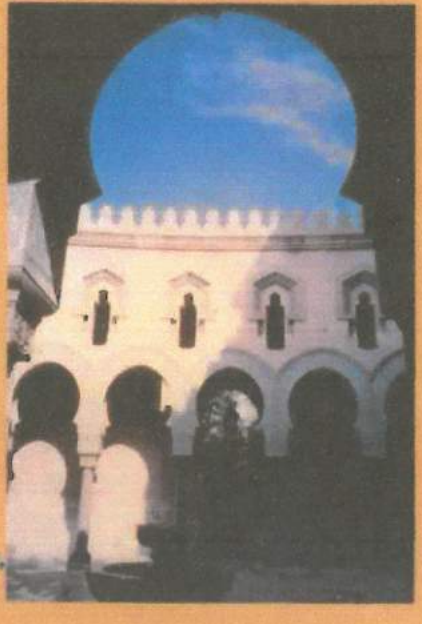
Returning to the present, what opportunities do the American public have to study Islamic art - both in the academic class setting and in the museum? Americans

continued on page 91



APPRECIATING ISLAMIC ART

Lois Lamya' al Faruqi



Above: *View of the courtyard and arcades of the Islamic Center, Washington, D.C. Courtesy of the Islamic Center.*
Top right: *Wooden plate inlaid with mother-of-pearl, Egypt. Private collection, photograph by the author.*

When contacted to make a contribution to this special issue on Islamic art in America, my first reaction was to propose as topic the description of a particularly important collection in America or a survey of one city or region of the North American continent which has outstandingly rich Islamic art holdings. Both of these projects are worthy and important ones, for many people in the world — and even in North America itself — are little aware of the Islamic art collections, both private and public, which can be found in the towns and cities of the United States and Canada. As persons particularly knowledgeable about the various collections came forward to fill that need, it became apparent that another sort of article was also needed — one which would assist the reader in comprehending and appreciating what was available in those collections. I therefore undertake here to provide an introduction to the appreciation of those Islamic art objects and collections described so capably by fellow contributors to this special issue of *Arts and the Islamic World*.

This article is intended for a diverse audience. First of all, it is written for the non-Muslims who would wish to understand and appreciate Islamic art. Recent decades have seen a tremendous increase in political and economic interaction between Muslim and non-Muslim nations as well as between Muslim and non-Muslim individuals. The events of the past few years have caused Islam and the Muslim peoples to surface in non-Muslim consciousness with an unprecedented intensity and extensiveness. There is a new awareness of the importance of understanding and dealing with Islam and the Muslim peoples. Certainly the arts are an important means for penetrating the ideas and ideology of those peoples, and of learning to know and understand their brilliant cultural heritage.

The non-Muslims are, however, not the only persons calling for an unlocking of the doors to apprecia-

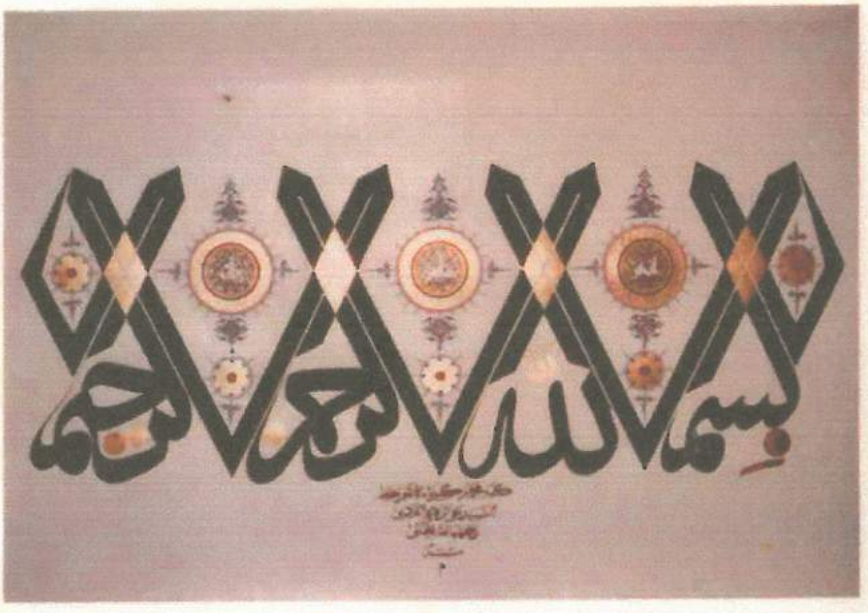
tion of the Islamic arts. Even many Muslims have a similar need, though the reasons for that need have quite different roots.

Some of the Muslims exemplifying such a need are those who have perhaps been introduced, either academically or informally, to the Western art tradition, but who have little or no knowledge of their own Islamic aesthetic heritage. This applies to most Muslims born and reared outside the Muslim world, but even to a large number of the highly educated, Westernized or "internationalized" persons living in the Muslim world. Like the non-Muslims, these persons seek in Islamic art the characteristics of another art tradition and are therefore often frustrated and disappointed. Such aesthetic de-orientation or mis-orientation results in part from the fact that art education in the Muslim world is generally a "disaster area," either in that no training whatsoever in the arts is given, or that the art education imparted to children or adults is completely alien to the culture and its ideology. Art education materials and techniques of pedagogy have been adopted wholesale from Europe and America, and they offer little that would cultivate an Islamic sense of beauty. In addition, art education in Muslim lands has suffered from an apathy or antagonism to the arts, despite their importance in the lives of the people and the history of the culture.

Other Muslims who experience a need for an introduction to the appreciation of Islamic art are, however, Islamically oriented, rather than Westernized or "internationalized". In fact, some of the most cultured of Muslims have little conscious awareness of the artistic heritage in which they participate, and they are unaccustomed to even think of calligraphy, geometric designs, stylized ornament, or the building arts as art. They have long regarded art as something alien which intrudes on the Islamic world anomalously, with its figural easel paintings, its classical or rock music, its statues of important political figures decorating city squares. For them, the term art and its Arabic equivalent *fann* conjure up mental visions of a cultural invasion. Though these Muslims have a subconscious appreciation for Islamic art, they may actually proclaim a dislike of "art" and evidence a shocking lack of concern for the



Left: *Copper-niello platter including calligraphic and vegetal motifs with interlacing (Egypt). Private collection photograph by the author.*
Below: *Basmalah in Thuluth Musalsalah script interspersed with gold medallions. The artist is M.U. Zakariya (Arlington, Virginia), who indicates that he was following the inspiration of a design by the late calligrapher, Al Sayyid 'Ali al Rifa'i al Fardi. Photograph by Zeki Findikoglu.*
Bottom: *Calligraphy design by M.U. Zakariya comprising fine segments contain the opening and closing formulae for the Qur'anic passage, an exerpt from Qur'an 3:134, the calligrapher's name, the date (1402 A.H.), and indication of the abjadi calculation. Photograph Zeki Findikoglu.*
Below Right: *Table top from Lebanon inlaid with geometric Islamic patterning. Private collection, photograph by the author.*



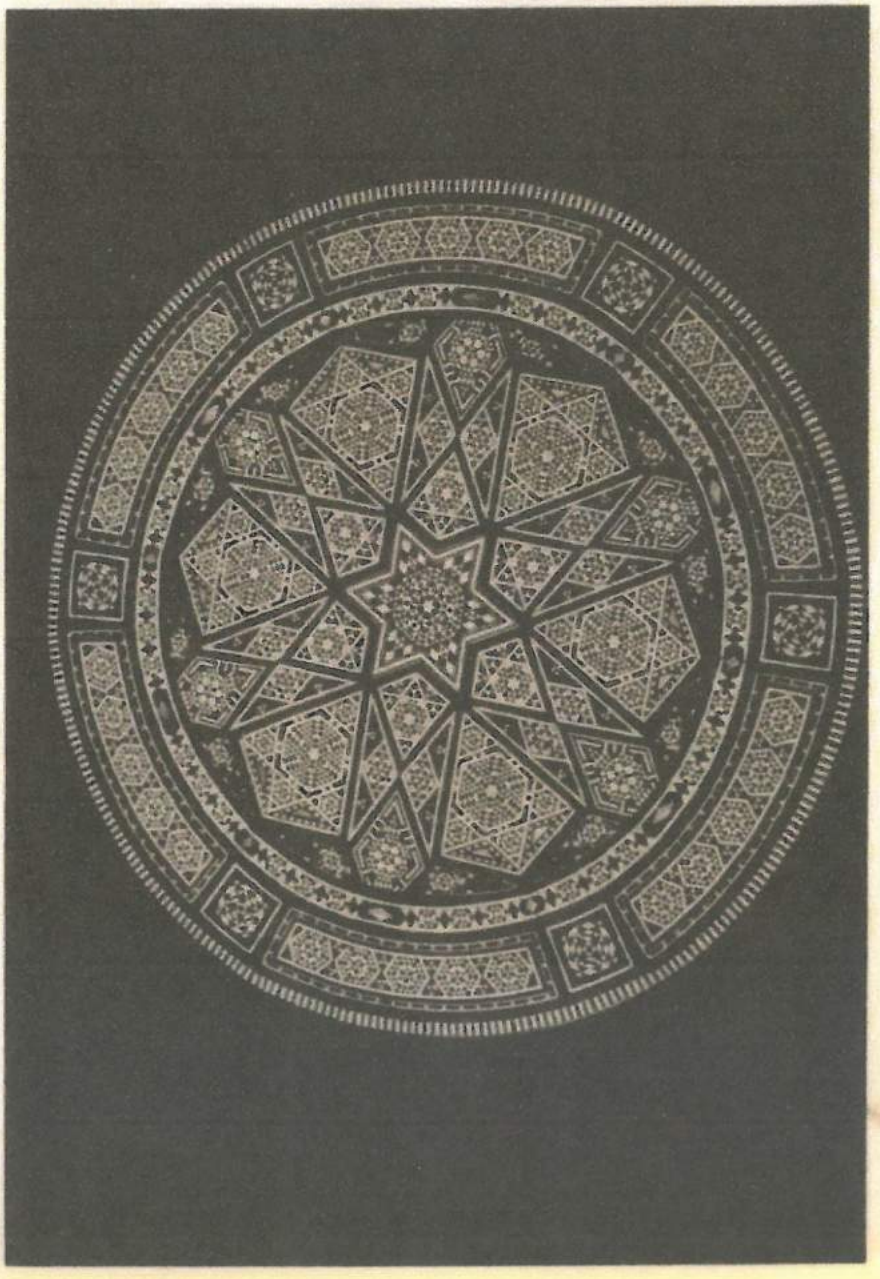


field. Sometimes the paucity of aesthetic awareness is encouraged and fuelled by a blind conservatism which condemns all art because of the unsuitability of some art or arts' to Islamic aesthetic goals.

It is hoped that this presentation will assist the widest possible range of readers. It is meant for the non-Muslim who has a desire to better understand his global neighbors, the Muslim peoples. It is meant for the aesthetically de-Islamized Muslim whose educational background and aesthetic training, if any, are the result of a colonialist reality or mind-set. It is meant, as well, for the Muslim who is newly being introduced to the relevance of the Islamic arts to his religio-cultural traditions.

An introduction to any art should convey two aspects of aesthetic information in order to be useful to the viewer. First of all, it should introduce the viewer to the socio-cultural context of art production and appreciation in the relevant cultural, geographic and time frame. Without that knowledge, it is impossible to understand the art or its development. In this regard, it would be important to know how the people who were its creaters and appreciaters have regarded their art? What is the function of art in the culture? What are its underlying religio-philosophical messages — in other words, the world view and God view of the culture — which were affective or even determinative of that art? In the first part of this presentation, therefore, we shall focus on such questions relating to the place of art in Islamic society and culture.

Secondly, the introduction to any art tradition should also focus attention on the art itself. Only by pointing out its salient features would the perceiver learn how to approach the work of art and to enjoy it. Encountering a new kind of work of art — even when it is but a new variety created within one's own cultural environment — can sometimes be puzzling and even annoying. It can be even more baffling when one crosses cultural boundaries to experience a completely different art tradition. Therefore, the perceiver should be given some hints as to what to look for in this art; and equally informed of how the art conveys an expression of the culture — not in words, phrases and concrete ideas as we would find in a philosophical essay — but in lines, shapes, colors and their organization. Such aesthetic elements convey the message of the culture not only through the surface content of the work of art — i.e., the humans or scenes depicted, the symbols or objects included — but also through the way in which those contents are organized on the visible surface of the aesthetic product.



In attempting to introduce the visual arts of Islamic culture, we shall try to include something from both of these aspects of knowledge: 1) facts relating to the socio-cultural context which would clarify our understanding of the Islamic arts; and 2) some of the most important aesthetic characteristics which make that art both interesting and unique. In other words, we shall be concerned not just with the art product, as though it existed in isolation or in a vacuum, but with the art as it has been conceived in, and has enriched Islamic culture and society. This is the only way to truly apprehend and appreciate any art tradition.

1. *The Socio-Cultural Context of Islamic Art*

A. In regard to the context of Islamic art, we shall speak of two features which are of great importance in the aesthetic environment of the culture. The first of these is that art in an Islamic context should not be viewed as a "fine" art or as a "museum" art. This may sound very strange since we are accustomed to thinking of the "fine" arts as being the worthy arts, those on the highest level of excellence. In addition, many of us have been conditioned to connect art automatically, even necessarily, with museums and museum viewing. So how could it

be maintained that Islamic art is not a fine art, and not a museum art? Let us explain what is meant by these rather curious statements which may seem to be so heterodox, or even heretical!

In recent centuries, people concerned with aesthetic matters have regarded art as divisible into two categories — one designated as the "fine" arts, the other as the crafts. The former has generally included drawing, painting, sculpture; and in some cases architecture, literature, concert hall music and such forms of dance as classical ballet. On the other hand, the other arts — ceramics, metalwork, textiles, leather tooling, oral literature, traditional music and dance, etc. — have often been regarded as existing on a lower level of creative skill. They have been classified as crafts, handicrafts, or folk arts. Since they were not "fine" arts, they were often regarded as useful additions to the culture, but ones which evidenced a crudeness of conception and execution. Therefore the crafts and the folk arts were not until very recently ever placed in art museums, nor were they accorded serious concern by those who studied or wrote about the arts. They belonged, it was evidently felt, only in an anthropological or ethnographic collection, or to an anthropological or ethnographic concern. For the past few centuries "real art" for most viewers, at least in Europe and America, was that which was to be found in the art museum, the art that was created for aesthetic enjoyment or enrichment. Pushing this idea to an illogical extreme, a movement arose proclaiming the doctrine of "art for art's sake". This movement had the effect of widening the gap between the fine or museum arts on the one hand, and those which were produced as useful articles for popular use, on the other.[2] It is true that palatial residences and European churches shared with museums an important place in recent centuries, especially in Western Europe, for the housing and appreciation of the arts. But in the main, even those institutions were fulfilling an expository or museum role rather than a religious one when it came to the presentation and exposure of their artistic holdings. This seems not to have been true in many other cultures and in an earlier period of Western culture. For example, in Hindu or Buddhist culture or in medieval Europe, art was actually the handmaid of religion rather than merely the expression of beauty for its own sake.

The context of Islamic art contrasts sharply with the Western experience of recent centuries. Islamic culture evidences little if any bifurcation between fine art and the crafts. In fact, one might argue that all the Islamic arts, despite the skill of their execution, are in fact crafts. They are produced, not as art objects to grace the walls or halls of a museum, not as sounds or movements to be experienced in the formal concert. Instead, they are useful and practical objects and activities which are integrated into the daily life of the Muslim peoples. They are objects and expressions to be used. Rather than an easel painting or a statue, Islamic art is one which enhances the religious ritual, the book to be read or studied, the scriptural text, the garment to be worn, the binding of a book, the building, the armour of the horse, the vase, and even the cooking utensil. Islamic art is an art which, while presenting the culture's norms of beauty, does so as an adjunct or auxiliary feature of creating a useful item for members of the society. Whether a concrete object, or a poetic or musical expression, it is never divorced from a practical use and context.

Because of this interpenetration of art and life, Islamic art is rarely an art of the monument, i.e., an art created solely to keep alive the memory of a person or event. It may be monumental in size, in magnificence or importance; but it does not carry the significance generally associated with the monument. Just as the small *objet d'art* of Islam is not created as a museum piece, the architecture edifice evidences a functional importance. It is always a useful structure, a fountain, a park or garden, a mosque, a hostel. We should not expect therefore to find the best examples of Islamic art in museums scattered around the Muslim world, nor in the concert hall or auditorium. Its collection, housing, or performance in such institutions is only a very recent phenomenon in the Islamic environment — one which is certainly inspired by traditions borrowed somewhat incongruously from Western culture.

B. A second feature of the culture which is important for an understanding of Islamic art is the relevance of the expression "Islamic art" for all the arts, regardless of their function. When they speak of "Christian art," scholars as well as laymen tend to think only of art which in subject matter and function is integrally connected with Christian religious practice or its teachings, but particularly with its liturgy. A comparable definition of its relevance is not suitable to Islamic art. Islamic art in fact is not limited to the religiously significant object or building. It may certainly be magnificently exemplified in the embroidered calligraphic decorations on the cover of the Ka'bah in Makkah, the page of an illuminated manuscript of the Qur'an, or the decoration or facade of a mosque. But the term is equally relevant for the *madrasah* or school, the tomb of a ruler's wife, the tabletop or ceiling decoration, or the upholstery fabric for social rather than religious use. Islamic art is therefore inclusive of all products of skill and beauty which express Islam's message, regardless of their religious or non-religious use of function.

The arts of the Islamic world evidence the same rejection of a bifurcation between the sacred and the secular that has been maintained in Islamic writings and culture from the time of the Qur'an's revelation. *Din*, which has often been misleadingly translated as "religion", is not a matter exclusively concerned with belief (*iman*) and prescribed ritual responsibilities (*ibadat*). It also involves every other aspect of culture and thought that is expressed or encountered by the Muslim in his/her daily life. Islam is therefore an ideology and a system for thought and action which penetrates all aspects of the use as well as the basic characteristics of the arts produced under its aegis. This cultural norm has resulted in making Islamic art inclusive not only of the religious, but also of the secular arts of the Muslims. At the same time, it has widened the influence of the ideology and the religious component in all examples and types of art, regardless of whether they were created for use in a religious or secular context.

We have thus far in our introduction to Islamic art presented two contextual considerations that are important for understanding the arts of Islamic culture: 1) that it is not a "fine" or museum art; and 2) that Islamic art includes all the arts of the culture, not just those which fulfill a religious function. Now we shall turn our attention to charac-

terizing the work of art itself.

II. *The Art Product: Its Characteristics*

If Islamic art is not typical of the expression "art for art's sake," that is, is not specifically or particularly an object for aesthetic enjoyment and enrichment, the work of art must have another more important aesthetic function in the culture in addition to its general usefulness about which we have already spoken. This is its aesthetic "translation" of the ideology. Islamic art is actually an expression, or reiteration, of the basic tenets of the faith through artistic means and materials. Every object created by the Muslim artist or artisan (let us remember that there is little that distinguishes the one from the other in Islamic culture) — in other words, every work of art is in fact a reminder to its owner or user of the existence of God. It is a prop or support for the Muslim which causes him/her to turn attention and concentration to the transcendent realm.

Islam teaches a monotheistic doctrine in which God or Allah is utterly transcendent. For the Muslim, God is a non-physical Power and Will that guides humanity and creation by means of revelations and laws. Allah, the Creator, is so other - than His creation that He can be described as neither male nor female, neither black nor white, neither old nor young, neither anthropomorphic nor zoomorphic. He is, in fact, faceless and formless, One Whose attributes must be understood "without our asking how" (*"bila kayf"*), since as humans, our experience is limited to the created world of space-time. This God-view and world-view of Islam has had profound effects on all aspects of Islamic thought and culture. In the arts, it has produced an aesthetic unity of unmistakeable and basic characteristics which are distinguishable in aesthetic products created over wide geographic expanses of the Muslim world and throughout the many centuries of Islamic history. These basic characteristics may be achieved in a thousand and one different ways as a result of the creativity of the artist-artisan; but they are readily apprehended, once one knows what to look for. For the proper understanding of Islamic art, two aesthetic characteristics of this art are particularly crucial.

A. The Importance of Abstraction and Stylization

The first of these is the basically abstract quality which one encounters in the Islamic arts. Many of us are so used to viewing art which portrays known figures, or mythological and historical events that it may be difficult initially to understand what the Islamic work of art is saying to us. We may search in vain for the figurative content in this art, or may be disappointed when the few figures which are portrayed are rendered in such a stylized and denaturalized manner. But this is of the essence of Islamic art; for it is, above all, an art of abstraction and stylization.

1. In subject matter: Since God is so ultimately transcendent and other-than His creation, no use of images which impress the viewer with nature, or turn the mind to it, are suitable for Islamic artistic expression. An intuition of Allah cannot be achieved through representative art. Hence, we find Islamic art characterized by either an outright rejection of figural subject matter or a denaturalizing stylization of its depictions. This religiously determined tendency toward abstraction in subject matter caused Muslim artists to excel in three categories of non-figural subject matter: calligraphy, geometric patterning, and stylized floral or plant designs. Of these three motif categories, calligraphy — the most abstract of them all — has always been considered by Muslims to be at the pinnacle of artistic nobility and endeavour. In addition to its use in the arts of the book, it occurs on small objects and buildings, both for secular as well as religious use. Qur'anic quotations are particularly favored for artistic inclusion in visual and even aural art products. These passages, which have not changed since their revelation to the Prophet Muhammad over 1400 years ago, not only provide evidence of the firm link between mankind and Divinity but also serve as a constant reminder of God and the Muslim's obligations and responsibilities. Other devotional expressions, the names of religious figures, the attributes of God, as well as dating and patronage information, are also commonly found as calligraphic inclusions on artistic objects or structures.

2. In materials: Abstraction also caused Muslims to use materials in unique ways. The artists seem to be trying to disguise or subdue the awareness of the naturalistic qualities of the materials used, lest the viewer's attention be drawn to nature rather than to God. The heaviness of stone is transfigured by intricate carving and piercing techniques. A metal door gives a lacelike appearance. Bricks are laid in a complicated mesh of patterns; and beautifully patterned veneers cover the cruder materials at the core of any small object or building.

3. In structures: Abstraction is also evident in the de-emphasis of structural aspects in any example of the Islamic visual arts. Construction details are covered with exquisite patterns. Junctures and vaults are masked with *muqarnas* decorations. Huge portals hide the shape of buildings beyond them. Corners are masked with arches which render them no longer corners, and domes appear to lose their weight and confining limits with a proliferation of windows or decorarative segmentation devices. Realized through countless means and techniques, with a wealth of motifs and materials, such disguise of structures draws the mind of the viewer away from this world in order that it may concentrate on the other-than-nature transcendent realm.

B. Modular Structure

In addition to the Muslim artist's endeavors in the abstraction and denaturalization of subject matter, use of materials, and structures, there is a second aesthetic characteristic of the Islamic arts that should be described in an introduction to the appreciation of the Islamic arts. Many readers will undoubtedly have been exposed to the idea that every work of art, if it is to be regarded as great art, must evidence a structural unity dominated by a single aesthetic focal point.[3] Islamic art does not evidence such a characteristic. Instead it evidences a characteristic that I have designated as "modular structure."

Since an intuition of Allah could not be stimulated through naturalistic portrayal, creation of a new mode of aesthetic expression was demanded after the rise of Islam in the seventh century. The early Muslims rose to this challenge, and produced a structural entity or organization which is known as the arabesque or the infinite pattern. For the Muslim, such patterns of beauty do not stand for or symbolize the transcendent Being. They are not holy in the sense that the icon is holy. However, by aesthetically expressing that Allah is indeed inexpressible, the arabesque acts as

a catalyst for intuiting the indescribable God.

Islamic art, whether used to enhance a religious or secular object, comprises a multi-focal organization of modular segments. No module takes precedence over another. Each segment provides one "statement" of beautiful patterning, comparable to one insight into God's beauty and dominion, and is therefore aesthetically satisfying in itself. Each is appreciated in turn as the eye and the mind move from module to module, from focal point to focal point.

In order to create an impression of infinity, these modular structures deny the impression of single or overall unity. Islamic patterns of beauty avoid final conclusiveness. In fact, the pattern seems to be a micro-segment cut from a much larger macro-pattern. One sees in a particular pattern only one "field of vision" out of the totality, yet one that instructs about that totality which is beyond full view or comprehension.

The discernment, or the working out, of each module of an example of Islamic art involves a feeling of pleasure in aesthetic achievement, stimulating the move to another and another segment of the design. The borders of a rug, the edges of a table, the outer limits of a picture frame, and the arcades of a building are often placed so as to give hint of a never ending continuity. Addition of another archway, another border, another series of modules would always be possible. One module after another is experienced, causing delight in its intricacy and beauty. As the viewer becomes involved in the perception and unraveling of the modules and their successive combination into larger patterns, his/her imagination is invited to continue the design even beyond the boundaries of the page or the edge of the panel. This is an aesthetic activity which must eventually break down as the imagination is put to such a difficult test. In the moment of the collapse of the imagination, the viewer is struck with awe at the perfection and intricacy of the pattern, and the impossibility of the assigned task. It is in this moment that an intuition is achieved of the perfection and infinite nature of God and of the marvels of His creation in which such meaningful beauty can be manifested.

III. *Development and Change*

Since this issue of *Arts and the Islamic World* deals with Islamic art in an environment in which Islamic or Muslim presence,[4] as well as appreciable interest in that art, are recent innovations, the reader may be concerned with the question of possible development and change in the Islamic arts in America. Can the presence of Muslims in the new environment be expected to bring drastic changes in the use and character of the Islamic arts to be created here? Will the newly awakened interest in the Islamic arts among the peoples of America — or of any other region of the world where Islamic art may be newly experienced phenomena[5] — result in radical changes in the art as non-Islamic aesthetic expectations are brought to bear?

It is highly speculative to make predictions about the future of any art tradition. New elements can always arise which would alter the complex of conditions and factors that had occasioned those predictions. Nevertheless it may be possible to make a few tentative suggestions about the future of Islamic art in America. We base these suggestions on an examination of the nature of development and change in the Islamic arts in other parts of the world over the past fourteen centuries of Muslim history.

A first premise for any discussion of artistic development and change is that some sort of change is a constant in the art of any cultural complex, any geographic region, and any period of time. The creative process actually implies development or change. Without it, there would be no second work of art. Barring all change, each item would only be a replica of the first work of art.

Having said this, it is important to state another premise of equal importance. That is that the development and change of the arts in one culture are not necessarily identical in degree or dynamism to their development and change in another culture. In fact, even within the same culture, change in one period or one geographic region may differ somewhat from that of another period or region.

If we accept these two premises — and it would seem that they are self-evident — we must be open to viewing development and change of the Islamic arts in light of the factors pertaining to that culture and that art. It is certainly true that the amount and the rapidity of change evidenced in the different periods and schools within Western civilization since the Middle Ages has been tremendous. These variations in style and subject matter were occasioned by, and generally ran parallel to, corresponding changes in the realm of ideas.[6] In no other culture have such drastic changes in ideas and the aesthetic expression of them been known to exist.

In Islamic culture, such drastic alteration and such speed of the innovative process were never known. Although this may have been the result of a complex of factors, a main reason for the comparative stability of art and ideas in Islamic culture is the unchangeable nature of the scriptural foundations of the culture. Since the Qur'an is regarded by every Muslim as the word of God, and since its untranslated form in a living Arabic language offers little opportunity for hermeneutical problems of interpretation, the religion and the belief system have strong barriers to rapid development and change. Islam is relatively immune to drastic changes in ideology such as those which swept across Western Europe from the tenth to the twentieth centuries. Since the belief system experienced little change, the art works expressing that culture and ideology might be expected to reveal a similar stability. And such is actually the case. It is certainly true that many, though not all, of the Islamic arts produced in one region can be distinguished from those created in another region. It is also true that the works of one century sometimes, but not always, evidence certain distinctive qualities which make their dating possible. On the whole, however, the Islamic arts reveal a marked unity in elements of both content and form over vast expanses of geography and passage of time.

Abstraction and stylization principles, for example, are discernible in all the Islamic art products, though the realization of those features may have been variously achieved. The modular structures are evident in the arts of all places and at all periods of Islamic history. Since history teaches us that it is not to be expected that Islam as religion would be drastically altered as a result of any new — in this case, an American — experience, and since aesthetic products are a culture's means of expressing its world view and God view in varying media

readily apprehended by the senses, those features that characterize earlier manifestations of Islamic art would be expected to continue to play their important role. If those basic characteristics of aesthetic content and form that have been described are therefore not expected to change as a result of a new experience in America, what are the elements that might be expected to change?

The answer to this question is also derived from the history of Islamic art. While the basic characteristics of that art have remained constant throughout the centuries, and can be expected to remain constant in similar fashion in the future, a number of the elements of Islamic art have kept the door open in the past for creativity and innovation — in other words, for development and change in an Islamically consistent manner. One of these elements was the motif vocabulary. Although certain categories or "genera" of motifs appear to be constant, different regions and periods have evidenced new variants of those categories or produced prominent or diminished use of their constituent "species".[7] For Islamic art in America, this element would predictably follow a similar pattern. New motifs will be developed, adapted and adopted from American art or the experience of life in America, while the importance of calligraphy and abstraction and stylization characteristics are maintained. This trend is already evident, for not a few of the attempts at artistic creativity that have so far been made on this continent are ones which involve calligraphy and calligraphic design.

Materials are another element that could be expected to change drastically in the Islamic arts produced by Muslim Americans during the coming decades. New processes for producing materials and new synthetics developed by industry will undoubtedly open up new materials for the creation of art works. Such examples of development and change are already evident in the new metal alloys used for calligraphic decorative pieces which abound at every bazaar held in connection with a national or local Islamic meeting.

Techniques of production can also be expected to change drastically as Muslims make use of contemporary technology in which they themselves have been involved. One instance of such development and change is evident in new processes for creating building blocks which, when laid, provide decorative sun diffusion for the building as well as ornamental infinite patterns. Such blocks made in California were exported to Malaysia for use in construction of one of the mosques of Kuala Lumpur. The Islamic building arts will be the ones most apt to benefit from such innovations made in America or in any other part of the world.

It should be expected that a vibrant Islamic art, supported by a healthy and viable Islamic community in this hemisphere, and by the newly awakened interest of the non-Muslim community in this aspect of their neighbors' cultural contribution, would stimulate the development of new ways of successfully combining motifs, materials and techniques to produce Islamic art, though the exact nature of those new combinations or expressions remain unknown as yet. If that art is to be a living and vibrant phenomenon in its new environment, it will undoubtedly evidence some elements of change. Only thereby could it prove to be an expressive and creative endeavor, with the power to rejuvenate itself and resist degeneration into a form of aesthetic *taqlid* ("state of rigidity and antiquation").

In every one of the regions and earlier periods of Islamic history, Muslims have produced new expressions or manifestations of the basic aesthetic characteristics of Islamic art. We would hope and expect that this would also be the case in North America.

Notes

1. It is not just individual examples of a particular art form which may be suited or unsuited to Islamic aesthetic expression because of their characteristics of content and form. In addition, certain types of artistic expression have proven to be particularly compatible or incompatible to Islamic aesthetic goals. It is a well established fact that some arts are more developed and appreciated in one culture than in another. Certainly calligraphy as an art form has achieved greater interest and more extensive and varied use in Islamic culture than in any other culture (China included). On the other hand, when compared with its use in many other cultures, dance or the art of movement as an aesthetic expression has been singularly neglected by the Muslim peoples.
2. This movement or doctrine has been known as "aestheticism". It maintained that art should have no other motive (whether religious, political, social or moral) than the aesthetic one, and that it should be judged by no non-aesthetic standards. The roots for such ideas were first formulated by Kant. Later it was stressed in various ways by other German philosophers (Goethe, Schelling, etc.), as well as by English (Coleridge and Carlyle), American (Emerson and Poe) and French (Mme.de Stael and Victor Cousin) writers. Cousin is credited with coining the phrase "*l'art pour l'art*" early in the nineteenth century. Exaggerations of the doctine of aestheticism by later poets and philosophers had reached their peak by the beginning of the twentieth century, and the pendulum began to swing back with the publications of such writers as John Ruskin and L.N. Tolstoy. More moderate forms of the doctrine remain, however, to the present day in such ideas as the autonomy of aesthetic standards and the judgement that the values of beautiful art depend on its formal qualities to the exclusion of its subject matter or content (Clive Bell).
3. Edmund Burke Feldman writes in his *Varieties of Visual Experience, Basic Edition* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., and Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973), "perhaps unity is the only principle of visual organization, and the others merely different ways of achieving it" (p. 251). However, see Catherine Lord, "Organic Unity Reconsidered", *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 22 (1964), pp. 263-268.
4. The term "Islamic" pertains to anything which exhibits determination by Islam the religion. "Muslim," on the other hand, characterizes that which pertains to those people who regard themselves or who are regarded as adherents of Islam. Some Muslims are truly Islamic in thought, word and deed. Other Muslims may exhibit only a surface relationship to Islam. Many of the thoughts, actions and creations of these statistical rather than Islamically determined persons therefore warrant the characterization as "Muslim" rather than "Islamic." The same sort of differentiation has affected designations for the arts. This matter was discussed in a paper by this author entitled "Islamic Art or Muslim Art?", prepared for the First International Seminar on "The Arts in Islamic Lands," Farnham Castle, England, March 26-28, 1982; and subsequently published in *Pameran Tamaddun Islam* (Kuala Lumpur: Balai Seni Lukis Negara, 1984), exhibition catalogue; and in Arabic as "A Fannun Islamiyy am Fannu Muslimin?!", *Al Manhal*, Vol. 50, No.46 (Mar.-Apr., 1984), pp. 332-347.
5. A comparable situation pertains in many parts of Western Europe, as well as to a lesser extent in Japan and some parts of Africa.
6. The Romanesque, the Gothic, the Early and High Renaissance, the Mannerist, the Baroque, the Rococco, the Romantic, the Impressionist, and the Expressionist are but some of the well known periods which mark these changes in the arts of Western culture. For discussion of the parallel movements which can be discerned in the arts and thought of Western civilization, see Curt Sachs, *The Commonwealth of Art: Style in the Fine Arts, Music and the Dance* (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1946); and William Fleming, *Arts and Ideas* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 6th edition, 1980)
7. See I. R. and L. al Faruqi, *Cultural Atlas of Islamic Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1985), Chapter XX, for a typology of motifs used in the Islamic arts.

THE TEACHING OF ISLAMIC ART IN AMERICA

Oleg Grabar

Islamic art entered the University much later than it appeared in museums. Long after major collections had been gathered and made public in St. Petersburg (Leningrad), Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, New York, Istanbul, Cairo, Boston, or Washington, none of the universities in these great centers of learning had chairs in Islamic art and many still don't. Curators would occasionally teach, students would join museum staffs to learn about objects, independent (and usually independently wealthy) scholars would write and sometimes share their learning in their private studies, but Islamic art did not penetrate, as a field of enquiry, into the hallowed curriculum of universities. An early exception was, no doubt, the by now legendary Josef Strzygowski in Vienna, who drew enthusiastic listeners to his fascinating, even if often debatable, wanderings, all over the art and architecture of the Near East, but, even if he inspired disciples, he did not develop a discipline.

Quite independently, changes began to occur in the thirties in Paris and Ann Arbor, Michigan. In Paris, mostly in scholarly institutes like the Ecole des Hautes Etudes and the College de France, the unique personality of Jean Sauvaget attracted students from the Ecole du Louvre or the Ecole des Langues Orientales to the material culture of the classical Muslim world. Sauvaget was often caustic about art historians and questioned their methods and purpose. He himself preferred to talk of "archaeology," of a discipline which begins with objects and monuments of architecture and, then, through the study of inscriptions, texts, and whatever other sources may be pertinent, sketches out a moment in time, the space of a city, a function, or a meaning. Beyond the magnetism of a personality which still pierces through much of his writing, beyond the occasionally opinionated criticism of others, two objectives dominated most of Sauvaget's efforts. One was that the study of artifacts and of buildings cannot be separated from a knowledge of history and of culture, and, therefore, that the language of a past time was essential to the understanding of its remains. Issued no doubt from a now decried Orientalist tradition, he had developed a deep sympathy for the history and past culture of the Muslim world and became aware of the need to understand the past through the present and vice-versa. Sauvaget's second objective was more specifically pedagogical. Everything he wrote was meant to teach and one often recognizes in his writing the professor in a seminar or a lecture course. He prepared bibliographies, surveys, lists of dates and of terms, all the paraphernalia which are now called "tools" and a series of his posthumous articles put together by his former students are still among the best introductions to Islamic ceramics or to Umayyad palaces.

Something quite different took place in Ann Arbor. There, Mehmet Aga-Oglu, a student of Strzygowski in Vienna, established the teaching of Islamic art in the context not of a tradition of "oriental" languages and culture, but of a department (at that time a program) of Art History. His success lies in having provided for the art of the Muslim world a presence within departments dominated by western art, with, at least in the United States, an old awareness of an exotic Far East. Aga-Oglu was also concerned with tools but his were images and a seminar. Thus, the University of Michigan began to develop what is still one of the most elaborate collections anywhere of slides and photographs of Islamic art. The "seminar," by now a somewhat antiquated and out of fashion conception in the organization of humanistic research in America, was a space in which books, articles, images, and students would mingle and interact with each other. The permanent upshot of the seminar was *Ars Islamica* (later *Ars Orientalis*) which for over two decades was the major vehicle for the dissemination of knowledge about Islamic art all over the world. *Ars Islamica*, under the leadership of its founder and then of Richard Ettinghausen, reflected the whole breadth of concerns with Islamic art, from archaeology to esthetic theory, but its main thrust was art historical, as characteristic art historical approaches like stylistic groupings, iconographic interpretations, descriptions of monuments or of newly discovered objects, attempts at chronology, predominate over historical or cultural ones.

I shall return shortly to some deeper implications of this point. What matters at this stage is that the American introduction of Islamic art into the University was done through the discipline of Art History, not through Middle Eastern or "Oriental" studies. Success was, initially, limited. Ruydolf Riefstahl taught at the newly created Institute of Fine Arts attached to New York University, but was not replaced after his untimely death. Here and there, at Princeton or Rutgers, a course was offered occasionally, and even at the University of Michigan there was a hiatus of several years between Ettinghausen's departure for Washington's Freer Gallery in 1943 and D.S. Rice's appointment in 1953.

As so much in American higher education, the study of Islamic art expanded dramatically during the twenty years between 1955-1975. In 1955, there were, I believe, only two institutions teaching the field on a regular basis, the University of Michigan and Florida State University. By 1975, twelve institutions had full-time historians of Islamic art and another six to eight had significant teaching in the field. In nearly all cases, as well

as in the two or three positions developed since then, the primary host department is the History of Art. The same pattern tends to prevail in the sadly few institutions in the Muslim world with programs in Islamic art, although the most successful ones have tended to be closely related to the training of archaeologists, because of the immediate needs of most Muslim countries for excavations, preservation, and conservation and because departments of antiquities rather than museums are major employers. A more recent development is the appearance of an interest in Islamic architecture in schools of architecture; its focus so far has been less scholarly and historical than critical and formal. In most of Europe, the teaching of Islamic art, when it exists, is still closely tied to departments or centers devoted to the whole Muslim culture and strongly anchored in linguistics and philology. Both in Europe and in the United States the budgetary cuts or restrictions of the past years have stopped or, at the very least, slowed down the expansion of the teaching of Islamic art in universities and, while museums have picked up a few positions, a tragically large number of excellent young scholars of Islamic art are unemployed, underemployed, or employed in tasks or areas other than those for which they prepared themselves.

It is not my aim in these remarks to dwell further on the question of jobs, even though it is a social and ethical question about the future which should concern all those who are involved with Islamic art. I would rather meditate further on the implications of the two predominant approaches to Islamic art as taught in Western institutions, it being agreed that they often overlap in the scholarly work of any one individual. I want to do so, because, as I shall try to show, we are dealing with much more than academic issues of methodology; we are dealing in fact with questions of ideology and of professional ethics which need to be debated more fully than they have been so far, preferably without acrimony, ill-will, or blind partisanship.

The antiquarian and historical approach takes as its premise that the knowledge and understanding of any one object or monument of architecture occurs within two sets of coordinates. One, the synchrony of the object, is the sum of available information about motivation, purpose, function, technique, quality, and appreciation available within the time of the object. The other one, its diachrony, is the sum of the knowledge and appreciation of the object through the ages. The medium of this approach is the written word, as inscriptions, contemporary texts, and scholarly literature are its agents. The directions the approach takes are manifold, as sociology, history, literature, or religion may become essential components of what is ultimately the immersion into a moment of the past through a thing made. The difficulty of the approach lies in its linguistic requirements, as Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and often a dozen other languages are required to deal intelligently with Islamic art, not to speak of a scholarly intellectual apparatus which can be equally complex. At its best, this approach is an enlightening form of knowledge, because it makes a permanent contribution to learning. Aside from occasional pedantry, its problem is that its appreciation or the art of learning from it require an equally complex intellectual equipment and it is therefore an approach which is almost by definition a restricted one. It is, furthermore, a time-consuming one and its practice restricts both writer and reader to a limited number of opportunities. Almost by definition, it would avoid cultural generalities, as it specializes in exceptions or transforms nearly everything it studies into an exception. Finally, while it is a justified approach for anyone interested in the Muslim past, it is difficult to share it with other than initiates and to transmit it to the general public, whether students or simply curious auditors and readers.

The second approach, a visual one, is much more immediately accessible. Its procedures of technical, formal, iconographic, stylistic, modal, even now structural and semiotic definitions and discussions are shared with the arts of all periods and areas of the world. Its ambition is to integrate Islamic art within world art, to identify those features which make it different or unique, and to separate them from those which are found in other traditions as well. It is, for instance, appropriate to think about Persian or Ottoman ceramics together with ceramics from China or Japan. And, whereas the problems of building domes are universal, the *muqarnas* dome or the double dome are uniquely Islamic solutions.

In a more interesting way from this point of view, the characteristics of Islamic art can serve to highlight and perhaps resolve more universal questions of art history, such as attitudes towards representations and aniconism in general or else the uses and meanings of ornament. These issues and others like them have an immediate appeal to students in western universities, especially in departments of Art History, but they also contain an implication which, properly or not, has been questioned in much of the Muslim world. The implication is that the study of any art should lead to the posing of universal questions rather than to the identification and elaboration of culturally or nationally specific issues. The problem becomes particularly acute when one turns to contemporary art and architecture, for in today's world the tension between universal images and techniques, on the one hand, and the profound aspirations toward visual self-identity on the other has reached nearly insoluble proportions. Within this context, it is in fact possible, perhaps even appropriate, to argue that the ultimate objective to any teaching of Islamic art lies not so much (or not merely) in making available and understandable the creativity of the past but in preparing students and the general public, both Muslim and non-Muslim, to appreciate and explain the art of today. In this aim, it agrees with the purposes of an ideal History of Art, but does it agree with the aspirations of the contemporary Muslim world?

For the purposes of this essay, I have sharpened the distinctions between two approaches to Islamic art, for in reality good scholarship and effective teaching maintain some kind of equilibrium between them. Yet these distinctions also correspond to the inclinations of the public served by teaching and affect the assumptions underlying centers of teaching and research. Three types of students appear nowadays. There are the historians of art and culture who, regardless of their origins, seek to know and understand specific times of Islamic history; there are the historians of art who learn about Islamic art because its techniques, forms, or ideas are important for the esthetic culture of connoisseurs of art; there are, finally, men and women committed to the visual culture of their own world today who find in past traditions sources of inspiration or pride for contemporary needs and who expect to derive from these traditions principles or ideas for modern creativity and for

intelligent criticism.

How well can universities or other appropriate centers of learning outside of the Muslim world itself serve these constituencies? Harvard University is a case at point. Thanks to the Fogg Museum with its rich collection, especially in Persian and Mughal painting, and with nearly all necessary technical and curatorial expertise, the means exist for that indispensible contact with original works of art which is a pre-requisite for art historical research. The neighboring Boston Museum of Fine arts complements in many ways Harvard's own holdings. A second tool which existed at Harvard before the study of Islamic art appeared is a comprehensive research library which has over the years acquired books and periodicals in nearly all of the twenty-five languages with, to my knowledge, information directly pertinent to Islamic art. A more recently developed resource is the visual collection of slides and photographs. For some time, it grew primarily around the requirements of courses or from the casual travels of faculty, students, and friends. Then, after the establishment in 1979 of the Aga Khan Program in Islamic Architecture at Harvard and MIT, some 50,000 items were added to the collection and a comparable archive for twentieth century architecture has been developed at MIT. As important as a collection of visual materials may be, it is not very useful without an elaborate cataloguing and retrieval system. The annual *Materials Acquired* put out by the Aga Khan Program, with its lists of acquired books, pamphlets, and slides or photographs, and the complex card catalogue of the Fine Arts Library serve some of the purposes of accessibility. A pilot video-disk with an attached data-bank analyzing its images is about to be completed and aims at providing immediate and thoughtful access to some 30,000 images of Islamic architecture from its early beginnings to the recently opened Riyadh airport.

Much is still unsatisfactory with these extraordinary tools. Too many publications are missing or in inaccessible languages. Too many images are not of adequate quality. Too much information is simply missing. For the modern and contemporary world, we have only begun to deal with architecture and have not touched painting, sculpture, or the so-called decorative arts, whose importance is so great in Islamic art. And the problem of making this information, however, inadequate, easily available whenever and wherever it is needed has not yet been resolved.

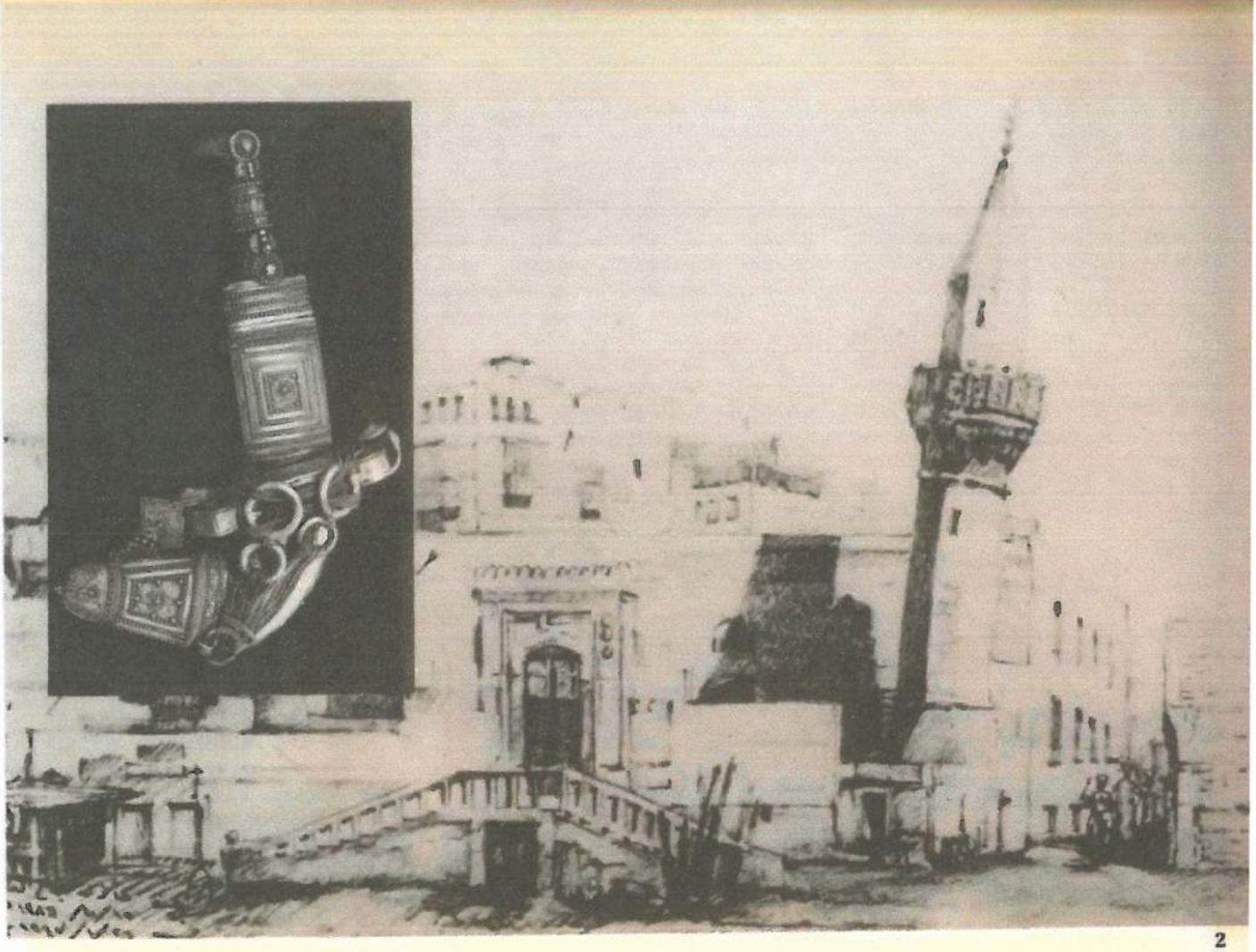
I am confident, however, that solutions will be found to most of these issues, especially those which involve images and raw bibliographical material. The greater accumulation of data does not make knowledge and the asking even of intelligent questions does not provide useful answers. Yet the need for rapid processing of data for availability and the asking of questions around the two or three approaches I have outlined earlier may end up by compelling answers without a true debate on the issues.

What, then, are the challenges? Three seem to me to stand out. One is to define and refine the relationship between past and present within the Islamic world. I do not mean simply the scholarly task of studying and evaluating the dialogue with its past that Islamic culture and art have, like any living organism, had over the centuries. I mean rather the normative requirements which the past is alleged to have predicated to the present or the future. The identification and justification of these requirements is outside the domain of western universities. But the validity of these requirements to explain past monuments is part of their domain, because contemporary judgements have affected the understanding of the past, which is everyone's concern. In other words, answers and positions which are, almost by definition, the privilege and the prerogative of the Muslim world, require, or so it seems, to be put in universally understood terms. Is this possible?

A second challenge is to discover the nature and limits of what I would like to call "useful" knowledge. Obviously any information can be useful, but the semantic range of an archaeologically retrieved ceramic sequence (especially when shown only as a series of drawings) is *a priori* different from and lesser than that of the mosque of Cordova or of the *Baptistere de St. Louis*. Yet it all depends on the question one is asking, or on the approach one is following, for the very visual uniqueness of the mosque of Cordova or of the *Baptistere* may make them less suitable examples than simple ceramic sequences for the knowledge of traditional Muslim culture in the past. Which is more "useful", to explain everyday life or works of art which transcend their time? Both are, of course, useful, but they require different types of competences not usually found in the same persons. In other words, should one maintain, as has been done so far, the independence of each individual and institution to develop as they wish? Or should one create collectively adopted programs which are then farmed out wherever the proper competences exist? As can easily be seen, the growth and configuration of institutions and of tools depends on answers to these questions.

The third challenge is perhaps the most important one. Most of the research and publications on Islamic art have over the past century been in western languages and generated by western institutions or heavily westernized ones like the various institutes of Soviet-Central Asia. It is easy enough to see in this phenomenon yet another example of the domination of Islamic studies by Orientalists. To a degree it is indeed so, just as it was for decades, western collectors who pursued so many treasures of Islamic art acquired under dubious circumstances. It was, in any event, natural enough that this western tradition of scholarship used a terminology and an approach which was its language of understanding. The challenge is to find out whether, like physics or orthopedics, a History of Art issued from the West has become universal or whether culturally discrete concepts, functions, and values can be identified for today or in the past.

Western institutions have, in my judgement, a triple role to play in meeting these challenges. One is to continue to gather written and visual documents from all over the world and, through teaching, publications, and whatever other means may be devised, to make this documentation available everywhere. The second role is to maintain both the antiquarian-historical and the visual approaches to Islamic art, so as to ensure that all historians and lovers of art regardless of their specific interests and specialities, be made aware of and concerned with the values and issues of Islamic art. The third one is to contribute whatever they can to the complex issues of art and culture in the Muslim world's own understanding of its past and expectations for its future. For this last role, however, the formulation of the questions and of the issues must initially come from the Muslim world. ■



2

THE AMERICAN PILGRIMAGE OF ISLAM

TEMPORARY AND TRAVELLING EXHIBITIONS

Wendy M. Blazier

Museums and art collections are of fundamental importance in our awareness and understanding of Islamic culture. Travelling and loan exhibitions are unique vehicles which serve to increase the national and international visibility of the world's art heritage, affording unprecedented opportunities to see and appreciate Islamic artworks, not only in the great cities of the world but also in regions where previously no Islamic art collection existed at all.

The re-emergence of the Islamic world as an economic, political and spiritual force today has resulted in a considerable increase of interest in its rich cultural past and its magnificent arts. Acknowledging its growing importance, the preponderance of exhibitions of Islamic art throughout the United States annually is staggering proof of the American public's fascination with Islamic works of art and the culture which created them. This interest of late is inspired not only by changing world events, political and economic upheaval, but by the accessibility of world-wide travel and the public's increased interest in museums.

The United States has by far more museums per capita than any other nation in the world. Numbering nearly five thousand,[1] American museums play a significant and public role in the education of their communities, contributing to the intellectual and cultural life of American society. Millions of people visit museums each year, seeking knowledge, enjoyment and a great understanding of other peoples, other times, and other places. Islamic art has been available to the American public through the permanent collections of many major American museums since the turn of the century. Though long recognized by scholars in the field of art, the general public has known little of the magnificent artworks and objects of more than a millenium of Islamic civilization. Within the last two decades, the museum-going public has been offered a growing number of Islamic art exhibitions. The availability of these travelling temporary exhibitions to cities throughout the United States has better helped the American public understand and appreciate the nature and meaning of Islamic culture.

During the decade of the seventies, American museums presented an unparalleled series of international exhibitions of foreign cultures and masterpieces never before seen in this country.[2] Whereas only large institutions in major American cities have hosted or organized these exhibitions, it is clear that they have had a widespread national effect on the American public's expectations for museum programming. Thus the desire for international exhibitions has grown in an atmosphere of heightened awareness of the artistic and humanistic expressions of other cultures.

Many of America's major art museums house substantial collections of important examples of Islamic art. From these holdings, they have for years organized exhibitions which featured different aspects of their Islamic collections. For the smaller regional museum, access to major works of art and to funds for organizing complex exhibitions is necessarily limited. Similarly, the vast majority of the American public is without access to major museum collections. Therefore, traveling exhibitions became especially significant. Through these exhibitions, the splendors of foreign cultures become important educational links in the nation's social and cultural consciousness. The travelling exhibition of Islamic art becomes both teacher and ambassador, helping to demystify the unfamiliar.

As we will see, the majority of temporary Islamic exhibitions borrow heavily from private collections. The recognition of Islamic art holdings within the private sector serves to remove the identification of that culture from the impersonal distance of the museum setting. Communities which have contributed to the organization of Islamic exhibitions through the loan of objects can more easily identify with a multi-cultural experience and acknowledge the interdependency of all cultures and faiths. Thus these exhibitions serve to develop both an understanding of the more lasting cultural and humanistic relationships between the Islamic world and the West today, and an expanded cultural awareness implicit in the nature of the exhibition's organization.

The temporary exhibition creates a sense of community identification with the museum. Collectors of Islamic art are especially generous in loaning works for exhibition. Perhaps as a tribute to and appreciation of the value of culture in today's society, museums and private collectors have realized the educational, historical, cultural and aesthetic importance in allowing these objects to reach the broadest audience.

The temporary exhibition changes our way of looking at artworks. The collective exhibition of pieces from diverse private or public sources places these artworks into new contexts through their relation to other works. This may be illustrated by looking at the loan of a khanjar dagger and scabbard from a private collection (Figure 1) to supplement the travelling exhibition "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia".[3] In the context of the exhibition, this magnificent eighteenth-century silver dagger had a new and different message. Alone, its importance was always maintained by its beauty. Exhibited with other Islamic artworks and interpreted in relation to them, this object speaks of the history and religion of Islam as well as the historical continuance of ancient metalworking techniques.

Countless exhibitions of Islamic art have been organized within the last several years. At any given time, several exhibitions of Islamic artworks or culture are circulating nationally to institutions of all sizes and disciplines. Understandably, these exhibitions are too numerous to discuss in individual detail, yet a broad overview of their diversity and scope should serve to introduce this rich and rewarding aspect of America's Islamic art holdings.

Traditionally American museums, just as their foreign counterparts, have been the sole organizers of travelling and temporary exhibitions tailored from the holdings within their collections. In addition to this approach, there have arisen in the last thirty years, several organizations in the United States that offer an exhibition service to American museums, circulating exhibitions of the highest quality and importance.[4]

Because of the vast range of Islamic art, these temporary and travelling exhibitions have been most often organized to concentrate on either one historical period or one specific type of artwork. The 1981-82 tour of "Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks"[5] presented a spectacular selection of the finest examples of the art of the Mamluk era (1250-1517). One hundred and twenty-eight precious artworks and objects represented the finest works produced during the Renaissance of Islamic art in the Arab world. Illuminated and illustrated manuscripts, metalwork, glass, ceramics, stone and textiles were selected from nineteen worldwide public and private collections. "Renaissance of Islam" went beyond a mere survey of Mamluk art, and addressed the extraordinary aesthetic refinement and technical excellence of this pinnacle of Islamic artistic tradition. Circulated by the Smithsonian Institution Travelling Exhibition Service, this magnificent exhibition travelled to nine major American museums.

Many exhibitions curated for national tour have sought to give a glimpse into the collective understanding of the Islamic culture, rather than concentrate on one particular historical period. In this context, countless exhibitions have brought together objects of diverse periods of Islamic history and from different corners of the world to give a sense, if possible, of certain overall themes that Islamic arts have traditionally shared worldwide. One of the most comprehensive exhibitions of this nature to tour throughout the United States was "The Heritage of Islam", organized in 1982 by Islam Centennial Fourteen, a non-profit Washington D.C. - based organization. Containing over two hundred and fifty objects in all media representing each century since Islam's inception, "The Heritage of Islam" brought together pieces borrowed from museums and private collections in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East.

Travelling exhibitions have emphasized not only the superior achievements of Islamic artists, but the cultural history of the geographic area that began with the rise of Islam as a religion and way of life. Two travelling exhibitions in recent years have sought to highlight the development of rich cultural traditions in this crossroads area of the world. "Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia"[6] was an exhibition circulated by SITES which illustrated the rapidly disappearing lifestyle of the Bedouin and the villagers of Saudi Arabia. This ambitious exhibition presented one hundred and fifty objects including a fifty-foot full-size Bedouin tent, dividing curtain



3

walls, tent bands, rugs, blankets, saddle bags, costumes, jewelry, weapons, coffee accoutrements, incense burners, leather and baskets, all borrowed from American and Saudi Arabian collectors. With an emphasis on illustrating the traditional architecture of Saudi Arabia, an exhibition entitled "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia" travelled within the southeastern United States during 1983-84. Organized by the Center for Transnational Projects, Washington, D.C., and circulated by the Southern Arts Federation, Atlanta, Georgia, "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia" sought to bring into focus not only the nomadic lifestyle of Arabia, but the varied regional architectural styles throughout the Arabian peninsula. In thirty-three intricate drawings by Professor Wahbi Al-Hariri-Rifai, the traditional architecture of Saudi Arabia's cities and deserts was recorded with keen and exacting detail. Executed in 1979, al-Hariri's drawings document a rich and varied architecture which developed in numerous forms dependent upon available building materials, climate, and the influences and styles of differing cultures coexisting in Arabia for centuries (Figure 2). Included in "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia" were thirty-six artifacts and traditional handicrafts of the nomadic lifestyle – textiles, metalwork, costumes, jewelry and utilitarian household objects. Through such exquisitely-rendered objects as a leather coffee bean bag (Figure 3), we glimpse an ancient lifestyle and culture rapidly changing in the face of twentieth-century technology.



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Another rare view of the rapidly-changing Islamic world was captured in an exhibition entitled "Anatolian Tribal Weaving", organized by the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida in 1981. Presenting a connoisseur's collection of nineteenth and twentieth century flat-woven textiles from Asiatic Turkey, "Anatolian Tribal Weaving" also provided the documentary context in which these weavings could be most appreciated. The forty rare flat-woven textiles exhibited were on loan from the Turkish-born Armenian rug collector Ligia Jamieson. Each piece in this exhibition served to enlighten and define the complexity of nomadic weaving, such as is seen in a rare brocaded cover from Anamas in Southeast Anatolia dated to 1850 (Figure 4). Accompanying the textiles was a collection of photographs by the Turkish photographer and cinematographer Ersin Alok, documenting the textile weaving traditions and lifestyle of the Turkish nomadic tribes and villages. Through maps, diagrams, and Alok's photography, these textiles come to be perceived not only as unique artistic expressions, but also as a means to assess the richness of Islamic cultural tradition.

Lastly, collaborative efforts between museums and between museums and university art galleries have fostered exciting exhibition development that can reach broader audiences. Within the university, the presentation of objects of cultural history in the format of an exhibition, rather than merely a publication or text, creates for the student an exciting means to learn. As institutions of learning, museums and university galleries are beginning to function cooperatively, sharing in the development of exhibitions, contributing to the already growing body of scholarly investigation and publication in the field of Islamic art, history and culture.

University art galleries and museums, both regional and in major cities, have organized temporary or hosted travelling exhibitions of Islamic art for years. Regionally these efforts have particular significance, making Islamic art and



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artifact available to audiences without access to major museum collections. The 1984 exhibition "Pattern: An Islamic Tradition" organized by Valencia Community College, Orlando, Florida, illustrates the far-reaching effects of regional university efforts.[2] By focusing on pattern in Islamic arts and crafts, a varied group of artworks served to introduce the philosophy and religious beliefs implicit in the art of Islam. Florida collectors who had loaned artworks to two previous South Florida exhibitions, "Anatolian Tribal Weaving" and "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia" participated in this Central Florida exhibition, in which their works now were interpreted in a new context (Figures 1 and 4). Through weaving, metalwork, woodwork, manuscript illumination, and ceramics, an extensive vocabulary of decorative motifs – geometric, vegetal, floral, calligraphic, and occasionally figural – served to illustrate the symbolic use of ornament and its multiple levels of interpretation. In a mid-sixteenth century Ottoman underglaze molded ceramic tile (Figure 5), the profusion of floral and vegetal pattern creates an interlacing arabeque. When multiplied across the expanse of a tiled wall, the repetition of infinite pattern dissolves surface and architectural detail, thereby becoming the visualization of transcendentalism.

It is in these and many other temporary and travelling exhibitions that the profound historical importance of Islam and its vast influence and numerous cultures continues to enlighten. May the museums of America continue to keep the lamp lighted.

NOTES

1. American Association of Museums, *Museums for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1984), p.7.
2. For an overview of the "blockbuster" era of American museums see Stuart Silver, "Almost Everyone Loves a Winner," *Museum News* LXI (November/December 1982), 24-35.

3. "The Heritage of Saudi Arabia", circulated by the Southern Arts Federation, Atlanta, Georgia, was exhibited at the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida September through October 1983, with supplemental loans from private collections.
4. National travelling exhibitions service organizations include: Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service (SITES), Washington, D.C. 20560; "International Exhibitions Foundation, 1729 H St., N.W., Suite 310, Washington, D.C. 20006; and American Federation of the Arts, 41 East 65th St., New York, N.Y. 10021.
5. "Renaissance of Islam" was organized by Dr. Esin Atil, Curator of Near Eastern Art, Freer Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., with funding from United Technologies Corporation. Artworks were loaned from the Louvre, the British Museum, the Victoria and Albert Museum, and a dozen North American institutions and private collections.
6. "Traditional Crafts of Saudi Arabia" was organized by the Memorial Art Gallery of the University of Rochester, New York, for SITES, with the cooperation of John Topham, a private collector who initiated its undertaking.
7. Curated by Islamicist Dr. Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch, "Pattern: An Islamic Tradition" brought together thirty-three objects on loan from five private Florida collections, and the collection of the Florida State University Gallery of Fine Arts, Tallahassee, Florida.

Figure 1: Khanjar Dagger and Scabbard, silver, wood scabbard covered with silver; 18th century, length 13", Collection of Dr. and Mrs. Fuad Ashkar. (Photo Credit: Brandt Magic).
Figure 2: Professor Wahbi Al-Hariri-Rifai, *Houses of Inheritors of Said Ibrahim Kadasah*, Beesha, drawing.
Figure 3: Coffee Bean Bag, before 1950, leather with red cloth and fringe, Saudi Arabia.
Figure 4: Cover, Anamas, Southeast Anatolia, ca. 1850, 44 1/2" x 21". Collection of Ligia Jamieson.
Figure 5: Ottoman Turkish Molded Tile, mid-16th century, 15" x 15", collection of Dr. Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch. (Photo Credit: Brandt Magic). ■



Photo: Lehnert and Landrock

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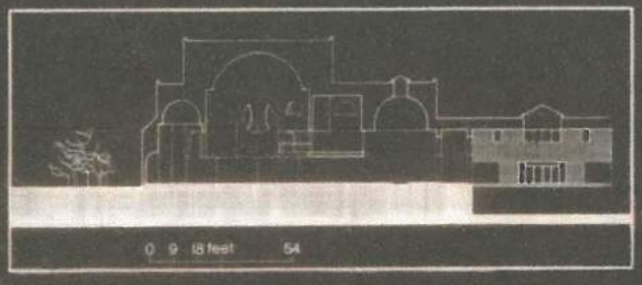
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ARCHITECTS IN AMERICA DESIGN FOR ISLAMIC CULTURES

Nadar Ardalan







In theory and practice, architects in America are helping to build in Islamic societies in both America and abroad.

Professionally in practice, architects are designing and building Islamic centers, hotels, universities and whole new towns in the United States, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf States, Turkey, Pakistan and a number of Southeast Asian countries.

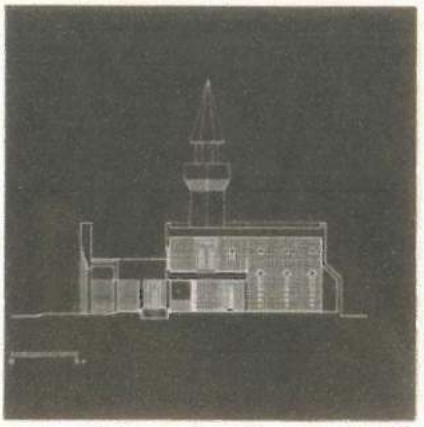
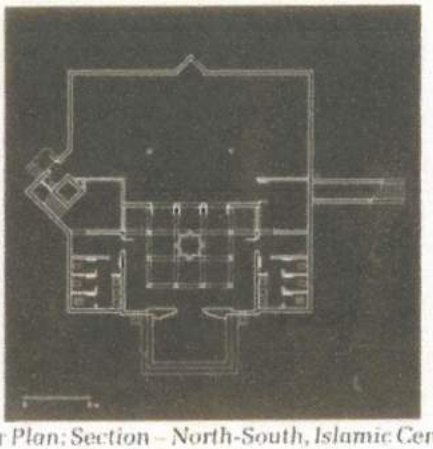
Academically, major programs have been established to train students and professionals from America and abroad to design more appropriately for those Islamic cultures.

This article will select a few examples from these two domains of practice and theory and discuss the products produced, the process that has produced them and evaluate their relative merits and future prospects. Of course, in order to establish a basis for judgement of relative worth, it has been useful to review the recent history on this issue.

This review has been structured into three separate historical periods: (First Period - end of W.W. II, i.e. 1945 to 1973; Second Period - 1973 to 1982; Third Period - 1982 to Year 2000).

First Period - "The Cultural Vacuum" Post World War II to 1973

Historically, the involvement of architects from North America with Islamic Cultures is relatively a recent, Post War II phenomenon. More accurately, it was not until the 1950's and early 60's that the first wave of interactions occurred. For example, in Turkey, Skidmore Owings & Merrill designed the Istanbul Hilton in 1954, the Japanese American Architect Minora Yamasaki produced a master plan for Shiraz University, Iran, in 1960; Walter Gropius and The Architectural Collaborative designed the master plan for Baghdad University in 1952; and Frank Lloyd Wright proposed a design for the Baghdad Opera House in 1957. These remained isolated, exotic endeavors which were some of the precursors to a more significant pro-


Above: *Section – East-West; Ground Floor Plan; Section – North-South, Islamic Center of Jonesboro, Arkansas, Architect Prof. Gulzar Haider.* **Title page:** *Axonometric section (and inset) section, Islamic society of North America, Plainsfield, Indiana, Architect Prof. Gulzar Haider.* **Below left:** *Concept model - Mersin International Hotel, Mersin, Turkey. Architects, Jung/Brannen International Ltd.*

fessional participation that took place in the late sixties and seventies.

As the former Dean of the School of Architecture at M.I.T., Professor Emeritus Lawrence Anderson has observed "The petroleum crisis certainly had something to do with the sudden increase in the interdependency between America and the OPEC countries of the Middle East." The sixties brought heightened oil money and greater political stability to many of the countries of the Middle East. This increased the possibility of cultural and economic interaction with the West and in particular, the United States. Many students from the Middle East commenced their training in American colleges and universities. Some of the first American-trained architects from Islamic cultures received their degrees in the early sixties and eventually returned to their home countries to assume leading positions in the professions and academia. Increased urbanization, educational reforms and industrialization all were forces which demanded foreign trained architects and engineers to contend with the new technical needs of society during this first wave of socio-economic movement to and from America. However, any deep understanding of the fundamental cultural issues involved was greatly hampered in that very little information on the indigenous cultures and their architectural heritage existed in the English language in the libraries of the American campuses where the students were trained and even less was to be found in the libraries of the home countries. Therefore, the initial works of both the Muslim students and those few American professionals working in the Middle East were extremely lacking in mature historical and scientific ecological relevance to the local place, its history and social/cultural needs. As a hidden treasury of knowledge, the information lay somewhat overlooked in the mud and brick structures of indigenous villages and towns and in the slowly dying crafts of the local countries.

Second Period - "The Aberration" 1973 - 1981/82

The second period of interaction may be called "The Aberration". The sudden acceleration of OPEC prosperity meant the unleashing of vast international and national economic forces in the market place that spawned development programs in the Middle East of unprecedented scale and speed. Entire new cities, universities and other public institutions along with enormous transportation networks became the main target of national development plans of most oil-rich Islamic countries. Many urban centers experienced an accelerated demographic growth of 6% to 7% per year, which meant that in a ten year period, the respective populations doubled. Growth at this booming rate created a certain amount of excitement and change of pace, urban congestion, environmental disorientation and a psychological sense of alienation for the populace, while uncontrollable problems plagued those entrusted with city management. Not only did this rapid growth necessitate foreign trained, particularly American trained architects and engineers, but the volume of work demanded and drew to the Middle East most of the major American architectural, engineering and construction companies.

This period of "The Aberration" produced substantial volumes of research, case studies and heightened personal, academic and professional interactions. Many conferences were convened to understand more clearly the forces at play and to develop strategies to deal more coherently with the new processes that had been unleashed. For instance, the International Conference of Architects in Isfahan, Iran, in 1970 and then in Persepolis in 1974 were exemplary of this concern. The first conference was entitled "The Interaction of Tradition and Technology" and the second conference was called "Toward a Quality of Life". Many leading American architects, such as Louis Kahn, Josep Lluis Sert, Paul Rudolph, Ralph Rapson, Paolo Soleri, Jerzy Soltan and Phillip Will attended.

Similar gatherings occurred in Saudi Arabia during the Dammam Conference on "Urbanism and Architecture in the Islamic World" held in 1980 and then again in Medina in 1981 during the "Arab City Symposia."

But by far, the most pervasive outgrowth of this period in the field of architecture was the Aga Khan Award for Architecture started in late 1976 and followed a few years later by the Harvard-MIT Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture. The very prestige, financial commitment and media coverage of these ongoing programs of awards, seminars, academic workshops, archival procedures and publications strengthened existing programs already created in many Islamic countries and provoked many new ones into being in both the West and the Middle East.

In a matter of only a few years, the great vacuum that had existed in the American educational field related to architecture of Muslim cultures began to be filled. During this second period, the maturity of American architectural firms also grew by direct experiential knowledge and by the integration of many profession-

als from Muslim countries into key American firms.

Third Period - "The Sober Reality" (1981/82 - Year 2000)

The third period (the 1980's to the year 2000) called here "The Sober Reality" is characterized by neither the "Cultural Vacuum" of Period One nor the pendulum swing of "the Aberration" of Period Two.

OPEC oil price reductions, the "oil glut" and military strife have caused economic growth to slow down considerably in the Middle East. Political stability is at best fragile. Yet the OPEC countries are still in possession of more than 60% of the proven oil reserves upon which the internal combustion engine economies of the West still depends. Also the level of general knowledge in Islamic countries and about the countries themselves has risen considerably. Further, during the economically active years of the sixties and seventies, wave upon wave of emigrants from Muslim countries have settled, more or less permanently in northern Europe and North America. It is, therefore, within this context, looking at the 1980's and onto the 1990's that this article is written.

Two New Islamic Centers in North America

In 1975, the Muslim Student Association (MSA) of the U.S.A. and Canada decided to centralize its numerous activities by establishing a new headquarters in Plainsfield, Indiana called the Islamic Society of North America (ISNA).

Professor Gulzar Haider, an architect and engineer, originally from Pakistan and now residing in Ottawa, Canada, and teaching at Carleton University, was asked to design the project.

An 84-acre site was reserved for the ISNA to accomodate the following facilities:

Mosque for 500 men and women
Research Library for 100,000 volumes plus and audio-visual Library.
Office complex for the sponsoring and associated organizations and the Islamic Book Service
Educational camp building with an auditorium, classrooms, day care center and cafeteria.
Cabins and dormitories for 500 short-term residents plus some staff housing.
Recreational and outdoor sports facilities.

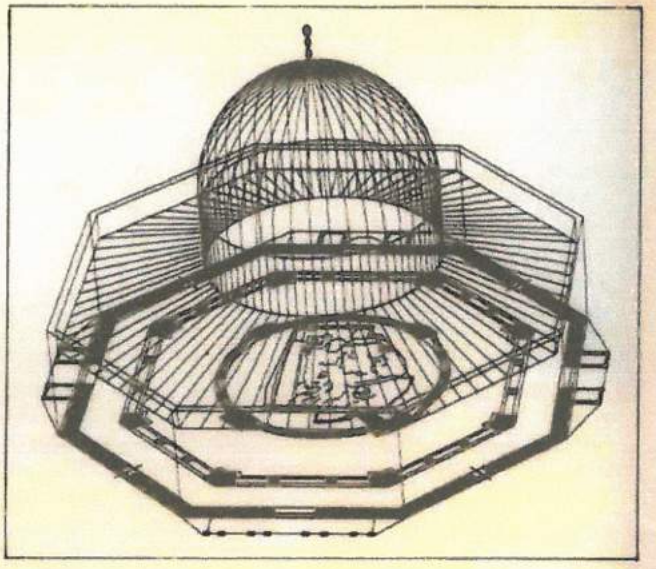
The master plan and building design were completed by Professor Haider and the detailed construction documents were produced by the associated architect, Mr. Mukhfar Khalil, AIA, of Dana Architects and Planners of Chicago. The building was completed in 1983

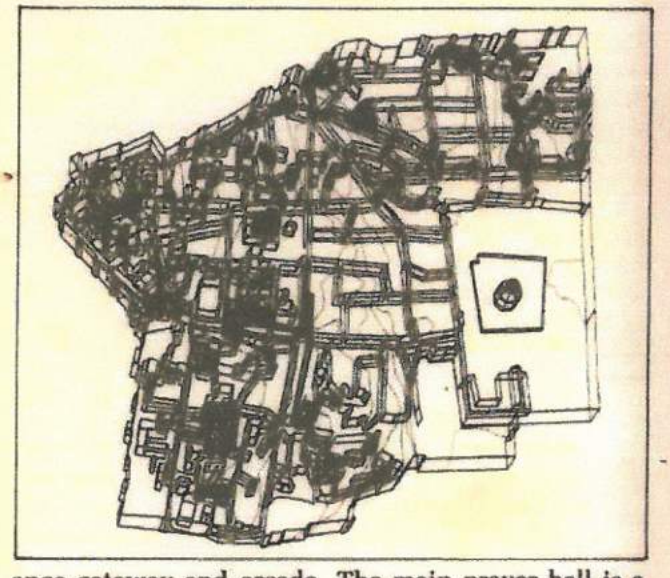
Unfortunately, only the first phase of the project has been constructed thus far, but it is hoped that the full richness of master plan will one day be realized.

Professor Haidar was also asked by a Saudi Arabian patron to design on the University of Arkansas campus a student mosque. The local architects were Brackett-Krennerich and Associates

The resulting building for the Islamic Center of Johesboro, completed in 1984 provides a modest, yet significant statement regarding the concept of a mosque in a non-Muslim environment. The total size of the local congregation is less than 300.

The building design was based upon a 64-foot cubic envelope, within which has been placed a small ablution court open to the sky, approached through an entrance gateway and arcade. The main prayer hall is a rectangular space of double height focused upon the *Mihrab*, thus facing the worshippers toward the *Kaaba* in Makkah. The ladies gallery is approached by both internal and external stairs. The minaret measuring 64 feet in height completes the cubic, spatial volume of the design.





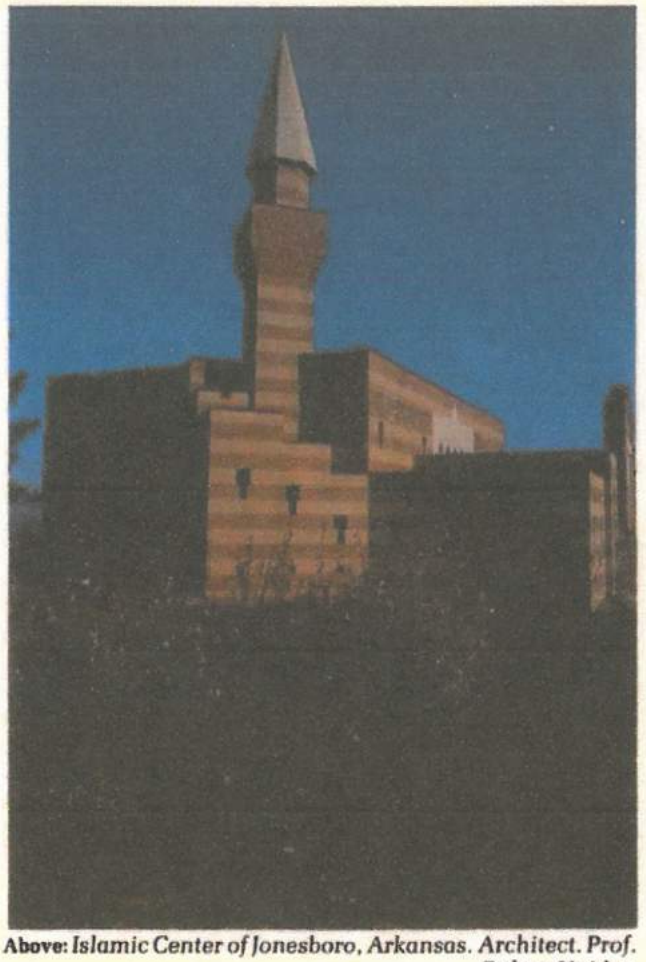
The mosque design is very influenced by the cultural origins of the congregation, for it is of a Saudi Arabian style, many of which traditionally were built by Yemeni masons.

The structure boldly carries a decorative brick frieze of Kufic calligraphy containing a Koranic message.

Some of the guiding principles in Professor Haider's explorations for a relevant, contemporary Islamic architecture are to be found in his numerous writings. These "operational principles" as he calls them are categorized into three groups namely *environmental*, *morphological* and *semiotic*. It will be interesting to view his development of this direction on larger and more complex work.

Large Scale Architecture and Planning Projects in Muslim Lands

One of the major challenges posed by the sudden wealth gained by the OPEC countries of the Middle East has been the design and construction of large scale projects in a very short time frame. A corrollary issue has



Above: *Islamic Center of Jonesboro, Arkansas. Architect. Prof. Gulzar Haider.*
Above Left: *Dome of the Rock, Jerusalem, 3-D Computer image*
Left: *Old city of Jerusalem, 3-D Computer image, Wader Ardalan in J.U. Jung/Brannen Associates.*
Overlead: *Islamic Society of North America, Plainsfield, Indiana. Architect, Prof. Gulzar Haider.*

also been the safeguarding of the cultural heritage of the local countries within this boom period.

As this author has been actively involved in both of these fields of professional practice for nearly 20 years, one of our current works can serve as illustrations of the issues involved.

In 1984 the Armagan Company asked the Boston based firm of Jung/Brannen International to design a new hotel complex in the Mediterranean Port City of Mersin, Turkey. This author has been the principal architect responsible for this work.

The project consists of a 220-room, first class hotel of approximately 29,000 square meters under construction and includes an apartment hotel, large ballrooms and meeting facilities, several restaurants, health club and a 100-car garage. The hotel has been planned to be built within two years to fill the great need existing in this dynamically growing port city for hotel facilities. Most developing Muslim cities have found a great social and business need to build new hotels to accommodate the transient visitor, to fulfil the ceremonial functions of weddings and other cultural celebrations and to provide recreational opportunities.

This hotel has the added quality of immediate frontage upon the Mediterranean coast and thus a small yacht harbour plus tennis courts and a sea water pool have also been included into the master plan for the site.

The building has thus far only reached the conceptual design phase, but already the two principles of adaptation to nature and relevance to culture are apparent in the conception. Rapid construction will be achieved by standardisation of architectural elements and the use of precast concrete technology, available in the region.

The School of Environmental Design in King Abdulaziz University, Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

The School of Environmental Design (SED) was established in the fall of 1976 as a department in the College of Engineering. The SED offers three separate 12-semester programs (including two introductory semesters) in architecture, landscape architecture and urban and regional planning, leading to the Bachelor's Degree in each of these professional areas.

However, in 1974 and 1975, the SED was only an idea. It had been proposed to a team of Harvard University professors to develop with the local assistance of the Faculty of Engineering. The then Dean of the Graduate School of Design, Professor Maurice Kilbridge and the former chairman of the Department of Architecture, Professor Jerzy Soltan, had been asked to form a U.S. consultant team to define the goals and structure for this new entity. Dr Jamjoon, Dean of the College of Engineering at KAU, directed this project for the University. In time, they brought into being an advisory panel to comment upon the curriculum and tailor it more specifically to the Islamic traditions of Saudi Arabia. This writer was a member of the advisory panel that met both in Cambridge and Jeddah to put the final touches on the program for the new school.

The challenge of creating a totally new academic facility placed two major opportunities before the U.S. consultants: First, to conceive of the most holistic framework within which to teach about the man-made environment and, second, to make it relevant to the cultural and ecological context of Saudi Arabia.

The main principle established was that the three departments of the SED should be interrelated with a shared common purpose. To provide a common experience and knowledge to the students, a common (or core) academic program was developed for the first six semesters. The remaining six semesters represent the professional program years and are separate and distinct for each specialized department.

The core program has as its purpose to provide students with a broad understanding of man's relation to his physical, social and aesthetic environments. Emphasis is here given to Islamic culture, literature, art and architecture.

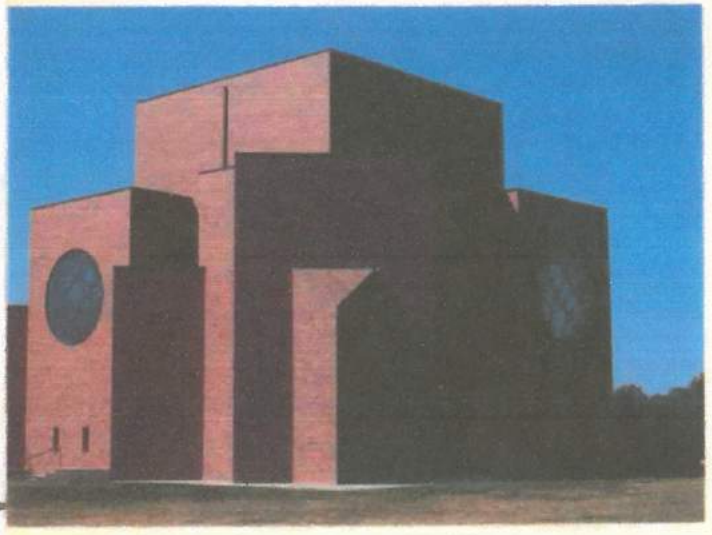
The Departmental Programs have as their objective to prepare graduates to assume specific, technical and managerial responsibilities as architects, planners and landscape architects. The emphasis in the last six semesters is therefore on professional competence and the development of adequate knowledge and skills to engage in professional practice.

The SED was conceived for a 500 student enrollment, roughly divided into 250 in architecture, 100 in landscape architecture and 150 in planning. A faculty of 37 and a support staff of 27 was deemed necessary to organize and operate the school.

Memories of the International recruitment process of faculty and the adaptation of the curriculum to the actual realities of Jeddah still linger with most of us.

Some highlights may help illustrate the pioneering activities demanded of all who took part in those early years.

As a part of the entrance qualification exams to the SED, the U.S. consultants had determined that demonstration of drawing skills were important. One afternoon in 1976 a group of very alert young Saudi candidates were brought to the studio and each asked to draw upon a pad of paper various objects. The instructor asked that the students draw a chair - which they all did. Next they were asked to draw a fellow student sitting in the chair. Suddenly, there was a great deal of nervous reaction to this request and finally all of the students refused to comply. Befuddled, the American instructor inquired the reason for this abstinance and shyly, but with deep conviction one of the students observed that the drawing of human images was considered blasphemous in the Islamic traditions from which they came. A raw cultural nerve had been hit inadvertently and quickly the instructor withdrew the request and the session went onto a harmonious conclusion, but a sense of a new and different reality had been touched upon by the early first team of instructors recruited mainly from the U.S., Europe, Egypt and Turkey.



In many respects, the founders of SED anticipated that their proposed curriculum should be considered embryonic and therefore incomplete. The perfection of the academic program it was thought would come with experience and by the learning curve gained by the faculty and the students.

In fact, the first serious comprehensive revision of the original program has only recently occured under the guidance of Dr. Farooq A. Mofti, Vice Dean for SED Affairs, Professor Hussein Ateshin (Chairman, Dept. of Landscape Architecture) and Professor Richard Woodhouse (Chairman, Dept. of Urban and Regional Planning).

SED is now one of four schools in Saudi Arabia that trains professionals related to the built environment.

Future Challenge

The cities in the Islamic World continue to grow at increasingly rapid rates due to a variety of forces. The resulting built environments are all too often overcrowded, polluted and aesthetically alienated from their historic past.

Meanwhile, the strong dollar and Middle East strife has brought a new limitation on the possibilities of professional and academic interventions and exchanges between architects in America and Muslim cultures. Although programs in Islamic architecture have been established in some academic institutions in America, as partially documented in this article, the degree of access of most students from Muslim countries tends to be extremely limited due to economic constraints and the ratio of student places to the full world need for trained professionals.

Coincidently, schools in architecture have been started in Muslim lands - many with the direct, well intentioned participation of architects from America. Many of these programs are now relatively self-sufficient, as they had been originally programmed to be.

Professionally, architects in America have helped many practicing architects in Muslim lands to become more technically proficient and therefore less dependent on professionals from abroad. The economic picture also minimizes the availability of building budgets that can support large scale U.S. professional involvement.

Do these signs portend another period of isolation between architects in America and Islamic cultures?

In the short run, they may, if some creative new directions are not sought and developed in very effective and economical ways.

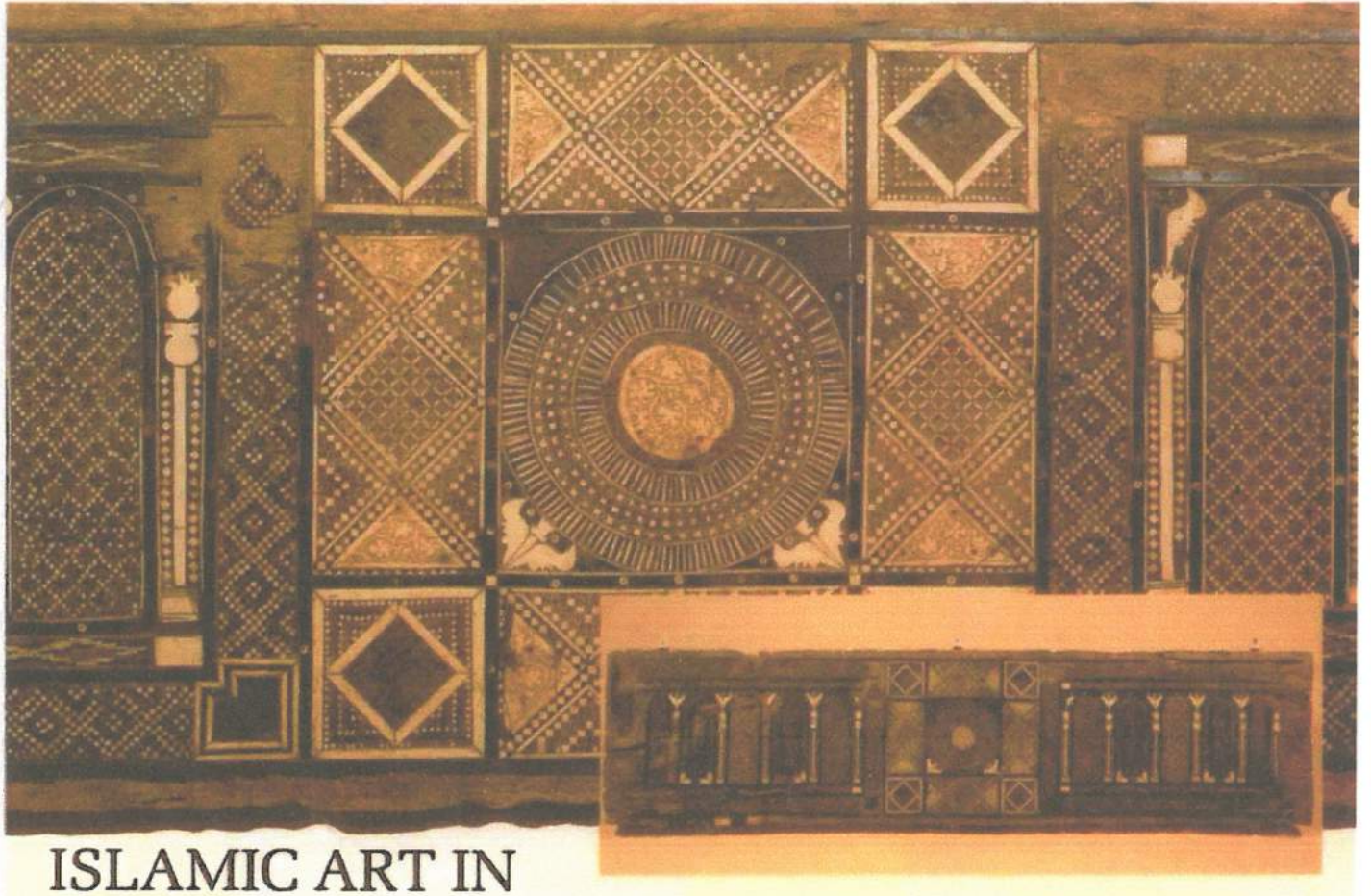
An indication of this type of pathfinding can be seen in the design contracts being signed with architects in the U.S. No longer are the Muslim clients asking for full professional services, but only preliminary designs are being contracted. The remaining professional work is being carried out by local professionals with only periodic monitoring by the U.S. based consultants.

In this new direction, therefore, the definition of design principles becomes extremely important. Concepts and ideas, not technical details seem to hold the main place of valuable exchange. In this light, knowledge of concepts valid both culturally and ecologically will receive primary attention. A deep understanding and lucid distillation of historic prototype models for specific building types such as mosques, *madrassa* (schools), bazaars (commercial centers), caravan *serai* (inns) and the home will provide essential tools for this new phase of professional communication.

A vocabulary of regionally valid building parts such as gateway, garden court, arcade/porch, room and the screened window may be the specific architectural language to be explored. The structure of this language will also depend upon a good understanding of materials and methods related to such basic elements as brick, stone, mud, plaster, cement and reeds.

Couple the above with the advances made in computer aided design hardware and software, one of the future prospects for Architects in America, is the development of creative new design approaches using the computer that build upon the already acknowledged need for contemporary integration of traditional architectural prototypes. These new approaches must be of the high tech age, yet be fully in resonance with such timeless qualities admired for instance in the mirror-like pools of fragrant paradise gardens.

The future cannot forget that the "cultural vacuum" of the past has fast faded away in the media-conscious world of today. The future demands a purposeful, new complexity founded upon historical knowledge, and the mutual search for new beginnings rooted in the sense of place, its people and its culture. ■



ISLAMIC ART IN THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

Marilyn Jenkins

A major event in the field of Islamic art occurred in the United States on 24 September 1975. On that day, ten new galleries of Islamic art opened at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. To some, it was a long awaited event; while to others, the riches of this collection came as an amazing revelation. The latter was not at all surprising since, until this installation was completed, only a small proportion of the Museum's vast holdings had been on view, despite the fact that the first Islamic objects entered the collection as early as 1847, and although over three-quarters of the Islamic treasures were acquired before 1955.

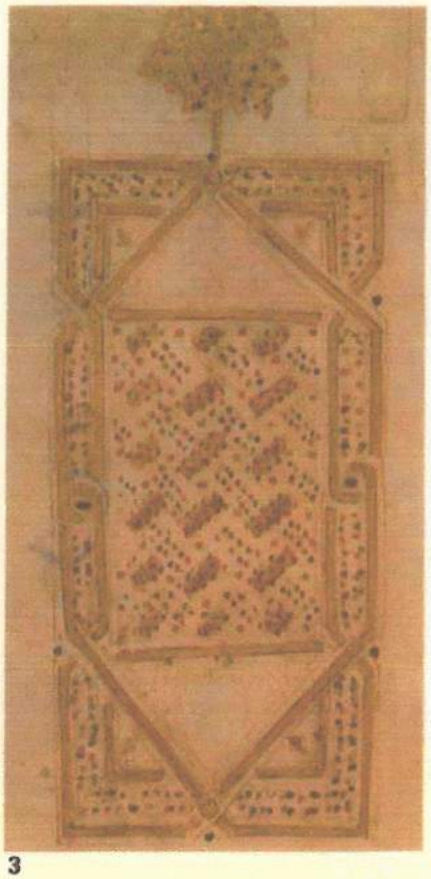
Since the opening of these galleries, a number of publications have appeared that bear witness to the scope, size, and quality of this collection. In the Summer of 1981, one hundred and forty-five objects were chosen from the collection for an exhibition in the Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbestiz, Berlin. The three principal criteria of selection were that the objects be representative of all media, that they be of extremely high quality and finally, that they not be a part of the permanent exhibition at the Metropolitan, i.e., they must have been passed over by the Met's curators for their own exhibition. The mere fact that the fully illustrated catalogue of the exhibition was entitled *The Arts of Islam: Masterpieces from the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, bears testimony to the Islamic riches at this museum.

In the Spring of 1983, the first book devoted to the history of Islamic jewelry was published. Each of the one hundred and forty-six objects or groups of objects discussed was drawn from the Metropolitan's own collection. No other museum in the world can boast of a collection so comprehensive as to be able to demonstrate the thirteen-hundred-year history of this medium.

The same Spring, a history of Islamic ceramic production appeared which was based solely on sixty objects from this collection. Here, new paradigms were substituted for better-known examples of certain types of wares. In other words, the resources for illustrating such a history are so rich that the Metropolitan's ceramic collection could fuel the fire of a number of similar studies and still not be exhausted.

Although no other museum could mount a comprehensive exhibition of one hundred and forty-five Islamic masterpieces without touching a single object in its permanent exhibition as well as provide all of the examples needed to write complete histories of both Islamic jewelry and pottery, it is not this aspect of the Metropolitan's collection on which I would like to dwell here.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of the opening of this Islamic museum within the Metropolitan, I would like to pause for a



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moment and linger over what I consider to be an even more important aspect of the largest comprehensive collection of Islamic art in the world. No matter into what aspect of the field I wanted to delve in my more than twenty years as a curator of the collection, an excavation undertaken in the catalogue files and the store rooms was not in vain. By the sheer accident of an unsolicited gift or bequest or a conscious and informed choice on the part of one or more of the earlier curators, examples of whatever I was searching for were to be found. Quite simply, whatever the problem or vogue, the Metropolitan's Islamic collection will reward those who tap it.

Let us consider the current, very strong interest in the formative years of Islamic art which encompass the Umayyad and early Abbasid Periods or roughly the two-hundred-year span from 650 to 850 A.D. Several factors have stimulated this concern. The relatively new Arab interest in Islamic as opposed to pre-Islamic art (which has resulted in a stunning new Islamic museum in Kuwait - Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyya - as well as the promise of others soon to follow in the same area) has given rise to an increased concern with the origins and tentative beginnings of this art. A corollary to this is the striving to learn as much as possible about the early Arabic script. This great interest in Arabic calligraphy has been further fuelled by the recent discovery of approximately forty thousand leaves of parchment and early paper Qur'ans above the ceiling of the Great Mosque in Sanaa, Yemen Arab Republic. Another important factor contributing to this new interest in the formative years and the concomitant change in attitude towards them and the art produced within them, however, is the maturation of the field itself. Islamic art historians are turning back to the "roots" of their discipline, to the period of what Oleg Grabar more than a decade ago called "the formation of Islamic art", to better understand this art in general.

At the present time, the study of the art of these formative years is in its infancy. The surface has barely been scratched. It was not so long ago, for example, that one of the most important mid-eighth century Islamic palaces in present-day Jordan – Mshatta – was considered by leading scholars to be pre-Islamic as was the ewer illustrated in Figures 7 & 8!

Is the Metropolitan's collection going to be able to make a significant contribution in this area as it has in so many others? Let us look carefully at a few of the objects in New York that fit into this time period. The results of this particular search are breathtaking - one masterpiece after another, unique of its type or one of very few examples extant.

The rectangular wooden panel, illustrated in Figures 1 and 2, originally functioned as one of the sides of a large chest or cenotaph. Its decoration is executed solely by means of the fitting together of thousands of pieces of light and dark woods and bone in a technique known as marquetry which is essentially a mosaic. This technique, as well as the less elaborate one known as intarsia which is an inlaying of wood with wood, was employed by the Romans and later by the Copts.

Not only does the technique have pre-Islamic origins but so do most individual aspects of the tripartite decoration. Hellenistic influence can be seen in the vine scroll on the circular and triangular ivory plaques highlighting the central design as well as in the arcade motif itself and in the various geometric designs which are out of the Roman mosaic repertory. The wing motif serving as the spandrel decoration, with a stylized pomegranate growing from between the paired wings, is purely Sasanian. Thus, we see on one object the blending of the two

principal pre-Islamic influences on Early Islamic art - the naturalistic Greco-Roman tradition on the one hand and the more abstract and stylized Sasanian on the other.

This Egyptian panel provides us with a textbook case of how successfully motifs and designs, from two seemingly diverse traditions, were adapted to the new direction artistic production was beginning to take at this time under Muslim patronage.

This very time-consuming technique which required highly skilled craftsmen to execute properly had a long life in Egypt. That the technique not only continued to be employed there but was further refined is evidenced by the equally rare, and even more delicate, examples made during the period when the Mamluks with their capital in Cairo ruled Egypt and Syria (1250-1517). Those of us who have ever travelled to Cairo or Damascus and seen or acquired in these cities boxes or mirror frames very delicately inlaid not only with wood, ivory and bone but also with mother-of-pearl are well aware of the continued popularity of this technique in the Eastern mediterranean to this day.

The beautifully calligraphed parchment Qur'an section which is illustrated in Figures 3 and 4 begins with verse 142 and continues to verse 253 of Chapter II. Arabic writing existed in the Arabian Peninsula before the dawn of Islam and this particular script was only one of the numerous as well as continuous transformations it was to undergo from very early in the Islamic period. Very well suited to the oblong format seen here as the horizontal letters are exaggerated giving them an "extended" look, this script also characteristically effects a wonderful balance in the placement of the letters on the page.

Of particular interest to us here, however, are the decorative illuminations on the double frontispiece and double end pages of this section each of which is in the form of a *tabula ansata*, so-called because of its relationship to Roman inscription tablets. The *ansa* (handle) of the *tabula ansata* here serves as marginal decoration and is in the shape of a tree. The rectangular part of this decorative form is basically an interlace ornament, the various bands and partitions of which bear motifs reminiscent of some of those of Hellenistic inspiration on the marquetry panel just discussed. The



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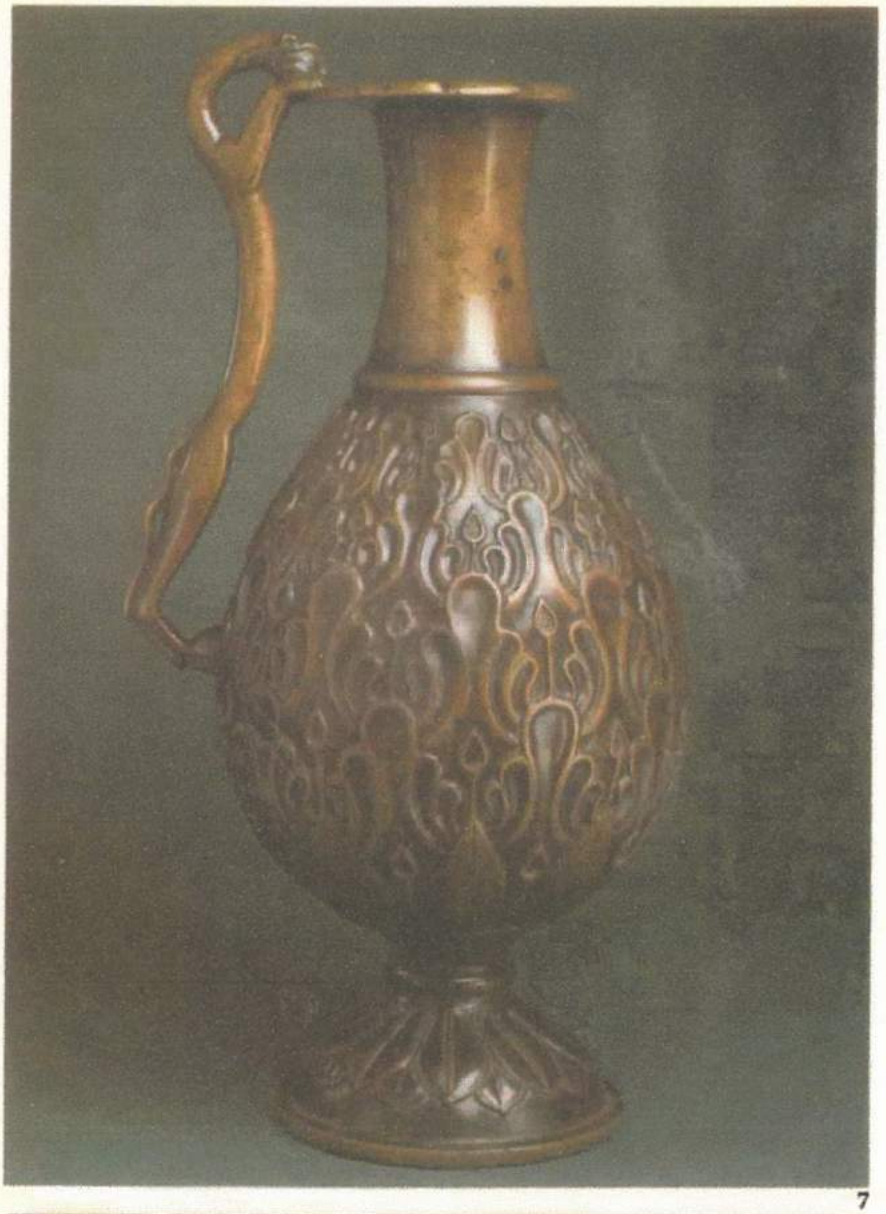
two triangular areas on the illuminated double end pages, one of which is illustrated here, are ornamented with a large palmette flanked on each side by a smaller leaf executed in sepia. These areas can be related in both design element and function to the triangular bone insets decorated with vine scrolls in the central section of the marquetry panel. The highlighting of some other motifs with dots of different colors can be compared to the decorative use of the variously hued tesserae on the same panel. The spatial difference effected by the use of sepia and stronger and more colorful tones may have been inspired by Coptic bookbindings.

Once established, this *tabula ansata* format for Qur'an frontispieces and Surah headings was to remain a favorite until the present day.

The polychrome luster-painted glass beaker shown in Figure 5 illustrates an extremely rare glass technique that is totally Islamic in its origin and which, after having been perfected in this medium, was used to decorate pottery. One of the very few complete luster-painted glass objects extant, it shares with other surviving examples a decorative scheme that consists of a band (or in the case of the single dish, a Roundel) of decoration circumscribed by one or more lines and which is bordered on one side by an Arabic inscription. This inscription has, so far, defied reading.

The decoration on the band of the beaker is an arcade, here consisting of a narrow arch alternating with a broader one. This motif as well as the spandrel accent of a dot within a circle can be seen on the marquetry panel discussed earlier. The motif of a split palmette crowning a column or a guilloche-like trunk also bears close comparison to the columns surmounted by paired wing motifs on the marquetry panel, even down to the rows of dots that flank the vertical elements. Dots of different colors already noted as highlighting the panel and the illuminated leaves of the Qur'an section can also be seen on the beaker.

The technical innovation in glass decoration as represented by this beaker left a permanent imprint on the ceramic industry in general. After having been employed on glass as early as the middle of the eighth century, the technique was transferred to the pottery medium in the kilns of ninth century Baghdad. From this capital the technique passed to Egypt, Syria, Iran, North Africa, Spain, Europe and eventu-



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ally to America thus becoming one of the most important contributions of Islamic pottery production.

Islamic potters have rarely been surpassed in their technical accomplishments and numerous methods that exhibit varying degrees of complexity (one of the most complex being the luster-painted technique mentioned above) were adopted, adapted and created by them to decorate the surface of a ceramic object. Another of these techniques, which grew out of Roman *terra sigillata* and which consists of manually working earthenware into a carved and already fired clay mold, is employed on the dish shown in Figure 6. Illustrative of the earliest type of molded pottery to be found in the Muslim world, its flat-bottomed, rimless shape is based on a metal prototype and its repousse-like decoration as well as glaze color enhance this analogy.

Not only did the Greco-Roman world provide inspiration for the technique employed in executing the decoration but the design itself is an Islamic adaptation of an interlace motif drawn from the earlier tradition. Here, the various elements of the pattern bear abstract motifs - parallel slashes, circles, and dots - which illustrate the Islamic penchant for allover decoration. The type of glaze used to cover the buff earthenware body of this object entered the Islamic repertoire because Muslim potters rediscovered the ancient Egyptian device of adding tin oxide to clear lead glaze. The use of the resulting opaque surface for colored designs is a further development of this rediscovery and an early example of inglaze painting can be seen here in the green, stain-painted in the glaze, on the four inner most knots of the decoration as well as on four of the squares created by the interlace.

What seeds did this type of pottery sow in the Early Islamic Period which were to be reaped for centuries to come? The tentative staining of the glaze seen here was eventually to give rise to the technically perfect underglaze-painted wares for which the Islamic potters are so justly famous. The rediscovery of opacifying lead glaze with tin in addition to enjoying a long life in the Islamic world laid the ground for Italian majolica and the many other European wares that were decorated with designs painted on an opaque white surface.

The majestic cast bronze ewer illustrated in Figures 7 and 8 is an extremely important object from an art historical point of view, in addition to its great aesthetic appeal, because of the innovations incorporated in its decoration.

In order to better appreciate the decoration on the body of this vessel, let us first look again at the principal spandrel decoration of the arcade on the marquetry panel discussed previously which consists of a wing motif with a stylized pomegranate growing from between the paired wings. This particular version of the motif is one that first came into vogue toward the end of the Sasanian period. In an earlier version, the enveloping elements were split palmettes instead of wings.

The artist working under Muslim patronage who made the bronze ewer has, by connecting the tips of the wings or leaves of the Sasanian design, formed a continuous horizontal band, a band that he has repeated in four staggered rows on the vessel which diminish in size towards the top. The end result is a totally abstracted version of the original design that has no beginning and no end and in which the distinction between background and foreground is becoming less obvious. The step to the true beveled style and the arabesque was now a small one indeed.

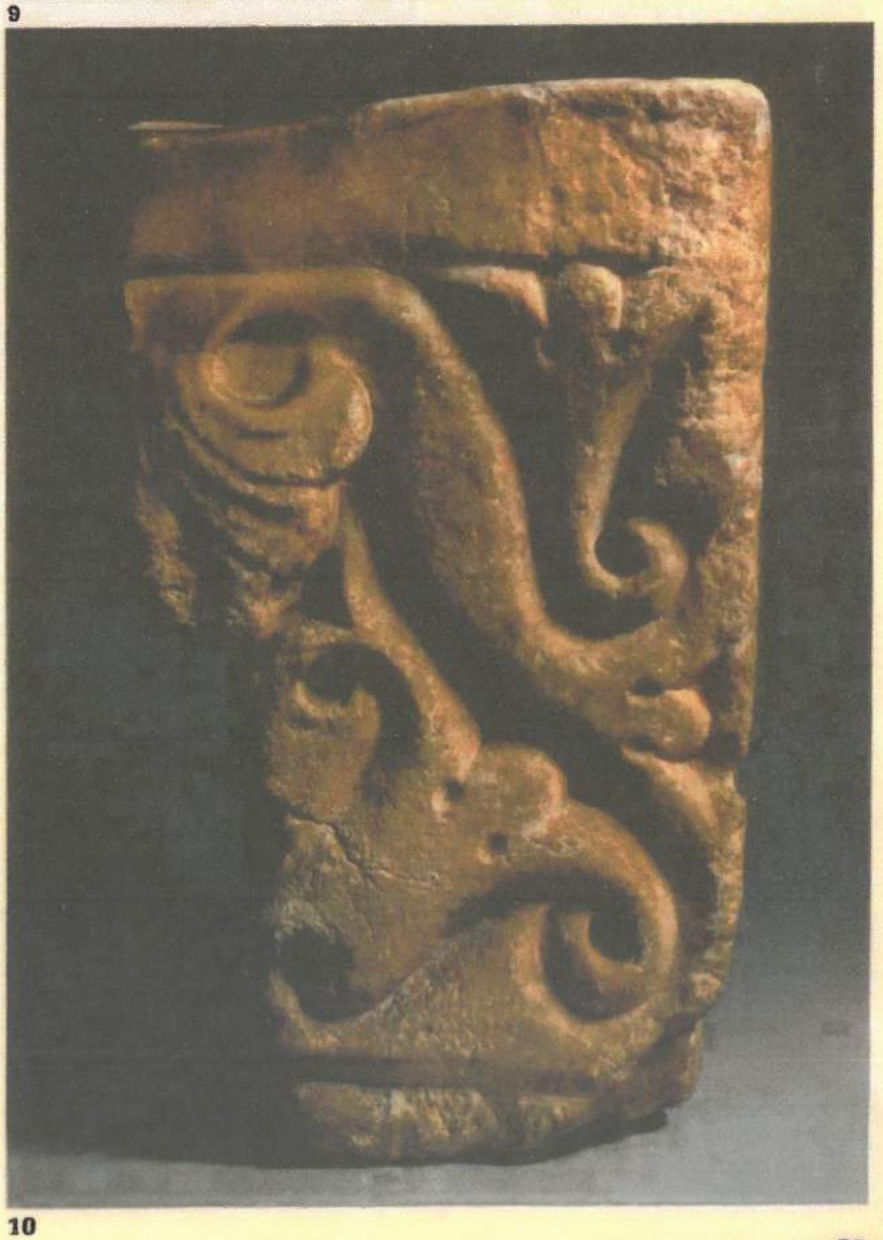
Before taking this step, let us focus for a moment on other elements to be seen here. Another innovation is the tentative use of inlay. Although the copper with which the pomegranates were all originally inlaid is now missing, this ewer presages medieval Islamic bronze and brass objects that were so profusely and exquisitely inlaid with gold, silver and copper.

The motif of a feline drinking from a vase or jar is a minor element of Dionysian iconography. The graceful handle on this vessel in the form of a leopard or panther with its head and paws resting directly on the rim of the ewer is a beautiful example of the use of pre-Islamic iconography in a purely Islamic context. The duck heads encircling the rim of the vessel have Roman prototypes as well. Zoomorphic handles as well as rims terminating in birds' heads were to remain favorite solutions on metal vessels for centuries to come.

The alabaster capital illustrated in Figures 9 and 10 is an early, rare



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and very beautiful example of both the beveled and the arabesque which were alluded to above. The beveled style is so-called because of the slant style of carving it employs. The formalization known as the arabesque is created when a vegetal design consisting of full palmettes and half palmettes becomes an unending continuous pattern in which each leaf grows out of the tip of another.

The source of the style itself is still a matter of scholarly debate although Sasanian art appears to be the most likely source of inspiration. However, the stages through which a particular vegetal design passed until it had totally freed itself from its Hellenistic prototypes and was transformed into an arabesque can be clearly documented.

Rectangular in plan and decorated on only three of its sides, this capital must originally have crowned a pilaster. Its highly stylized decoration covers as much of these three faces as possible. In fact, every inch of available surface appears to be filled, as the customarily negative background has become part of the foreground - a characteristic feature of the beveled style.

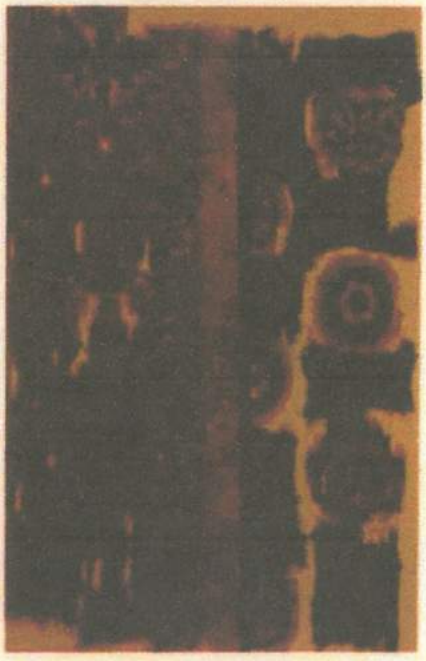
Since this style gave rise to the arabesque, one of the most prevalent motifs in Islamic art in general, these seeds that were sown in the Jazira (between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers) in the late eighth century were reaped throughout the Islamic world for the next one thousand years.

As to the beveled style itself, examples of it can be found in numerous Muslim countries at least until the fourteenth century, attesting to the popularity of this convention not only with the early Muslim art patrons but with their successors as well.

The textile illustrated in Figure 11 belongs to a rare group of tapestry woven woolen textiles which can be associated with one woven in silk containing an embroidered inscription incorporating the name Marwan and the mention of a factory *tiraz* in Ifriqiya (present-day Tunisia). The Marwan mentioned is generally assumed to be the second Umayyad caliph of that name and the last who ruled from Damascus (744-750 A.D.). Thus, the group in question can safely be considered to be products of the middle of the eighth century.

These textiles, which are generally believed to have been made in Iraq,[1] characteristically bear an allover repeat pattern consisting of staggered rows of variously decorated rosettes indicating that their prototypes were woven on a mechanically controlled loom, which by its very nature creates a generally symmetrical and staggered design. Such prototypes can be seen in the patterned textiles represented on the rock reliefs at Taq-i Bustan in western Iran generally attributed to the Sasanian ruler Khusrau II (591-628).

This textile is one of the earliest extant exhibiting a layout that was to enjoy great popularity within the Islamic repertoire for the next one thousand years. Presumably originating after the early Muslim



conquests as it appears not to have been in vogue in the Sasanian or Greco-Roman worlds, this layout consists of a series of parallel bands each of which often – as in the present example – not only bears a different design but a different ground color as well.[2]

What do these seven masterpieces, each in a different medium, tell us about the most complex and challenging period in the history of Islamic art? Although the answer to this question is too complicated to deal with here, this brief glimpse is a very clear indication that a thorough study of the art of this period is essential to the understanding and comprehension of most later artistic production in the Islamic world. By looking closely even at these few objects, we can learn what was immediately acceptable to the new Muslim patrons of the arts - how the Greco-Roman and Sasanian elements that were present in the various areas which came under Muslim domination and those elements which the Arabs themselves contributed from their own pre-Islamic culture were accumulated, sorted and redistributed in a new, Islamic way. Thus new combinations of old forms and techniques were created which were to become inherent characteristics of Islamic art in general. Indeed, an exhaustive study of the subject will show that the majority of the seeds to be reaped during the next one thousand years were sown at this time and no matter how the resulting plants were grafted and trained in the centuries to come, their origins in this formative period are obvious.

Figures 1 and 2: *Rectangular panel; Wood, inlaid with ivory and wood; Egypt, VIII - IX century A.D.; Purchase, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1937 37.103*
Figures 3 and 4: *Leaves from a Qur'an section; Ink, colors and gold on parchment; Egypt(?), IX century A.D.; Gift of Philip Hofer, 1937 37.142*
Figure 5: *Vessel; Glass, free-blown and luster-painted; Egypt or Iraq, VIII - IX century A.D.; Purchase, Rogers Fund and Gifts of Richard S. Perkins; Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wrightsman, Mr. and Mrs. Louis E. Seley, Walter D. Binger, Margaret Mushekian, Mrs. Francis E. Keally, Hess Foundation, Mehdi Mahboubian and Mr. and Mrs. Bruce J. Westcott, 1974 1974.74.*
Figure 6: *Dish; Earthenware, molded and glazed; Iraq, IX century A.D.; Rogers Fund, 1953 53.110.*
Figures 7 and 8: *Ewer; Bronze, chased and originally inlaid; Northern Syria or Iraq (the Jazira), VII-VIII century A.; Fletcher Fund, 1947 47.100.90*
Figures 9 and 10: *Capital; Carved alabaster; Northern Syria or Iraq (the Jazira), late VIII - early IX century A.D.; Purchase, Samuel D. Lee Fund, 1936 36.68.1*
Figure 11: *Textile fragment; Wool, tapestry weave; Iraq, mid-VIII century A.D.; Rogers Fund, 1950 50.83.*

1. Miss Nobuko Kanitani of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, believes that the inscription was probably added in Egypt or North Africa as opposed to where it was woven. To support this claim she cites the quality of the stitch itself as well as the fact that in contrast to the expertise exhibited in weaving the principal pattern the inscription was first written in ink and then embroidered.
2. The author would like to thank Miss Kajitani for drawing her attention to the importnce of parallel bands in the layout of Islamic textiles in general. ■

ISLAMIC ART IN THE FREER GALLERY

Esin Atil

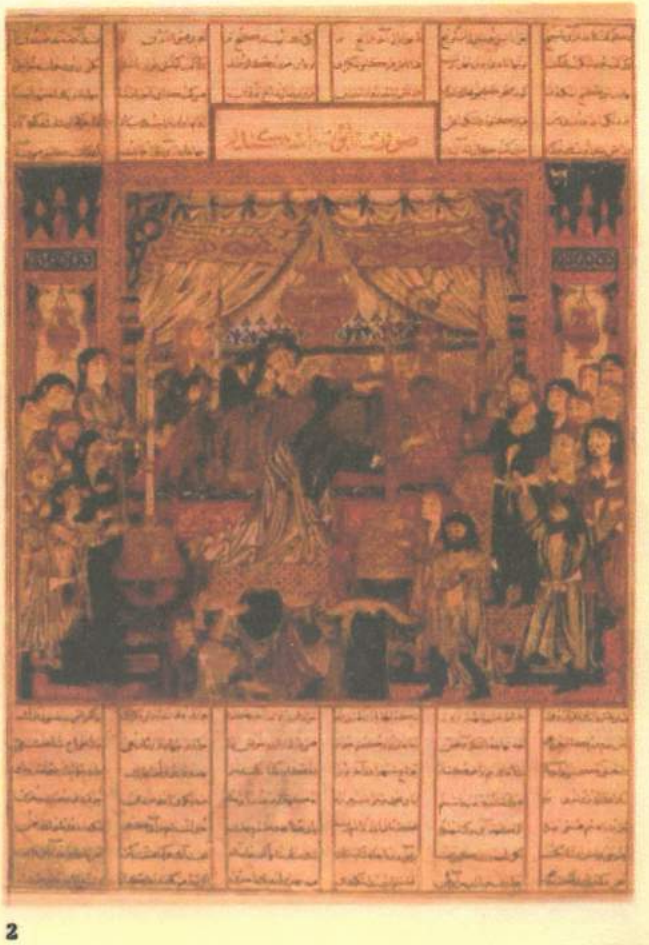
The Freer Gallery of Art was conceived as a museum as well as a center for research by its founder, Charles Lang Freer (1854-1919), a Detroit industrialist who gave his collection of Asian art, the building that houses it, and an endowment fund to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. When the collection was received in 1920, it contained over fifteen thousand items (each folio in a manuscript counted separately) representing the civilization of China, Japan, Korea, India, central Islamic lands, and Egypt. Also included was a selection of contemporary American paintings and a large group of Whistler's works together with his famous Peacock Room. Freer's deed of gift restricted additions to the American holdings but provided for the growth of the Asian sections, to which ten thousand more items were added in the ensuing years. One third of the present collection is devoted to the arts of India and western Asia, representing Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, pre-Islamic, and Islamic traditions.

The artistic traditions of the Islamic world are represented by objects produced in the countries extending from India to Egypt between the eighth and eighteenth centuries. They include illustrated and illuminated manuscripts, metalwork, ceramics, and glass, as well as a few carved stone, rock crystal, and jade pieces. Supplementing them is a study collection consisting mostly of pottery shards. In addition, there are the archives of Ernst Herzfeld (1879-1948) and Myron B. Smith (1897-1970) with several thousand notebooks, photographs, slides, drawings, and plans of pre-Islamic and Islamic sites.

As with any American museum established in this century, its holdings acquired through purchases and donations, the Freer collection has a number of gaps. Some were unavoidable because of the unavailability of high-quality objects or funds, while others — such as textiles, rugs, and nineteenth-twentieth-century arts — are intentional, considered beyond the scope of the museum. These omissions, however, are more than compensated for by unique examples from the forma-



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tive years and the classical period of Islam as well as by works representing the high court traditions of the Ottomans, Safavids, and Mughals.

Among the highlights of the arts of the book are early parchment Korans dating from the eighth and ninth centuries, exquisitely illuminated and transcribed in angular scripts. Stylistic developments of calligraphy and illumination in the later periods are also well represented. An early appearance of nastaliq, the most elegant of all cursive scripts whose invention has been attributed to Mir Ali of Tabriz, is found in a rare copy of the *Divan* of Sultan Ahmad Jalair produced at the turn of the fifteenth century. This volume is decorated with delicatedly tinted marginal drawings that present sophisticated images of esoteric and mystic concepts. Works of such esteemed sixteenth-century master calligraphers as Mir Ali of Herat, Shah Mahmud Nishapuri, and Sultan Muhammad Nur appear either on independent folios once a part of imperial albums or in anthologies and collections of poems written by Hafiz, Hatifi, Arifi, Nizami, and Jami, the great Persian lyricists.

The Freer Gallery's collection of manuscript illustrations and album paintings is particularly extensive, with examples from all major periods, centers, and styles. Representing the Baghdad school in the classical period are seven illustrated folios from the 1224 Arabic copy of the *Materia Medica* by Dioscorides. The paintings in this work are beyond mere illustrations of the plants described in the text but are transformed into genre scenes, revealing the artist's interest in pictorial narration (pl.1).

Another set of six folios from the so-called Demotte *Shahnama* reflects the monumental style of Ilkhanid painting (pl.2). Thought to have been produced in the 1330s in Tabriz, the illustrations of this volume show an unusual interpretation of themes and stress the psychological interactions of the protagonists.

The most outstanding paintings are those produced in the sixteenth century, the golden age of imperial manuscripts sponsored in Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal courts. They are either bound into volumes of literary and historical works or were made as single sheets to be incorporated into albums. The unique portrait of a painter (pl. 3), executed in the 1480's in the Istanbul court atelier of Sultan Mehmed II, reflects a synthesis of European and Islamic traditions. Other works include an *Anthology* dated 1524 and adorned with a circular frontispiece signed by Behzad, the renowned artist of Herat; the *Haft Avrang* of Jami, commissioned by the Safavid prince Ibrahim Mirza and produced in Mashhad, Qazvin and Herat between 1556 and 1565; and album paintings and drawings from the court of the Mughal ruler Jahangir, some signed by the master Abu'l-Hasan, called by his patron Nadir al-Zaman, or the Wonder of the Age.

The collection of metalwork is relatively small but it includes a number of key pieces that help to determine the evolution of regional styles, themes, and techniques. The Freer pen box decorated with human-headed inscriptions (pl. 4), made in 1210 by Shazi for Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar, the governor of Khorasan, is one of the earliest dated pieces of Islamic metalwork prior to the Mongol invasion.

The art of the metalworker, which reached its high moment of technical and aesthetic perfection in Egypt and Syria during the Ayyubid period, is represented by several masterpieces, including a ewer made in 1232 by Qasim ibn Ali for Shihab al-Din, the regent of the sultan of Aleppo; a basin commissioned by Sultan Najm al-



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Selected list of catalogues on Islamic art published by the Freer Gallery:

1. Atıl, Esin. *Exhibition of 2500 Years of Persian Art*, 1971.
2. Atıl, Esin. *Ceramics from the World of Islam*, 1973.
3. Atıl, Esin. *Turkish Art of the Ottoman Period*, 1973.
4. Atıl, Esin. *Art of the Arab World*, 1975
5. Atıl, Esin. *The Brush of the Masters: Drawings from Iran and India*, 1978.
6. Atıl, Esin. *Islamic Metalwork in the Freer Gallery of Art*, 1985.
7. Beach, Milo C. *The Imperial Image: Paintings for the Mughal Court*, 1981.
8. Murray, Julia. *A Decade of Discovery: Selected Acquisitions 1970-1980*, 1979.

1. *Physician and Attendant. From the Materia Medica of Dioscorides. Copied by Abdallah ibn al-Fadl. Iraq, dated 1224. (32.20)*
2. *Bier of Iskandar. From the Shahnama of Firdausi. Iran, circa 1330. (38.3)*
3. *Portrait of a Painter. Turkey, circa 1480. (32.28)*
4. *Brass Pen Box Inlaid with Silver and Copper. Made by Shazi for Majd al-Mulk al-Muzaffar. Afghanistan, dated 1210. (36.7)*
5. *Brass Canteen Inlaid with Silver. Syria, mid-13th century. (41.10)*
6. *Slip-painted Bowl. Iran, 10th century. (57.24)*
7. *Luster-painted Plate. Made by Sayyid Shams al-Din al-Hasani. Iran, dated 1210. (41.11)*

Din Ayyub around the 1240s, depicting polo players and scenes from the life of Christ; and a unique oversize canteen (pl. 5) made for an anonymous patron, also decorated with Christian themes. The spectacular canteen combines a variety of scripts, including fully animated inscriptions with arms, torsos, and legs of human figures making up parts of letters. The combination of Christian and Islamic iconography found on the basin and canteen reflects the social and cultural diversity of the age and provides insight into the political developments of the region.

Other important metal pieces include a pair of gold bracelets made in Syria and Iran in the eleventh and twelfth centuries; a rare early Ottoman candlestick; and a magnificent knife made from a meteorite for Jahangir in the year 1620.

As in the other areas of Islamic art, the Freer Gallery's holdings of pottery are fairly comprehensive, and are highlighted by a number of important pieces that identify stylistic developments. Among the most celebrated examples is a slip-painted Samanid bowl (pl. 6), its walls inscribed with the words "it is said that he who is content with his own opinion runs into danger; blessing to the owner." It exemplifies a group of epigraphic pottery produced in Khorasan and Transoxiana during the tenth and eleventh centuries, decorated with Arabic proverbs and popular sayings that stress virtuous behaviour.

Other significant groups include Abbasid, Fatimid, and Ayyubid lusterwares of Iraq, Syria, and Egypt as well as those produced during the Seljuk period in Iran. The famous luster plate (pl. 7), made in 1210 by Shams al-Din and attributed to Kashan, is among the most well-known of all the Freer pieces. The artist's metaphoric use of mystic symbols — a horse with its groom sleeping at the edge of a pond full of fish and a naked female — indicates the existence of a highly intellectual patronage profoundly involved with sufism.

The decoration of Seljuk pottery reflects an overwhelming interest in figural representation, which was predominantly employed on high-quality minai, or overglaze-painted wares, which were probably produced for the court and upper classes. The Freer Gallery owns a number of such examples, including a beaker decorated with the earliest representation of an episode from Firdausi's *Shahnama*; a large bowl commemorating the conquest of a fortress by a group of warriors, whose names are inscribed over their heads; and a lobed bowl depicting a bride riding in a howdah carried on an elephant, made for Amir Abu Nasir Kirmanshah. Representing the stylistic and technical features of later Islamic pottery are Iznik wares decorated with a profusion of floral motifs, and Iranian blue-and-whites and celadons inspired by Chinese porcelains.

The group of Mamluk glass dating from the fourteenth century is exceptional and ranges from a tiny perfume bottle adorned with musicians to a large vase, bottle, and bowl made for Rasulid sultans of Yemen. The Freer Gallery also owns one of the rare glass mosque lamps commissioned by Sultan Hasan for his famous madrasa-mausoleum complex in Cairo.

The holdings of Islamic art in the Freer Gallery demonstrate that a collection does not have to be large and all-embracing to be able to represent the cultural history of a civilization. By concentrating on select pieces that highlight the production of certain regions and periods, the development of the artistic traditions of the world of Islam can be thoroughly studied and presented to the public.■



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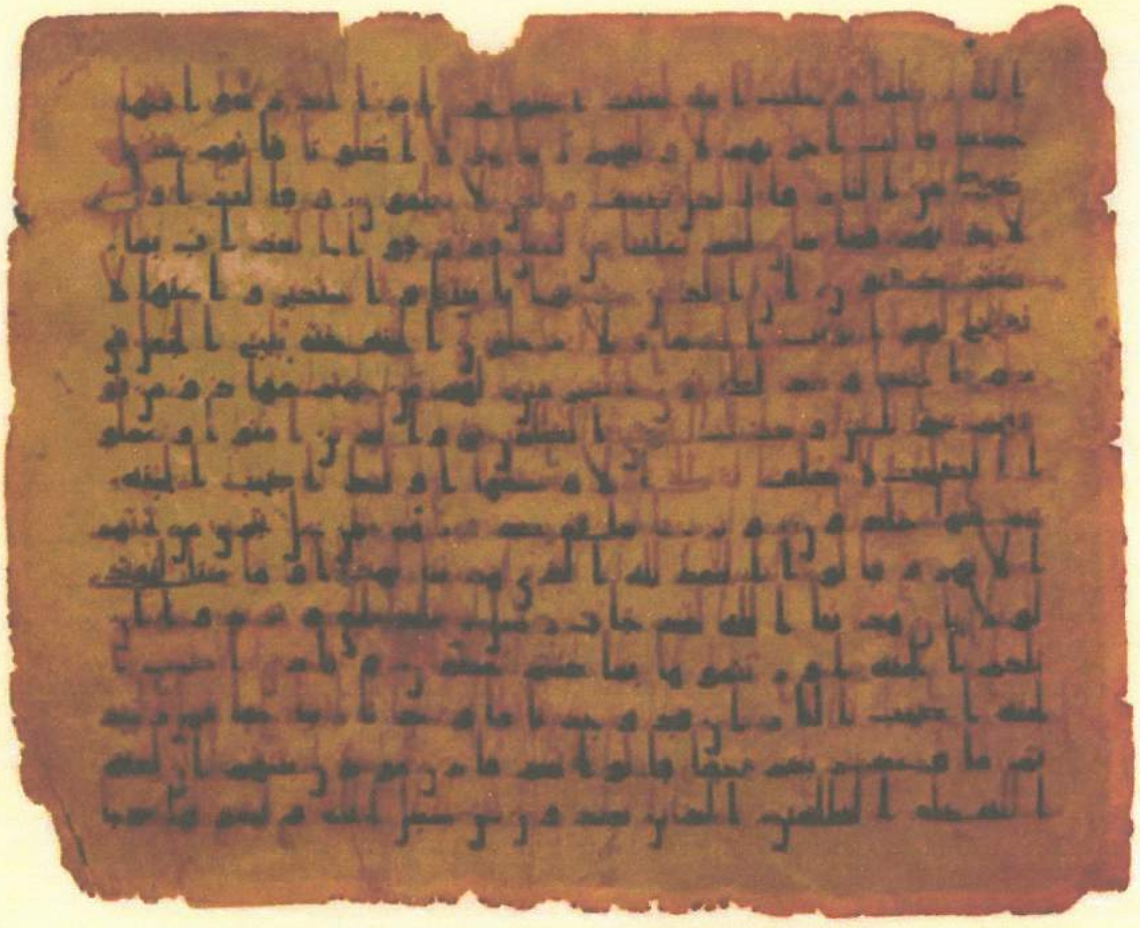
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ISLAMIC ART FROM THE MADINA COLLECTION

Linda Komaroff

It is by now well known that New York City's Metropolitan Museum of art houses the largest public collection of Islamic art in the United States, however, vey few individuals are aware that New York is also the home of America's largest and most comprehensive private collection of Islamic art, namely the Madina Collection.

The exhibition *Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks*, which circulated among several American museums in 1981-82, afforded the public its first opportunity to see a number of objects from the Madina Collection. In fact, when this exhibition was shown in New York at the Metropolitan Museum, thirty-five examples of Mamluk art from the Madina Collection were included, while only the Metropolitan's own collection and that of the Islamic Museum, Cairo, were better represented. No doubt many cognoscentes were taken by surprise by the quality and quantity of the Madina Collection's contribution to the Mamluk show in New York, which included examples of metalwork, glass, textiles, calligraphy, woodwork, stonecarving, and, perhaps, most significantly, a number of exceptional ceramic vessels that will help to rewrite the history of Mamluk pottery.

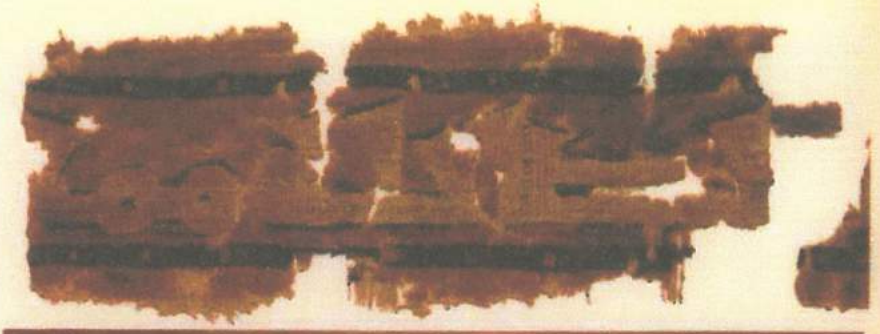
Another travelling exhibition, this time presenting Ottoman art - *Tulips, Arabesques and Turbans*, and shown at New York University's Grey Gallery, was augmented by ceramics, stone, wood and metal work from the Madina Collection. Once again, the quality and relative rarity of the Ottoman holdings from the Madina Collection, which included in the category of metalwork the earliest dated example of the uniquely Ottoman tulip candlestick, may have come as

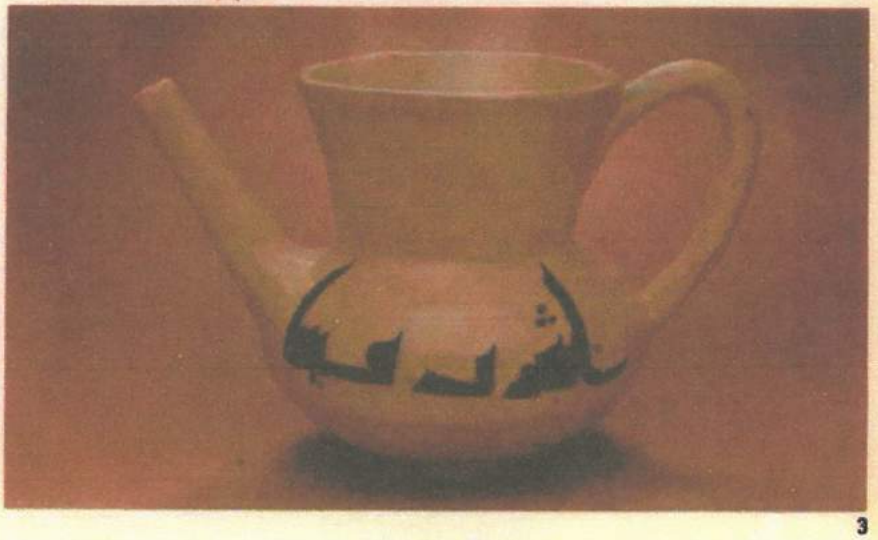
something of a revelation to many of those who are concerned with Islamic art.

No doubt, it will create a slight shock throughout the Islamic art world, as it did for this writer, to finally learn that the Madina Collection is comprised of over one thousand objects that depict nearly every aspect of Islamic art and which encompass a wide geographical and chronological expanse, ranging from Umayyad Syria to Mughal India. Ceramics, glass, textiles, calligraphy and metalwork of the early Islamic, Ayyubid and Mamluk periods are especially well-represented. The Madina Collection, which was gradually acquired over the past decade, also encompasses the world's largest single collection of Islamic unglazed pottery. While it is impossible in so short a space to give a complete impression of a collection that is thus far almost entirely unknown to the general public and which will certainly be of special interest to those who study or else collect Islamic art, I would like to introduce the Madina Collection through several objects that demonstrate the caliber and scope of this collection.

Among the earliest examples in the collection is a parchment Qur'an page, **Fig.1.** Here, the strong vertical emphasis of the calligraphy, in which the letters frequently touch those of the line above and below, the pronounced separation of the *alif-lam*, as in the definite article "al-", as well as the reversed and extended final *ya'*, are all characteristic of the so-called "Hijazi" script. Based upon the recently discovered cache of Qur'ans from the Great Mosque in Sanaa, North Yemen, the "Hijazi" script, which is a precursor of Kufic, was used for the earliest extant Qur'ans. By comparison with certain of the Sanaa Qur'ans, the Madina Qur'an page is likewise datable to the first century *hijra*, that is, the 7th/8th century A.D.

Slightly later in date is an Egyptian tapestry woven textile **Fig.2.** Tapestry-weaving had a long, unbroken history in Egypt prior to the Islamic conquest in 641 A.D., so that the new Muslim rulers inherited a well-established textile industry, which they gradually adapted to their own needs and to the precepts of Islam. One of the most important changes was the introduction of Arabic inscriptions or *tiraz*, as is illustrated by this detail from the Madina tapestry,

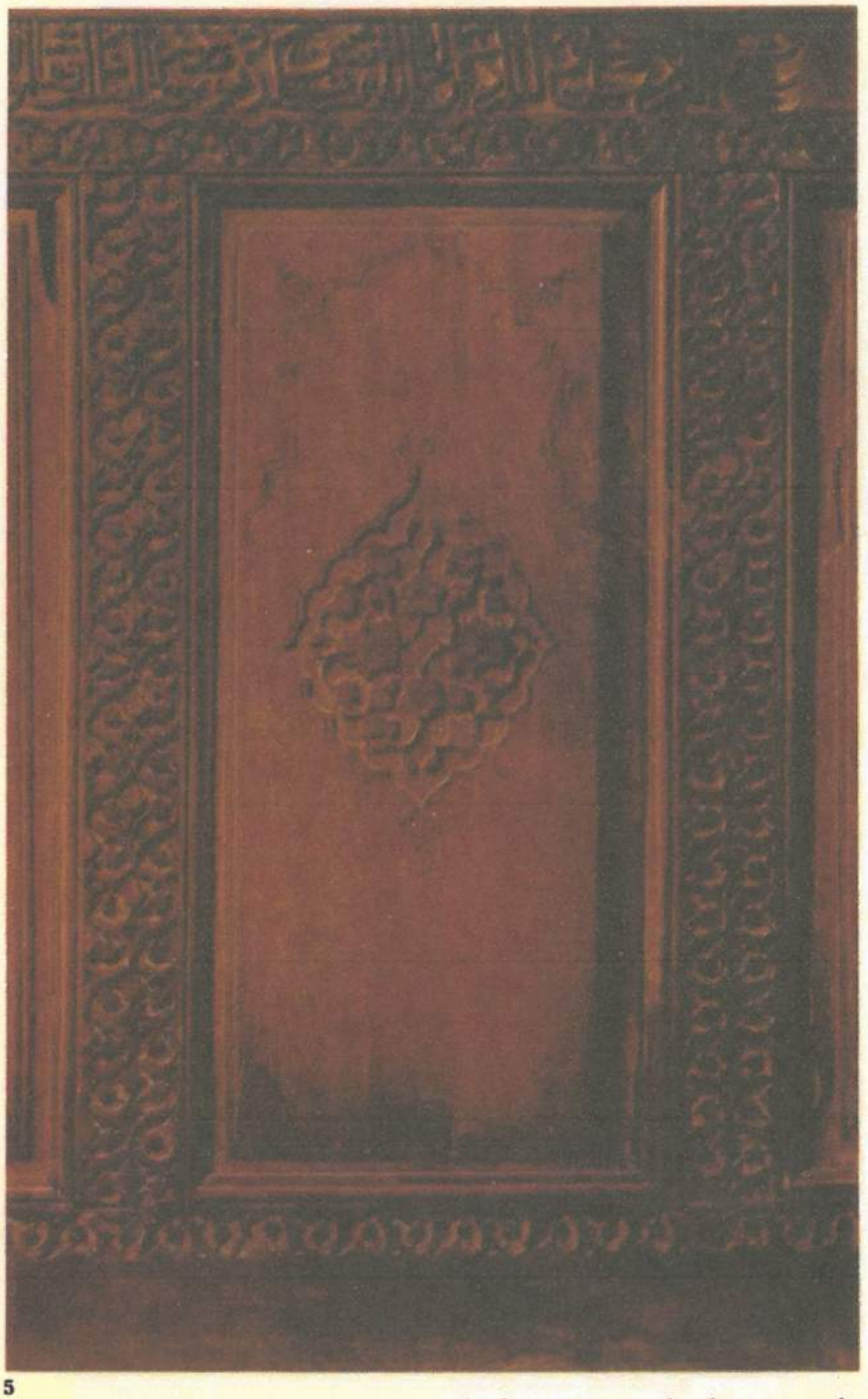




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Fig. 1: *Page from a Qur'an (recto, Surah 7,38-45); Ink on parchment; Hijaz, 7th/8th century A.D.; Ca47*
Fig. 2: *Textile; Wool and linen, tapestry woven; warps linen, wefts wool and linen; Egypt, second half 9th century A.D.; T8*
Fig. 3.: *Ewer; Earthenware, white engobe, slip-painted, incised and glazed Iran or Transoxiana, Nishapur or Samarqand, 10th century A.D.; C37*
Fig. 4: *Candlestick; Brass, inlaid with silver and copper; Northern Iraq, first half 13th century A.D.; M60.*
Fig. 5: *Front or Back of a Cenotaph; Wood, carved; Turkey, 1570 A.D. - 978 A.H.; W10.*

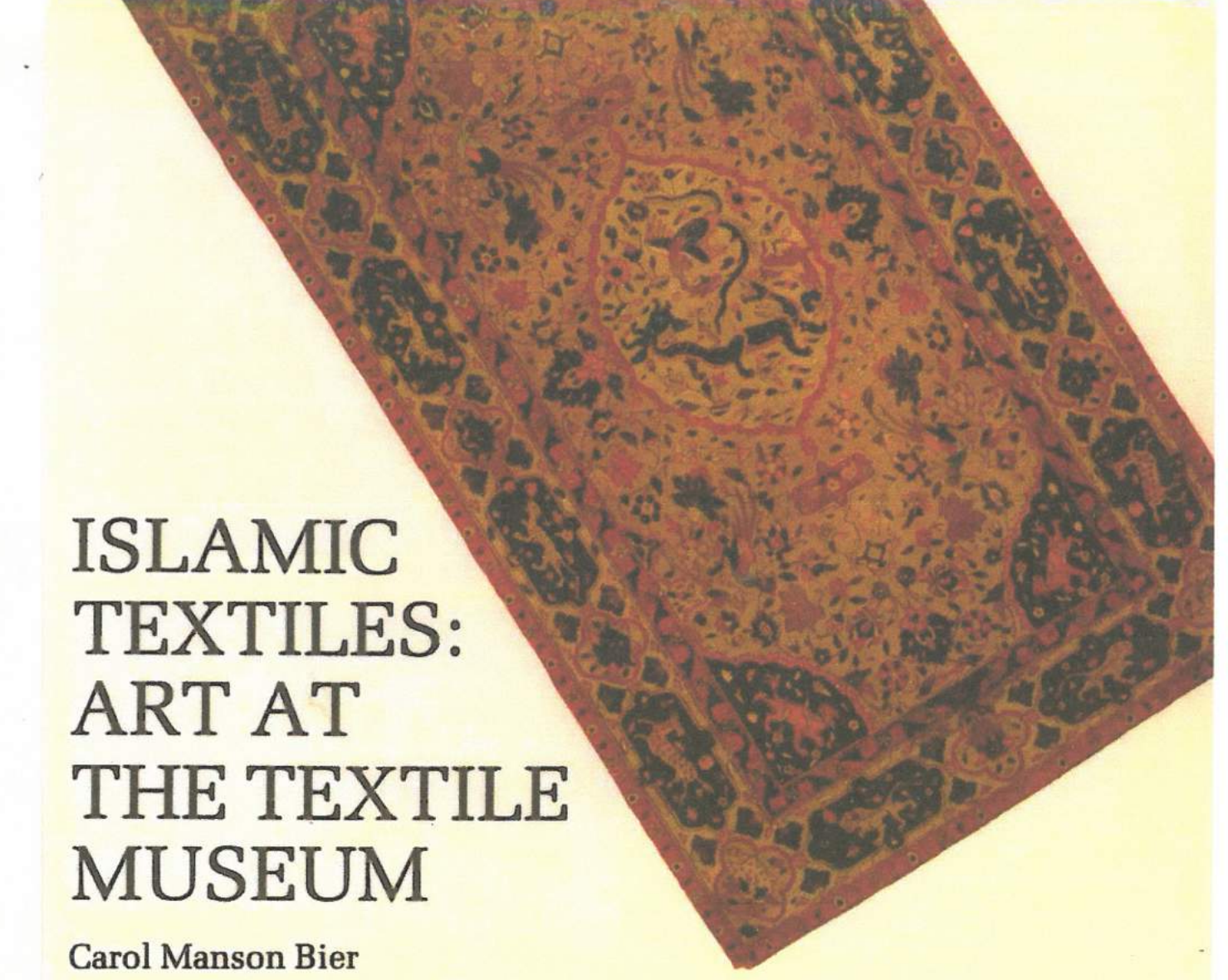
which is among the largest such extant examples attributable to the Tulunid period [868-905 A.D.].[1]

Arabic calligraphy was similarly used to decorate objects produced within the Iranian world, such as a rare type of spouted vessel from 10th century Samarqand or Nishapur, whose bold, rhythmic Kufic inscription is perfectly suited to the vessel's contours **Fig.3.** Not only does this inscription further enhance the beautiful proportions of the vessel, but it also calls attention to the ewer's function. "Drink from it/May it be to your health".

The technique of inlaying bronze or brass with precious metals as practiced by the Islamic metalworker in the 12th and 13th century provides some of the finest examples known to Islamic art. One especially influential center of inlaid metalwork is believed to have been located in northern Iraq, during the first half of the 13th century. On account of its particular style, as well as its technique, a silver and copper inlaid brass candlestick in the Madina Collection can be included among the handful of objects that are attributed to this metalwork center **F4.** The Arabic inscriptions from the shoulder and base of the candlestick offer a series of blessings to the owner, while the figural medallions depict pairs of banqueters and perhaps musicians.

Islamic woodwork is another medium that demonstrates a high level of artistic and technical accomplishment. Very often this woodwork shares a common stylistic vocabulary with other decorative arts, as is the case with the Madina Collection's Ottoman carved wood panel, whose predominantly floral and leaf ornament compares closely with that of contemporary Ottoman ceramics, metalwork and especially leather bookbindings **Fig.5.** The Madina panel is either the front or back of a cenotaph of which the other three sides are preserved in the Museum fur Islamische Kunst, Berlin. According to the *thulth* inscriptions from the Berlin segments, this is the cenotaph of Sayyid Ibrahim who died in Safar 978 A.H./July 1570 A.D.

If this very brief glimpse of the Madina Collection of Islamic art only serves to whet the appetite, then it has accomplished one of its goals, which is to bring this collection to the attention of a wider audience. Just as the Madina Collection has helped to lay a new foundation for the study of Mamluk ceramics, it may also lead the way to a better understanding of other little known or unexplored areas of Islamic art. The collection should also prove to be an invaluable source for the ongoing reevaluation of the formative periods of this art. Therefore, it is very much hoped that the Madina Collection will someday be made entirely accessible to scholars and ultimately to the general public, as the collection gives an excellent impression of both the finest and best known examples of Islamic art, as well as the less appreciated, but equally significant products of this art and culture. ■



ISLAMIC TEXTILES: ART AT THE TEXTILE MUSEUM

Carol Manson Bier

To recognize the importance of historic Islamic textiles is to recognize the products of the major industry of the preindustrial world. Textiles were the principal industry of the Islamic world at a time when Europe was just beginning to develop. Bukhara, Cairo, Damascus, Mosul, Baghdad, Cordoba, and Calcutta, all gained renown for their celebrated loom products. From their heights, such words as "cotton," "damask," "muslin," and "calico," found their way into the English language. And the significance of textiles in the Islamic world continued for many centuries, its economic role only supplanted recently with the discovery of applications internationally for the uses of oil. Over the centuries, and on into recent times, textiles were the economic sustenance, the basis for economic development, and the means of economic reform.

Silks from Persian looms were copied in the Byzantine West and as far east as Japan by the 8th century A.D. The relics of saints in European church treasuries are wrapped in what we now recognize as Islamic silks. And lengths of fabrics from Islamic lands have been found in Denmark, Sweden, and other countries far to the noth. Persian carpets, from the time of the Safavids,[1] came to be treasured by the royalty of Europe, and are illustrated in the paintings of Vermeer and Jan Steen. Turkish carpets [2]were exported commercially in the 15th and 16th centuries, and appear as a regular feature in Dutch genre painting. And Mamluk carpets[3] were collected by the Medici.

The Textile Museum's holdings of Islamic textiles comprise one of the largest and most extensive collections in the Western world. Consisting largely of historic materials, this most significant component of The Textile Museum's Eastern Hemisphere collections contains approximately 5000 textiles, and over 1000 rugs. All natural fibers, including linen, wool, cotton and silk, are represented in a wide variety of fabric structures that inherit from various weaving and decorative techniques. Embroidery, tapestry, applique, and accessories, are included in the collections, as well as compound structures of pattern-woven fabrics.[4,5,6] The importance of these materials, recognized internationally, derives from the fact that textiles were major items of trade and prestige, receiving royal patronage and evincing the finest artistic achievement. The signal importance of this collection is emphasized all the more by the rarity of surviving specimens in disproportion to the wide-ranging use of textiles in all levels of society throughout Islamic history.

Islamic holdings at The Textile Museum principally represent the urban traditions of fine fabrics frequently produced by and for the court. Textile arts of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal imperial courts are particularly well rep-

resented.

But an appreciation of historic textiles, and their cultural value, goes beyond their significance for the court and princely classes. For the medieval Islamic world, textiles represent not only the urban tradition of fine fabrics produced by and for the court, sometimes even inscribed with official protocol, and serving ceremonial or ritual functions. They were also the domain par excellence of the mercantile classes, of producers and merchants, whose consumers were at all levels of society. And beyond that, they were a basis for the nomadic existence of tribes whose livelihood derived almost exclusively from animal husbandry and the grazing of herds of sheep and goat, prime source of renewable resources for the production of woolen garments, rugs,[7] tent walls and furnishings.

Inscribed *tiraz* and early Islamic textiles form important components of the collection: pre-Islamic Coptic materials from Egypt are a significant segment.[8] The Textile Museum also holds many fine examples of the oldest surviving pile carpets in the world, produced in Mamluk Egypt (15th-16th centuries) and Nasrid Spain (15th century).[9]

While many of the court-related materials came to the museum from the collection of George Hewitt Myers, much has been acquired since his death in 1957. More recent acquisitions have focused on tribal and ethnographic materials produced by nomads and villagers from throughout the Islamic world. These fabrics originally were designed to serve practical needs for protection, warmth, and interior furnishings. Portable architecture in the form of tents, to serve nomads and courtiers alike, the elements of tent interiors are also included.

Products from looms throughout the Islamic world and all periods of history are represented in the collections: Spain (including Mudejar materials of the 15th and 16th century), Morocco and North Africa, Sahelian Africa, Egypt, The Yemen, Saudi Arbia, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, USSR (primarily from the Caucasus and Central Asia), Afghanistan, Pakistan[10], India, western China, Malaysia and Indonesia.

That this corpus of Islamic materials forms such a significant portion of the museum's holdings, actually reflects the particular importance of textiles in the premodern



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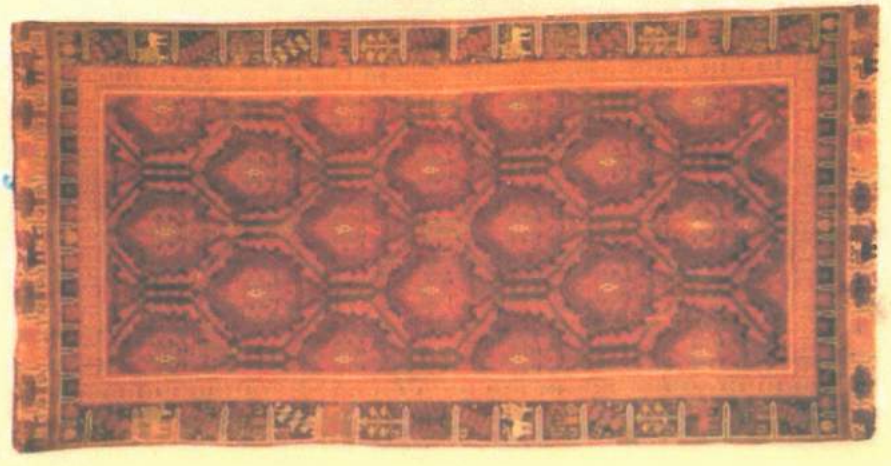


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societies of these areas of the world. The geography and climate of Islamic regions, stretching from Morocco to India across the middle latitudes of the northern hemisphere, provides a physical setting well suited to the production of the four major natural textile fibers, thereby encouraging the development of local weaving arts and industries. Textiles came to fill a significant role in the material culture of these regions, and reached the most advanced stages of man's technical achievement.

The Textile Museum, a private non-profit institution, serves as a repository for the preservation and permanent documentation of man's creative achievements in the textile arts. The museum today possesses more than 10,000 textiles and 1,000 rugs from both Eastern and Western Hemispheres, and has long been recognized as an international center for exhibitions, scholarly research, and the conservation of rugs and textiles. Carrying on a grand tradition set forth by its founder George Hewitt Myers in 1925, the museum has taken on new directions through the years in response to an active international and local membership. Through exhibitions, publications and interpretive programs, the museum not only encourages appreciation of the beauty and significance of textiles, but also offers fresh insights into their historical and cultural contexts. Its dedicated professional staff takes seriously, in its service to the public, a dual mandate of preservation and presentation.

Islamic materials at The Textile Museum represent an important asset as primary source material for research as well as for exhibition. On a regular basis, the Textile Museum has mounted temporary exhibitions of signal importance, both to highlight its own collections, and to bring to public attention private collections of aesthetic beauty and cultural significance. With gallery tours, lectures and workshops, youth programs and tours for school groups, membership newsletters, and catalog publications, these materials are presented to wider public audiences. Major catalogs of key areas of the collection, with full technical analyses, have been published, but much remains to be studied.

Plate 1: *Silk floor covering, Iran, Safavid period, 17th century A.D. Perhaps the*



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most extraordinary surviving flatwoven floor covering of Safavid Iran, this example incorporates traditional elements in its design and layout, which reflect the development of both Persian and farther eastern arts. The dragon and phoenix in combat, seen in the central medallion, draw ultimately from Chinese prototypes. They are here combined with other fantastic beasts and mythical creatures as well as elaborate floral blossoms and leaf scrolls. Like the medallion layout with corner quarter medallions, and main border with cartouches, these design elements follow formats familiar in both contemporary wool pile carpets and gilded leather book cover.

Plate 2: Wool carpet ("Holbein"), Turkey, Ottoman period, 16th century A.D. An infinitely repeating design of geometric interlace in the central field is interrupted by an arbitrary finite enclosing border. This kind of carpet was often depicted in the paintings of Dutch master Hans Holbein, whose name is now used to refer to carpets with similar colors and pattern, which were exported from Turkey to Holland in the 15th and 16th centuries.

Plate 3: Wool carpet, Egypt, Mamluk period, 15th-16th century A.D. Collected by the Medicis in the 16th century, Mamluk carpets were an integral component of interior decor in the Pitti Palace, Florence. The Textile Museum's collection of Mamluk carpets, acquired by the Museum's founder George Hewitt Myers, was considered to be by the 1930's one of the finest collections in the world. Mamluk carpets from the Museum's collections were published in a catalogue raisonee in 1957, Cairene Carpets and Others Technically Related, by Ernst Kuhnel and Louisa Bellinger, specialists respectively in Islamic art and technical analysis of carpets and textiles.

Plate 4: Silk embroidered cover (detail), Spain, Nasrid period, late 15th century A.D. The embroidered pattern of interlace with octagons and crosses reflects the strong influence of Turkish carpet patterns on the decorative arts of Nasrid Spain. But the bright colors are characteristic of textiles woven in Spain at this time, and the design is achieved by means of a type of cross-stitch embroidery on a linen fabric ground. Similar influences of design are seen in Spanish carpets of the 15th century. Note the similarity of detail to the pattern of the "Holbein" carpet.

Plate 5: Robe, Iran, Safavid period, 18th century. Assembled from several textiles of different dates and decorative techniques, this robe must have once been among the sumptuous garments worn by a courtier of the late Safavid court. The blue silk with woven floral design was stamped with a diagonal lattice pattern that affected a play of light on the fabric.

Plate 6: Silk textile (detail), Turkey (Istanbul), Ottoman period, 16th century A.D. A full loom width, this textile fragment was designed according to imperial standards for use either in the construction of garments, or for interior furnishings. Its ogival patterning with floral and interlace ornament relates its design to other Ottoman works of art of the 16th century.

Plate 7: Wool carpet, Iran or Central Asia, Turkmen tribes, 18th-19th century A.D. Turkmen women wove carpets of wool, readily available from their flocks of sheep and goat. Using natural dyestuffs such as indigo and madder, they achieved varying colors, which were used to complement overall repeat patterns of traditional guls, highly stylized floral designs that were passed on from mother to daughter, generation to generation.

Plate 8: Wool and linen tapestry roundel, Egypt, Late Roman (Coptic) period, 6th century A.D. In addition to important holdings of Islamic materials from nearly all corners of the Muslim world, and all periods, The Textile Museum also has an extensive collection of pre-Islamic textiles from Egypt and eastern Mediterranean lands. These are significant, not only for their rarity (they survived in the aridity of gravesites in Egypt), but also for the elements of design and construction which so influenced the development of textile arts in the early Islamic world.

Plate 9: Wool carpet, Spain, Nasrid period, 15th century A.D. Following a traditional format of central oblong field with surrounding borders, and relying upon geometric interlace patterns derived from either contemporary Gothic textiles, or earlier rugs from central Islamic lands, Spanish carpets often also show an additional border of indigenous motifs evolved from local Iberian art. Spanish carpets are further distinguished by a particular knot structure using only a single warp.

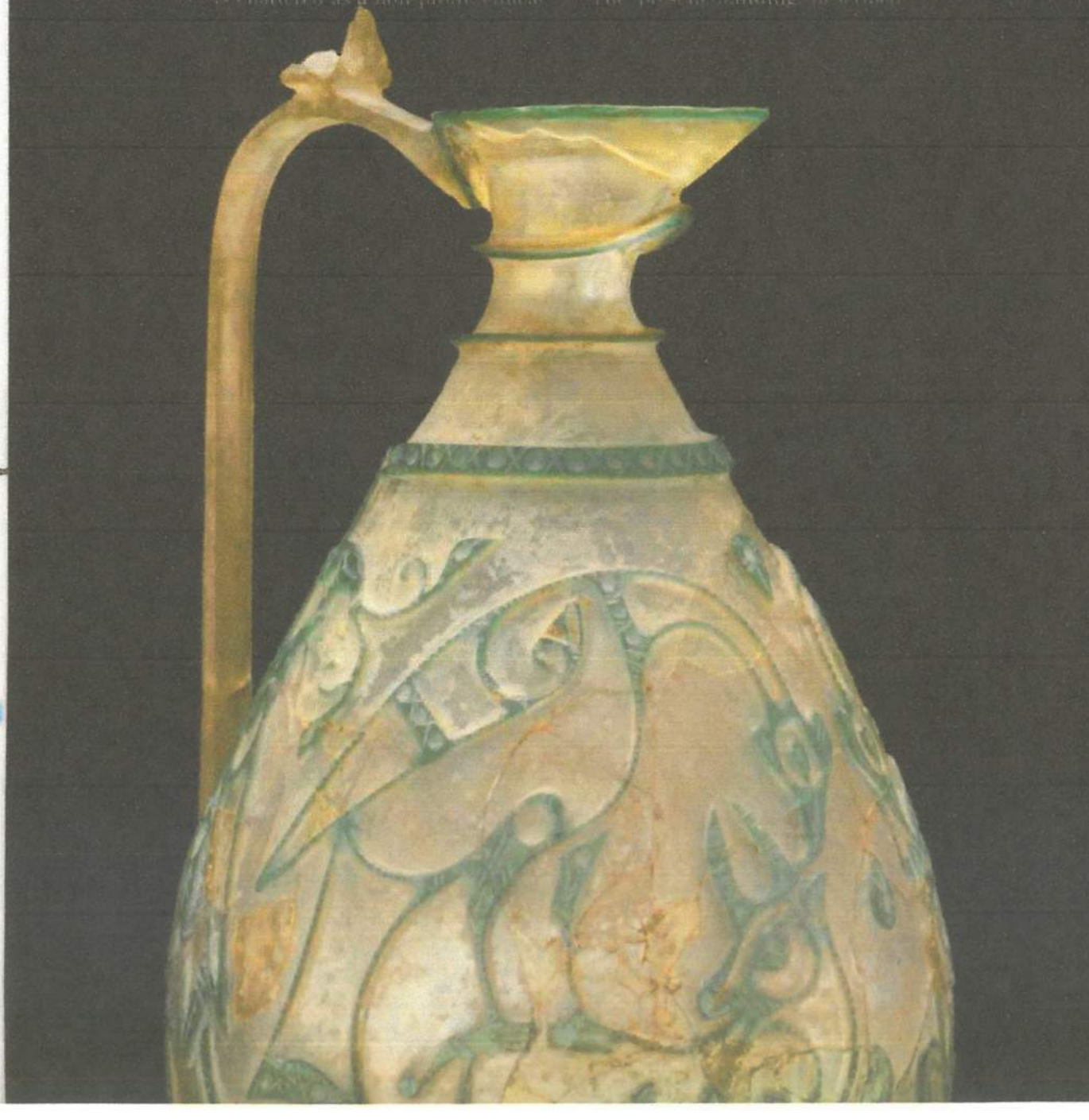
Plate 10: Cotton and wool carpet fragment, Pakistan (Lahore), Mughal period, 17th century A.D. The scene with elephants in combat illustrates a favored sport of the Mughal court, and relates to architectural tile panels of the 17h century. Court workshops for the weaving of carpets were established at Lahore and Jaipur, and initially relied upon the skills and traditions of Persian craftsmen whom they employed. But the manufacture of Mughal carpets soon evolved to produce among the largest and most finely woven carpets in the world.

THE CORNING MUSEUM OF GLASS

David Whitehouse

The Corning Museum of Glass in Corning, New York, is part of the Corning Glass Center which contains in a single complex the Museum, the Hall of Science and Industry and the Steuben Glass Factory. The Center was founded in 1951 to celebrate the centennial of Corning Glass Works. The Museum is chartered as a non-profit, educational institution by the Board of Regents of the University of the State of New York. Its objectives are to preserve and exhibit glass of historical, aesthetic and technical importance, to conduct research on the history of glass and glassmaking, and to encourage a wider interest in glass of all countries and periods.

The present building, described





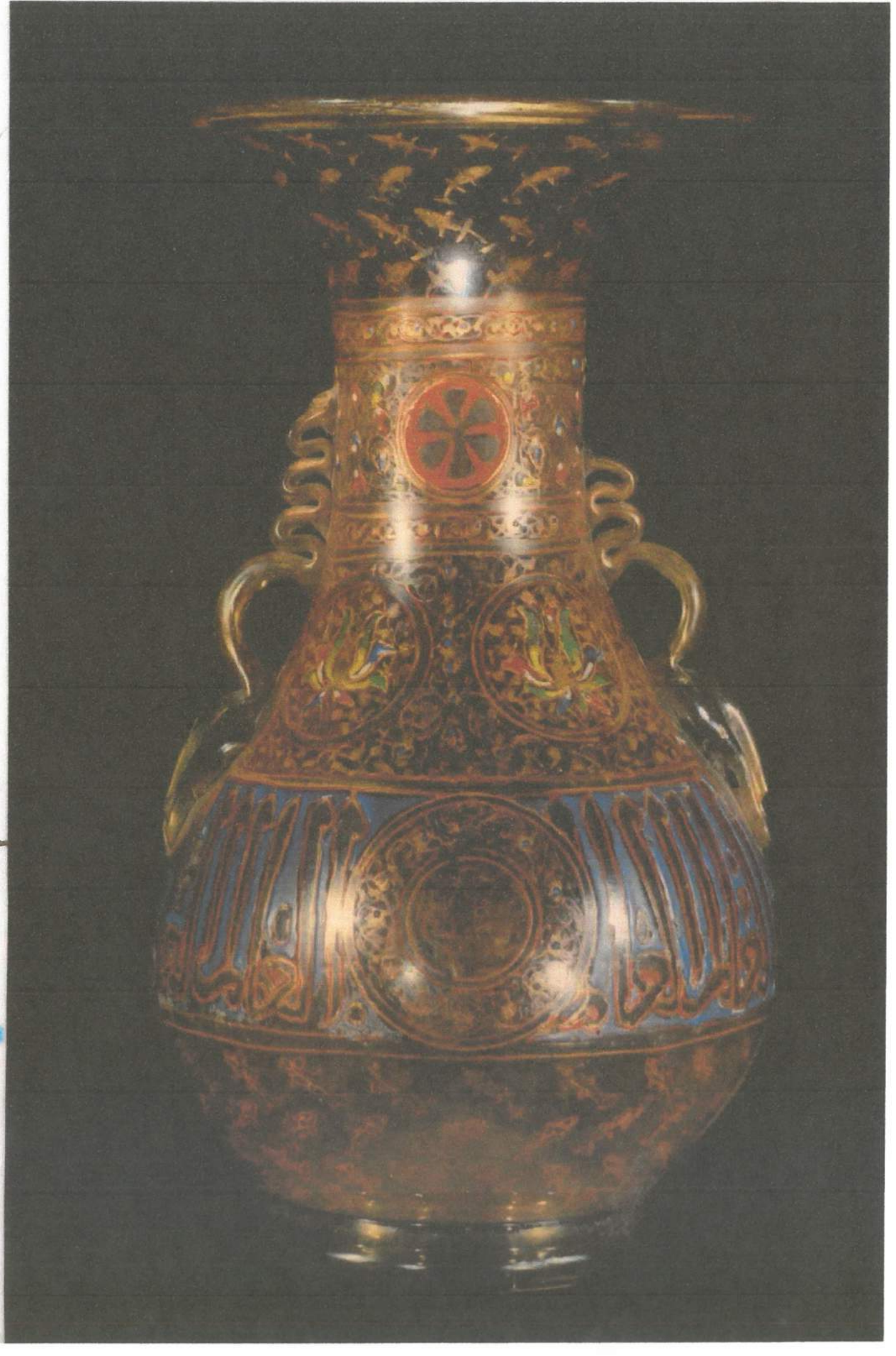
as "the most innovative museum building in America" was designed by Gunnar Berkerts and completed in 1980. A circular Masterpiece Gallery illustrates the history of glassmaking from its origins to the present day. Seven Study Galleries allow the visitor to explore in greater depth the glass of particular peoples and places. Study Gallery 3 is devoted to Islamic glass, of which the Museum possesses more than two hundred vessels, in addition to a much larger number of "coin weights". The nucleus of the Islamic collection was formed in the 1950s. It includes important pieces from the Ray Winfield Smith collection and the collection of drinking vessels assembled by Jerome and Ruth Bryan Strauss. More recent acquisitions include the Halberstadt Hedwig beaker and an exceptional cameo-cut ewer. Many of these objects were made in Egypt, Iran or Syria between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries. More recent material includes eighteenth century glass from Iran and Mughal India.

One of the commonest methods of decorating glass, widely practiced in the Islamic world, is that of blowing the parison into a mold. The use of composite molds enables the maker to produce rapidly and in quantity vessels with elaborate ornament. Among the Islamic mold-blown vessels at Corning is a bottle (Fig. 2) of translucent green glass, probably from northern Iran and datable to the eleventh or twelfth century. The body was blown in a two-piece mold. It has four zones of ornament: a band of petals radiating from the neck, a continuous leaf

Previous Page: *Ewer, 10th century A.D. colourless glass with greyish green overlay. Blown, cased and wheelcut. Persia, height 16.0cm*

Left: *Bottle, probably 12th century A.D. Translucent dark green glass. Mold blown with applied decoration. Syria (?) Height 25.8cm.*

Right: *Mamluk enameled and gilt vase. Syria, probably Damascus, ca. 1320-1330. Height 30.2cm.*



scroll, an inscription, and a second leaf-scroll. Translated, the inscription reads, "And to the owner happiness and blessing and joy". The neck is decorated with an applied band of zigzag threading.

Between the ninth and the twelfth century, Islamic glassmakers produced a large number of vessels with decoration in relief. Most were cut from colorless or monochrome blanks, but a few are cameo glasses with green or blue overlays. The main centers of production seem to have been in north or northeast Iran. The Corning ewer (Fig. 1) is the finest example of Islamic cameo glass. It is colorless, with a translucent green overlay. Most of the overlay has been removed on the wheel, leaving only the outlines of the ornament. This consists of two almost identical scenes, one on each side of the body. A bird of prey lands on the rump of a gazelle and pecks at the back of its head. The animal stumbles. As its forelegs buckle, it turns to look at the attacker. Behind it is a second bird, perched on a branch. The sides of the ewer are wafer-thin and the ornament has an elegance which puts the object in a class of its own.

Below: *'Hedvig' beaker, probably Egyptian. Colourless glass with brownish tint. Wheelcut. Late 11th-12th century. Height 8.6cm Diameter 7.2cm.*



The most puzzling group of Islamic relief-cut vessels are the so-called Hedwig glasses: beakers of colorless glass with a distinctive smoky topaz tinge, decorated with lions, griffins or eagles. The ornament is vigorous, and details are indicated by hatching. Only fifteen examples are known. They are widely believed to be Egyptian and of the twelfth century, but neither the origin nor the date is certain.

The beaker at Corning (Fig. 4) has an extraordinary story. Discovered in about 1820 during repairs to the sacristy of Halberstadt cathedral, it passed through the hands of several owners, including a bookbinder of Harzburg, who is said to have used it as a paste-pot.

The latest major group of Islamic glass of the Middle Ages is decorated with gilding and colored enamels. The enamels were applied cold and fixed by firing at a low temperature. The majority of enameled glass was made in Syria, the only other center of production being in Egypt. It dates from the twelfth to the fourteenth century.

The vase in Fig. 3 is attributed on stylistic grounds to a Syrian workshop, perhaps, in Aleppo or Damascus, and dated to the period c. 1320-1330. The attribution is supported by the tentative identification of the heraldic device or the neck. Although the rosette was a popular device under the Ayyubids and Mamluks, only one official is known to have used the six-pointed rosette on an undivided round shield: the Mamluk *amir* of Damascus, Saif ad-din Bahadur, who died in November or December 1329.

I have focused attention on four outstanding examples of Islamic glass. They are, of course, exceptional. Islamic glassmakers produced a great quantity of vessels for everyday use, and many special forms, from alembics (used for distillation) to chess pieces. Those and many other items are displayed in the Islamic Gallery at The Corning Museum of Glass. ■

ISLAMIC LEATHER BOOKBINDINGS

OF THE ORIENTAL INSTITUTE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch

The large collection of Islamic bindings with other manuscripts and artifacts was obtained from Dr. Bernhard Moritz, distinguished German orientalist, in 1929. An Arabic proverb says, "For the sake of the book the binding is loved." However, the beauty and technical achievement of the bindings (many of which have been separated from their contents) have absorbed my interest since Professor Martin Sprengling first showed them to me.

Two North African authors are significant. The first, Ibn Badis, was a ruler of Tunisia (422 A.H./1031 A.D., d. 501 A.H./1108 A.D.) and a bookbinder by vocation who inspired his subjects to produce articles to be traded in distant lands. The other was Al-Sufyani (1029 A.H./1619 A.D.), a master bookbinder who recorded his methods and techniques because apprentices were so unreliable.

These propaedeutic works, basic to an investigation of bookmaking in the Western Islamic region, led us to choose our first example from North Africa, the Maghrib (A12118). It gives us the opportunity to consider an intact Islamic leather binding consisting of five parts: upper cover, spine, lower cover, fore-edge and flap.

The covers and flap were stiffened and glued to paste boards. Then the entire binding was lined with thin block-pressed leather. The exterior leather (goat) is blind and gold-tooled while the doublure (lining) is thin block-pressed (sheep) leather. A broad, highly burnished band edges the decorated areas of the cover. Although the overall design is of the center and cornerpiece category, in this case the corner pieces merge with the frame. The cornerpieces are tooled with a complex geometric interlace of knot work, the linear elements of which are formed using a small hatched bar and a small hatched arc. These tools are placed so as to pivot around an interstitially placed centered dot tool. The inner edge of the frame and corner pieces is defined by a thick tripartite fillet which leaves a burnished line. The field of the inner panel exploiting the lighter colored, grained texture of the untooled leathers impinges on the square corners with semi-circular intrusions which leaves an arrow-like corner form pointing inwards. The center of the inner panel also gives the illusion of having been cut away to reveal a ten-scalloped rounded texture, the same field used in the frame and corners. There is a three-dimensional quality that suggests the interior of a dome with squinches.

The doublure (A12118No.2) leather is printed with a densely patterned block which seems to have been of a





small, narrow, oblong shape. The thin vine complex interweave creates an alternation between a roughly circular outline and four-petalled forms with tiny leaves.

It may be instructive to compare an earlier North African Maghrib binding (A12313) with one of South Arabian provenance (A12135). Both are smaller, simpler bindings of average quality. Yet the average binding is indicative of regional trends within general trade practices. Elsewhere it has been shown that small ornamental hand tools, *peti fers* and block-pressed doublures are common to several regions, but the difference lies in the composition, the proportion of the decorated areas and the relation of texture that may indicate religious ideas.

In the Maghrib example, a burnished band edges the frame with a running pattern of a rectangular single axis stamp depicting a schematic lotus blossom linked by scrolls. The inside edge of the border is defined by multiple fillets with adjacent tripartite fillets bordering the inner panel. The entire inner panel is occupied by a geometric strapwork interlace. The straps are of untooled leather defined by single fillets. Each compartment is filled with knotwork. The central star has at its core a small square area left untooled, except for a centered annular gold-painted dot with smaller dots at its corners. The corner quarter-star compartments are centered by large annular gold painted dots. The knotwork is constructed of hatched bars, arcs and dots. A mystic sense of continuity is provided by the fluidity of the knotwork portions while the strapwork invokes architectural restraint. The lotus buds of the floral stamps lend an archaic touch, as if an echo of earlier idioms.

The South Arabian cover of light brown goat leather has a broad burnished strip which edges a border of repeated impressions of a bold, square epigraphical stamp reading *hamdan*, "praise". The inner panel has a five central roundel defined by a tripartite fillet filled with a large flower whose six petals are compass-constructed. In the center of the flower is a single circular epigraphical stamp reading *Allah hasbi*, "God is sufficient for me." The compartments between the petals are filled with knotwork constructed with a hatched bar, a hatched arc and centered dot tools. On the vertical axis, above and below the roundels are large, finely exe-





Title Page:*Complete exterior bookcovering. North Africa (A 12118) 15th century A.D.* **Far Left Above:***Portion of doublure design of A 12118* **Far Left Below:** *Lower cover of a bookbinding. North Africa (A 12131) 13th-15th century A.D.* **Left:***Lower cover of a bookbinding. South Arabia (A 12135) 15th century A.D.* **Below:***the upper and lower covers and envelope flap of a bookbinding. Egypt/Syria (A 12159) 14th century A.D.*

cuted lozenges of knotwork with an untooled square at their center. Flecks radiate from the points of the lozenges. The triangular corners are demarcated by two rows of tripartite fillets. Within the corners are placed three impressions of a circular epigraphical story reading *Allah hasbi*, "God is sufficient for me."

Both the North African and South Arabian bindings have block-pressed doublures and similar hatched small irons that provide the textured areas. However, the effect of the latter, with its light brown leather, rather flat blind tooling, polished surfaces and use of calligraphic stamps, suggests an individual response indicative of certain Shi'ite Muslim attitudes of the Zaidites of Yemen.

An Egyptian-Syrian binding (A12159) of the fourteenth century has two covers and the envelope flap surviving. It is of superior quality and an example of early cut-work on a bookbinding. The upper and lower covers are similarly ornamented. On both, a burnished outer border, defined by fillets, edges a thin gold-painted meander border of fillets. An outer frame is composed of linked knotwork squares built around tiny circular stamps depicting a six-pointed star with a center dot. The knotwork is formed using hatched bars, arcs and gold dots. The edge of this frame is separated from another inner frame by tripartite fillets, and the central groove is painted gold. The frame is stamped with gold "s"-shaped tools placed to create a guilloche pattern of untooled leather with interstitial gold dots.

Double tripartite fillets, the inner one gold painted, define the inner panel. Its ground is slightly filled with small cross motifs with dots at their centers and at the ends of their arms around which weave hatched bars and arcs. The elaborate center medallions and corner quadrant medallions have the leather floral-geometric patterns cut out with further small cutout areas in the finials of the medallions' extension. The center medallion has another looped, scalloped out line and an inner gold one. The scalloped compartments are filled with arc and dot work. The pointed bases from which the finials project are straited, leaving a central cut-out compartment outlined in gold. Multiple fillets ring the roundel.

The floral field is of cut-out leather underlaid with green silk, also used as the doublures of these covers. The design is bisymmetrical with dominant horizontal



and vertical axes and minor diagonal axes centered on an eight-petalled gold outlined flower. From this center, interweaving scrolls from an outer zone of ogivally-pointed petals or double stems, which in the horizontal and vertical axes, form the bases of three-sepalled calices. A complex interweaving of scrolls continues to the perimeter of the roundel from which single-lobed leaves develop and which, on the diagonal axes, pass through bar-shaped ties to become gold-outlined, three-sepalled calices of different forms with paired leaves at their bases.

The corner quadrants, on the outer edge, are elaborated by a gold fillet forming an outline related to the scalloping, points and finials of the center medallion, but with simpler calices on the upper tier of its finials. The golden fillet outline continues around the perimeter of the inner panel and forms half finials of the corner quadrants against the inner frame.

The envelope flap is decorated in cut-leather work of the inner panel and has similar but slightly different outer frames. The inner panel has a field of rolling, interweaving scrolls with leaves and three calices issuing from a large, central three-sepalled calyx with an open center sepal. The design is symmetrical along the horizontal axis. The elements of this foliate design are outlined with gold fillets, and the background is cut and underlaid by the same green silk used in the upper and lower covers as well as in the doublures. The doublures silk has been examined by a textile historian who suggests it is fourteenth century silk, possibly Near Eastern or Chinese.

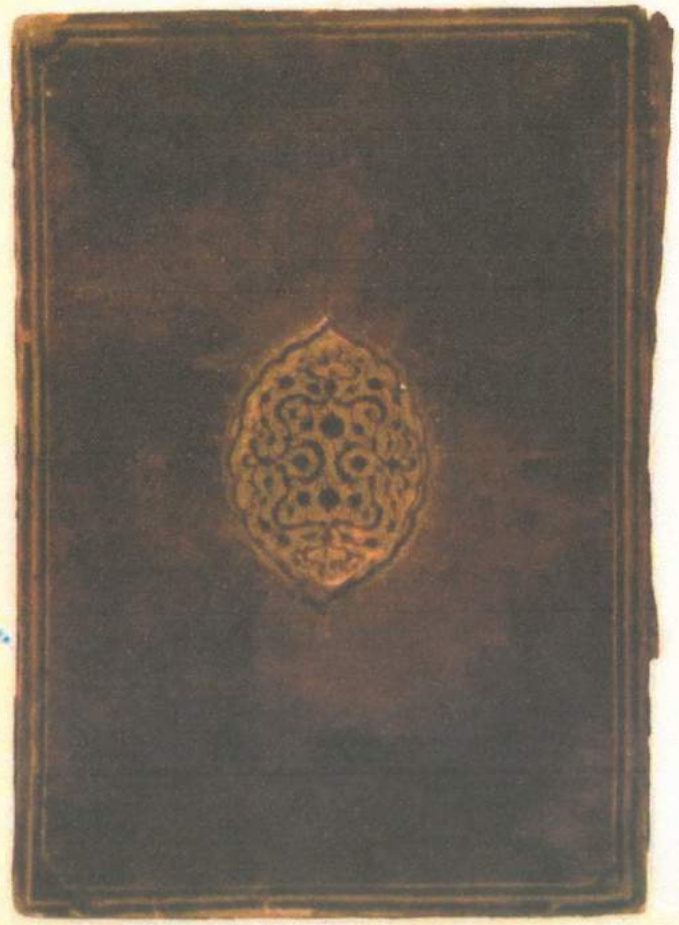
This marvelously textured bookbinding is an encyclopedia of ornament. Its layers insist on meditation from minutiae to floral exuberance.

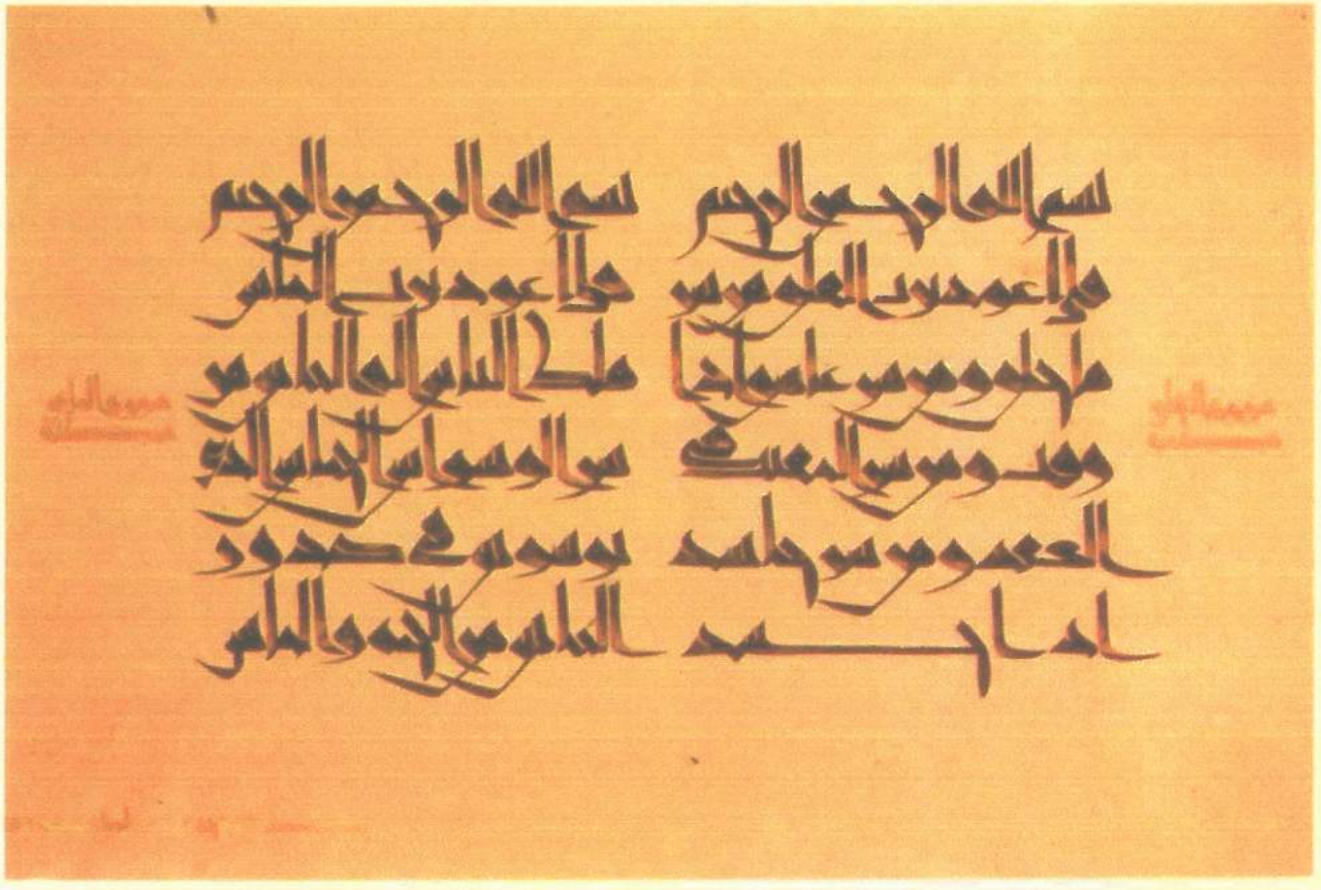
Al-Sufyani, our later North African author, seems to follow the Persian-Turkish style, and our last example (A12166) could be an end result of following his directions. The cover has a delicate guilloche border overpainted in gold and defined by single blind fillets. Within is a single gold-painted line which leaves tiny triangular vacant corner compartments. The center has an exquisite panel stamp of a shallow, scalloped, ovoid outline. It has a gold painted background with a bisymmetrical relief pattern of twisted and tied cloud-ribbon forms through which a secondary fine vine moves from a central lozenge. The vine is studded with large and small carnation flowers and buds. The cloud-ribbon pattern is oriented with its ends near the points of the medallion and its bows and knots along the sides. The scalloped outline of the panel stamp is emphasized by a gold painted line with gold bud flecks at the spandrels of the scallops. The doublure is of a similar leather to the exterior of the cover and is applied to the overlaps. It is edged by double blind-tooled fillets and a single gold painted line.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Eastern Persian-Turkish style prevailed in the Islamic world. Instead of small stamps, individually placed to create a design or to fill a textured compartment, large stamps were used for the medallions, their extensions, a portion of the cover or an entire inner panel of the cover. The cut work becomes filigree and more intricate in Eastern Islamic works, sometimes with paper or thin leather used on the interiors.

Lacquer bindings on leather are introduced into Persia through Chinese influence. However, that is part of a more involved story of Islamic bookbindings also found in the Oriental Institute collection. ■

Below: *Lower cover of a bookbinding. Persia/Turkey. 16th-17th century A.D. (A 12166).*





WORN PATHWAYS, NEW ROADS:

FIVE ARTISTS IN AMERICA



Francis Harper

To find artists working in the United States who have some connection, either by birth or affinity, with the Arab world, is not difficult, although certainly the five artists included in this article are exceptional representatives. The five artists included here are not all Arabs—Ali Jihad Racy is a Lebanese working in the United States; Moustapha Akkad and Mokhless Al-Hariri are Syrians who became American citizens; Fred Maroon is an American of Lebanese ancestry; and Mohammed Zakariya is an American Muslim whose field of work is in the Islamic arts. Whatever their relationship to the Arab world, their creative success in the United States is much in evidence. Here their chosen careers are most fully nurtured, and here their artistry is in great demand.

Moustapha Akkad, a Syrian-born American citizen, is best known in the United States as the producer of the thriller "Halloween" which launched the directing career of John Carpenter and inspired spin-offs and imitations of a new genre of chiller films. His first epic work, "The Message" was the first international feature film about the life of the Prophet Mohammad. Yet in his own assessment, Akkad's most important work to date has been "Omar Mukhtar—Lion of the Desert," the story of the Libyan resistance to the Italian facist occupation of the 30's. "Artistically and emotionally, it was more rewarding because it did two things: it gave me a chance to develop a film with characters that are part of

Previous page top: *An illumination of the last two sura from the Koran, in North African kufic script, 1982, Mohammed U. Zakariya.*
Previous page bottom: *A Hadith from the Prophet Mohamnmad, "Believers reflect each other," in mirror-style talik script, 1982, Mohammed U. Zakariya.*
Below: *A quotation from the Koran in Naskh script, 1982, Mohammed U. Zakariya.* **Bottom:** *A verse from the Koran, "All things celebrate his name," in North African kufic script, 1982, Mohammed U. Zakariya.*
(Photos courtesy of Georgetown Design Group)





my cultural heritage. And it was a director's film with strong character development. In many ways, it was a statement about my personal frustration with the politics of our time."

Akkad's romance with directing began in his home town of Aleppo where, as a youth, a neighbor who was the local projectionist would take him to the movies six or seven times a week. Among his early favorities were American films, particularly those of Alfred Hitchcock. "At the age of 14, I knew I wanted to be a film director, but it was hard to convince anyone that it was the best thing." Throughout his high school days at the American College in Aleppo, he was involved in directing sets and scenery design, and general stagecraft.

After coming to the United States, Akkad studied Theater Arts at the University of California - Los Angeles, completing his degree there before going to the University of Southern California for a master's degree in Cinema Arts. He then worked for CBS-TV, the famous American director Sam Peckinpah, and others before launching his own production company.

Now residing in southern California with his family, Akkad continues to pursue his craft successfully. He feels strongly the attraction of the Arab world as his emotional and cultural heritage. "As long as this blood runs in my veins, the Arab world will always be important to me. I have more ideas for projects than I could do in a lifetime. You cannot change your blood, and my creativity blooms when I deal with Arab subjects, although my work style, mentality, practicality, and way of doing business are American."

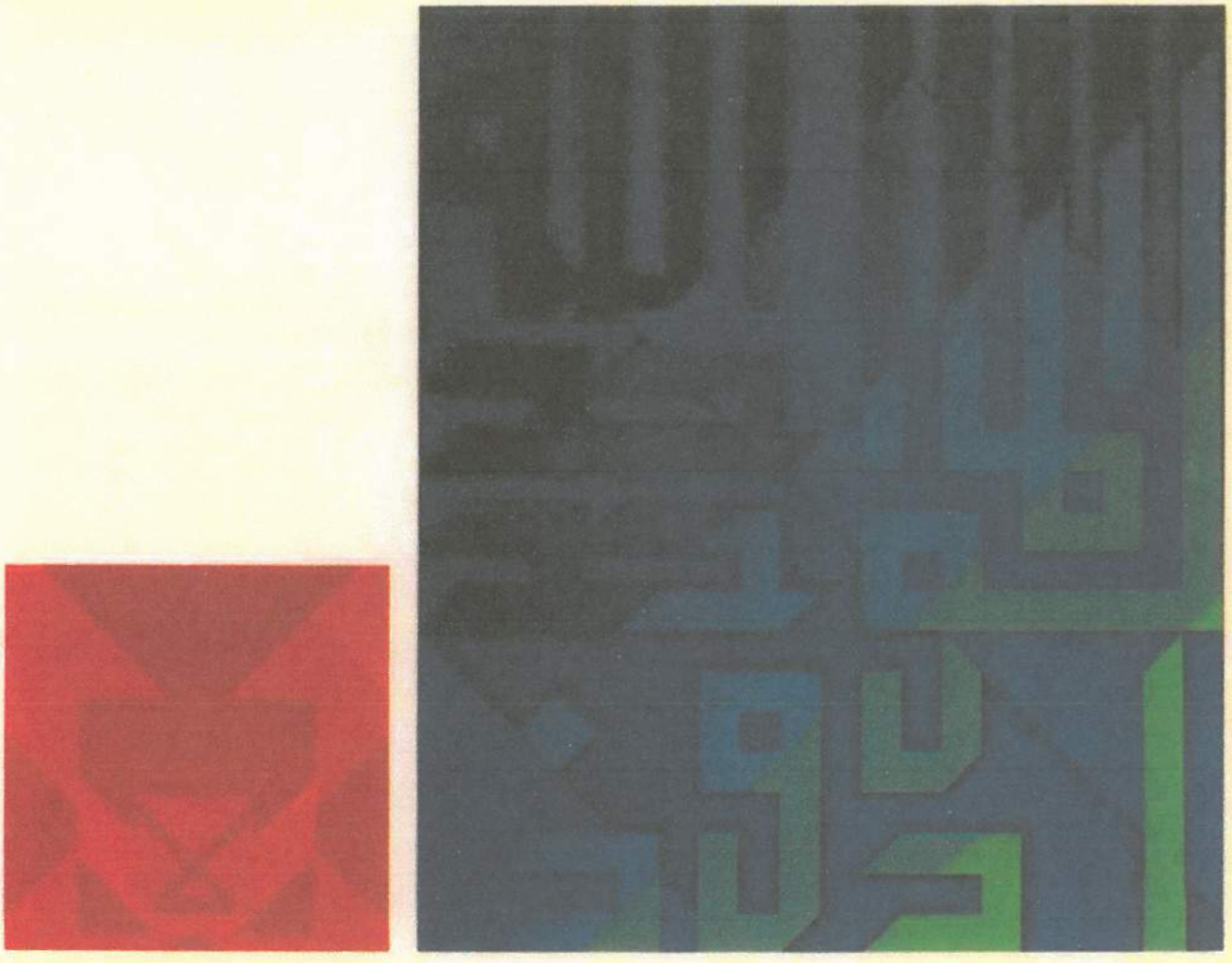
Akkad feels a special commitment to changing the negative stereotypes of Arabs that appear in the media. He feels it is a personal matter for his children to be proud of their heritage. He feels fortunate that his career provides him an opportunity to deal with images that all Arabs in America, regardless of profession, should be concerned about correcting. To Akkad the effort is a service to his culture.

In looking back over his career, and as an indication of the boundless energy he brings to his projects, Akkad feels that the most important factor in his development has been the building of a spirit of self-confidence. "We (the Arabs) are as good as, and as intelligent, if not more so than others. Because of our low self-esteem, we have not made the effort which we can to succeed. Nothing is impossible. We must overcome the feeling that everything foreign is better. We have much to contribute, from our heritage and our talents. It is possible for everyone to prove themselves in a society like the United States."

Dr. Mokhless Al-Hariri, trained as an architect and urban planner, is constantly expanding the boundaries of his talents. With a variety of interests and skills as a graphic artist, photographer, designer, and producer of special events, he seeks to combine all of these into an integrated universe of services for his clients. As the President and Founder of Georgetown Design Group, Al-Hariri specializes in creating a relationship with his clients that makes it possible for him to see their needs from the "inside looking out", an Eastern orientation which, according to Al-Hariri, is "not found in the Western approach to design, which looks from the outside in."

Upon attaining his doctorate in Paris at the Ecole National Superieure des Beaux Arts, Dr. Al-Hariri came to the United States for advanced study in Planning and Development at George Washington University in

continued on page 92

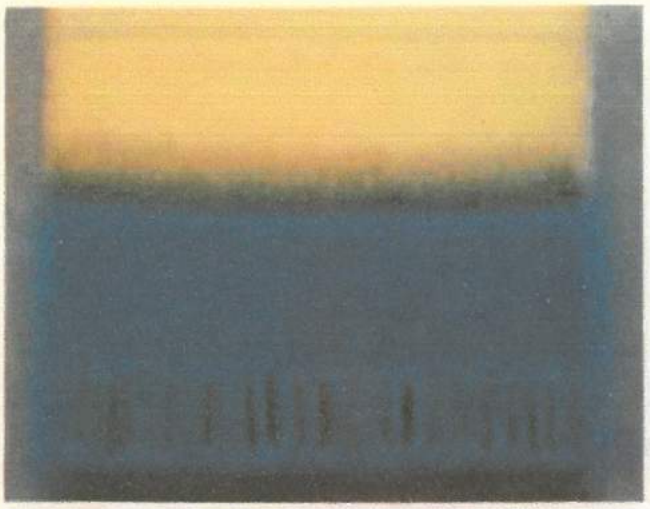


CONTEMPORARY ARAB AMERICAN ARTISTS

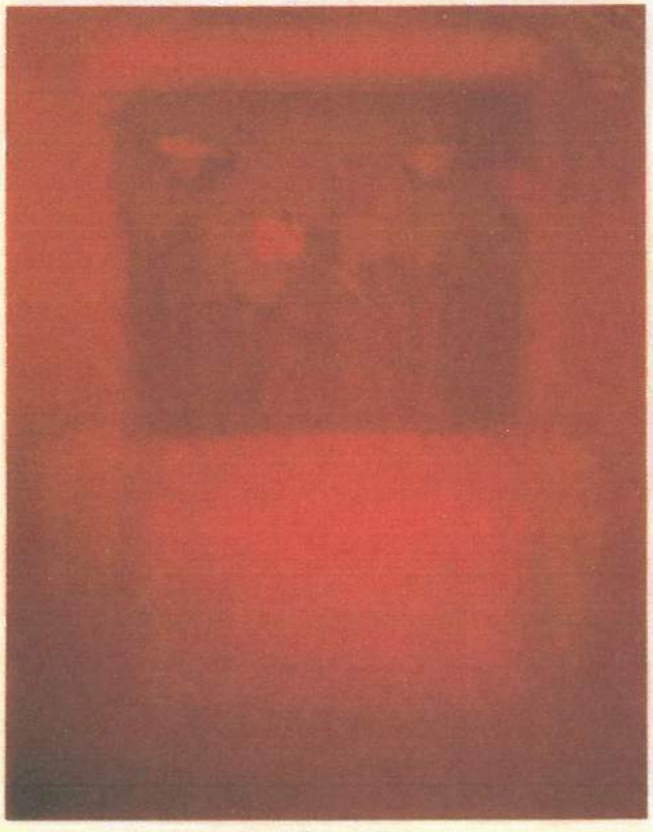
Ann Burnham

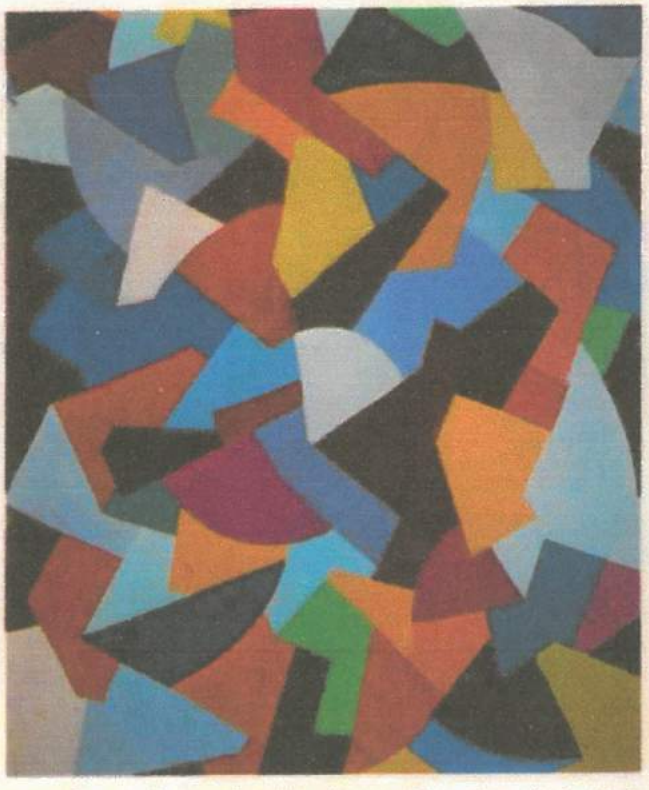
America is a nation of immigrants. Successive waves of people from all over the world came and still come and create a new and continually changing society. It is a society that on the one hand is distinctively and unifyingly American but, like a two-sided jigsaw-puzzle, the flip is a kaleidoscope of ethnic groups that both celebrate and denigrate their origins and even after generations have passed, can take enormous pride in or resent having their American-ness hyphenated with Anglo, Hispanic, Irish, Afro or other prefixes, including Arab.

American tolerance of ethnic diversity, and in some cases its penchant to underline it, can be a reassurance and boost to recently arrived immigrants, especially those who come not of their own volition but because of adverse circumstances in their home countries. For artists, however, it can be a double bind — a Catch 22 situation. If in their work they lean too heavily on









Previous Page: *Kamal Boullata 'Allah, al-Uahid, al-Majid, al-Wajid, al-Wadud "Allah, the Unique, the Noble, the Finder, the Loving".* **Left:** *Kamal Boullata 'Lam Alif "L.A."'.* **Top left:** *Helen Khal 'Cobalt Forest'.* **Bottom left:** *Helen Khal 'Never a Rose...'* **Bottom right:** *Samia A. Halaby, 'She Braids and Understands' 1983.* **Top right:** *Mohammed Omer Khalil 'Collage with Barber Shop' 1982.*

motifs and references from their native culture they run the risk of being labelled folk rather than fine artists. But if they work in an international style, they can be accused of being derivative or imitative, of abandoning their heritage for the sake of 'fitting in.' Emphasising the ethnic angle in any group of artists' work, whether it is done for marketing, social or political reasons, raises the expectation of a specific component in the art and puts it in danger of being set apart from the mainstream.

In addition to these tensions, Arab artists working in America are faced also with the fact that although they come from an ancient civilization, the tradition of personalized expression in the visual arts for them is relatively new, whereas in the West since proto-Renaissance times, artists have personalized their works, and in contemporary America the cult of individualism in art is at an all-time high.

In spite of all this, or perhaps because of it, more and more Arab artists are exhibiting and becoming known in America. Awareness of

continued on page 94



CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC ART IN NEW YORK

Layla S. Diba

New York has become the Mecca of the art world since the 1940's when many of the most talented and avant-garde contemporary European painters fled that continent in chaos to make their home in the United States. As a result, New York took over Paris' role as the art capital of the world.

Since then New York has provided the setting and the inspiration for the best in contemporary painting, be it the Abstract Expressionism of the 50's, the Op-Pop, Color field and Minimalist movements of the 60's and 70's or the New Expressionism and Graffiti of the 80's.

Galleries mushroomed to encourage and promote all these new developments and could be found from the high power corridors of the



Previous page: *Y.Z.Kami, "Kami and Nane in Front of Picasso's 'Parade'".*
Right: *Hossein Zenderoudi, 'Gende', Monoprint 1 metre x 1½ metres*
Below: *Adel Al-Saghir, 'Tagasim iii', 61x82 cms*
Bottom right: *Nickzad Nodjoumi, 'Discovering the New Possibilities', 52"x72"*





Upper East Side and 57th street to the bohemian atmosphere of the Soho and most recently, the "New" East Village. Artists from all over the world feel the need to come to New York to measure themselves against the best and the brightest of their peers. Only by going there could they absorb and perhaps contribute to the most important developments in contemporary art.

Now, since the opening of the Leila Taghinia-Milani gallery in New York in May, 1983, the art world has had the opportunity of seeing some of what the rest of the world, particularly the Muslim and Iranian one, has been up to. Here one can see not only how artists of Muslim origin have taken from modern movements what they needed and applied it to the formal idiom and principles of their own culture, but also what elements of Islamic art have interested contemporary Western painters or have found parallels in their works. Many of the artists to be found in the gallery are well known in their countries of origin or in Europe. They are often winners of International prizes or participants of international exhibitions such as the Venice Biennale or the Paris Salon d'Automne. They represent different tendencies but all draw on their own culture's artistic past for their creative energies.

Take for example, Hosein Zenderoudi, an Iranian-born artist now living in Paris. He was among the first Iranian artists during the 60's to use an artistic idiom that was traditionally Iranian and yet contemporary at the same time, based on the decorative and then increasingly abstract use of language "signs" or calligraphy. His current works, as those of the past, can be read in different ways: as symbols of a spiritual experience or as strong formal statements in their own right. This multiplicity of meaning and form is one of the most important characteristics of Islamic art of all periods. A variety of experiments with calligraphy can be seen in other Iranian artists including Assurbanipal Babilla.

Mehdi Qotbi, a Moroccan-born artist describes his work as "writing as art". Against color saturated backgrounds of brilliant hues he uses vocabulary based on Islamic calligraphy to create vivid and poetic works, which remind us at times of the works of Klee or Miro, but are

continued on page 96

2ND INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR RECOMMENDS ISLAMIC ARTS ARCHIVES

The Islamic Arts Foundation, London, is setting up a Reference Archives of Islamic Arts in London, in pursuance of the recommendations of the 2nd International Seminar on Islamic Arts, held at Farnham Castle in UK from 19-21 July 1985, and attended by Islamic art scholars, museum directors, curators and connoisseurs from 26 countries of the Eastern and Western world.

The aim of the Reference Archives is to bring together basic data about Islamic art holdings in various public and private collections, and make this documentation available to those institutions and individuals who have a special interest in this field. The Archives would also compile and disseminate updated information about the sale, movement, acquisition and the state of cataloguing of important Islamic art objects throughout the world.

The idea is not to replicate any existing activity, project or institution, but to liaise and coordinate with those already on the ground, in an effort to consolidate all relevant material for purposes of reference and research, with a view to stimulating better knowledge and critical appreciation of Islamic art worldwide. In each case and at all times, full credit will be given to the source of any information that is stored and disseminated.

Initially the Reference Archives of Islamic Arts will obtain and put on computers, in a standard format to be developed in consultation with Islamic art curators and scholars, the data which is available about catalogued items, i.e., those which are listed in published sources, including museum publications, exhibition and sale catalogues, art historical studies, periodical articles etc.

In the next category is published material now out of print, and therefore not generally available: in such cases, data will be obtained by special request from the relevant institution/organisation, and put on computers.

As for items which have been annotated but not included in published catalogues, photocopies/microfilms of catalogue cards will be obtained from the museum or private collector concerned, for being computerised.

Finally, in respect of uncatalogued material known to exist in various museums and collections, an identification photograph/colour transparency/print will be obtained as and when available, and separately stored pending preparation of appropriate annotation.

Simultaneously with the building up of the Reference Archives of Islamic Arts, a modest Islamic Arts Reference Service will be initiated to keep track of



A group photograph of the Seminar participants taken on the last day (21 July 1985).

recent and forthcoming Islamic art exhibitions and sales, and other relevant information pertaining to arts of the Islamic world generally both traditional and contemporary.

Like the Reference Archives, the Islamic Arts Reference Service will also be compiled in consultation, and with the assistance of relevant art institutions and experts in the field, and every effort will be made to ensure authenticity, objectivity and a reasonable degree of comprehensiveness.

Following is a report on the proceedings of the Seminar that was prepared and presented on the last day of the Seminar by Mr. Alistair Duncan on behalf of the Drafting Committee comprising himself, Mrs Ghada Qaddumi and Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed, which was constituted by the Seminar President, H.E. Dr. Ezzeddin Ibrahim:

In welcoming the distinguished guests and participants to this 2nd International Seminar on Islamic Arts, the Chairman of the Islamic Arts Foundation, Mr Muazzam Ali, made reference to the specific area of concern for the Seminar's deliberations - namely that of the need for cataloguing Islamic art resources in public and private collections throughout the world. He reminded the participants of the spiritual and human components which are contained within the Islamic cultural identity and of the need to understand and appreciate the achievements of the past as influences upon the development of present and future societies. In this respect, today's ever-increasing awareness of the importance of the heritage of Islamic art is matched by fresh discoveries of repositories of these treasures all over the world under circumstances and conditions never previously imagined or considered. Our knowledge - great as it is - may only encompass the tip of a cultural iceberg, if only we develop the determination and capabilities to discover its real extent.

The Chairman also announced plans to organize, at national and international level, a series of exhibitions of paintings by contemporary artists of the Arab and Islamic countries. The exhibitions will be put together in consultation with the art and cultural institutions and scholars in the respective countries themselves, and will aim at introducing the work of these artists to a wider international audience. The first exhibition of this series would be organised within a year comprising contemporary paintings from Pakistan. This plan was strongly supported by the delegates from Iran who also offered to present an exhibition of modern Islamic Arts from Iran.

His Excellency Dr Ezzeddin Ibrahim accepted Mr Muazzam Ali's invitation to act as President of the Seminar. In so doing he praised the work of the Islamic Arts Foundation, its founder and all who served its endeavours, for their achievements in mounting two seminars of international importance and the successful and continuing publication of the quarterly magazine "Arts & The Islamic World"; all in less than four years. He referred now to the need to concentrate attention upon the coordination of available resources and documentation and to pool data for a central Register as an aid to the teaching of Islamic Art in both the Muslim world and the West. It was his honour and pleasure to invite the Secretary General of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, His Excellency Mr Sharifuddin Pirzada, to inaugurate the Seminar.

H.E. Mr Sharifuddin Pirzada emphasised that the arts in the Muslim world had for a long time been neglected in the hierachy of Islamic traditions and that this Seminar was part of their revival. In this it was important to realise that only by understanding Islam itself and its moral values could we achieve a true understanding of all that is meant by Islamic art and by extension to God and all His creation. He referred to the present gap in the field of information and documentation of Islamic art resources and the lack of a consolidated base for such knowledge. But new technology was becoming available and we could now envisage the setting up of a central archive and reference service for the arts of Islam. He pledged the support and collaboration of the OIC for all efforts to explore and catalogue Islamic art collections throughout the world and urged others to do likewise. It was with great pleasure that he inaugurated the Seminar.

The Chairman thanked H.E. Sharifuddin Pirzada and invited H.E. Dr. Mohammad Abdo Yamani to give the key note address.

His Excellency thanked Mr Muazzam Ali for his invitation to participate in the proceedings and encouraged the participants to do their best to preserve the cultural heritage, which is directly related to our integrity. We should open our cultural channels to others in a spirit of mutual enrichment and contribute thereby to a balanced dialogue free of sectarianism. Thus we shall help the world to move towards a new cultural order.

After thanking H.E. Dr Mohammad Abdo Yamani for his key-note address which would guide and contribute to the deliberations of the Seminar, the Chairman invited Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed to give his report on the work of the Islamic Arts Foundation since its last meeting. Before doing so, however, he drew attention to Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed's vital and sustained role in the preparation for this Seminar and all his other activities which he conducted so effectively and so modestly.

Mr Jalal Uddin Ahmed referred to the first broad survey in the 1st Seminar three years ago and the recommendations arising therefrom. He reviewed the establishment and the success of the quarterly magazine "Arts & The Islamic World". Now we had gathered together to consider the perceived gap in our knowledge of the resources of Islamic arts material, which could be filled by a central reference and data base, using the remarkable capabilities of computer technology and, specifically, the advanced laser videodiscs capable of storing colour images. The programmes already being developed by curators of museums and collections were providing the nucleus for a projected Islamic Arts Reference Service.

The Seminar President then concluded these preliminary stages of the Inaugural Session by emphasising that we should concentrate our minds upon resources and documentation and the pooling of all available data. Our discussions in this Seminar should lead to the setting up of a master catalogue of Islamic arts, and this could be of the greatest benefit in aiding the teaching of Islamic arts throughout the world, and their place in the syllabus of education. Furthermore it would encourage the writing of new studies of both the arts and philosophies arising out of the themes of creative expression.

The Chairman finally invited Mr S A Naqvi, Director of the Division of Cultural Heritage, UNESCO, to deliver a message of good wishes from his Director General, H.E. Amadou-Mater M'Bow. In so doing, Mr Naqvi referred to UNESCO's Constitution and the role of the Islamic Arts Foundation in increasing means of communication between peoples and the promotion of a truer and more accurate understanding of each other's lives. He referred to the increasingly important role of museums as educators as well as being treasure houses and research centres.

The four working sessions were initiated by a truly fascinating exposition of the capabilities of the latest computer technology by experts from the USA, France and the UK. Particularly impressive is the capacity of the laser videodisc, its ability to store up to 100,000 images on both sides of its film, and its potential for world-wide dissemination via computer print-out. The overall ability to transfer and to absorb additional information and data via such computer print-outs and conventional telephone lines demonstrated the speed and extent of such communication, in a world-wide context.

A lively discussion ensued. Many questions were raised which ranged from the protection of image copyright to the risk of adopting or adhering to a particular format or system when technology itself was developing so fast. There was anxiety about a basic need to protect the "human focus" on

art when computerised, and the method whereby a large number of objects could be recorded in a "digestible form" was raised. There was a prime need to address great effort to the enormous backlog of material requiring cataloguing before starting on new acquisitios. With literally millions of objects and artifacts waiting to be processed, how could we be sure to concentrate on essentials? Much present cataloguing was inaccurate and could not, therefore, be transposed onto the new record systems. Time and money were in short supply and at least one major curator would welcome a xeroxed hand-list now as being realistic in preference to a computerised future potential or facility. Just as we were being made aware of the almost incalculable extent of Islamic art treasures in the world, so equally immense and incalculable was the task of implanting accurate catalogue entries into a computerised data base from at best inadequate card index systems. This was a theme which ran through our minds as the participants in the Seminar, who chose to describe their collections in both public and private ownership, demonstrated the geographical spread and extent of our interests. The representatives of the great international repositories of Islamic art who spoke about their collections drew attention in our minds to others, equally great, whose representatives were not with us to remind us of even more treasures; particularly those of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union including the Central Asian Republics.

From Morocco to Indonesia, the need to collect, collate and preserve the artistic heritage of Islamic culture has been recognised and the urgent need to update records and catalogues by every and any means was commonly expressed. One curator of a well ordered and exemplary museum spoke of "a mass" of uncatalogued documents, and another spoke of his concern for the "millions of unknown objects and manuscrips in private collections" which were as yet beyond the reach of even the most cursory inspection or evaluation by experts. We have learnt of a learned society whose library catalogue has at long last been completed but whose publication is still thwarted for lack of comparatively modest funds. We have heard of the setting up of a Documentation Centre for Islamic Minor Arts in Oxford and the development of their research and teaching programme in this field, the progress of an educational and religious centre in Bahrain, created to commemorate the beginning of the 15th century of Islam. The long awaited creation of an Islamic Department for the Victoria & Albert Museum was still hedged about by difficulties of staffing and operational resources.

But new encouragement comes from the pioneering work of such institutions as OIC's Research Centre on Islamic History and Culture in Istanbul, and the Dar al Athar al Islamiya in Kuwait's National Museum complex and its private loan collections of Sheikh Nasser. Here there has been financial commitment by both government and owner, tailored to meet the needs of the institution. The resulting excellence of endeavour, presentation and publishing capacity is inspirational to us all. Additionally, the Kuwait Museum hopes that other leading museums will organise exhibitions from amongst private collectors as they intend doing, as a way of encouraging the revelation of hidden treasures and artifacts.

Further encouragement comes to us in the reports from Istanbul, particularly by the great traditional institutions of Islamic art and culture. In similar terms we welcome the initiatives being taken in the Middle East, North Africa, the Indo-Pakistan sub-continent and the Islamic states of the Far East, in themselves no less important than the immense contribution by Western scholarship in developing and maintaining departments and museums of Islamic arts. Overall, the picture of the old museums, with their embarrassment of material riches and woefully inadequate cataloguing was enlivened and balanced by their capacity to reach out to the public with immensely impressive static and travelling exhibitions.

At this point, reference was made to the achievement in 1976 of the World of Islam Festival made possible by the cooperation and coordination of scholars and academics from Muslim and non-Muslim countries in effecting a portrayal and study of Islamic culture and heritage in a western setting. Such and similar cooperation would be the key to success in our present endeavours. There is a wealth of talent, resourcefulness and energy available from amongst the world's academics whom you represent here today. How have we responded to this brief period of deliberation?

There has been a proposal to prepare a standard lexicon for universal use in preparing a future data base. There has been an appeal to centralise the cataloguing of private collections under the benevolent auspices of government authorities. There is a proposal for governments to encourage the training of students in Islamic arts in certain countries, unfamiliar with Islamic culture, in order to protect the interests of inadequately valued or appreciated small collections in both public and private hands.

It is proposed that governments should be prepared to protect and document private collections, static or immovable buildings and other historic architectural structures such as bridges and irrigation schemes and, in addition, new artistic and architectural achievements; to provide support for museums and galleries for contemporary Islamic art. It has been proposed that UNESCO should play a greater part in the operation of national and regional commissions to supervise conservation, and to use its authority and influence to encourage individual governments to do likewise.

There is a need to provide funds for the training of registrars and librarians, and the improvement of national legislation to meet existing needs for conservation of Islamic property. A standard format is required for the collection of basic information and all data collected and linked to documentary centres by computer terminals should be made freely available for retrieval by scholars and researchers. One of the participants offered his own simple card index as a prototype of the format that may be used.

Our needs are many and varied; but as one of the participants commented, "we may not all be in the same boat, but we are in the same sea!"

The Seminar also emphasised the need for the protection of artifacts from acts of war.

What then can we resolve to do collectively? Individual museums and galleries will pursue the development of their own specific needs, but we should try to avail ourselves of certain simple requirements upon which our ultimate ambitions may be built. We have been asked to consider the setting up of a Central Reference Archive of Islamic Arts and this could be done if, in the first instance it limits itself to the identification of objects and artifacts and their location, wherever they may be. Where that Central Archive will be sited and how it should be staffed and operated is beyond our immediate competence. Similarly, the inauguration of an Islamic Arts Reference Service may be undertaken to keep track of new acquisitions of Islamic artifacts by public museum and private collectors, together with general relevant information about exhibitions, sales and discoveries. Both Archive and Reference Service would be an aid not a substitute for existing academic research. They would grow into useful educational adjuncts and reference points by virtue of the cooperation of scholars' and curators' participation in the building up of their resources; and through this cooperation they will develop in stature with a logical and natural momentum.

KING FAHD AWARDS FOR ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE

The OIC International Commission for the Preservation of the Islamic Cultural Heritage, chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Faisal Bin Fahd, has instituted the King Fahd Awards for

Design and Research in Islamic Architecture which is a triennial competition open to the students of architecture and newly graduated architects all over the world.

At each event a total of US$100,000, $50,000 for architectural design, $50,000 for architectural research, will be awarded to authors of outstanding works and their tutors. Each group of awards will consist of 10 prizes for the participants and 10 prizes for their tutors. Furthermore, a limited number of honourable mentions may also be given in both categories at the discretion of the Jury. The Jury of the Competition, separately indicated for Architectural Design Awards and Architectural Research Awards will be announced at a later date.

The primary purpose of the King Fahd Awards is to recognise the emerging design talent and scholarship aimed at the issues of Islamic architecture. More specifically the Awards have been instituted to encourage the discovery of the creative spirit of Islam as embodied in its cultural and artistic legacy; search for the formative principles of architecture as inspired by the Islamic way of life; debate on architectural design issues that challenge the contemporary Muslim societies; pursuit of compatibility and continuity between the historical traditions as embodied in the architecture and craft of societies structured around Islamic values and the futuristic visions of the contemporary Muslim societies many of whom are driven by the developmental imperatives; and scholarly research on specific topics of the history and theories of an Architecture of Islam.

For the Design award, architectural institutions and individuals are invited to devise design problems and run studio of one semester or 16 weeks at the most on either of the following two Design Issues: dwelling as a reflection of self; and cultural transpositions in architecture. Each participating institution may run as many parallel studies around these themes as they desire and may send a maximum of 5 entries. Newly graduate participants may enter the competition independently, as long as they can obtain sponsorship from an institution. It is expected that each institution will carefully select the entries on the basis of design merit and the Evaluation Criteria devised. The Jury will pay special attention to the educational conditions and relative advantages and constraints under which the students of various institutions and individual participants may have worked. While team and group effort is permissible during the predesign phase, each entry should be the design work of an individual student, or a newly graduated participant.

For the Research award, students associated with architectural institutions or research organisations are invited to submit their research work that is relevant within the broad spectrum of issues and topics of architecture and urbanism of Muslim cultures. The topics may range from philosophy, history, theory, morphology and symbolism to environmental response, materials, techniques, crafts and even to futuristic constructs of architecture and urbanism. Each participating institution may send a maximum of 5 entries. Newly graduate participants may enter the competition independently, as long as they can obtain sponsorships from an institution. It is expected that the research project the results of which are submitted is done within the best traditions of serious research and that each institution will select the participations within the spirit of this Award as reflected by the statement of Purpose and the Evaluation Criteria.

In case of very special topics or areas not covered by the expertise available within the Jury, guest scholars will be invited to make evaluations and recommendations to the Jury. Ongoing research that might have reached a significant stage can also be submitted as long as the degree of incompleteness and the intentions for the future work are clearly stated. The work of Research Teams and Groups can also be submitted.

A complete information package, containing Eligibility of Conditions, Responsibility of the Institutions, Distribution of the Awards, Evaluation Criteria, Design Issues and Subject Areas, Format Conditions, Required Contents of Submission, Submission Media, Registration, Questions of Clarification, Shipping Instructions, Competition Calender has been mailed to concerned bodies, including schools of architecture all over the world. Institutions and individuals intending to participate must register by 30th December 1985 at the latest. Due date for entries is 1st July 1986. For further enquiries please write to King Fahd Award Office, Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture (IRCICA), P.K. 24 Besiktas, Istanbul, Turkey. Telex: 26484 ISAN TR, Phone: 160.59.88 - 160.59.89.

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ARTS EXHIBITIONS

MATHAF'S SUMMER EXHIBITION OF ORIENTALIST PAINTINGS

On Tuesday 2nd July 1985 the Mathaf Gallery opened its Summer Exhibition with over 100 oil paintings by famous European artists of the last century. Those paintings exhibited by Rudolf Ernst (1854-1932), Jean Leon Gerome (1824-1904) and Ludwig Deutsch (1855-1935) found immediate buyers amongst the Mathaf's expanding clientele. Apart from the Arab buyers, American collectors and Museums have also entered this market in strength. Undoubtedly, major works by 19th Century artists are going to become increasingly scarce and it is the Mathaf's proud claim to hold a stock of over 1,000 examples of 19th Century work at its best - all paintings related to the Arab world.

Amongst other works exhibited in the Summer Collection were colourful Market scenes by Eugene Pavy (who flourished from 1878-1887), Horse Caravan paintings by Victor Pierre Huguet (1835-1902), a brilliant example of an Arab Guard by Georges Clairin (1843-1919), some Horse paintings by Eugene Fromentin (1820-1876) and two splendid scenes by Frederick Arthur Bridgman (1847-1928) - one of a Courtyard and another of the Interior of an Algerian House occupied by a number of people and animals. Works by early Orientalists such as Charles Theodore Frere (1814-1888) and Leon Auguste Belly (1827-1877) were also exhibited.

An interesting aspect of the Mathaf's Summer Collection was its presentation in London in exotic surroundings: the Gallery itself had been transformed internally into the shape of an Arab tent with a black cloth roof and kilim rugs surrounding the walls. The Gallery's next presentation will be its New Year Collection for 1986.



Left: The Mathaf was decorated as an Arab Tent, with Kilims on the walls. Bottom left: Victor Pierre Hugnot 'Caravan', oil on canvas, 26" x 34". Bottom right: Fredrick Arthur Bridgman, 'Interior of Algerian House', oil on canvas, 26½" x 41". Below: Niels Simonson,'The Corsair', oil on canvas, 29¼" x 37½".







OMAN: AN ARTIST'S IMPRESSIONS

A private showing of lithographs and watercolours of Oman by Chester Williams in July was followed by an exhibition of 18 of these lithographs at the Royal Geographical Society in September. The artist was invited by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos, Sultan of Oman, to record his country in watercolours and lithography. The result has been a set of sensitive and some unusual "portraits" of an exciting country and its colourful people.

Explaining the background, the artist recalls that he had long heard about and wanted to visit the Sultanate, and by chance he was invited to Oman and spent about a fortnight in that glorious country. He fell in love with it and hoped that he might return some day. That day arrived sooner than he expected as his wife, Lucy Williams, had designed a gallery in London and the person running it offered to show some of the artist's water-colours of the Sultanate.

It was the beginning of many trips, as in 1981 Chester Williams was asked to undertake two projects for His Majesty. The first was a series of 30 water-colours of his country for his private collection. They were paintings depicting aspects of Oman, "a daunting assignment as the topography is tremendously varied."

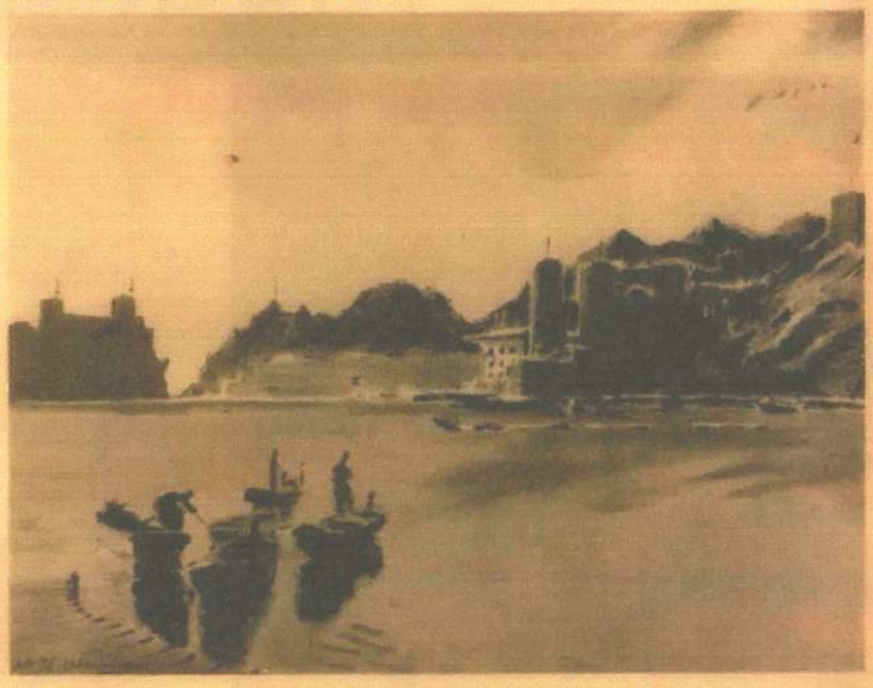
The second phase was to view the country and it's activities and to paint them with a view to translating them into lithography - limited edition of 100 of each subject, complete with the Royal Coat of Arms and the titles in Arabic, and there were to be 18 editions in all.

Six of the subjects, says the artist, were to be for the Services - Army, Navy and Air Force. "I found myself being dropped on a tiny ledge, thousands of feet up in the Mussandam mountains to draw the Mussandam Security Force! On another day I watched a helicopter delivering cement to a remote village, so that the inhabitants could make the wells water-tight — a part of Civil Aid. A foray into the desert introduced me to a new vehicle especially designed for travelling over sand, known as V'8s. The Omani Navy has several roles and I had to draw a very modern frigate, and by contrast, a tall ship, the 'Shebab Oman' used as a training vessel for young sailors."

His trips to Oman were exciting and interesting and, as anyone seeing the lithographs will realise, he had to be adaptable: "my subjects, apart from those I have just described, covered visits to Bee-keepers, to an oil rig at Lechwair (132 degrees of heat in early April), to the Harrasis desert to see the Oryx, to the pottery at Bahla (Pottery being made as it must have been for literally hundreds of years). Then of course I drove through wadi's in most corners of Oman—I slept in the Empty Quarter and I explored Dhofar and it's unbelievably marvellous coastline. Often I left before 5 a.m. to catch the morning light at a particular site and returned well after dusk; in the Middle East the light is revealing and so relevant to a painter."

To be a travelling artist Chester Williams cheerfully argues, is no new role, "as Daniell, Lear and Roberts have preceded me. The difference today is that transport is easier, but the landscape in many Islamic countries remains virtually unchanged and attracts adventurous artists today much as it did in the past. Having succumbed to the allure of Arabia, I hope to explore more of this ancient part of the world and paint it in greater depth and profundity."

Ken Chapman



Above: Muscat Harbour from a northerly direction, lithograph size: 13½" x 18" 9 colours. Below left: The Mosque at Bilad Bani Bu Ali (The mosque has 39 domes), lithograph size 13½" x 18" 8 colours. Below right: Pottery making at Bahla, lithogaph size 13½" x 18" 9 colours.





PARIS NEWSLETTER

Public sales of Islamic art in Paris are becoming more and more popular. Although the catalogues are still very slim, the lots rarely reproduced (and, when they are, in black and white) and the publicity limited, the good results registered for the last season should encourage some auctioneers to devote sales regularly to Islamic art. The majority of the merchandise comes from private collectors rather than from the trade, the estimates are reasonable when they are not too low, and, consequently, the percentage of unsold lots is very small.

The system of French auctioneering provides a concentration of two or three major annual sales with a large enough publicity budget and enough high quality items to attract international buyers. There are, in Paris alone, about 84 auctioneers, who sell individually whatever comes into their hands; and when they find Islamic objects, they tend to sell them either as antiques or with Chinese and Japanese art.

The major sale of the season was held in March, by Ader Picard et Tajan (APT), the main auctioneers of Paris. It grossed Fr.2,600,000. Reflecting the Islamic art market in France, it consisted mostly of 19th century objects: Turkish and Egyptian silver, North African jewellery, some of which was acquired by Christiane Naffah for the Museum of the Institute of the Arab World, and Ottoman textiles, which sell very well in France (like the Isnik pottery, absent from the French market this year, they are bought not by Turks but by Europeans). A Suzani-Boukhara fetched 33,000 Fr. There were also two rare 17th century silk embroideries; one of them, a *bohca* with a *chintamani* and *saz* motif, estimated at 17,000 Fr. fetched 85,000 Fr. The 19th-century silver included a copper gilt *tombak* (ewer), engraved with a diamond-cut motif, and its basin. It was acquired by a Turkish private buyer for 350,000 Fr., seven times the highest estimate. According to the connoisseur Lucien Arcache, it is older and better than a similar set at the Musee des Arts Turcs at Istanbul (exhibited at the Topkapi in 1983).

Another ewer and basin, in silver engraved with floral motifs, from the time of Mahmud II, was sold to a Lebanese collector for270,000 Fr., four times the estimate. Within a year or two, prices for 19th century Ottoman silver have sometimes tripled. In the November 1984 sale organised by APT, good prices were also obtained: 85,000 Fr. for a Bohemian crystal and silver narghile, 78,000 Fr. for a coffeepot, the same price for an ice-pail, 91,000 Fr. for a *pilavlik* (rice dish) and 98,000 Fr. for an ewer and basin. We must mention too, in the March 1985 sale, a Syrian hexagonal Qur'an Kursi, in wood pierced and decorated with silver inlays, in the Mamluk style, which sold for 130,000 Fr. estimated at 50,000 Fr. (a much smaller one was sold for about the same price in November 1984), and a pair of 18th-century Turkish guns with gold inlays of Quranic verses, floral motifs and the Zulficar, sold for 91,000 Fr. much above the estimate.

Lucian Arcache, unlike other connoisseurs in Paris, is not a dealer; he spends all his time researching goods, evaluating, cataloguing. He also does sales for Maitre Boisgirard, who this year organised two small Islamic sales with good results.

In the January sale, although one third of it was devoted to antique pieces from Persia, none of that was reproduced in the catalogue, except on the cover, which showed a page from a manuscript of 135 folios, with eight Mughal miniatures, from the 17th century. Estimated at 20 to 30,000 Fr. it fetched 42,000 Fr. The ceramics, about 20 pieces from between the 10th and 15th centuries, were all sold, but at lower prices than they would have been in London; one of the reasons, perhaps, is that the French are obliged by law to mention in the catalogue the slightest crack or repair (or the client can claim his money back), while the British are not.

Me Boisgirad's April sale started with 42 books on Islamic art, which sold well, then went on with mostly 19th and occasionally 18th century arms, lacquered boxes, calligraphy silverware, ceramics, glass and textiles.

Two large 19th-century jars from Fes (Khabya) sold for 9,100 Fr. and 13,500 Fr. respectively having been estimated at 1,500 to 2,000 Fr. 19th-century Moroccan ceramics are more and more appreciated in France, like Berber and Kabyle jewellery. Among the metalware, mainly early 20th century from Syria and Iran, a Qur'an box with silver inlays, estimated 12 to 15,000 Fr. fetched 39,000 Fr. This sale made twice what had been expected. Surprisingly enough, the great majority of buyers were French dealers. But the biggest surprise came from the sale of furniture, much of which was in very bad condition: an Ottoman 18th-century chest with mother-of-pearl and tortoiseshell inlays, estimated at 5 to 6,000 Fr, fetched 57,000 Fr. and a 19th century Egyptian wardrobe and a pair of armchairs fetched 81,000 Fr.

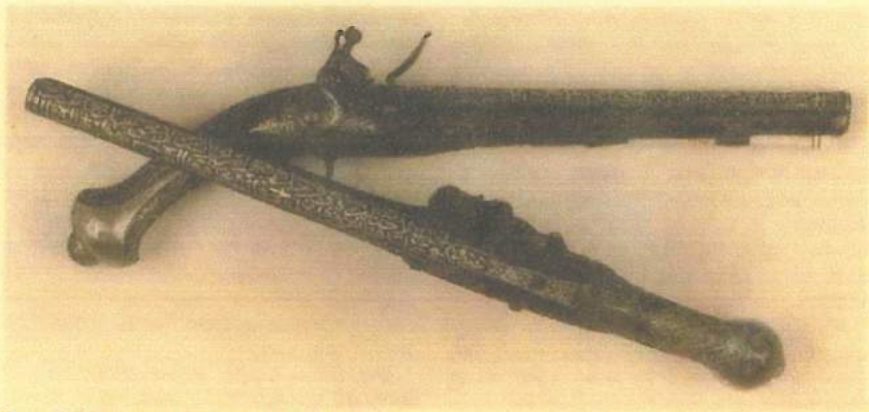
Turkish Qur'ans have a good market in Paris. In the November 1984, an 18th century Qur'an, estimated at 15 to 20,000 Fr., sold for 60,000 Fr. The 17th century Qur'an presented in the Boisgirard sale did not reach the lower estimate of 15,000 Fr. probably because it



Ewer and Basin, silver, Turkey, 1808-1839.



Jars, Khabya, Fes - 19th century.



Pair of Flint guns. Turkey, 18th century.



Portrait Sheikh Saadi Shirazi, 1527.



Kursi, Syria, 19th century.

was in poor condition.

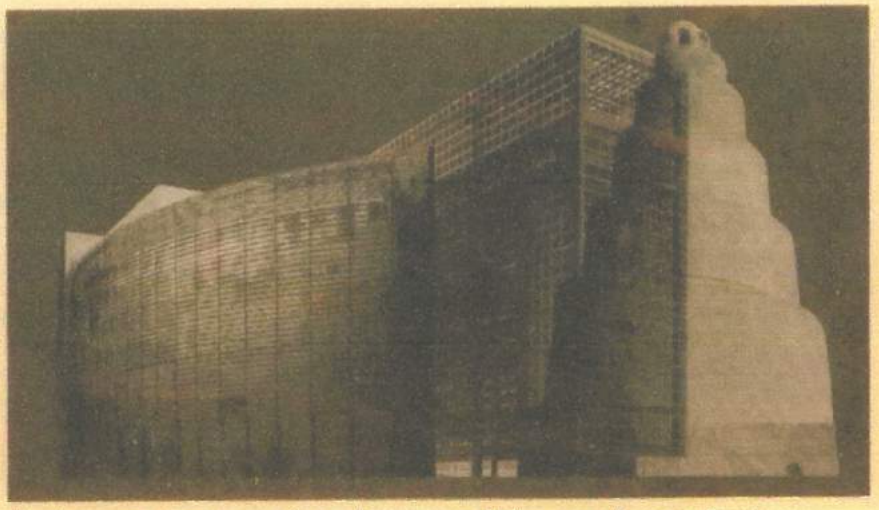
In the past season, no important miniatures have been sold by auction in France. The last time Paris attracted international attention in that field was in March 1984, when Me Oger and Dumont sold two 16th-century pages from the *Siyar-e-Nabi* (Life of the Prophet), previously shown at the Centenary Exhibition of the Maison Soustiel, which broke the world record for a Turkish miniature. They are both now in private hands in Geneva and one is presently being exhibited in Treasures of Islam. Five more pages from the same manuscript were sold last March by the same auctioneer, but less successfully for between 120,000 Fr. and 145,000 Fr. In the same sale, Me Laurin and his associates presented a 13th-century Seljuk tympanum (109 cms. high), with incised calligraphy (Surah and vegetal CXII) and a central mosaic in geometric patterns, that was pre-empted by Marthe Bernus-Taylor for the Louvre for 140,000 Fr. In April, Me Pescheteau sold some interesting and relatively cheap ceramics, appraised by Jean Soustiel: the main item was a Gurgan cup on a pedestal (11th-13th century) with lustre decoration, which fetched 9,200 Fr., and a Sultanabad 13-14th century cup which sold for 7,400 Fr.

Some good bargains, too, for those used to buying in London, were available at the sale of 8th to 13th-century Persian pieces by Me Loudmer last June. Excavation pieces from Iran are not often sold in Paris, but Mme Kevorkian, connoisseur and dealer, has a clientele for them. The main lot was a ceramic seat from Rakka (12th-13th century) with a moulded decoration under a turquoise glaze, hexagonal and pierced with *mihrab* shaped niches 20.5 cm. high. It fetched 15,000 Fr., the lower estimate. In the same sale, a 12th-13th century cylindrical inkwell from Khorasan, in bronze with incised decoration, fetched 6,000 Fr. In the Qajar section, an enamelled copper hookah bowl was sold for 30,000 Fr., once more the lower estimate. The sale also included a series of 19th-century Ottoman and Qajar metalware, arms from various countries and an 18th-century Zand *qalamdam* (penbox) that was sold for 8,500 Fr. Among the very few miniatures in the catalogue, the two main ones, a battle scene from a 16th-century Shiraz Shah Nameh with a graceful gold drawing of animals in a forest on the back, reproduced in colour on the cover and estimated at 60 to 80,000 Fr. failed to reach the reserve price.

The day before, Me Loudmer had sold an important stock of Antique and Islamic glass. The operation was mounted in the British style: for the first time in Paris, an expensive hard-cover bi-lingual catalogue was produced, mostly in colour and with an introduction by Sidney Goldstein, associate director of the St. Louis Art Museum, USA, and conferences showing projections of the magnified, fragile objects were held in New York, Tokyo and Basle. The prices, sometimes very high, rocketed for the Gallo-Roman pieces, but the 125 Islamic pieces, generally more accessible in price were not so popular. Collectors may have been disappointed, as there was no Mamluk enamelled glass and quantity was put before quality. But it may have encouraged new collectors. Some good prices were registered: 120,000 Fr for a Mughal hookah with gold and polychrome decoration, 42,000 Fr. for a 10th-century Iranian or Iraqi translucent ewer, and 400,000 Fr. for a small translucent Iranian bottle adorned with concave wheel-cut facets, from the 9th-10th century.

The next season will open with two Islamic sales in October, one to be held by Me Boisgirard and about which little is known so far, the other by Mes Ader Picard and Tajan (APT), on October 29-30-31. It could be the most important sale in this field at Drouot so far. It will include a collection of Turkish silver that was commissioned in the 1920s by a Pasha of Egypt, consisting of some finely incised jewel boxes with rocaille and flower motifs, ornate Ottoman mirrors, gilt and enamelled cups and saucers, etc. This collection of about forty 19th-century silver pieces, sold by Mme L.Y.S., was presented in Geneva at the end of June at the Beau Rivage Hotel. Also in the APT October sale will be: a cigarette case that was offered by the Sultan Abdul Hamid II to Pierre Loti, the famous French traveller and writer, a series of 17th and 18th-century embroideries, Mughal jewellery from the collection of Mme R., part of which was sold in November 1984 and March 1985, more jewellery from 19th-century North Africa from the Schramm collection, and some important 9th-16th century pieces from the Delaporte collection, such as a wooden calligraphic frieze from the Al-Tulun Mosque in Cairo and a complete *Bustan* of Saadi, made in Tabriz in 1527 and calligraphed by Mohamed Qasim bin Shadishah. On the last day of the sale, more than 200 books on Islamic art will be offered.





The Institute superimposed over the minaret of Mosque at Sumarra (Iraq).

The construction of Institut de monde Arabe (the Institute of the Arab World) on the riverbank of Paris is going on. The metallic structures are starting to emerge from the ground, and it is expected that the imposing building of this cultural centre created in 1980 to promote the exchanges between France and the 19 countries of the Arab league will be inaugurated in 1986.

It will house a huge library and documentation centre, a museum of Arab-Islamic culture, and various conference halls. Funds, though, have still to be found for the setting up of the temporary exhibition hall and the acquisition of objets de'art for the museum. So far, Christiane Naffah, its director, has had a limited budget. The search for sponsors has yielded some results as an important Arab Bank has already answered positively. Soon, a society of the Museum of the Institute will be created and it is hoped that it will encourage donations.

The Institute, headed by Philippe Ardent, is developing local contacts in the Arab world, collaborating with various countries for setting up the ethnological section of the Museum. Kuwait and the Emirates intend to present exhibits on pearl diving, a fast disappearing activity. Yemen will be represented by a janbiyya of Sanaa, and Jordan by the reconstruction of Bedouin and rural life, the fabrication of Palestinian embroideries, and the preparation of coffee. Syria would donate a traditional loom and also help with the recontruction of a noria from the Oronte.

In the field of research, the Institute is preparing, with the help of S. Ory, teacher at Aix University, a computerised program on Arab tombstones which should help archaeologists and scholars. Each item will be filed with a detailed description (provenance, shape, decoration etc.) and a text analysis in Arabic.

Also, the institute is participating in the organisation of cultural events linked with the Arab-Islamic civilisation, like the exhibition entitled "A thousand and one nights" held at Boulogne Billancourt, or the conference on Contemporary Art in Morocco held at the Museum of Modern Art in Paris. The conference was introduced by Ibrahim Ben Hossein Alaoui,the head of the Contemporary Art section of the Museum of the Institute, who also organised the summer exhibition entitled "19 Painters from Morocco" at the Musée National des Arts Africains. (This exhibition was initially held at the Centre National d'Art Contemporain de Grenoble.)

During the conference, the interaction between the so-called "developing" and "developed" world in artistic expression was discussed as well as the claim for a genuine Arab contemporary art creation.

In the catalogue of the exhibition, M Alaoui describes the emergence and the evolution of the art of painting with oil on canvas, originally a European invention introduced during the French Protectorate, but which flourished after the Independence (1956).

If the first generation of Moroccan painters was influenced by European figurative and naive painting (subjects drawn from the daily life like in Ben Allal and Drissi works), a comeback towards the cultural heritage of the Arab-Islamic and Berber civilisation of Morocco became visible in the 1960's, notably in the work of Cherkaoui (a half Berber influenced by traditional themes used in textiles, ceramics and in tattoos)and in the work of Garbaoui who was the first Moroccan abstract painter or even Belkahia who uses goat skin as a medium and natural colours such as those of henna and symbols of African origin.

During this transitional period, Moroccan painters were once more influenced by Occidental art (European and American). The Ecole des Beaux Arts (Fine Arts School) of Casablanca became the focal point of this new artistic expression which combined Occidental influences and Islamic and traditional inspirations.

In the past 15 years, a new generation of Moroccan painters has emerged (Kacimi, Bellamine) whose atention has been drawn by the art of other Arab countries (especially that of Iraqi calligraphic art) - some painters, however, have followed a path of their own, such as Aherdan, a master of subtle shades and monstrous conglomerate of vegetal and animal or human shapes in the manners of a Dali, or the Naif painter Loardin who specialised in bright depictions of fantastic animals and fairy tale figures in luxuriant landscapes, or Miloud who aligns an infinite variety of minute motives that recall textile and miniature paintings.

This Paris exhibition of leading Moroccan artists provided a good opportunity to understand the claim for international recognition of a genuine Arab contemporary art.

M. Alaoui has been stressing in the catalogue that since the beginning of this century, Occidental artists such as Klee, Kandisky, Matisse or Ernst have been inspired by the complex and rich world of symbols, forms and colours of the art from the Third World, so that there is no reason why Abstract art should be an Occidental monopoly.

Judging by the lack of inspiration, the gloominess and the violence that emanates from some contemporary plastic (fine) works of art, such as those exhibited at the London Summer Exhibition or at the Paris Biennale, one could wonder if Occidental artists still have to learn from their Third World comfrera.

The French edition of the catalogue of the Geneva exhibition "Treasures of Islam" (Edition Scala, Price FF420) is now available.

Pascale Villiers le Moy

Islamic Art in the United States: Introduction
continued from page 30
were slow to show a scholarly interest in Muslim culture. Dr. Oleg Grabar of Harvard University presents us with a succinct description of the beginning of Islamic art programs in American universities and includes insightful questions concerning the philosophy of teaching Islamic art in formal institutions. Today, unfortunately, the study of Islamic art is limited and although coursework is available widely, only a few universities offer advanced degree programs.

How did American museums begin and when were the major Islamic collections founded? Museums in America developed as people felt the need to establish places which recorded their own history. American heritage had been predominately European and the first two American museums, the Philadelphia Museum (est. 1786 - also known as Peale's Museum), in Pennsylvania and the Charleston Museum (est. 1773) in South Carolina, reflected this. It was not until the late 19th century, however, that those major museum institutions which today hold important Islamic art collections were begun. The establishment of American museums can be attributed to several factors which were uniquely American. Unlike historical patterns in other parts of the world, where political victories or religious patronage initiated vast art collections, America's major museums were created as a result of social and economic interests, and were supported by a new middle class.

Today, there are approximately 700 art museums and of that number, 23 museums which have important Islamic collections. Additionally, there are several regional and university-related institutions which hold small or study collections. A report of those institutions and collections was given by me at the Second International Seminar on Islamic Art in July at Farnham Castle.

Several of these major museum collections are featured in this issue. We chose to report them in a geographical as well as a media selective manner. Of primary importance is the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art which is significantly presented by Associate Curator of Islamic Art, Dr. Marilyn Jenkins. Begun in 1874, the quality and extensiveness of its multi-media collection of approximately 11,000 Islamic works makes it perhaps the world's finest.

Washington, D.C. hosts two other superb collections of Islamic art. The first, the Freer Gallery of Art of the Smithsonian Institution, owns an extensive multimedia collection of over 10,000 works of pan-Islamic inspiration. Dr. Esin Atil, former curator of Islamic Art, guides us through highlights of this major collection. Second, the Textile Museum, founded in 1925 by George Hewitt Myers, contains objects of Islamic textile art as well as woven material from many other cultures. Curator of Islamic material, Carol Bier, describes the collection and its founder, who established both a rationale for his collecting patterns and a commitment to research that continues to govern the museum today. Myers was quoted as saying that he first became interested in 'oriental' rugs in the 1890's when buying a rug for his room at Yale University. At that time, he had no intention of building a collection that would eventually number in the several thousands, but one thing led to another.

Another specialized museum which collects and displays art of the Islamic world is the Corning Museum of Glass, located in central New York State. Founded in 1956, it contains examples of every period and era of glass history. Curator of Islamic glass, David Whitehouse, describes the collection of approximately 200 works and isolates a few superb works for this issue.

The final article on museum collections in this issue is by Dr. Gulnar Bosch, former Chair of one of the university programs mentioned in Professor Grabar's essay on academic opportunities. The bookbindings in her article were donated in 1929 to the University of Chicago's Oriental Institute by Bernhard Moritz. An unusual exhibition theme, bookbinding was also the topic of a two-day symposium at the Institute which marked the opening of the exhibition "Islamic Bindings and Bookmaking" at which Dr. Bosch gave the opening address. In her article, she selects some of the most exquisite examples from the Moritz collection for us.

In addition to museums, there are other opportunities for the scholar, student, and appreciator of Islamic art to follow here in the United States. Several eastern institutions, including the Arab American Cultural Foundation, the Islamic Cultural Society, and the Middle East Institute offer reference and information services. The Foundation was begun in 1980. It has sponsored programs for performing artists, singers, folk groups, artists, scholars, poets and creative writers. The Cultural Society, founded in 1971 in New York City by wives of Muslim representatives to the United Nations, promotes Islamic culture and civilization and attempts to strengthen the bonds of understanding and friendship between American and Islamic peoples.

Several institutes in the Washington D.C. area, affiliated with universities, offer educational programs on Islam, Islamic art and cultural activities, including the American Institute for Islamic Affairs (American University). Founded in 1984, its purpose is to increase American understanding of Islamic civilization through a variety of special programs, information services, seminars and publications. Likewise the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, established in 1975, provides an Arab Studies academic program concentrating on Arab Society and culture (Georgetown University).

Several journals and newsletters, such as the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (University of Chicago); the *Middle East Journal* (Middle East Institute); *International Journal of Middle East Studies* (Cambridge University Press), and *American Institute for Islamic Affairs Newsletter* (American University) contain articles on Islamic Art and culture and are available by subscription.

Galleries offer further opportunities to participate in or view the Islamic arts. There are two important ones in Washington: the first in the aforementioned Middle East Institute, the second, the Alif Gallery in Georgetown, a gallery and cultural society which also hosts a wide variety of events including lectures, recitals and poetry readings; and the Leila Taghinia-Milani Gallery in New York City which gives important exposure to Muslim and Muslim American artists. The activities and stables of both of these galleries are well presented in our issue.

We hope this special issue has given a new audience a well rounded perspective of the opporutnities and activities which are available in the United States, as well as served to reacquaint and inspire those already familiar with our collections, programs and artists. We look forward to the next issue. ■





Top: *Moustapha Akkad with Anthony Quinn during the filming of — Lion of the Desert* Above: *Dr Mokhless Al-Hariri*

Washington, D.C. where he now resides. He is a frequent lecturer on art in the Arab world and has written a number of articles dealing with city planning and architecture in the Middle East.

His first love, however, is developing projects which integrate his four primary specializations: advertising, design, architecture, and special events. "It is hard for some people to recognize how these skills can be brought together in a single project, and much of my professional life has been spent in expanding our client's vision to recognize how we can help them on several levels at the same time. It is very Western for clients to look at you only in terms of one or two services, for example, hiring us to do architectural design—a clear preference for vertical thinking. What we try to do is get them to look at us laterally—to see how design needs affect all aspects of their work, from graphics, to media, interiors, and company events."

Dr. Al-Hariri believes that, culturally speaking, the Arab and Islamic vision is not of the world as discrete units but as an integrated universe. Wisdom and knowledge, mathematics and science, arts and history, were all part of a functioning world that served a higher purpose. By separating physical reality into too many parts as we do today, Hariri feels we have lost that sense of completeness that is essential to creative, effective design.

Among his successful visual interpretations of the Arab world, Dr. Al-Hariri has produced two photographic projects which have been acquired by the Smithsonian Institution and the Library of Congress. The first is a set of color photographs entitled "Unity and Diversity in the Arab World," and the most recent is a set of 100 prints documenting the 1982 seige of Beirut. He has also served on the project evaluation team for the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, and his firm has designed several embassies for Arab government clients in Washington D.C.

For Dr. Al-Hariri, his next professional aim is to produce a major film or video project. He has already taped several of his special productions and recognizes a distinct style emerging in his work. He feels that this medium will give him the best opportunity for the kinds of integrated projects he has in mind. It is this creative process—the synthesis of distinct skills applied to a problem—which most intrigues Dr. Al-Hariri.

He feels that his time for moving into this arena is rapidly approaching, and he looks forward to bringing the formula which has been successful in his other work to fruitful use in film and video production. As he looks to the future, Dr. Al-Hariri maintains an optimism that has carried him half way around the world - from a career as an architect to a producer - with a commitment to seeing the heart and universe of his work—notions borrowed from a heritage rooted deeply in the Arab and Islamic world.

Fred Maroon, an American of Arab ancestry, was born in New Brunswick, New Jersey. His parents were shopkeepers who emigrated to the United States as children, his mother from a coastal village north of Beirut and his father from the mountain town of Jour el-Hawz, situated on the old Biblical road to Damascus.

After graduate work in architecture at l'Ecole Superieure des Beaux Arts in Paris, Maroon spent two and a half years as a practicing architect. Following an editorial traineeship at *Life Magazine*, Maroon became a freelance photographer in 1954.

During his more than thirty years in professional photography, Maroon has developed an international reputation as a still photographer, photojournalist and a photographic author with an expansive list of commercial and print clients. His photographs have appeared in *Newsweek*, *Time*, *Life*, *Paris Match*, *National Geographic* and the now defunct *Look* and *Holiday* magazines, among others.

He has exhibited widely and his photographs are included in the permanent collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Modern Art, the International Center of Photography, and the Library of Congress. Among the numerous awards for his work are four first prize awards in the annual White House News Photographers Association competition.

By the time the era of the large format feature magaziners had come to an end, Maroon had already looked beyond photojournalism to what he considered a logical next step — photographic book publication. Maroon's first two books, *Washington: Magnificent Capital* and *Courage and Hesitation*, had already been published.

Book format afforded Maroon an opportunity to examine a subject in-depth and to use his photographs within an editorial context. Rather than 'represent' his subject through photographs, Maroon uses books as a framework in which to make a statement about his subjects, to offer a point of view. Maroon has chosen the subjects of each of his five books, electing to forego the financial advantages of commissions for the artistic advantages of being able to control content and design. Publishers have been involved only once the material has been gathered, the story in place and the artistic format determined. This has been a successful approach for Maroon, whose last three books, *These United*



Above: Fred J. Maroon Opposite: Ali Jihad Racy

States, (1978) *The Egypt Story*, (1979) and *Keepers of the Sea*, (1983) a profile of America's modern navy have enjoyed wide popularity and international distribution.

At 24, Maroon made a six-week trip to Lebanon to visit his parent's homeland for the first time. The experience gave him a sense of heritage and instilled in him a lasting interest in the Middle East. In 1963, *Holiday Magazine* sent him on a five-week assignment to Lebanon to photograph for a feature story on Lebanon with co-author William Sansom. That story, "Sarcophagi and Skyscrapers" appeared in the March 1964 issue of the magazine.

With this feature and an earlier photo story on Turkey, Maroon earned a reputation for his expertise in the Middle East. It was an expertise that has led Maroon on photo assignments to the region once or twice a year ever since. He has photographed extensively in Afghanistan, Iran and Lebanon since then, and in 1977 was commissioned to do official portraits of King Fahd and other members of Saudi Arabia's Royal Family.

After his third book, *These United States* was published, Maroon decided to do a book which related to the other side of his background, the Arab world. Between 1976 and 1977, he travelled throughout the Emirates and Oman, collecting raw material for a profile of three Arab countries. The project was tabled when Maroon found his third subject, Lebanon in the midst of civil war. Still challenged to produce a book on the Arab world, but in an environment more amenable to his working, Maroon turned in 1978 to Egypt as his new subject.

His interest lay not so much in developing a collection of random photos about the country, but in using photographs to tell a story, to provide the link in the public's eye between the modern Egypt of the '70's and the Pharaohs. His book *The Egypt Story*, published in 1979 by Abbeville Press appeared in time to contribute to and benefit from America's fascination with Egypt, most evidenced in the wild popularity of the King Tutankhamen exhibition. Since publication, over 100,000 copies have been sold and editions in German, French and Dutch have been published.

Although proud of his Arab background and, on a personal level, adamant in his feelings about the Middle East today, Maroon makes it clear that his first priority as a photographer is to be a good one regardless of the topic. When there is a convergance of artistry and market with his own heritage he is pleased and he brings to it the same commitment and talent with which all of his work has been characterized.

Ali Jihad Racy, an ethnomusicologist specializing in music of the Near East and a renowned performer and composer of Arabic music, has always been surrounded by music. Born in the small village of Ibi al-Saqi in southern Lebanon in 1943, Racy grew up in a family of musical talents — his mother played the violin, his uncles traditional Arab instruments. An acoustical phonograph and a stack of old records in the village gave Racy his first introduction to many of the great classics of Arabic music.

From childhood, Racy and his brothers studied music. When he entered the American University in Beirut in the early '60's, it was natural that he should become a part of the musical environment he found there. Racy joined the Lebanese Conservatory and together with his brother and a friend, produced a monthly television program combining comedy with original Arabic music which he composed. In addition, the young artist produced a weekly program for Lebanese Radio on the different music of the world.

Despite his deep love of music, Racy felt that he would need something more — a respectable professional skill. In 1968, he took his Bachelor of Arts degree in Public Administration, a move which, despite his subsequent career, Racy has never regretted. It was not until a visiting professor passing through Beirut introduced Racy to ethnomusicology that the young student realized that he could combine his musical passions with bonafide scholarship in an academic profession. Racy's father, a folklorist well-known for his specialization in Lebanese folk literature, had instilled in his son an interest in history and culture — an interest which had been fired by his radio programming efforts to explore the musical styles of different cultures. The study of music using anthropological methods, appeared to be the logical combination for talent and career.

After a year of further course work at AUB, Racy came to the United States to study at the University of Illinois. There he completed his doctorate in 1973, graduating with a specialization in ethnomusicology focused on the music of the Near East.

With several teaching posts, many musical performances, and a number of published articles behind him, Racy accepted an assistant professorship in the Music Department at the University of California - Los Angeles (UCLA) in 1979. Today, an associate professor, Racy is also Chairman of the department's Ethnomusicology program. Despite a heavy academic schedule of classes, lectures, and writing, Racy has continued his career as a performer. In addition to the violin, he is an accomplished musician on no less than 10 traditional Arabian musical instruments. He is best



known for his work on the *buzuq* and the oud, both stringed instruments, and the *nay*, a reed flute. Two complete recordings of music performed by Racy have been released, —*Taqasim: Improvisations in Arabic Music* and *Ancient Egypt: A Tribute by Ali Jihad Racy*, and he has contributed to more than a dozen films.

Racy's musical style and repertoire are classical although he respects the contemporary Western artists who incorporate Eastern musical traditions into their own work. It is, he says, "part of human nature that the cultures should interact."

In his own life, the interaction of the Arab world and the American environment has been a successful and happy one. Racy enjoys international acclaim as a performer and composer in the classical Arab tradition he inherited from his native Lebanon, and his work at UCLA, whose department of musicology is one of the most respected in the field, has earned him a reputation as a scholar and a teacher. Using an Arab orientation in a Western field of study, Racy has become an effective performer and educator in both worlds.

There is a precise attention to everything *Mohammed Zakariya* does, whether it be the writing of a Koranic verse in a particular Arab calligraphic style, the crafting of a fine astronomical instrument, or the making of airplane models with his young son. It comes, he says, from years of study and practice — an Eastern approach which is most successfully evidenced in the exquisite illuminations of Arabic scripts which he makes in his home in Virginia.

Mohammed Zakariya comes to be a product of both East and West not by birth, but by choice. An American of Anglo-Saxon and German descent, he converted to Islam 23 years ago after discovering during several visits to Morocco a strong philosophical attraction to the religion and a fascination for the Arabic language.

Returning home to Los Angeles, and tiring of the demands of working for others in a precision machine shop, Zakariya, then in his late teens, was determined to go to work for himself. Impeded in his efforts to launch a business by his lack of a formal education, Zakariya ended up making a sundial — the only thing he could produce which combined his machinist skills and his talents as a craftsman.

In talking with Mohammed Zakariya today, one senses that the years since his decision to make that sundial have not been altogether easy. Nonetheless, Zakariya has now achieved the unusual — he has developed an income-generating business by crafting beautiful objects which reflect the religion he has embraced as his way of life. He has found for his work a market in which there are few other artisans capable of the painstaking craftsmanship such fine work requires.

Today, Zakariya has more work requests than he can fill both from private collectors and international and Middle Eastern organizations. He has taught calligraphy at the Middle East Institute in Washington, D.C. and his work has been exhibited in France, England, the United States, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. He teaches Arabic to several students, employing the same techniques he used in teaching himself the language.

Mohammed Zakariya considers himself an ecclectic traditionalist — always true in his rendering of older styles and techniques, yet often combining those of different regions and time periods in a single piece of workmanship. His art is not spontaneous — it reflects layers of effort and experience. In this respect, Zakariya is singularly Eastern in his approach to his craft: he believes each product can be improved upon; each effort can benefit from further study. Not like the Western artist, Zakariya points out, "who would not paint a Mona Lisa over and over again" to produce a perfect version.

Beyond the precision of his hand, particularly in the calligraphy using Koranic verse, lies the unmistakable mark of reverential affection. It is as if the efforts behind them were an expression of faith in Islam a religion which Zakariya describes as "something tremendously beautiful but not graspable." Such calligraphy, as a manifestation of faith, conveys the harmony and beauty of the religion without specificity. To Mohammed Zakariya, "calligraphy is like the good voice with which beautiful poetry is read."

Zakariya's philosophy of repetition in pursuit of perfection is not altogether practical in the business environment in which he applies it. While as a businessman he finds challenge and achievement in meeting the specifications set down for him by a client, satisfaction for the artist is frequently more elusive. Indeed, Zakariya finds that "the more you learn, the more you want to improve."

Zakariya continues to study calligraphy through the mail with his teacher, Hasan Celebi, in Istanbul, Turkey, and through countless hours of study and practice. He has chosen Turkey because there the chain of transmission, the passage through study from one calligraphy master to another, is at its strongest and clearest. Asked if one day he will be part of this chain of transmission, Zakariya replies that is "out of his hands" — that for now, he is "still a student." ■

Contemporary Arab American Artists *continued from page 78*





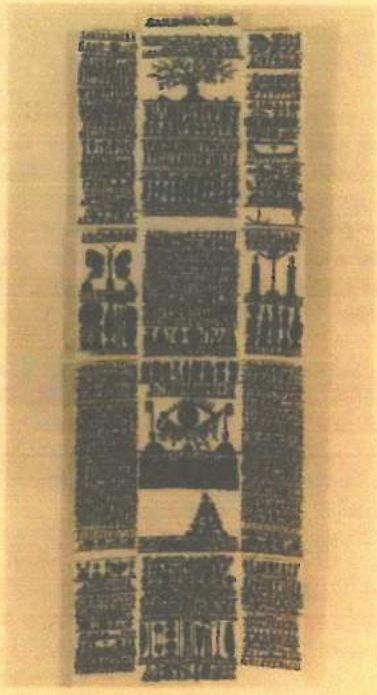


Right: *Mohammed Omer Khalil, 'Halfa' 1978.* **Top:** *Kamal Boullata, 'Huwa-"He"'.* **Bottom:** *Samia A. Halaby 'Against Apartheid'.*

Arab art has been highlighted by the creation of the Alif Gallery in Washington, D.C., under the auspices of the Arab American Cultural Foundation, and recently by an organization known as the American Arab Arts Society which staged a group exhibition of 14 Arab artists at the United Nations this summer.

Some idea of how these artists respond to their circumstances in America and how they find their work being influenced by them were gathered in recent conversations with a random sampling of artists from different parts of the Arab world living mainly on the East coast of the United States.

Mohammad Khalil is from the Sudan. He is a graphic artist whose work has been exhibited in Europe and throughout the United States and South America. He firmly resists any efforts to pigeonhole his art and says he feels no obligation to express any element of his heritage: "If you have an obligation to anyone or anything, you are not really letting yourself go, you are not expressing yourself fully... the work does not come out naturally." Khalil's finely-wrought prints and whimsical collages do use motifs from his Sudanese background, but they are also full of references to life in New York. The pace and excitement of the city are artistically stimulating. As he says, "New York is the most exciting place I have been. All ideas fly here and if you have an idea you have to put it out right away or



Contemporary Islamic Art in New York *continued from page 80*

never merely derivative. The works of Adel al Saqir, a Lebanese artist, are imposing pictographs based on the stateliness, power and intrinsic rhythm of formal Arabic script.

Other artists such as Nassir Oveissi exploit the decorative possibilities of Iranian motifs and iconography and invest them with an Oriental richness of texture and color. His themes and figures are drawn from the mythological past of the Iranian national epic, the *Shah-Nameh* or from the more recent paintings of 19th century Iran, the Qajar school.

Left: *Assurbanipal Babilla, "Homage to Keith Haring, 1984, Acrylic on board, 53"x12-1/4"*

Below:*Massoud Arabshahi, untitled. 1983*



Massoud Arabshahi is at his best creating mysterious and architectonic paintings of somber hues highlighted by gold or silver. Although they may contain references to Assyrian art or to the techniques of traditional Iranian builders, architects and alchemists, they phrase these concerns in thoroughly contemporary terms, not unlike the works of various color field painters such as Mark Rothko.

Younger painters are also given a forum. These include Nikzad Nojumi, a powerful artist in the Expressionist vein, who draws on his memories of Iranian miniature painting and mixes them with his reactions to political and topical events to produce a highly personal art. Y.Z. Kami, almost classical in his approach, produces serene and meticulously painted works, often conscious of the ironies of the Islamic present looking to the Western artistic past for inspiration, as seen in his signature painting, "Kami and Nane in front of Picasso's 'Parade'".

Many of these artists were brought together and juxtaposed with their Western counterparts, in two group shows that were produced at the gallery. The first was called 'Calligraffiti' and was a visually exciting 'New York' show, very ambitious, which brought together for the first time the established artists of the 'tachiste' tradition of the School of Paris such as Mathieu or Soulages, Islamic inspired calligraphic works and the latest in contemporary art, the New York graffiti artists, the poets of the spray paint can and the subway car, such as Keith Haring and LA2. The co-curators, Jeffrey Deitch and Leila Taghinia-Milani amply demonstrated the importance of calligraphy and its 'gestural' implications, for the Modernist tradition.

A more recent show, 'Connections', co-curated with Eric Siegeltuch, focused on how the past can inspire vastly different and yet totally 'modern' statements. Western artists inspired by such various traditions as that of Byzantine architecture or medieval Iranian tilework were mixed with the works of Arabshahi and Qotbi.

The presence of this new forum for the works of artists of Muslim origin or inspiration can only enhance the reputation for internationalism that New York has enjoyed since the 1940's and enrich the artistic fabric of the city. ■



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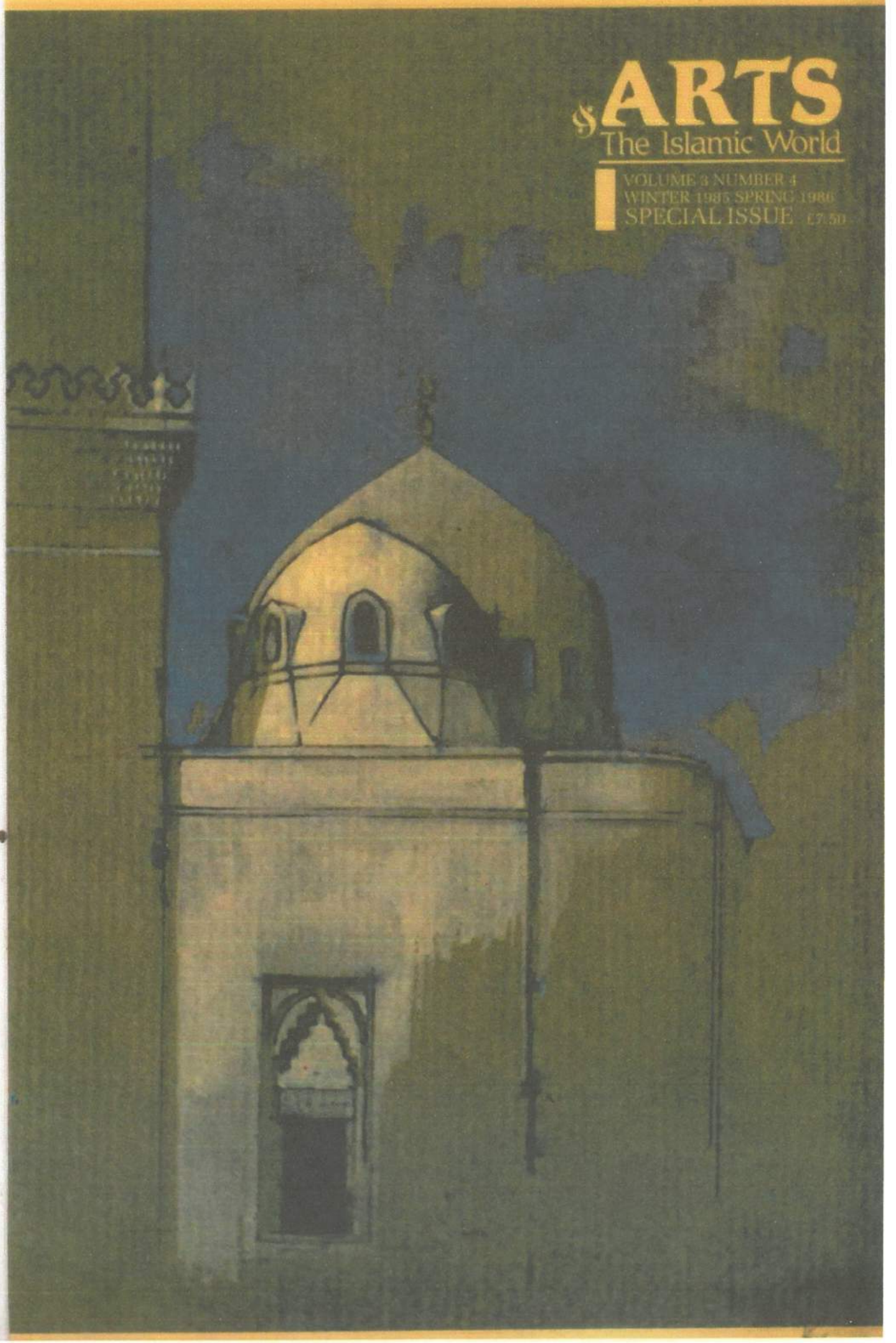
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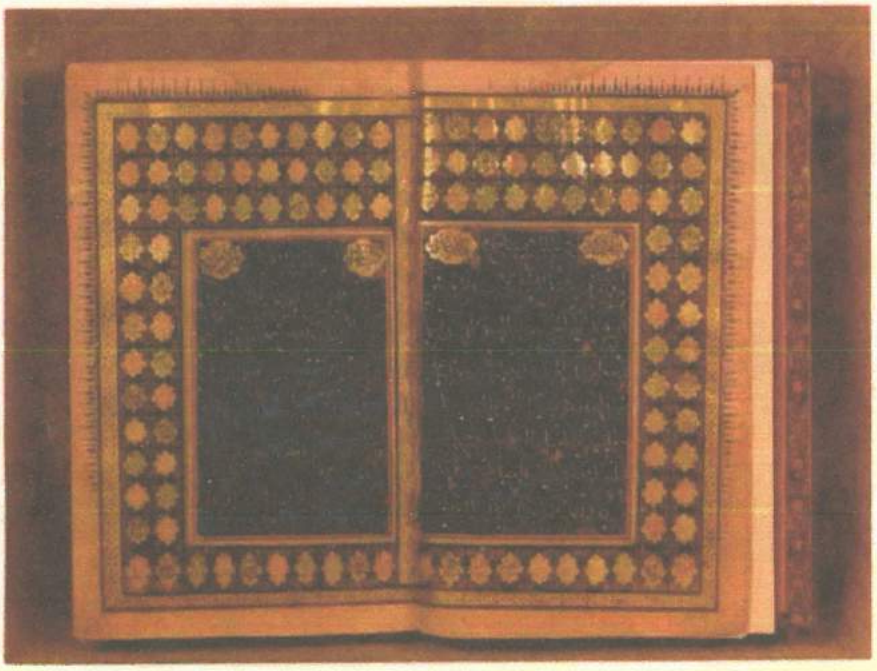
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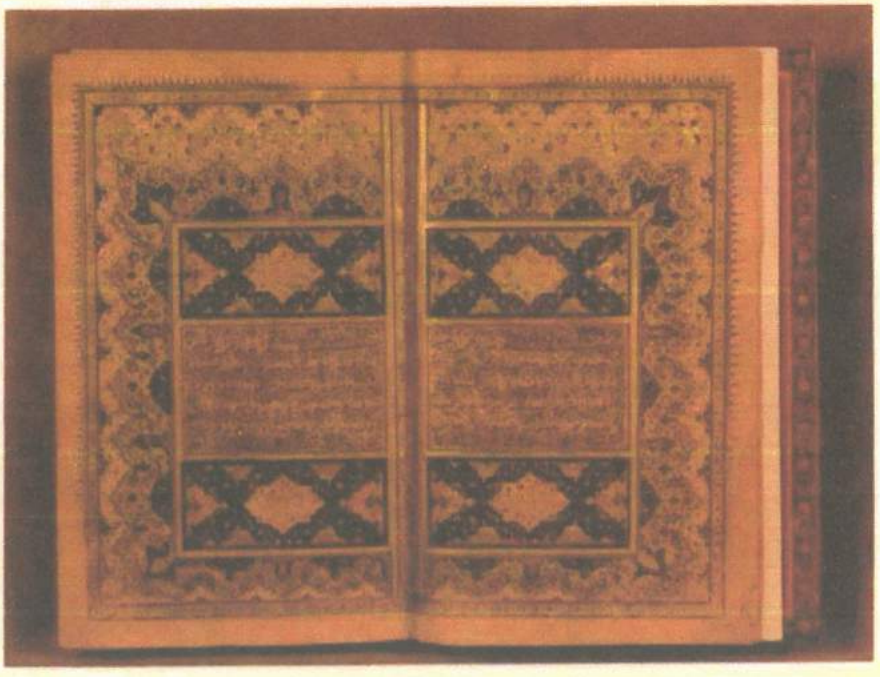
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Volume 1 No. 1 Winter 1982/83



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List of Seminar Papers
Calligraphy in Modern Arab Arts
Rifand al-Haidari
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Heritage of Islam
Problems of Creative Artists
Agha Abdul Hamid
London: International Art Market
Saleem Shahed
Arts News
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Volume 1 No. 2 Spring 1983



The Al-Sabah Collection in the Kuwait National Museum
Huon Mallalieu
Cairo - Preservation and Restoration of Islamic Monuments
John Rodenbeck
Collecting Handicrafts in Saudi Arabia
John Topham
Decorative Arts in Moroccan Architecture today
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Islamic Arts in Malaysia
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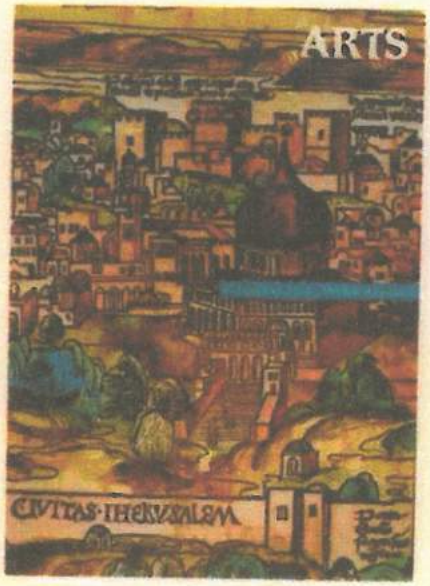
Volume 1 No. 3 Summer Autumn 1983



Oriental Carpets in London
Majid Amini
Modern Turkish Painting
J.D. Norton
Islamic Art - Common Principles, Themes and Forms
Ayyub Malik
Opa-Locka: American City with Islamic Design
Carol Hotchkiss Mait
Arab Artists in Paris
Shirley Kay
Punjab Panorama
Miriam Habib
The Aga Khan Award for Architecture : An Assessment
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The Award Winners
An Architect's Overview
J.R. Gibson
Profile: Suad Al-Attar
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Arts Publications
Arts Sales
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Volume 1 No. 4 Winter 1983/4 Volume 2 No. 1 Spring 1984 Volume 2 No.2 Summer 1984





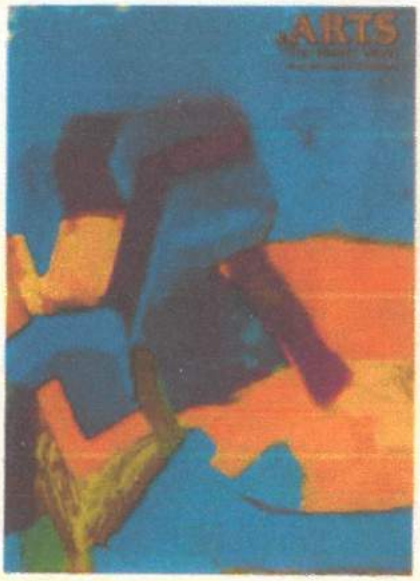


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Saleem Shahed
Arts News
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Archibald G. Wallis
A Modern Statement in Islamic Art
J. Graham
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K. Fareed
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Al-Albait Foundation, Royal Academy of Arts
Nassir El-Din El Assad
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Some Aspects of Jordanian Folklore
Mahmoud Zeoudie
Traditional Costumes of Jordan and Palestine
Widad Kawar
Jordan's Traditional Crafts
Samia Zaru
Extension to the National Gallery
Designing Houses in Amman
Jafar Tukan
New Mosque for Amman
Jan Cejka
Community Housing
Rasem Badran
The City of Salt
Rami Khouri
Mosaics of Jordan
Michele Piccirillo
Pella of the Decapolis
Robert Houston Smith
Neolithic Art from Ain Ghazal
Gray O. Rollefson
Iraq El Amir: The IFAPO's Research Programme
E. Will
Um Qais
Nazmieh Rida Tawfiq
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Publications

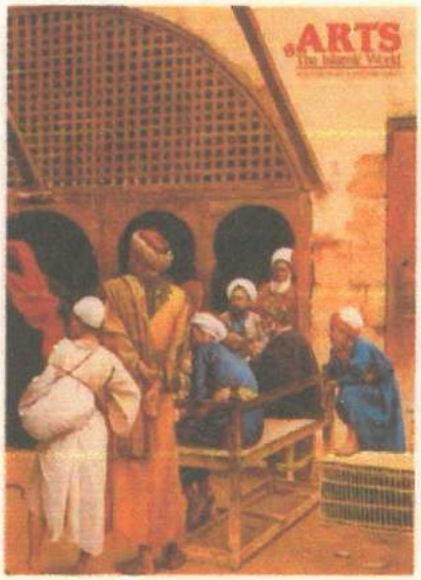
China and the Islamic World
Michael Gulbenkian
Al-Sabah Collection
Recent Acquisitions
Manuel Keene
Profile: Basil Alkazzi
Maureen Ali
The Arts in Egypt: A Special Supplement
State of Arts: A Retrospect
Elizabeth Rodenbeck
Museum of Islamic Art
Irene Erlugrul
Contemporary Egyptian Art
Dagmar Painter
Islamic Architecture and the Discipline of Design
Abdullah Schleifer
Mud Brick
Neil MacFarquhar
The Wissa Wassef Atelier at Harrania
Hilary Weir
Silver Jewellery
Susan Weeks
Traditional Costumes
Shahira Mehrez
Embroidery in Akhmim and El-Arish
Jayne Spencer
Egyptian Cinema
Egyptian Theatre
Mursi Saad El-Din
Musical Life in Egypt
Samha El-Kholy
Arts News
Arts Forum
Arts Exhibitions

Volume 2 No.3 Autumn 1984



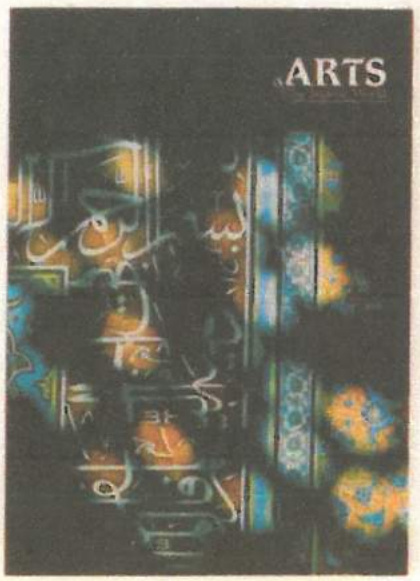
Bihzad and Herat Renaissance
Dr Mulk Raj Anand
A Niche of Light
Rolph Blakstad
Homage to a Mosque
Ayesha Abdel-Haleem
Indigenous Architecture of Saudi Arabia
Shirley Kay
Profile:Sharifa Fatima Syed Zubair
Chishi
Bahrain Art Society
Rashid Al Khalifa
A Personal Note
Raquel Clegg
First Impressions
Baria Alamuddin
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Publications
Arts Conservation

Volume 2 No.4 Winter 1984/85



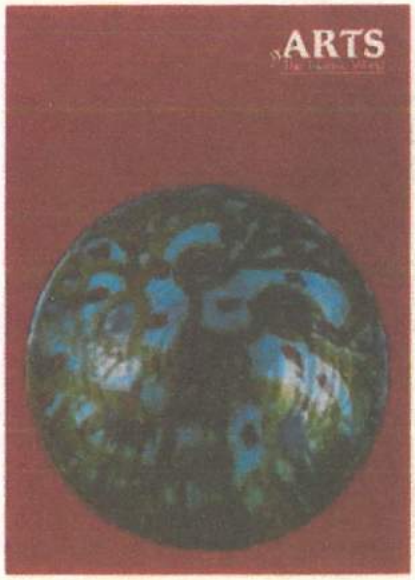
The Qatar National Museum
Dr. Darwish Mostafa Al Fat
The Jerash Fetival for Culture and Arts
Wijdan Ali
Washington's Islamic Centre
Carol H. Mall
The Dogheg Project
Robert Chenciver
The Exploding Metropolis
Ian Anstruther
The Islamic Art Market
Manroon Ali
Profile:Zubeida Agha
Agha Abdul Hamid
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Publications

Volume 3 No. 1 Spring 1985



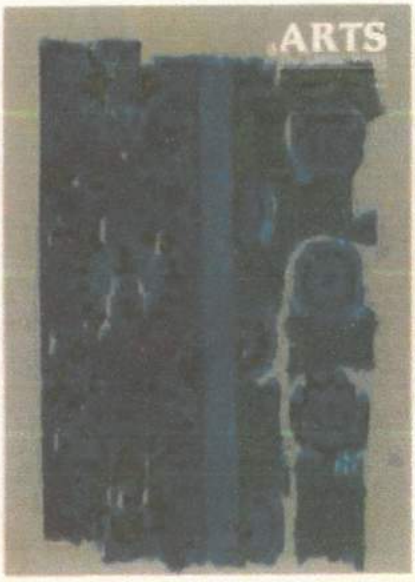
Oleg Grabar
Oliver Hoare and David Sulzberger
Towards an Islamic Theory of Environment
Ziauddin Sardar
Keshkul. Beauty in Beggar's bowl
Jill Tilsley Benham
Bait Al-Qur'an
Sarea Searight
Earliest Extant Illustrated Manuscript for a Prince of the Mughal Family
Heather Elgood
Kuwait - A Special Supplement on the Arts
A general outlook on Arts and Culture
Shaikha Hussa al-Sabah
Kuwait National Museum
Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi
Rare Qur'anic Manuscripts at Dar al Athar al Islamiyyah
An endeavour to preserve the craft of Bedouin Weaving
Najat H. al-Sultan
The Visual Art Scene in Kuwait
Abdullah Saleh Taqui
Contemporary Architecture
Badi Al Abed
Of Good old days and Modern Lights: Cinema and Television in Kuwait
Farouk Abdulaziz
Modern Excavations on Failaka Island
Theresa Howard Carter
The making of "Treasures of the Gulf" and "The Arabs"
Michael Mckinnon
Dialogue of Land and Sea
Mohammed Al-Mahdi
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Sales

Volume 3 No. 2 Summer 1985



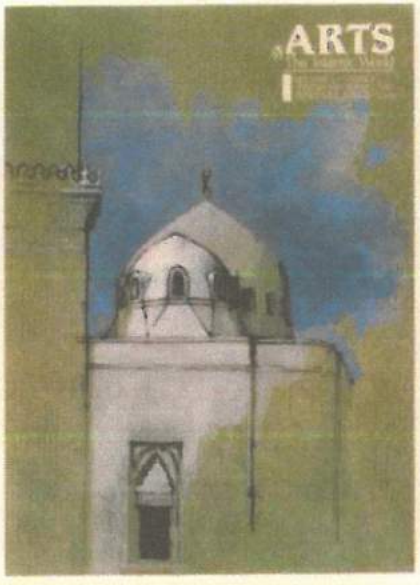
A Place for Prayer
Peter Monroe
Treasures of Islam - A Special Supplement
General Introduction
Pascale Villiers de Moy
The Arts of the Book
Basil Gray
Mughal India
Ralph Pinder Wilson
The Art of the Qajars
Leyla Deeba
Principles of Islamic Architecture
Dr. Sayyed Hossein Nasr
The Crisis in Islamic Art
James R. Gibson
Walī - The Great Artist of Herat's 15th Century Golden Era
Dr. E. Baharī
Qatar University
Dr. A. Kaffawi
A 15th/16th Century Turkman Helmet
Robert Elgood
The Splendour of Yemeni Architecture
Shirley Kay
Pakistani Painting
Kaleem Omar
Profile - Houria Niati
Juliet Highet
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Publications

Volume 3 No.3 Autumn 1985



The New Face of a Nation as Old as the World: Modern Egyptian Art
Liliane Karnouk
Dubai to Host Major Islamic Art Auction
Stan Nelson
Profile: Karl Schlamminger
Islamic Art in the United States - A Special Supplement
Introduction
Carol Hotchkiss Mait
Appreciating Islamic Art
Lois Lamya al Faruqi
The Teaching of Islamic Art in America
Oleg Grabar
The American Pilgrimage of Islam: Temporary and Travelling Exhibitions
Wendy M. Blazier
Architects in American Design for Islamic Cultures
Nadar Ardalan
Islamic Art in the Metropolitan Museum of Art
Martlyn Jenkins
Islamic Art at the Freer Gallery
Esin Atil
Islamic Art from the Madina Collection
Linda Komaroff
Islamic Textiles: Art at the Textile Museum
Carol Manson Bier
The Corning Museum of Glass
David Whitehouse
Islamic Bookbindings of Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago
Gulnar Kheirallah Bosch
Worn Pathways, New Roads: Five Artists in America
Francis Harper
Contemporary Arab American Artists
Ann Burnham
Contemporary Islamic Art in New York
Layla S. Diba
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions

Volume 3 No. 4 Winter 85/Spring 86

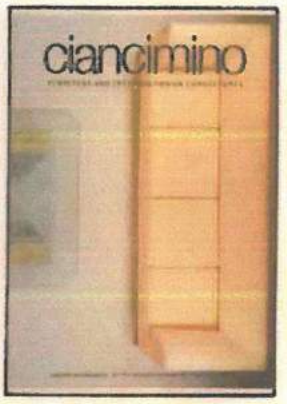


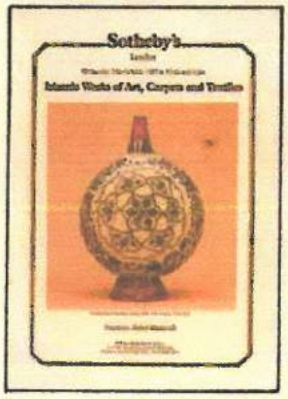
Islamic Arts Database and Resource Survey
Contemporary Art in Qatar
Mahmoud El-Bassiouny
The Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi
Jim Antonion
Excavations at Bannasa in Egypt
Geza Fehervari
Traditional Architecture finds a Royal Patron
Haroon Sagich
The Marrakech Festival
Juliet Highet
Profile: Ahmed Moustafa
Maureen Ali
The Arts in the United Arab Emirates — A Special Supplement
Introduction
Dawn of UAE Civilisation
Traditional Architecture of the UAE
Restoration Project: Ancestral Home to be Restored
Traditional Handicrafts of the UAE
Bedouin Jewellery
Aamal Al-Tajir
Art of the Ancient Past in the UAE
Richness of Style in UAE Mosques
Modern Architecture makes the most of the UAE Waterfront
Fine Arts in the UAE
Film Studios in Ajman
Shirley Kay
Dhow Building: Survival of an Ancient Craft
Tessa Rickards
A British Artist's Impressions of UAE
Chester Williams
First Islamic Art Sale in Dubai
Pascale Villiers le Moy
UAE Styles of Dress
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Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
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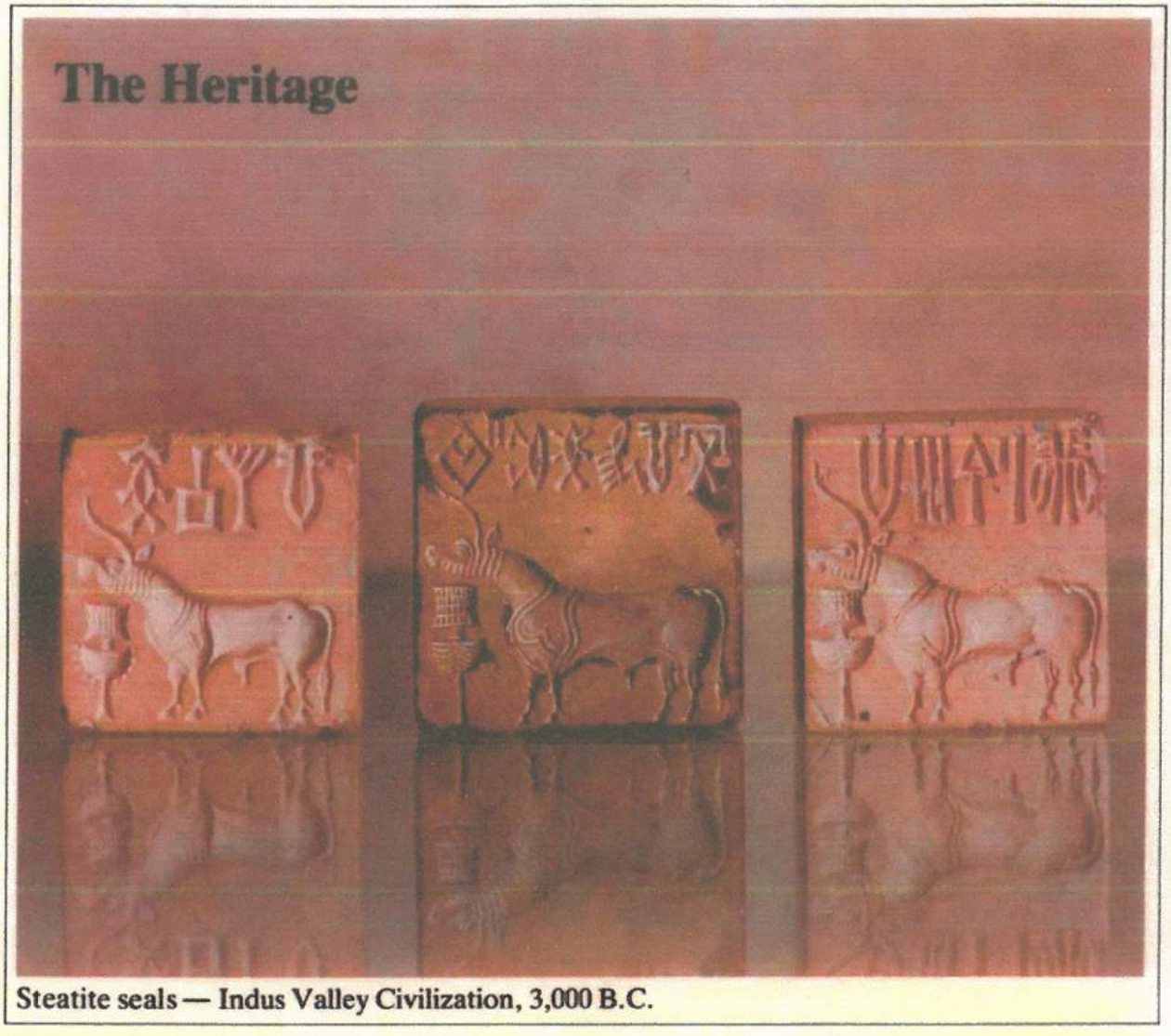
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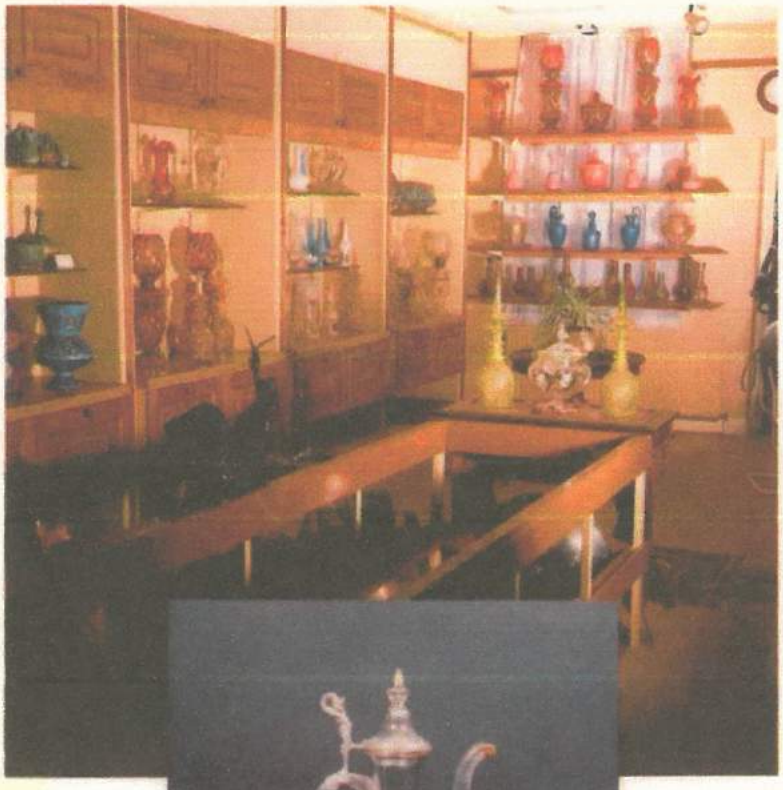
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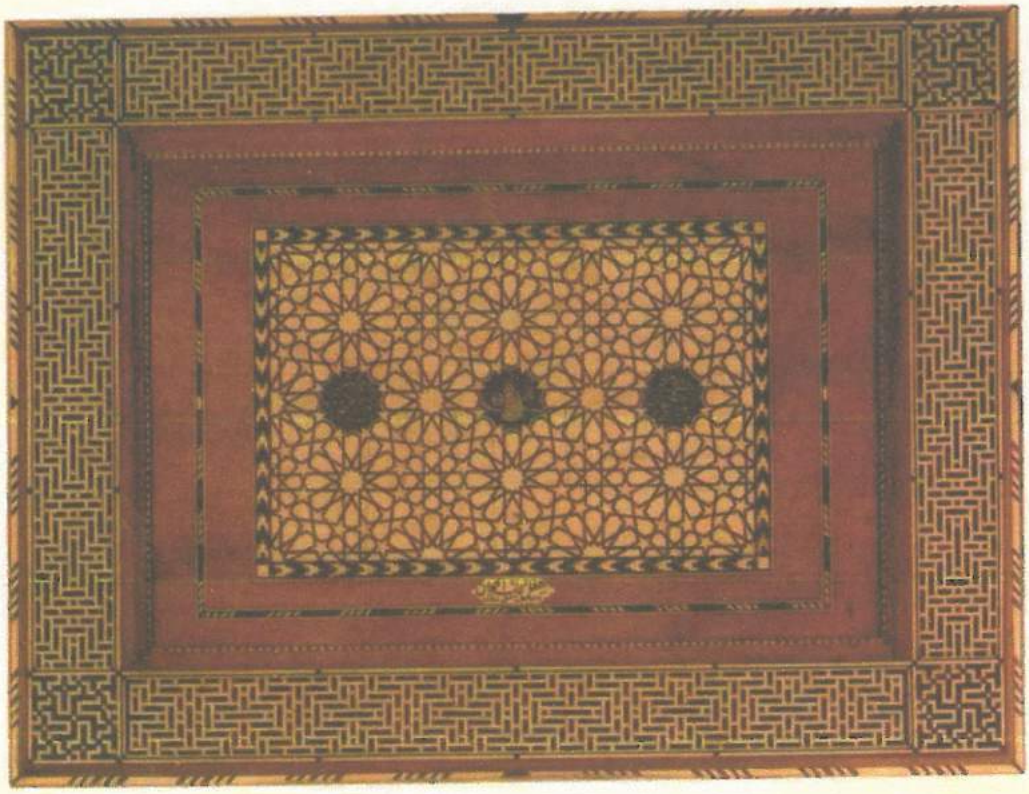
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Typeset by Olympia Typesetters, London
Printed by Penshurst Press

Islamic Arts Foundation, London
ISSN 0264 1828

Published for the
Islamic Arts Foudation, London
by
New Century Publishers
5A Bathhurst Street, London, W2 2SD
Telephone: 01 402 1451
Telex: 262284 MONREF G Ref: 3307

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Single copy in UK. £7.50. Abroad $10.
Annual subscription for 4 issues:
In UK. £30. Abroad $40.
All rates include surface postage.
Air surcharge extra.

Arts and the Islamic World (ISSN 0264 1828), a quarterly magazine, is printed in London by Islamic Arts Foundation for U.S. $40.00 per year. Postage paid at Brooklyn, New York. Postmaster: send address changes to Arts and The Islamic World, c/o Medialink International, 191 Atlantic Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11201. U.S. Mailing Agent: Medialink International, Inc.

18
Editorial

19
Islamic Arts Database and Resource Survey

33
Contemporary Art in Qatar
Mahmoud El-Bassiouny

37
The Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi
Jim Antoniou

41
Excavations at Bannasa in Egypt
Geza Fehervari

45
Traditional Architecture finds a Royal Patron
Haroon Sugich

51
The Marrakech Festival
Juliet Highet

53
Profile: Ahmed Moustafa
Maureen Ali

57
The Arts in the United Arab Emirates — A Special Supplement

Introduction—58
Dawn of UAE Civilisation—63
Traditional Architecture of the UAE—68
Restoration Project: Ancestral Home to be Restored—70
Traditional Handicrafts of the UAE—73
Bedouin Jewellery—75
Aamal Al-Tajir
Art of the Ancient Past in the UAE—59
Richness of Style in UAE Mosques—64
Modern Architecture makes the most of the UAE Waterfront—71
Fine Arts in the UAE—78
Fim Studios in Ajman—80
Shirley Kay
Dhow Building: Survival of an Ancient Craft—76
Tessa Rickards
A British Artist's Impressions of UAE—81
Chester Williams
First Islamic Art Sale in Dubai—83
Pascale Villiers le Moy
UAE Styles of Dress—85
Jessica Hansen
Theatre in the UAE—87
Abdul Ilah Abdul Qadir
Traditional Craft of Metal Working—89
Nasser Hussain Aboudi

97
Arts News
Arts Exhibitions
Arts Publications
Arts Sales

COVER: *Quba Mosque, drawing by Edwin Venn*

Editorial

This special issue of *Arts & The Islamic World*, a combined one for Winter 85-Spring 86, marks the completion of three years of its production as an experimental publication on a non-profit and self-financing basis, without any grants or subsidy. It has been a challenging task in more ways than one, made possible thanks to the voluntary and honorary work of a broadbased editorial and marketing team drawn from a number of Eastern and Western countries. The Islamic Arts Foundation, itself a non-profit Trust aimed at promoting the study and appreciation of Islamic arts, both historical and contemporary, wishes to express its gratitude to them, as well as to all those who, as writers, subscribers and advertisers, have contributed so much to the journal's continuing publication on that basis. However, the project has reached a stage in its development where it could vastly benefit from a corporate structure with full time paid staff and adequate financial resources. Plans for this are being drawn up, and readers will be kept in the picture as these ideas take a positive shape.

An area that deserves particular attention in the Arab and Islamic world is the state of art education and the work of younger artists in the field of plastic as well as performing arts. Two measures have been initiated in this direction. One is the announcement of a Competition inviting paintings from two age-groups: those under 12, and those between 12-16 years of age. The theme for the former is the "Eid Festival" and for the latter a "A Wedding". Details of the Competition have been brought to the attention of the relevant Ministries and institutions in the Arab and Islamic world, and are indicated elsewhere in this issue. It is also proposed to devote space in future issues of the journal to a section entitled "Arts Education" that would seek to highlight the work of younger artists and will also review generally the state of art education in the Arab and Islamic world. The textual as well as illustrational material will be prepared in collaboration with art teachers and institutions in the respective countries who are invited to send their reports and contributions for inclusion in this section.

*****

Continuing its series of special supplements on specific countries and themes, this issue of *Arts & The Islamic World* includes one on "The Arts in United Arab Emirates". The Guest Editor is a young researcher in this field from the UAE itself, Aamal al-Tajir, who is presently based in London, and is engaged in a special study of her country's art and culture. The Research Consultant for this supplement is a writer and art critic at present based in Dubai, Shirley Kay, who has written earlier for this journal.

*****

As this issue goes to the Press, there has been the welcome news of an initiative taken by a practising artist from the Middle East to establish an Endowment at the Royal College of Art in London for the award of a number of scholarships and travel grants open to art students in various categories. To ensure an institutional character Mr Basil Alkazzi– whose own outstanding work was introduced to the readers of *Arts & The Islamic World* in its Profile section two years ago –has funded the project through a non-profit Foundation set up by him. The awards are open to most nationalities and, as a way of encouraging greater understanding between East and West, two of the grants would enable the recipients to travel in the Islamic world and the Mediterranean countries. Though not lavish in number and quantum, as the artist modestly puts it, the awards should go a long way in encouraging private munificence in the Arab and Islamic world to promote the study and appreciation of the arts.

ISLAMIC ARTS DATABASE AND RESOURCE SURVEY

The role and contribution of the Arab and Islamic countries and communities in shaping and enriching the artistic heritage of mankind over the last several centuries, and the nature and substance of their creative expressions that continue to refine and add new dimensions to the contemporary art and cultural scene, provided the themes for two international seminars organised by the Islamic Arts Foundation. The first of these, held in 1982, generally reviewed "The Arts in Islamic Lands", while the second organised in 1985, concentrated specifically on "Islamic Art Resources in World Museums and Major Private Collections".

The participants in the two seminars, comprising museum directors and curators of Islamic art as well as practising artists, art dealers and collectors from more than 30 Eastern and Western countries, posed and debated a broad spectrum of challenging questions relating to the enormity and wealth of the existing art collections on the one hand, and the limitations of access tools and resources for their documentation and study on the other. It was argued that of the more than a million Islamic art objects in various public and private collections in many countries of the world, not more than a very small percentage have published annotations available for academic research. In many cases the work of cataloguing, identifying and annotating art objects, even in major museums and collections, is hampered by problems of staffing and finance. As for most of the smaller private collections, even handlists have either not been prepared at all, or are not easily accessible.

It was generally felt that the task of establishing an international database for all the Islamic arts at a central place in any one country must wait while available resources, both individual and institutional, are geared to concentrate on ongoing cataloguing operations. Meanwhile efforts may be made to identify significant holdings of Islamic art located in various areas of the world, and to make information about the character, type, history, size, provenance of objects in these collections available to scholars and researchers. There is a coordinating role here which organisations like Islamic Arts Foundation may usefully serve.

As a first step in this direction, some of the papers on various aspects of Islamic art resources in specific countries and collections, which were presented at the 2nd Seminar, are reproduced in the pages that follow. More of these will be published in future issues of *Arts & The Islamic World*.

THE ISLAMIC ROOM AT THE BARGELLO

Giovanni Curatola, Marco Spallanzani

There are numerous works of Islamic art conserved in Italy, and they are evidence of the lively cultural relations that Italy long had with the East. Nevertheless, apart from the collection in the Museo d'Arte Orientale at Rome, objects of eastern origin are scattered throughout Italy; and the fragmentation of this artistic patrimony has meant that these objects are known only to a small circle of specialists. The 1968 exhibition of Islamic arts from Neapolitan museums and collections provided the last important occasion to see a group of works that came from the East and reflected the influence that Islam had on Italian civilization. Important collections, however, are also to be found in Milan, Palermo, Venice and Florence, as well as in Rome and Naples. Moreover, Italy also has significant collections of miniatures and bookbindings, but it must be kept in mind that — apart from the Berenson collection at Villa I Tatti in Florence — these are generally to be found in libraries, not in museums.

At Florence the most important Islamic collection by far is that of the Bargello, consisting of objects from the former grand-ducal collections and, more importantly, from the bequests of Louis Carrand, Baron Giulio Franchetti, and Ressmann.

A certain number of these objects, notable for their quality, have always been on display, along with other works of art, in the gallery dedicated to the superb Carrand Collection; but many other items were long confined to storage rooms as a result of lack of display space. This material merited more attention; and in 1983, in collaboration with the director, Dr. Giovanna Gaeta Bertela, we opened the new Sala Islamica on the first floor of the museum. It was, of course, not possible to display the entire Islamic collection, although for some categories, such as textiles, objects will be rotated. The works of art selected for this room - about one hundred - nevertheless present a comprehensive panorama of the collection and its high quality.

The largest part of the room is dedicated to metalwork, which is displayed in three cases (and more remains in storage). The first case contains six objects of documented grand-ducal provenance: four were in collections of the Medici - two Syrian incense burners from the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries blonged to Cosimo I in 1553; a Persian vase from the end of the fifteenth century and a Veneto-Saracenic bowl signed Zain ad-Din, from the collection of Ferdinando I, were displayed from 1589 in the famous Sala della Tribuna of the Uffizi. These pieces are not all of the same quality, but they offer exceptional testimony to the interest Florentines always showed in the oriental world. The second case contains some of the very finest Syrian metalwork to be found anywhere: the well-known vase dated 1259, a spherical incense burner of exceptional size (previously in the Museo degli Argenti and now generously transferred to the Bargello), and a splendid bowl (to which a handle was later added) with figured astral decoration inlaid in gold and silver. In the third case, along with objects of the so-called Veneto-Saracenic school (trays and boxes some of which seem to be of authentic eastern manufacture while others are perhaps Italian imitations), features some Iranian metalwork. This includes a little bronze mirror from the Seljuq period, a bowl and a stem cup inlaid in silver, and a small bronze animal attributed to Umayyad Spain. Displayed by itself is the large brass pitcher, incised and inlaid in gold and silver, produced in Cairo for a Yemenite sultan during the Mamluk period (more exactly, between 1363 and 1377).

Another case contains ivories and woodwork. The former includes a small box of Spanish provenance (Umayyad), another of the Sicilian school, an *olifante* also southern in origin (formerly in the grand-ducal collection), and seven exceptional plaquettes - six of which are Fatimid and probably come from the same box - representing the highest level of artistic, technical and stylistic expression reached in this medium. Also among the ivories worth mentioning are an elegantly decorated knife handle, and two magnificent chessmen. The woodwork includes two panels from the *minbar* of the mosque of Ibn Tulun at Cairo, datable to 1296. Finally, there are some plaquettes made of both ivory and wood that are attributable to fifteenth-century Egypt and were probably parts of a door.

Islamic glass, which is very rare in Italian collections, is represented by a celebrated mosque lamp that is a perfectly conserved example of work from Syria (1342-45).

Yet another case is dedicated to ceramics, especially tiles. A Persian group includes examples of vigorous Koranic calligraphy in relief and star tiles with lustre decoration (Kashan, 13th-14th centuries), and the Turkish tiles are characterized by the lively polychrome of Izmik. There is also a Persian ewer in the form of a small elephant.

Along one wall are displayed textiles and jewels. The latter include a gold necklace with two pendent earrings from twelfth-century Spain. The textiles form an important collection of some of the most famous Islamic and pre-Islamic work, such as a piece with the classic Sasanid *senmurv* that may be either Persian or a Byzantine imitation, and others from central Asia and Spain from the early period. The collection of later materials is very rich, and it was difficult to make a selection to put on display: those chosen include two perfectly preserved Turkish silks from the sixteenth century, and a Persian fragment of the seventeenth century with a floral design.

Two cases display arms, but again it has not been possible to exhibit the museum's large collection. A very rare piece is the jacket of a Mamluk officer from the first half of the fifteenth century; It, along with

an axe inscribed with the name of Sultan Qait Bay (1468-1496) and a quiver in velvet brocade from the Ottoman period, is recorded in inventories of the Medici armoury as far back as the seventeenth century. Other arms from the Medici collections include three helmets bearing the mark of the imperial Ottoman armoury, which was long at the church of St. Irene in Istanbul, and other Turkish and Persian pieces.

A stone bearing a long inscription and the date 1083 A.D. is mounted on one wall of the room. On each of the other walls are hung carpets. These are Turkish: one is of the type known as "Holbein" (from a church in the Florentine countryside), one is a "bird" carpet from Ushak, and the third is a "Lotto" carpet. These last two are among the largest and best preserved of their types to be found.

This newly installed collection of the Bargello constitutes only a part of the considerable patrimony of Islamic art in Florence. Other important (if smaller) collections are to be found at the Museo degli Argenti, the Museo Bardini, the Stibbert Museum, and Villa I Tatti as well as in the city's leading depositories of manuscripts - the Riccardiana, the Laurenziana, and the Biblioteca Nazionale. The importance of this Florentine material for the study of Islamic art and culture is greatly enhanced by the fact that, due to the extraordinary richness of the city's archives, the arrival in Europe of many of these works of art from the Near East can be securely documented. It is our intention, indeed, to publish many of these objects along with the relevant documentation in order to bring this little-known material to the attention of the scholarly world.

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AN OVERVIEW OF ISLAMIC COLLECTIONS IN MOROCCAN MUSEUMS

Jean-Louis Michon

A rich museographic patrimony

Morocco possesses a rather dense network of museums located in the principal cities, most of which contain representative samples of Moroccan arts and crafts as practised in the past and, to a large extent, still practised to-day. The displayed specimens belong either to the so-called "hispano-moresque" tradition, i.e. to the artistic culture which was common to Al-Andalus (Muslim Spain) and Maghrib al-Aqsa ("Extreme-West" of the Muslim world) before Reconquista - a culture which continues to permeate the way of life of contemporary Moroccans, especially city-dwellers -, or to the so-called "Berber" (but partly also Beduin, or nomadic Arab) world of technical and visual expression.

Most museums were created during the French Protectorate (1912-1955), or rather during the very first part of this period when Lyautey, as Resident General (1912-1925), was anxious to encourage the continuation of artistic traditions that were rapidly decaying, and even disappearing under the sway of industrial competition. Their location and a brief description of their contents are given on the following table. Only museums which contain "Islamic" objects, whether directly inspired by Islamic culture or belonging to the long-ago Islamized local cultures, have been listed.

According to recent reliable information, King Hassan II of Morocco has acquired important collections of traditional as well as modern art objects and works which he intends to exhibit in a museum situated in his own palace, in Fez. Among other acquisitions are Bert Flint's collections of "rural" carpets, woven materials and jewelry which have already been the subject of two publications.[1]

The present situation.

Physical facilities. After Independence (1956), Moroccan museums have suffered a long period of neglect, mainly due to the lack of funds and specialized personnel (most curators, who were French, had left Morocco at the time of Independence and no provisions had been made to have them replaced). The situation, however, is now improving and gaps are being filled: buildings (notably in Fez and Marrakech) have been recently restored, all museums now have qualified Moroccan curators, the recording, presentation and labelling of objects are being improved, and storage spaces are being created. One can anticipate that such progress will continue and accelerate, and that in addition to improving the quality of museographic presentation, a real policy of "cultural animation" will make the museums a more permanent and popular asset of the national cultural life. Such a move will be facilitated by the recently created "Caisse nationale de l'action culturelle" which draws its resources, inter alia, from the entrance fees (3 dirhams, equiv. to about 30 US cents) to the museums and which will help finance the purchase of new objects and promote museum activities in general.

Records. A system of museum records based on UNESCO and ICOM (International Council of Museums) recommendations has been developed and adopted in Morocco in 1976.[2] Its main component is a model of museum card which is now used in all Moroccan museums and which, in addition to facilitating the establishment of the individual museum files, will eventually permit the preparation, at the central level (Ministere des Affaires culturelles, Rabat), of a computerized listing of all

museum objects kept in the country. It is our opinion that this standard card ("fiche normalisee") as well as the field inventory card which is attached to every object at the time of the collection and/or entry to the museum (to be removed only after entry on the museum records and completion of the museum card) might be of help to countries which are now developing their museum collections. Efforts to ensure uniformity between the record systems of museum property applied in the Muslim countries would be extremely valuable and helpful for research, conservation and promotion activities in the field of Islamic art.

Museums as demonstration centers for living arts and crafts. One specific objective of museums when they were first created in Morocco was, in addition to the normal purpose of a museum (i.e. to make people acquainted with their cultural heritage), to serve as demonst-

AN OVERVIEW OF ISLAMIC COLLECTIONS IN MOROCCAN MUSEUMS

N0	Name	City & Location	Type of building	Main collections	Present curator (1985)
1	Musee des arts marocains	Rabat, Kasba des Oudaia	Ancient medersa entirely rehabilitated, with rooms opening on an Andalusian garden	Moroccan arts and folk traditions; jewelry, ceramics,carpets and textiles, costumes,musical instruments	Mrs Demnati
2	Musee des Antiquites	Rabat, 23, rue Briki	Contemporary building	Prehistory and Archaeology, with sections on the earliest Islamic settlements	Mrs.J. Benslimane
3	Musee des Arts traditionnels	Rabat, tariq El-Marsa	Old warehouses, renovated	Present day handicrafts, with a number of more ancient pieces	(Direction de l'Artisanat)
4	Musee d'art marocain	Fes, Dar Batha	XIXth century garden-residence (ryad)	Calligraphy and illumination, plaster and woodwork,carpets, copperware,furniture,ceramics regional artifacts	Mrs. C. Amahan
5	Musee des Armes	Fes, Borj Nord	Saadian fortress (17th Cy)	weapons, Oriental & European	Mr. A. Amahan
6	Musee d'art marocain	Marrakech, Dar Si Said	XIXth century mansion, with inner garden	Regional arts & crafts, incl. woodwork & furniture, carpets & textiles, jewels & weapons, pottery & ceramics, leatherware	Mr Bellarbi
7	Musee d'art marocain	Meknes, Dar Jamai	XIXth century mansion, with inner garden	like above; also: ironwork; XVIIth Cy *minbar* made of carved & painted wood	Mr. M. Idrissi
8	Musee d'art marocain	Tanger, pl. de la Kasba	Composite patio, part of the old Citadel	like above; esp. good collection of musical instruments and ceramics (linked with archaeological museum)	Mr. L. Tujami
9	Musee archeologique	Tetuan, pl. Al-yalaa	Contemporary building	Funerary stelas of the Muslim period	-
10	Musee d'art et du folklore	Tetouan Bab El-Okla	Traditional house	Musical instruments, regional costumes, embroidery, pottery, reconstitution of wedding room	-
11	School of traditional arts & Crafts	Tetouan, Bab El-Okla	XXth Century building in traditional style	Permanent exhibition of the finest objects produced by the pupils	Mr Fakhkhar
12	Musee d'art regional	Essaouira	Traditional house	Regional handicrafts: pottery, jewels, weapons, carpets...	Mr Lakhdar Boujemaa
13	Musee d'art regional	El Hoceima	Traditional House	Ceramics, weapons, carpets	being developed
14	Musee d'art regional	Safi, Kechla	Old Citadel	local crafts (esp. pottery)	being developed

All above mentioned museums are under the authority of the Ministere des Affaires Culturelles, except No 3 which is placed under the Ministere de l'Artisanat et des Affaires sociales.
Morocco also possesses a number of "site museums" located on archaeological sites (belonging to the Prehistoric & Roman periods) as well as several embryos of local crafts museums which still await further development.

1. Flint B. *Forme et symbole dans les arts du Maroc*; I. *Bijoux, amulettes*, 1973, II.*Tapis, tissages*, 1974.
2. Project UNDP/MOR/74/005, final report : *Maroc, inventorisation du patrimoine culturel national - Resultats et recommandations* - Unesco, Paris 1976. See also: Unesco, *The Organization of Museums - practical advice* - Museums and Monuments, IX, 1960 (2nd ed. 1967).

ration centers for the best productions of local arts and crafts. Not only were the objects exhibited of the highest quality and authenticity, so as to be exemplary sources of inspiration for craftsmen, but a few of the best artisans of the city were invited to come and work within the precincts of the museum where a workshop was placed at their disposal. Thus the visitors could have an illustration of how some of the objects displayed on the museum shelves were made and decorated, and they could place orders for replicas or adaptations of the originals. For the craftsmen, direct contact with a cultivated clientele was both materially rewarding (since no intermediaries robbed them of a major part of their earnings) and spiritually encouraging (since they received frequent words of appreciation which contributed to create a sense of social usefulness). This policy has been applied constantly for several decades and, even to-day, one of the original craftsmen (in the company of his son, a rare occurrence indeed!) may be seen in the Batha Museum, in Fez, practising his ancient art of cabinet making and very fine marquetry.

However successful, the policy has not been followed up after Independence, nor has it been resumed until the present day. Old craftsmen who retired or died have not been replaced. Others have left the museums, at the time when these were badly neglected, and one may wonder whether the idea of having artistic crafts demonstrated in the museums will ever again materialize as a permanent feature of the cultural life of Morocco.

In any case, the idea of demonstrating the crafts to the public has been taken up by the Ministere de l'Artisanat et des Affaires sociales in its program of creation of a network of "ensembles artisanaux". Such ensembles exist now in all the principal cities. They offer training facilities for the various crafts, workshops for individual craftsmen and exhibition rooms where products are sold to visitors at reasonable, fixed prices.

Detailed information on these centers and their productions will be available in the *Repertoire de l'Artisanat marocain* which I have been commissioned to prepare by the Moroccan Government and Unesco and which is now in print.

Chambesy, Geneva - May 1985

ISLAMIC ART COLLECTIONS IN SRI LANKA

Mohamed Haniffa Mohamed

Sri Lanka has a civilisation which dates back to over 2,500 years and the association of Muslims with this civilization is almost 1,400 years. It is recorded that an emissary of Ambassadorial rank was sent to Prophet Muhammed from Sri Lanka. Adam's Peak in Sri Lanka carries a foot print. It is interesting to note that the Hindus claim this foot print to be that of Sivam whilst the Buddhists claim it to be that of the Buddha and the Christians claim it to be the foot print of Adam. This is also the traditional belief of the Muslims.

Ibn Batuta a great scholar and traveller in his memoirs also makes reference to this foot print which he called Jabal-U-Adam.

The earliest Muslims who came to Sri Lanka were Arab traders and missionaries. It was they by example who converted large sections of the people to Islam. They brought along with them their religion, their culture and their art. The earliest of these art collections are tombstones, one of which dates back to 337 Hijra, that of Khalid Ibn Abu Bakaya, who was sent to Sri Lanka by the then Caliph of Baghdad to help the Sri Lanka Muslims in their religious observances. Similar tombstones with magnificient Arabic calligraphic work have been found in several parts of the Island.

In the Colombo Museum are also found a few pieces of Egyptian white glazed ceramics which belonged to an early date, but the period of actual origin is not traceable. In certain parts of the Island have been found rock crystal ewers with carved decoration of scrolls and fantastic animal forms which may be of the Fatimid period. A collection of coins brought by the earlier Arab traders dating back to the 10th century with Arabic characters is also available in the country. In a Museum in the North of the Island there are a few metalware pieces of Arab origin. A copper vase (flat) with inlaid decoration based on Arabic calligraphy is a good example of the techniques associated with Mosul, probably of Egyptian origin. There is also a brass dish bearing intricate engravings - the calligraphy work - not very distinct to decipher. A few copper trays (small) and jewellery boxes similar in style to those which appear in Syrian gospel books.

It is noteworthy that most of the collections in Sri Lanka are of Arab origin. The reason for this is partly historical. The country has been from time to time under foreign rule, none of which was Islamic oriented. The Mughal Empire in India did not extend as far as Sri Lanka and its influence was never felt so that there has been no collections of Mogul Art in Sri Lanka. The Portuguese who occupied the country in the 16th and part of the 17th century hindered the spread of Islam and the Dutch were indifferent. But during the Dutch period a number of Indonesians were exiled to Sri Lanka and in the homes of their descendents are found collections of Indonesian art such as kris knives and swords. During the British period, no encouragement was given to Islamic art and there was hardly any development in the art of calligraphy except in some of our Madrasas and Muslim Schools.

In some homes are Qurans over three hundred years old hand written by devout Muslims, one of which is a heirloom in my family written by my great grandfather who was from Yemen. There are also Arabic inscriptions on our Mosques dating back several centuries. One such inscription is on the Mosque at Dafter Jailani believed to be the resting place of the Sufi saint Abdul Cader Jeilani of Baghdad.

This Seminar has focussed in my mind the need for making collection of Islamic Art, as I am aware that excellent pieces of art lie undiscovered and unknown in many of the leading Muslim families in my country. I have, as Minister for Muslim Religious and Cultural Affairs started an Islamic Research Centre in Colombo and propose to have a separate section in this Centre to collect and preserve for the future Islamic works of arts and artifacts.

I am also aware that some of these art objects may be found in other countries as well, and I would appeal to all present here that if there are any of interest to Sri Lanka, they should be sent to me to be preserved in the Islamic Centre in Colombo.

ISLAMIC ART RESOURCES AT OXFORD

James W. Allen

Oxford is one of the world's oldest and most famous universities, with Islamic and especially Arabic connections going back at least 300 years. In 1640 the then Archbishop of Canterbury, and most famous of all chancellors of Oxford University endowed and gave his name to the Laudian Professorship of Arabic at Oxford. In his steps have trod a number of famous Arabists - figures like Margoliouth or Gibb, or more recently Beeston, an authority on pre-Islamic south Arabia.

In the 17th century there was a plan to build one of Oxford's most famous landmarks, the Radcliffe Camera, in the image of the Suleymaniye in Istanbul. It never came to fruition but another 17th century project was to have more lasting consequences. In this building - the old Ashmolean next to Wren's Sheldonian Theatre - was opened the first public museum in the world. It consisted at first of a collection of curiosities. They had been gathered from every continent by a royal gardener - Tradescant - and were purchased by an aristocratic astrologer - Ashmole - who gave them to the University. Among these curiosities was an Arab amulet case - perhaps 17th century Kabylie work from Algeria, Ottoman bow cases and bows, and a Persian box-wood spoon. And so the kernel - albeit a small one - of an Islamic collection came into being.

For the next two centuries the university's classical collections greatly expanded. By the 19th century they desperately needed more space and were moved to the now well-known Cockrel building in Beaumont Street. It was within that building that the foundation of a Department of Eastern Art in 1962 heralded the display of a collection of Islamic art worthy of this internationally famous university, a display further enlarged and enhanced by the building of the Gerald Reitlinger Gallery of Islamic Art, which was opened by Sadr al-Din Aga Khan in 1983.

The objects in this gallery were acquired through a number of generous benefactions. Some benefactions have been small - for example only a few months ago we received a magnificent Ghaznavid bronze bowl as a gift from an overseas connoisseur. Others have been much more wide-ranging: Sir Alan Barlow's collection of Islamic pottery given in 1956, for example, contained some superb examples of Persian 13th century lustre, among a collection spanning the Islamic centuries. Another benefactor, Fortnum, was a more selective collector, and his gift to the Ashmolean is notable for its late Persian and Iznik wares.

More eclectic than either of these was Gerald Reitlinger who amassed some two and a half thousand pieces of oriental ceramics, including 750 Islamic objects. Fascinated by the relationship between Chinese and Islamic blue and white his collection includes Safavid masterpieces, such as a dish decorated with two pheasants, or another decorated with seven quails. Both are superb teaching pieces as well as works of art, illustrating the way in which the traditional Islamic star patterns still provided the foundation for cermaic design long after the introduction of Chinese blue-and-white into the Islamic world. Reitlinger's collection has other fascination too - not least his talent for do-it-yourself repair work!

With limited purchase funds we try to fill the inevitable gaps. A Mamluk enamelled glass mosque lamp in the name of Sultan Muhammad ibn Qala'un, and a pair of Mamluk wooden door panels, inlaid with carved ebony and ivory, are two of our most successful acquisitions over the last 20 years.

Whatever our students and the other inhabitants of Oxford may believe, our two main functions as a University museum are teaching and research. Undergraduates reading Arabic, Persian or Turkish can do a special subject in Islamic Art, but more important, graduates can come to Oxford to do a two year M. Phil. in Islamic art and architecture, or a doctoral thesis in a more specialised field of Islamic art. The results have been encouraging: one of our students is now lecturing at Benghazi University, two others are lecturing at Bir Zeit. A key in this development has been the sponsorship of a three-year junior lecturership in Islamic art by the World of Islam Festival Trust, followed by the endowment of a full university lecturership by a group of Arab businessmen. We owe these generous benefactors a great debt of gratitude.

Sponsorship of archaeological excavation, although severely limited by our own lack of funds, is a crucial activity for us. This way we have available for teaching and research material which complements objects acquired on the art market. The result is a collection which provides ideal research material for our graduate students. The collection of Raqqa ware combined with a collection of sherds from the region of Ma'arrat Nu'man provided the focus for an M.Phil. thesis, and the student concerned was then able to add a new title to our Museum publications on Islamic art.

Handling is a key policy in our work. Most museums have a "hands off" policy: ours in contrast is a "hands-on" policy. This way students are taught to judge objects not only by eye, but by feel. That same room which houses our sherd collection is used for the study of objects and for teaching - there, pottery, metalwork, glass, can be scrutinised and carefully handled by all those who attend - practical learning, not simply learning through slides and photographs.

It is this same emphasis on teaching which has led to the creation of a model figure dressed in a copy of 15th century Cairene female costume. The materials were printed at the Manchester Polytechnic followed designs of the period extant in fragments from the Newberry collection in our Department, and the garments were made up by Gillian Eastwood on the basis of written and pictorial records of Mamluk costume. Tittered at by some of my more narrow-minded colleagues as "mere ethnography", I firmly believe that we must bring dead objects to life in this sort of way. Our lady friend, you will be glad to know, is soon to be joined by a male companion!

The Museum's collections are supported by an archive of slides and photographs, including the architectural archive of Sir Archibald Creswell, and by a comprehensive research library. If students are interested in the history of

costume, they can consult the photographic archive in the Middle East centre, attached to St. Antony's College. If they are budding numismatists, then the Heberden Coin Room in the Ashmolean has a full range of Islamic coins. If they have a leaning towards ethnography, the University's Pitt-Rivers Museum has collections ranging from Kabylie jewellery from Algeria to Nuristan wooden figures from Afghanistan. Yet more Islamic ceramics - the Brocklebank collection - reside in the President's lodging at Magdalen College, while scientific research projects into Islamic art are undertaken through the University's Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art, whose expertise ranges from Carbon 14 dating to thermoluminescence.

The most important resource outside the Ashmolean however, is the Bodleian Library. This is a national copyright library containing many million books accumulated over 5 centuries. More important from the artistic point of view is its collection of illustrated Islamic manuscripts.

This includes miniatures ascribed to Bihzad, contained in four volumes of Mir Ali Shir Mawa'i's poems, dated 890/1485, and a Kalila wa Dimna of Mamluk origin dated 755/1354. Here too is the earliest surviving illustrated astronomical treatise from the Islamic world - al-Sufi's *Suwar al-Kawakib al-thabits*, dated 400/1009-10.

This scientific manuscript leads us naturally back to the old Ashmolean, now the Museum of the History of Science. Containing the largest collection of Islamic scientific instruments in the world, it includes the only known spherical astrolabe, signed by Musa and dated 885/1480-1.

We exist at Oxford not just to do our own research, though we do that; not just to display beautiful objects to the public, though we do that too. Our essential function - and my first love - is to teach, and to bring understanding of Islamic culture and achievement to all who wish to learn about it. The artist of the Bodleian Library's Mamluk Maqamat MS has caught the spirit of our University, and his pictures vividly illustrate our aims:

to lecture and to give seminars
to teach in tutorial groups
above all to be willing to put
aside all comforts -
even sleep, for our students!

ISLAMIC ART AT VICTORIA AND ALBERT MUSEUM

Robert Skelton

It is well known that the Victoria and Albert Museum houses one of the world's finest collections of Islamic art and the reason for this is a very simple one that stems directly from the nature of the Museum and the nature of Islam. The Victoria and Albert Museum was founded primarily as a museum of the decorative and industrial arts as a part of the 19th century movement which produced the great Industrial Exhibitions and also which widened art education to include decorative art and design. Thus we have always had a bias towards collecting objects which reflected excellence of design applied to the everday things of life. The so-called 'Fine Arts' of sculpture and painting do also have a place in our collections but they are the 'cuckoo in the nest' which crept in despite our original brief rather than because of it.

It is unnecessary for me to explain what the founding policies of the V&A have in common with the tenets of Islam. As in our case, the pictorial arts of painting and sculpture have to some extent, managed to creep into the Islamic Cultural Heritage but if anything, Islam has been more successful than us in keeping them at bay. As a consequence the artistic genius of the Islamic world has expressed itself principally in the ornamentation and fine execution of functional things — the objects of commerce and use — those very things that the V&A was set up to collect.

Of course, if the craftsmen and designers of Islamic lands had not so brilliantly solved the problems of decorating such items of trade as textiles, pottery and metalwork and if the merchants of those lands had not so successfully spread their products around the known world, then the influence and importance of those arts would have been minimal. They would not have had the tremendous impact which they did upon the arts of Europe and Asia and there would have been much less reason for the founders of the V&A to take them seriously.

Yet despite this inherent affinity between the aims of the Museum and the arts of Islam, the V&A differs from many other Museums in that it has no department of Islamic art and no curators whose activities are restricted to the study and care of Islamic objects. This is because in the early 20th century when the Museum was re-named and reorganised it was felt that particular art media such as textiles or metalwork needed to be studied and looked after by specialists in that medium. As a result we still have departments organised in terms of materials and craft techniques rather than cultures. It was not until after the last war under Sir Leigh Ashton that the collections were rearranged into two sorts of galleries: the primary collections which showed objects in their cultural and historical context and the secondary collections which still showed the evolution of design within particular media.

There was one department in the Museum which formed an exception to this rule, i.e., my own department, the Indian Department. This is because we were in a separate building which we had inherited with the bulk of the East India Company Museum collections and there was a very strong lobby at the beginning of the century which stopped the Indian collections from being absorbed by the other departments.

In recent years these attitudes have changed and during the 1960s my predecessor argued that the study of Asian art had progressed to a degree where it was no longer possible for generalists to keep abreast of these fields where special historical and linguistic expertise was essential. At that time, if you wanted to study the Far Eastern or Islamic objects in the collections you would have had to call upon the resources of more than one department and in most of them you would have found no curator with really specialist expertise in those fields. This was clearly not satisfactory and so a committee was set up to propose a solution. They recommended that new departments of Far Eastern and Islamic art should be established and in 1970 as a first step a small nucleous of a Far Eastern Department was set up to take

charge of the Chinese and Japanese collections. It is now fully established as a department and is functioning very successfully. In the case of Islamic art, the decision to set up a separate department was postponed for two main reasons. One was the usual one of cash. If the Museum had then asked for funding for two new departments it might have got neither. The other concerned the nature of the collections. Despite their importance, our Islamic collections are not large compared with the Museum's holdings in other fields, e.g., Indian and Far Eastern Art, Furthermore, a large part of the Islamic collections are textiles and our colleagues in the Textile Department argued that the textile arts of Europe and the Near East are so closely integrated that it sould in fact be damaging to the study of these objects if they were separated into different curatorial departments.

The result was a stalemate but under the present Director, Sir Roy Strong, some progress has been made. In the first place he deliberately recruited an Islamic specialist into the Department of Ceramics with a specific role to act as consultant for Islamic art throughout all the departments. This post is held by Dr. Oliver Waston and subsequently an Arabist, Dr. Duncan Haldane, was appointed as Deputy to the Keeper of the Library.

The Director's second move was to appoint a Committee under my Chairmanship with the brief to report on the feasibility of setting up an Islamic Department with suggestion for a staff structure, the allocation of gallery space, the allocation of office space and an indication of the parameters of such a departmental collection. This committee was set up at the end of 1983 and reported its findings in the summer of 1984.

We found that excluding Indo-Islamic art, which I will refer to in a moment, the Museum has just over 19,000 objects which might be termed Islamic although almost half of these are pot sherds of academic rather than aesthetic interest. Of the remaining 10,500 objects a third are Ceramics and a third, Textiles, (3418 and 3633 respectively). Half of what is left, i.e., 1773 pieces or one sixth of the whole is Metalwork and the remaining sixth (1700 objects) is divided between various categories such as wood, ivory, stone, manuscripts, miniatures and calligraphy. At present just over half of this material in on exhibition, a fact which partly reflects the loss of an Islamic Secondary Gallery during the 70's and is partly due to the fact that certain categories such as textiles are normally kept in classified storage for curatorial reasons.

The consensus of this committee was to recommend a staffing complement of ten persons although it was recognised that this ideal structure could not be realised without massive ouside funding and the strongest protagonists of an Islamic department favoured a more modest structure as being most practical at the outset. In the event it became clear after the report was submitted that even a more modest proposal stands little chance of early implementation simply because the Museum is at present under heavy financial constraints and is handicapped by shortages of gallery, office and storage space.

Nevertheless it is important that provisional planning should have been carried out and as a fall-back position suggestions have also been put forward for an alternative staff complement of three with responsibility for Islamic material other than textiles. This coincided with new developments regarding gallery space which could become available in the North Court of the Museum. It was, therefore recommended that the proposed new development of area should include provision for linked Islamic secondary collections with galleries devoted to arms and armour, metalwork, mixed media and textiles directly above proposed new Indian galleries on the ground floor. Consultations about the North Court development are now in progress and to use a large part of the new space for the display of Islamic objects. We would like to link these galleries with Indo-Islamic art of the Mughal period by means of an open staircase in the centre of this large court.

This brings me to the question of my own department, which houses the arts of the Indian sub-continent and Southeast Asia. If we take these countries together we find that their combined Muslim populations even exceed those of the Near Eastern countries but the position regarding their artistic cultures is rather complex. In many instances the decision whether or not an example of Indian or Southeastern Asian art should be classified as Islamic is an arbitrary one. It is very easy to see why this should be so when we consider that in a mixed society such as we find in India the decorative objects of luxury and of use that we might classify as Islamic were produced, marketed and used by all sections of society and it becomes quite difficult to establish criteria by which you can say that one object is Islamic and another not.

I am sure that you can easily think of examples of this yourselves. When you consider, for example, that the Hindu Maharajas held high office in the Mughal Empire and adopted many features of the Mughal court life style, you will recall that in architecture, dress and domestic furnishing the artistic environment of these Hindu princes was virtually identical with that of their Muslim colleagues. Similarly in Rajput paintings you can find Islamic subject matter just as in the Mughal Royal Library you would find illustrated texts such as the Razm Nama whose subject matter is entirely Hindu.

If I now come to the question of cataloguing you will see that for my Department this question of deciding which category an object belongs to could be of some relevance if we have to isolate our Islamic objects. Unil now this has not been a problem but it might require careful thought if we are called upon to provide any central data base with details for our Islamic works of art.

So far as the existing situation is concerned several of our most recent exhibiton catalogues have included objects which might be classifed as Islamic and in some cases are very specifically so, but these exhibitions also contained Hindu and in some cases Buddhist or ever Christian objects. Take the recent catalogue of our Indian Playing Cards for example. It includes all the Indian cards in our collection - one would not issue separate catalogues for Ganjifa and the Das Avatara games, especially as they were often made by the same craftsmen.

Our latest catalogue on the inlaid metalwork known as Bidri ware could certainly be taken as Islamic metalwork, however, and since Java has a Muslim population you can probably say the same of our forthcoming catalogue of Javanese Batiks.

Another forthcoming catalogue of

Medieval Indian painting will contain Buddhist, Jain, Hindu and Islamic material. In other words we are following normal art historical groupings of material which do not necessarily observe religious boundaries.

When we consider these catalogues in the context of the present discussions we do come up against one very real problem which must be in the mind of every Museum curator who contemplates these ambitious visions of huge central data bases. Did you notice for example how many different pieces of information were to be recorded by the French "Shams" database? If this information is already on file a computer operator can easily put it into the system. If it is not on file it may take an experienced specialist many hours to bring such information together. Every one of the catalogues of our collection has taken one or more people several years to produce and these catalogues cover only a fraction of material in our Museum. At present we simply cannot spare the staff time to provide full catalogue information for large sections of the collection and in many instances the early records leave a great deal to be desired in both their accuracy and comprehensiveness. It is this issue which requires our serious attention and which is even more fundemental than the provision of elaborate hardware and software systems.

ISLAMIC ART AND COMPUTERS

Oliver Watson

Following on from Robert Skelton's last paragraph, I would like to add a brief word - a word of warning - to the discussion on the use of computers in the documenting of Islamic art. It is easy to be dazzled by the possibilities that computers offer for cataloguing purposes, and it is all too easy for enthusiasm to exceed practicality. I know this only too well, for it has happened to me. I have been brought down to earth somewhat by my experiences as a member of the Museum's computer committee, and by experimentation with my own, all be it very modest, computer. Computers are wonderful machines, but they do not of themselves solve all one's problems, indeed without much care they can greatly increase them.

The vision of a vast network of data bases on which is recorded every Islamic art object world-wide and which can be accessed from a terminal on one's own desk is very exciting. the technology exists to do it, why don't we try?

Ignoring for the moment the question of funds - and how much easier that makes the subject - there are still great problems that in our more sober moments we must consider seriously.

A fundamental rule of computing is expressed in the American phrase 'GIGO', in English perhaps to be rendered 'RIRO': 'Garbage', or rather 'Rubbish in, Rubbish out'. In other words the quality of what computers will do for you depends entirely on the quality of the information that you put in - not only factual information, but also in the way in which it is organised. A computer - or at least one used for cataloguing purposes - acts like an enormous, super-efficient and super-fast card index system. But if your card index is in a mess and not organised efficiently to begin with, all computers will do is generate a far greater mess at very high speed.

The Victoria and Albert Museum's records are probably in no worse a state than those of any large collection formed over a period of time - in fact like those of virtually every Museum. Yet how useful are they in their present form? Our Departmental registers provide a great deal of information - where pieces were acquired, for how much, and if we are lucky which case they are in, and where they have been published, and what Professor X thought of the piece when he looked at it in 1927. But often the most important piece of information is missing: what is the current view of its attribution? Our basic records show what was thought when the piece was acquired, and perhaps 85% of our pieces were acquired before the First World War. Views have changed radically since then! Inlaid Arab metalwork of any period or country was frequently called "Old Saracenic" - not a description generally used today. Much of our Iznik collection is called 'Demascus' or 'Persian' ware. Some pieces with figural decoration are called 'pre-Islamic' because, as we all know, figurative decoration is "not allowed" in the Islamic world. Technical details are missing or misunderstood. And so on.

This is not because in the Museums we do not know the correct (or at least the current) attributions; but because the information is stored in a proliferation of places : Museum labels and the curators heads being amongst the most important and up-to-date. Printed catalogues are few, simply produced hand lists are even fewer.

I envisage a nightmarish scenario: somebody has acquired a vast computer, and comes to the Museum to ask to catalogue all the Islamic objects on it. To avoid RIRO, it will mean that I, or one of the other very few Islamic specialists, will have to write out a catalogue entry, virtually from scratch, for every item. Even at an overly optimistic rate of 2 items an hour - every item will have to be checked physically, and the main catalogue, and two or three other indices, consulted - this will take roughly 5 years provided no other work is done. And this will only be sufficient for a brief hand list - giving physical details, and the barest documentary background. Any further research, comparisons and discussion will take additional years. Of course, the new computer will require photographs; indeed it would be pointless to do it without them. Help! Only about 5% of our Islamic objects are photographed. To embark on a program of complete photographing is an immense task. It is not only the photographers time - that is in some ways the quickest part. In our galleries we need two people to get the objects from the cases and take them to the studio and back. Some have to be photographed in situ. Clerical and curatorial time is needed to number, caption and store the negatives and prints. We have work there for several people over many years, while all other work has to stop, and still the Giant Computer waits for us, in the hope of of establishing its Giant Data Base. And how will it cope

with the proliferation of transliterations in use for Middle eastern languages? And with the differing opinions as to data and country of origin of similar objects that different curators hold? And with the vagueness that of necessity characterises, in the present state of our knowledge, much of our cataloguing, even if up-to-date?

At present the Giant Data Base - the Great Data Base in the Sky - is a myth, and we should recognize it as such.

This does not mean to say that we should be happy with the present state of our cataloguing, or that computers have no part to play in improving it. Far from it. But we should start by examining what we really need, and what is the most effective manner of progressing, and in what way computers can help us most.

In our Museum, the first requirement is to produce up-to-date hand lists of our collection - so that we can say, in a form useful to colleagues elsewhere, what we have, in what quantities and where it is kept. In this conference we have heard descriptions of collections in various parts of the world: how useful it would be if we had a modest publication with all that information listed in it. The preparation of this material will be greatly aided by the use of word processors and simple data-base programmes. In our Museum, if the recommendations of the Computer Committee are accepted, such simple handlists would grow eventually into the full computerised catalogue as and when discrete sections of the collection are catalogued. And this process will be made possible within realistic time scales by the use of computers - not Giant Computers, but micro-computers available to everybody.

At the moment, as a curator in a Museum with a major collection of Islamic art under my care, I earnestly look forward to the day we establish an Islamic Department, when we may begin to devote significant amounts of expertise to the Collection. In the meantime, I look, not to expending my energy on a mammoth project of world-wide computerisation, but to finding sponsorship to help me buy a microcomputer to help me compile my handlists. I would have thought that most Museum curators would feel the same. And if there were an organisation which in some modest way published and circulated such lists and small catalogues amongst those interested, that would be a great advance. And who knows, in a decade or so we may even be able to begin thinking about the Giant Data Base...?

ISLAMIC ART IN SWEDEN

Karin Adahl

The collections of Islamic art in Sweden are spread over more than 30 museums, libraries and archives. They differ in character as well as in quantity. Amazing for a small country like Sweden, very remote from the Islamic part of the world is that Islamic art objects have entered Sweden since the early centuries of Islam and through more than a thousand years. Several objects of unique quality have come to Sweden as a consequence of diplomatic and commercial relations and can often be documented almost to the year or a decade.

Sweden was one of the first countries in Europe to develop trade with the Baghdad caliphate. Swedish vikings travelled with their ships through Russia and met Arab and Persian tradesmen (merchants) on the shores of the Caspian Sea. From there they brought back to Sweden textiles and garments as well as utilitarian objects for use at banquets etc. More important are the finds of minted silver, that is coins. More than 60,000 silver dirhems and also some gold dinars have been excavated in Sweden, especially on the island of Gotland and in the eastern parts of the mainland where the old capitals were situated. In Sweden they were not used as coins but for their silver value and when found are often cut in halves and quarters. Silvercoins were also melted down and made into jewellery such as bracelets and necklaces. These collections are in the Museum of National Antiquities and the Royal Coin Cabinet.

During the period from the 12th century to the end of the 16th century very few objects apparently came to Sweden and no complete objects have been found in excavations: only fragments, that is, sherds of enamelled glass of Syrian origin and faience from Persia. That these objects, of which now only fragments remain, came to Sweden in the late 13th century is obvious from the layer in the excavation in central Stockholm where they were found.

At the end of this period, that is, in the 16th century, a very remarkable carpet came to Sweden. This is the Anatolian 15th century carpet found in a church in northern Sweden and therefore called the Marby-rug. It is now in the Museum for National Antiquities along with the treasure of mainly Turkish and Persian textiles from the 17th and 18th centuries used in Swedish churches as copes, chasubles, antependia and chalice cloths.

During the 17th and 18th centuries contacts with Turkey and also the Tatar khanate of Crimea were intense, and with Turkey permanent diplomatic relations were established from the end of the 17th century. Sweden was then an important power in Europe seeking allies against Russia. From this period many valuable objects were brought back to Sweden by diplomats and travellers. Gifts of courtesy were also exchanged between the sovereigns, such as a splendid velvet coat, woven in Isfahan in the early 17th century and presented to Queen Christina by the Russian Tsar. There is also an important saddle with accessories, a gift to Gustavus Adolphus II from his brother in law, the prince Bethlen Gabor of Transsylvania and several jewel-studded quivers, also gifts to Gustavus Adolphus from the Tatar kings around 1630.

Swedes also took part in the wars against the Turks in the 17th century and several Turkish tents of different sizes, decorated with applique work, were taken as booty and brought back to Sweden.

The royal gifts are now in the Royal Armoury while a silk carpet of unusual quality, woven in Kashan around 1560 and brought to Sweden as part of Princess Hedvig Eleonora's dowry when she married Charles X in 1654, is in the Royal Palace collections.

The only collection of Islamic art

on permanent display is now in the Museum for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities. This museum was rearranged in new localities in 1982 and then for the first time also included Islamic art and Near Eastern Archaeology. This is also the first permanent exhibition of Islamic art in Sweden. The collection is a permanent deposition from the National Museum where the first objects entered in 1899, bought by the art historian Fredrik Martin and sold to the museum. The main part of the objects were ceramics, metalware and carpets. This collection was later added to by Carl Johan Lamm in the 30's but also subsequently by private donors, the most prolific being the late king Gustavus Adolphus VI after his journey in the Near East, Egypt and Iran in 1934-35.

This collection, including ceramics, glass, metalware, woodwork, miniatures, textiles and carpets, now comprises about 500 objects and additionally a collection of about 2000 fragments of enamelled glass as well as an extensive collection of faience fragments and fragments of textiles and carpets from the excavations at Fustat.

Other minor collections of Islamic art can be found in the Rohsska Museum of Decorative Arts in Goteborg, in the Lund Museum for Cultural History and Malmo Museum. Both Uppsala University Library and Lund University Library have received important Arabic, Turkish and Persian manuscripts, some illuminated, dating from the 17th century, such as the Jamal and Jalal of 1503-1505 and a Shahnama of 1602-03, both from Persia. There are also some minor private collections, the most important in the Celsing family. Two members of the family were diplomats in Turkey in the 18th century.

A few minor exhibitions on different subjects have been arranged through the almost one hundred years which have passed since the major Orientalist Congress in 1889, which marked an interest for Oriental and Arabic studies in Sweden, although the Orientalist tradition goes back to the 17th century. This Congress took place with participants from Europe, Africa and Asia.

The first exhibition of Islamic art in Sweden was the display by Fredrik Martin of his own private collection in a pavilion at the International Stockholm exhibition in 1897. Several of the objects on display were later sold to the National Museum. A small catalogue accompanied the exhibition.

Exhibitions of textiles and carpets from the collections in the National Museum and the Museum for National Antiquities were made by Agnes Geijer and Bo Gyllensvard at the National Museum in the 40's. An exhibition of Oriental manuscripts and miniatures was arranged, also at the National Museum, in 1957 by Nils Lindhagen and B.W. Robinson. In 1973 an exhibition of Persian art in Swedish collections was put up at the National Museum by Bo Gyllensvard and myself. The two latter exhibitions were accompanied by catalogues in Swedish, which are still available.

Objects from all these Swedish collections were on display at the first major exhibition of Islamic art ever arranged in Sweden, which opened in May 1985 at the Museum of National Antiquities, followed by a series of exhibitions on the theme "Islam - art and culture", the first two at the Museum for Mediterranean and Near Eastern Antiquities and in the Royal Palace. The major exhibition in the Museum of National Antiquities is accompanied by a catalogue, illustrated in colour and black and white with articles in Swedish and English followed by a catalogue of the 700 objects in Swedish.

The documentation of the Swedish collections of Islamic art is thus still limited to the museum records and inventories, to the printed catalogues on the collections of manuscripts in the university libraries, to the catalogues of the few exhibitions, and to articles on single objects published in Swedish and in English.

AN ISLAMIC PRIVATE COLLECTION OF CARPETS AND TEXTILES

Lois Lamya al Faruqi

The collection to which I wish to introduce you in this conference is that of Dennis R. Dodds, architect; co-founder, former American editor, and member of the Editorial Board of *Hali—The International Journal of Oriental Carpets and Textiles*. Mr. Dodds is also an author, lecturer and consultant in the field of oriental carpets, textiles and early Eastern art. This private collection may be known to experts in the field of carpets, but it has not received the exposure due in the wider community of persons concerned with the Islamic arts. It is for that reason that I wish to focus attention on its holdings today.

Mr. Dodds started his collection as a young architect, recently graduated from training at Arizona State University and the University of Pennsylvania, where he had been exposed through travel, foreign study, and student projects to Islamic architecture and culture. Professional trips to the Mediterranean region, Turkey and Iran later provided additional stimulus for his interest in the carpets, textiles and other arts of the Muslim world. His post graduate occupation in the Philadelphia area, centrally located as it is between New York and Washington, D.C., proved to be an excellent location for pursuing and deepening his interest in oriental carpets, and for increasing his knowledge of the Islamic arts. Before long, involvement in the study and collection of carpets and his private business of decoration and restoration of houses caused Mr. Dodds to retire from his architectural position in order to devote more of his time to his aesthetic interests.

I. The Collection

The Dodds collection started modestly and grew slowly, but it con-

tains today a substantial number of pieces reflecting the historical and scholarly expertise as well as the aesthetic acumen of its owner. Since the bulk of the items on display in the owner's residence in Philadelphia are examples of pile carpeting, we shall concentrate our description on that genre. It should be noted, however, that the collection also includes numerous kilims or flat weaves, rare textiles, ceramic objects, etc. The pile pieces of the collection include floor rugs, saddle bags (often designated as *khorjin* or *khurdshin*), large household bags (*chuval, tshuval*), smaller bags (*torbaor mafrash*), prayer rugs (*namazlyk*), door-cover rugs (*ensi, engsi* or *enksi*) decorative pieces for the breast of the wedding camel or the front of the bride's litter (*khalyk* or *asmalyk*), and cushion covers (*yastik* or *misnad*).

Most of the pile pieces are Turkic or Turkoman in origin—60% having originated in Anatolia, 30% in Turkoman Central Asia, and the remaining 10% in Iran, the Caucasus and China. The earliest of the carpets dates from the late 16th century. Most were made between 1600 and 1850, though there are also a few pieces of particular quality which were woven in the 20th century. Although features of general unity of period and provenance are evident, such details were not the crucial factors in the choice of items for the collection. Nor was the collection based merely on the dictates of the rug market. Instead, the owner describes a number of special aesthetic interests and preferences which he feels determined his choice of carpets. His perceptive "eye" and these preferences have encouraged me to introduce the collection in this conference, for I find its component carpets unusually representative of an Islamic aesthetic perception.

A. *Aesthetic Characteristics*

What are the elements found in these rugs which evidence this "Islamic" quality and appreciation, an appreciation which eludes many collectors from the Western world and even many from the Muslim world?

1. One outstanding characteristic of the Islamic arts and of the carpets in the Dodds collection is their consistent emphasis on the most abstract and highly stylized of motifs. The carpet patterns of this collection include all the usual geometric shapes (triangles, squares, diamonds, quadrangles, pentagons, hexagons, octagons, swastikas, etc.). In addition, when the constituent motifs do suggest objects from nature (e.g., stars, birds, flowers, trees, eyes, etc.), the depictions are strongly denaturalized. Abstraction and stylization of the Islamic motif vocabulary have been evident in all fields of artistic creation in all regions of the world where Islamic culture has moved and established itself. Certainly Mr. Dodd's collection evidences not just a conformance to this basic principle of Islamic art, but an emphasis of it.

2. There is a second feature which characterizes items of this collection in particular and Islamic art in general. This is the emphasis on pattern organization to achieve aesthetic impact and interest. It is true that unusual tones and richness of color may increase the appeal and value of a rug. The sheen of the wool or its ability to accept the dyes may also result in a carpet's being particularly valuable. Even texture sometimes makes a piece outstanding. But this collection, while not denying the importance of such considerations, evidences a dominant concern for another element which has been a basic characteristic of the Islamic arts through the centuries. That is the importance of pattern organization.

As the study of any Islamic art will readily reveal, design structure is perhaps the most important feature of that art. It is true that certain types of subject matter or motifs are typical of the Islamic arts. Calligraphy, geometric and stylized vegetal motifs must certainly be regarded as dominant in those arts while pictorial or narrative content is avoided. Despite this general characterisation, certain examples of Islamic art (e.g., miniature book illustrations, figural art in wooden or metal works, etc.) include illustration of, or motifs based on, living creatures. Through stylization and structural organization, however, their artists so mould and organize those elements of content that even they seem to conform to the Islamic aesthetic goals. It becomes evident then that the most crucial and influential aspect of Islamic art is not the conformance to a particular subject matter as much as it is the ordering and organization to which the chosen figures and motifs are subjected. One could characterize the "Islamicness" of a work of art as being primarily, though certainly not wholly, determined by its conformance to the organizational principles which govern its composition.

Surely this collection reflects the significance of that characteristic of the Islamic arts. Influenced by his architectural design background as well as his aesthetic sense, the owner has "hit upon" the most important feature of the Islamic arts in his choice of carpets. The items in this collection have been chosen in response to an interest in what Mr. Dodds describes as "the architecture in the rug." In addition to the importance of abstraction and stylization in their subject matter, the emphasis on Islamically inspired structural principles in these carpets is a second feature in which the Dodds collection conforms to the aesthetic principles of Islamic art.

There is a third characteristic which seems to have been determining the purchases for this collection and which make it a stunning and aesthetically satisfying group of carpets, from an Islamic point of view. This is its exemplification of numerous varieties of visual interplay between motifs and design spaces within the carpet pattern. Dodds, in describing his collection, considers the impression of visual interplay between motif segments and positive-negative (i.e., design-filled or empty) spaces in his carpets as one of their most important features. The aesthetic interest and excitement which many of the items generate is achieved through the rich possibilities for multi-view perceptions of motifs and patterns. This is a third and very important characteristic of the Islamic pattern or of any work of Islamic art. Like the Turkoman carpets of the 15th century described by R. Pinner and M. Franses, the carpets of the Dodds collection reveal that "a part (we would add—a significant part) of the artistic effect...lies in the challenge to the viewer contained in the double vision of the carpet structure."

This is a feature which makes the Islamic design ever dynamic, and which invites the viewer to become involved mentally, emotionally and physically in its contemplation and appreciation. Spectator perception of an Islamic pattern is indeed an active rather than a passive pursuit. Though Islamic patterns are not restricted to any single structural

organization, their multifaceted and shifting visual perceptions remain a constant.

This characteristic has been noted by specialists in the Islamic arts; but, to my knowledge, it has never been identified by a suitable and widely used term or expression. The English term "ambiguity" is sometimes used to refer to the quality in question, but that word has derogatory undertones which are not fitting. "Interlocking ornaments or compartments," "reciprocal patterns" and "double vision" are still other expressions that have been utilized, though they are more proper to certain varieties of this characteristic than to all its examples. As far as is known, there is equally no Arabic term or expression that has designated this important characteristic of the Islamic arts.

I would like to propose a term drawn from the Arabic language which could be used, in untranslated form, in the various Islamic and Western languages when there is need to refer to this kaleidoscopic quality in Islamic formal structure. The suggested term is *tadakhul*, a verbal noun derived from the root *dakhala*, meaning "to enter." The prefix "ta" provides a reflexive quality to the root meaning, and the medial a adds a reciprocal and repetitive connotation to the act or action involved. The term *tadakhul* therefore implies not only the necessary active quality of this aesthetic feature, but also the interpenetration of the design elements as perceived by the viewer, and the continuity of that aesthetic activity.

The examples of *tadakhul* to be found in the Dodds collection carpets are of at least four varieties. Sometimes they involve but a single motif which can be perceived or interpreted in different ways. Others include the visually shifting and interlocking parts of a two-part ("dual") motif or design unit. A third variety of *tadakhul* organization involves complex combinations of motifs disposed in a single compartment or field, which allow multi-perceptions of their relationship and organization. In the fourth kind of *tadakhul* structure, the possibility for differing perceptions occurs between two composite figures arranged in separate fields or compartments.

1. *Single Motif Tadakhul*

The first type of *tadakhul* design, that involving a single motif which is capable of more than one visual interpretation, has many exemplifications in the carpets of the Dodds collection. Sometimes it involves the two-directionalism of a zigzag or stepped border separating two fields (as in this late 18th century *mihrab* carpet from Mucur in Central Anatolia). The inward-projecting floral motifs counterbalance the outward-moving effect of the stepped colored borders. The boundary lines can be seen either as extensions of the central panel, or as extensions from the spandrels. A similar effect is achieved in another *namazlyk* woven in Ladik in the 18th century. Here the stepped boundary between the *mihrab* and the surrounding spandrels carries projections (latchhook and anchor-like figures) on both sides of the *tadakhul* edging. These move the viewer's eye and mind back and forth from field to field. In one view, the boundary appears as border for the *mihrab* field; in another view its function seems to be that of edging and expanding the spandrels. Sometimes the contrasting fields which are enclosed by such boundaries contrast one highly decorated field with one of limited design or plain color. At other times the element of contrast between the two fields may be that of color or kinds of motifs.

The *tadakhul* quality to be found in a single motif is not limited to boundary motifs. For example, those motifs commonly designated as latchhook or bird's head and curled leaf can be seen as a simple repeated figure in a given color on a contrasting field, or as the negative space or field setting off the corresponding motif. Such examples are numerous in the Dodds collection carpets.

Another example of multi-view quality in a single motif is to be found in a large Ottoman carpet from the late 16th or early 17th century. Two irregular shaped figures in the central medallion can be seen as oriented either up or down and they actually appear in the central medallion of the carpet in both ways.

2. *Dual Motif 'Tadakhul'*

The second type of multi-view or *tadakhul* structure involves a composite figure containing two motifs or entities which can be viewed singly or in combination. These are of two kinds. One will be designated as "2-directional composite" since its design suggests that the two motifs can be interpreted as pointing in different directions: Such a *tadakhul* organization is exemplified in an 18th century prayer carpet of the collection. Here a stylized tulip motif is found as one element in the border panel. The blossom can either be seen as the crest of the motif, or as a base for an arrow-like figure pointed in the opposite direction. A similar form using a stylized tulip motif is included in the main field of a 19th century Central Anatolian double medallion carpet.

The two-directional dual motif variety of *tadakhul* form also occurs in an upper panel of the Ladik prayer rug seen earlier. There the vision can move upward towards the crest of the tree-like figure as well as in the direction of its downward-pointing lower motif. Similar two-directional organizations of motifs can be seen in the triangular based, chimney-like forms in the borders of the double medallion carpet mentioned earlier.

In another vaiant of dual motif *tadakhul* structure, the two motifs are combined in an "*interlocking*" or interpenetrating way. In the Dodds collection this type of design is found in the panel above the spandrels of the *mihrab* of the 18th century Mucur prayer rug, in the Ladik prayer rug, and in a Central Anatolian double medallion carpet. A variant of this idea also occurs in the main border design of the large double-niched floor rug from Konya seen earlier. In that example a meandering vegetal figure expands into palmette designs alternately based on the inner and outer edges of the border, the reciprocal quality achieved there by an inverted repetition of a single motif rather than two different motifs which interlock.

A more complicated and therefore aesthetically exciting example of a dual motif "interlocking" *tadakhul* organization is found in a late 19th century carpet from Northwest Iran in which motifs seem to have been influenced by dragon carpets from the Caucasus. The finger-like extensions of the pink palmette figures in one row interpenetrate with beige figures on a staggered row above and between. Another primary row changes the color of the main figures while maintaining the interlocking quality of the design. The main field of the carpet presents a wealth of "views" to be achieved as the eyes and mind concentrate on

one figure as primary design motif, and then move visual allegiance to another.

3. *Multiple Motif 'Tadakhul'*

The third type of kaleidoscopic or *tadakhul* patterning utilizes multiple motif figures or entities. One variety of this type combines the motifs *"serially"* in an up-and-down or horizontal succession. One can view each figure separately or in various combinations. A particularly interesting example of "serial" *tadakhul* can be found in the guard and border patterns of the 18th century Ladik prayer rug seen earlier. Small and large squares are arranged and colored in a continuous alternation which brings out their individual identity as well as a number of beautiful combinations of whole and half squares and other geometric shapes.

A second variety of multiple motif *tadakhul* structure can be described as *"centrally oriented."* It includes those complex motifs in which constituent elements seem to have been added successively to form a figure which expands outward from its central core. The "centrally oriented" figure can be viewed as a whole or as a succession of different views or entities as each expanded version of the central core motif is apprehended. This sort of motif organization occurs in all media of Islamic art and is beautifully represented in the medallions and guls of a number of carpets in this collection.

A combination of both "centrally oriented" and "interlocking" *tadakhul* occurs in a runner from Western Iran, a rug woven before 1850, probably by members of the Bakhtiari tribe. A series of multiple motif and "centrally oriented" medallions, each bordered by four serrated leaves, alternate here and interpenetrate with repetitions of a contrasting multiple motif combination. The same serrated leaves are seen in the second "centrally oriented" figure. This time, however, instead of providing boundary for the composite figure, the leaves jut out diagonally as extensions of the central core. Of course, the motifs here do not change their location in the design, but our perception of their organization changes as we shift concentration from one design center or focal point to another.

4. *Multiple Compartment 'Tadakhul'*

In the fourth type of *tadakhul* structure, multiple design compartments are the basic elements of perceptual interchange. The figures within the different compartments may be of comparable pattern, shape, articulation and size; or, more commonly, one may dominate the other in one or more of those aspects. A number of examples of this type of structural type so common in the carpets of the Turkoman tribes are available in the Dodds collection. The rows of repeating segments enclosing one *gul* figure alternate with rows of a contrasting motif enclosed in other compartments which fill the intervening spaces. This type of design organization can be found in large floor carpets of the collection (e.g., a rug woven by members of the Central Asian Tekke tribe in the mid 19th century), in an *ensi* or door covering (Tekke tribe, ca. 1890), and a *chuval* bag (Central Asian Yomud tribe, late 19th century). Although one gul figure is generally dominant in relation to the other, the design is so organized that the viewer may adjust his/her attention successively from the repetitions of one pattern to those of the other. Thus the *tadakhul* quality is achieved between the main elements of a design incorporating multiple compartments.

A 19th century carpet with an interesting stepped design treats "multiple compartment" *tadakhul* organization in a somewhat different way. Here color plays a crucial role in the kaleidoscopic quality of the design. Viewed in one way, the colored angular arches are bordered by similarly shaped white arches. In another viewing, the white arches predominate, and the colored segments fulfill the role of contrasting compartments, thereby achieving for the carpet its multi-aspect organization.

The Dodds carpet collection reveals a keen awareness and appreciation on the part of its developer of the content and structural features which distinguish the Islamic arts. As for content, it concentrates on the abstract and highly stylized motifs. In regard to structural characteristics, the carpets included in this collection have been chosen as exemplifications of the importance of structural features and of *tadakhul*, that kaleidoscopic, multivisual design quality so characteristic of all the Islamic arts. It is for this reason that, instead of labelling my presentation today as merely "A Private Collection of Oriental Carpets and Textiles in Philadelphia," I have chosen to call it "An Islamic Private Collection of Carpets and Textiles in Philadelphia."

NOTES

1. Dennis R. Dodd's early interest in archaeology as well as the history, geography and culture of exotic lands was reinforced by such student projects in design as an airport complex for Kuwait and a mosque for an Islamic city.

2. See William T. Ziemba, Abdulkadir Akatay and Sandra L. Schwartz, *Turkish Flat Weaves: An Introduction to the Weaving and Culture of Anatolia* (London: Scorpion Publications Ltd., 1997), Plates 11,31,36,40 and 78, for illustrations and descriptions of kilims in the Dodds collection.

3. For example, a *chuval* bag for storing and carrying household items, one of the pieces in the collection, has a special appeal and value because of its dark purple hues.

4. "Two 'Turkoman' Carpets of the 15th Century," *Turkoman Studies I: Aspects of the Weaving and Decorative Arts of Central Asia*, ed. Robert Pinner and Michael Franses (London: Oguz Press, 1980), p. 86.

5. See I.R. al Faruqi and L. al Faruqi, *Atlas of Islamic Civilization* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1985), Chap. XXI, for an analysis of four of the most common organizational types; also in Lois L. al Faruqi, "The Islamization of the Hagia Sophia Plan," paper prepared for "The Common Principles, Forms, and Themes of Islamic Art," an international symposium in Istanbul, April 18-22, 1983.

6. The Arabist may wish to use here *wujuh al tadakhul* (s. *wajh*), meaning "styles" or "forms" of *tadakhul*.

7. See Louise W. Mackie and Jon Thompson, eds., *Turkmen: Tribal Carpets and Traditions* (Washington, D.C.: The Textile Museum, 1980) for numerous examples and their description.

8. Gul or gol refers to a type of design medallion, occurring in varying forms, which are repeated to create the pattern for the main field of a carpet. See a number of typical guls in Figure 4. Such a design often makes use of two different guls, one more prominent than the other.

Many attemps have been made to relate the term "gul" to a natural object such as "rose," "flower," and even "lake" (G.F. Markov, "Six Turkoman Carpet Products from the Museum of Ethnography in Leipzig," *Turkoman Studies I...,p.45, note 1) None of these attempts, however, have proven satisfactory. The same author goes so far as to say that "As our knowledge stands today, any discussion about the meaning of Turkoman ornaments tends to be unfruitful" (Ibid., p.44).*



Yusuf Ahmad, Cavalier

Contemporary Art in Qatar

Mahmoud El-Bassiouny



Jassem Zeini, Qatar National Museum

Qatar is a small country. It occupies a semi-island on the gulf area. Its inhabitants - the natives - are about half a million. Because of this limited population, Qatar has developed fast under the guidance of His Highness Sheikh Khalifa Bin Hamad Al-Thani, the Amir of the State of Qatar and His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, Heir Apparent, Minister of Defence and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces.

The writer lived and worked in Qatar the last five years. He has observed the evolution taking place in many aspects of life: in paving highways, planting trees, erecting new buildings with advanced facilities, establishing a unique Islamic edifice for the University of Qatar, and many other projects which are increasing every year. Qatar is a member of the Arab Gulf Cooperation Council. It contributes a great deal to strengthen this cooperation.

The contemporary art movement in Qatar has been reviving in the last ten years. Its modern stars have completed their artistic education abroad, in Egypt, Iraq, Italy, France or the United States.

Some of them express in their paintings scenes and incidents from the environment. Others are more concerned with theories of modern art which are reflected in their work. But there are still others who have a very unique spirit which preserves the merits inherent in the tradition of Islam.

One runs into the dilemma between subject matter and content. Is the native spirit reflected in works of art in Qatar a result of the nature of subject matter, or an outcome of the treatment and technique of handling the elements of the composition? Perhaps the answer to this dilemma is found in the analysis of a few examples of Qatari contemporary works of art.

Sometimes a dominating aesthetic culture encourages popular appreciation of realistic pictures. There is nothing wrong with realism if the achievement is through plastic relationships. But, if it is only an enlargement of a photographic



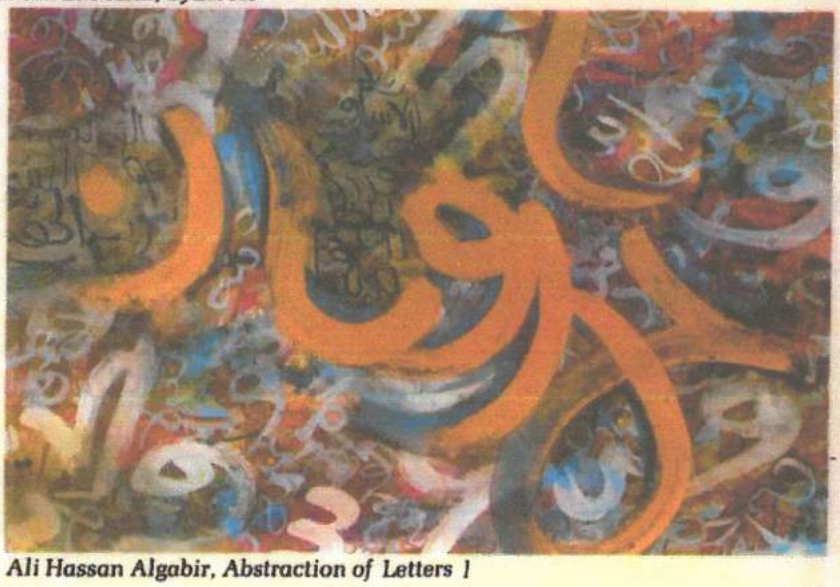
Salman El-Malki, The Shoemaker



Salman El-Malki, Symbols



Ali Hassan Algabir, Abstraction of Letters II



Ali Hassan Algabir, Abstraction of Letters I



Wafiqa Sultan Saif.

registration, art is lost. Although there is a trend in the United States which encourages the exactness of nature in works of art especially in sculpture, the appreciation here is not for the spirit of art in as much as it is for the technical skill of imitating nature, and for perfecting the imitation. But art is not imitation. Art is creation. Whether the appearance is representative or non-representative, realistic or abstract, creation is the important factor to rely upon and to be judged.

With this principle of creation in mind - complicated as it is - let us proceed by applying it in selecting examples of art works which represent the contemporary Qatari movement of art and its pioneers.

Hassan Al-Mulla

The first example is Al-Mulla who was born in 1952. He expresses metaphysical scenes influenced by surrealistic approach. His pictures combine Arabic letters with human eyes, a man and a building scattered into a symbolic representation. Al-Mulla's unconscious stores emotions, thoughts and historical events which are combined together and expressed spontaneously into his paintings. One would not know exactly what the Arabic letter (waw - ain -) particularly denotes but whatever a letter symbolizes, it is associated with specific meanings in the unconscious of Al-Mulla. Its worth in the painting is how all these letters are composed with the rest of the details which have visual character. Some are isolated symbols as the shape of the eyes used separately as were in Ancient Egyptian Art. An eye symbolizes attention. It may be a symbol of wickedness. It might represent a hidden force symbolized in the eye separated form the body.

When Al-Mulla puts houses, separate eyes and then a few letters of Arabic calligraphy, he assembles this painting from different sources. It can then be appreciated not by mere normal visual logic, but by the human mystic unconscious, plate 3.

Yusuf Ahmed

Born in 1952, Yusuf completed his art training from the College of Art Education, Helwan University, 1975, where he obtained his B.A. He continued his studies in painting in Oakland City, California, U.S.A., where he obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree.

He builds his paintings mainly with the use of Arabic calligraphy.



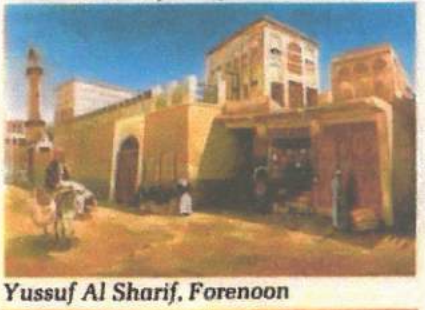
Issa Al-Ghanem, Symbolic Figures



Issa Al-Ghanem, Abstraction



Sultan Alsileity, A Qatari Girl



Yussuf Al Sharif, Forenoon



Mohamed Ali Abdullah

The letters used by Al-Mulla were almost accidental. With Yusuf Ahmed they are the main conscious structural elements of the painting. With Wassily Kandinisky (1866-1944) the evolution of non-objective art took place. In Kandinisky a patch of colour has meaning in relation to the other patches. It is a tone in a melody of music. With Yusuf Ahmed, along the non-objective approach, he uses Arabic letters as abstract signs which are arranged rhythmically and systematically to bring about new forms of composition.

Calligraphy in Arabic has its conventional rules as we see it in Islamic tradition. But the approach of Yusuf Ahmed is far away from this tradition. It has used the Arabic letters as a source for abstract systematic repetition which governs rhythm all over his work.

There are other Arab painters involved in using Arabic script as a source for their abstract compositions, having different trends within the same approach of creation. But Yusuf Ahmed has got a style of his own. He does not hide the letter. In other words letters in his paintings may be recognized, but they are no longer letters as seen and understood in normal writing which evoke literal meanings. Their meanings are structural, like bricks in a building.

In the organisation of his paintings he can move letters up or down, right or left, near or far, in the way necessary for building up the composition which at the end turns to be a symphony of directions, moulded together in a unique form.

In his other paintings Yusuf combines different trends together: abstract rhythmical calligraphy and visual symbolic representation represents a horse rider. The structure is formed out of the Arabic calligraphy. Though it is not readable but one recognizes certain



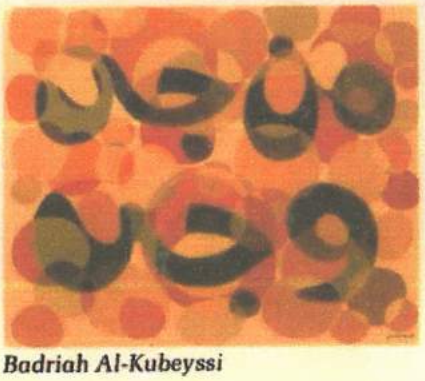
Jassem Zeini, Characters from Qatar



Salman Al-Malki



Majid Hilal



Badriah Al-Kubeyssi



Sultan Al-Ghanem

distorted Arabic letters done in two different tones: one thin, the other very thick. Both work together in the same direction to formulate the horse and its rider.

Waffika Sultan

Waffika was born in 1952. She obtained her B.A. from the College of Applied Arts, Helwan University, Cairo, 1974. She has a variety of approaches in her paintings. Among them is her interest in portrayal which has achieved something very intriguing. Here she exercises a poetical sense of expression. She paints the hair flying in the air, arranged in transitional stages, starts darker and becomes gradually lighter as it fades away in a horizontal way. The facial expression is rather meditative. The treatment of the dress has a feminine touch. Waffika Sultan offered her first private show in Doha Sheraton Hotel, May 1984, where she exhibited other paintings based on Arabic script as part of her expression.

She selects verses from the Quran integrating them with her abstract painting. The verse 'there is no God but God' (... Arabic script in space) is repeated vertically and rhythmically on the horizon of her painting called "Prayer" which gives visual significance to the architecture of the painting at the time.

Salman Elmalki

ElMalki was born in 1958. He is well known in Qatar through his caricature drawings in Doha daily newspapers. He is a graduate of the Faculty of Art Education, Helwan University, Cairo. He organised his first one man exhibition in Doha Sheraton Hotel, February, 1985. It contained several of his paintings and drawings in his oil painting of the "Shoemaker". This picture is composed of two parts: the foreground is occupied by the shoemaker who dominates the painting. He is busy with one of the red slippers. While the background portrays the entrance of the shop, Elmalki is emphasizing a theme which shows indirect appreciation of those who use their hands for a living. El Malki is now engaged as a technical adviser in the aesthetic layout of the Doha monthly magazine issued by the Ministry of Information. Although his caricature drawings may be the best in Qatar, they still have a long way to go in order to be termed as works of art as in the case of H. Daumier (1808-79).

Jassem Zeini

Jassem was born in 1943. A graduate of Baghdad Academy of Fine Arts, he is one of the pioneers in the field of visual arts in the State of Qatar. On his return home, he was appointed as a supervisor of art education in the Ministry of Education. During this time he extended his efforts to Jasra Club organising activities in the visual arts. A few more promising young Qataris joined the group. This little training has led some of these youngsters to pursue their studies in plastic arts. While some continued their studies in Egypt, others went to U.S.A.

As early as the sixties, the idea for establishing a free atelier for art was introduced though it took sometime to become a reality. As Jassem Zaini shifted his position to the Ministry of Information, he strengthened the idea till the "Free Atelier" was established.

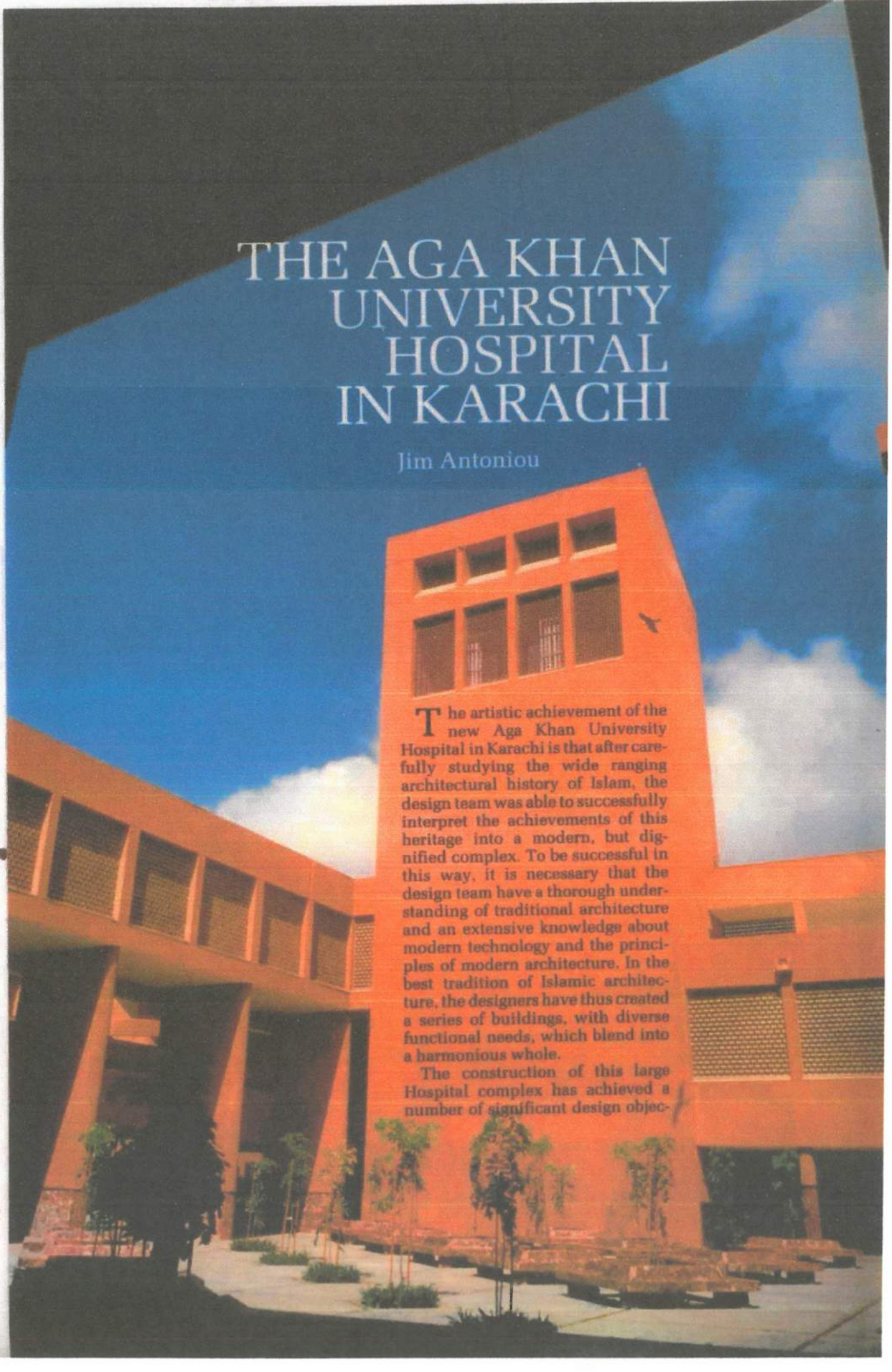
This free atelier opened the way for new comers who developed their interest in art and so played their role in the current movement of art in Qatar.

Jassem Mohamed Zaini's work "Characters from Qatar" is 90x60 cm. in oil. It contains two figures: a native boy and a girl sewing her clothes. Although the

continued on page 126

THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN KARACHI

Jim Antoniou



The artistic achievement of the new Aga Khan University Hospital in Karachi is that after carefully studying the wide ranging architectural history of Islam, the design team was able to successfully interpret the achievements of this heritage into a modern, but dignified complex. To be successful in this way, it is necessary that the design team have a thorough understanding of traditional architecture and an extensive knowledge about modern technology and the principles of modern architecture. In the best tradition of Islamic architecture, the designers have thus created a series of buildings, with diverse functional needs, which blend into a harmonious whole.

The construction of this large Hospital complex has achieved a number of significant design objec-

tives. First, the setting of this one million square foot of built up site area has created new environmental standards in Karachi for all who use the facilities. It is hoped that these standards will have a beneficial impact on future development likely to take place in the surrounding areas.

Second, the complex has revitalised many traditional features of Islamic architecture in the region, which in the recent past have been neglected in pursuit of international building styles. The design team was thus able to introduce traditional architectural themes in a modern way. Such themes include the interlocking of interior spaces, both covered buildings and walkways and open courtyards and careful landscaping, all designed as an integrated environment. Similarly, various indigenous environmental control methods are used to improve the comfort and appearance of the buildings. These include the introduction of wind catchers in the roof pattern and the setting back of windows in walls to avoid direct sunlight and reduce heat and allow for cross ventilation. The heat absorption of the building is also lessened by the use of textured wall surfaces and subdued colours of building materials.

Third, the exterior and interior design show a high level of integration of regional arts and architecture by means of tiles, ornamental metalwork, calligraphy, wood and plasterwork, rugs and fabric. Fourth, this integration has led to possibilities of developing and maintaining a variety of crafts and skills in the use of local materials for use in other parts of this region.

In this respect, the University Hospital complex contains the very qualities which the Agha Khan Award for Architecture aims for: a heightened awareness of Islamic culture and the encouragement of an architecture which is appropriate to present day needs.

The provision of medical facilities in Islamic countries goes back in history a long way - beyond the Dark Ages of Europe. Particularly between the Ninth and Thirteenth Centuries, Muslims were able to combine their understanding of Greek learning and Roman organisation, to provide for themselves sophisticated hospital services representing many disciplines and very often with teaching facilities to ensure improved techniques and continuity.

There are many examples from Cordova, Seville, Toledo and other Moorish centres in Spain, to Cairo and Damascus in Egypt and Syria. The availability of institutions for the sick in a city signified an enlightened social attitude and a high level of economic prosperity. In fact the first such institutions recorded in the Middle East was located in Syria, about 700AD, by Caliph al-Walid. Within some hundred years after, the Caliph Haroun Raschid provided a system of health care in Iraq for the sick and disabled by way of associating mosques with places of learning and hence hospitals. By 878, Ahmed Ibn Tulun founded a hospital in Cairo for civilians only.

In time there were many hospitals established in different parts of the Middle East - from Marakesh to the Nuri Hospital in Damascus. In Iraq, during the Twelfth Century, Ibn



Jubayr established a network of about 60 hospitals. There were also hospitals built by Suljuk Turks, notably at Kayseri, Sivas and later Edirne.

Hospitals were normally built in central locations to serve the maximum number of people. They were associated and closely linked with mosques. For practical reasons, hospitals were located close to rivers and canals, where water was freely available - a basic ingredient of hygiene. Indeed, because of the harsh climatic conditions in the region, water was used and displayed as a way of providing comfort to the patients. Invariably, the hospital was planned around a courtyard with halls opening onto enclosed landscaped areas.

It is with these qualities and association of ideas in mind that the Aga Khan University Hospital was planned and built in Karachi, one thousand years after the foundation of Al-Azhar University in Cairo, in 970, by the Aga Khan's ancestor Caliph Muizz, during the Fatimid Period. Designed by Payette Associates of Boston, USA, with Mozhan Khadem as design consultant, construction started in 1972 and the University Hospital was inaugurated on 11th November 1985. The main contractors were Trollope Colls Cementation Overseas Ltd. (UK).

The whole complex consists of a School of Nursing (opened some five years ago), a medical college and a 72-bed hospital, together with ancillary facilities, now in operation. Indeed the hospital provides teaching support to the Aga Khan University's Faculty of Health Sciences. It also provides in general medicine, surgery, obstetrics and gynaecology, as well as pediatrics with special units for intensive and coronary care, ophthalmology and orthopedics.

There is also included a private wing of 127 beds, although most of the accommodation is designed as general five-bed wards, to be in reach of Karachi's poor population. Out-patient services are to be provided ultimately for 250,000 people annually.

The hospital brief was developed over a period of ten years. It was changed and elaborated several times to provide a programme appropriate to the needs of Pakistan. It also set unprecedented standards of construction and quality of finish.

Before embarking on the physical plan rather than simply go for the lowest bid as is now standard practice in the Middle East, the carefully chosen design team visited many Islamic buildings which reflected the great traditions of Islamic architecture. The result was a sensitive plan where the buildings are contained mainly on three floors and are part of a unified whole.

The strong exterior forms of the buildings are designed to fit into the arid surroundings by the use of colour and texture. In contrast to the exterior, courtyards orientate the buildings inwards. Within the carefully designed and proportioned courtyards, water is used to provide comfort in a variety of ways: either running or splashing, or even as a sheet of still water.

The world of Islamic courtyards has been given a great deal of thought by the designers. Walking from one space to another, through colonnades and distinctive open-



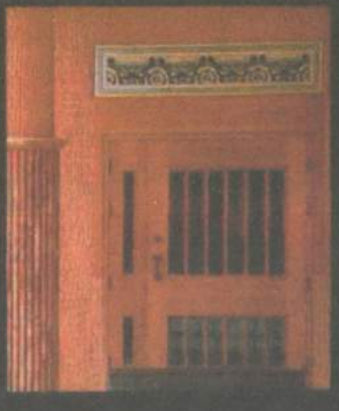
This page, clockwise from top: *The Medical College auditorium. The main entrance portal at the hospital. The courtyard of the Community Health Centre. A marble column in a courtyard of the School of Nursing. A mix of different surface textures adorned by calligraphy. Calligraphic detail on the main gate of the School of Nursing.*











Page 38: *An aerial view of the Aga Khan University and the Aga Khan University Hospital.* **Page 40:** *"Jali Blocks" provide an attractive pattern of natural light.*
Photographs by Ian Charles Stewart.

ings, one is struck by a feeling of human scale. Courtyards are not vast vacant spaces where people are forced to run from one side to the other to avoid the harsh climate; nor are they minute and oppressive places. The variety in the size of spaces and the shrubs provides an attractive microclimate for all who use the health facilities. This is particularly apparent in the School of Nursing, where the planting has matured, providing a pleasant set ting. Indeed, the physical design of the entire School of Nursing, provides a series of attractive, comfortable and functional spaces for nurse training. The buildings include classrooms, faculty offices, demonstration practice facilities, a library and common rooms - as well as single rooms as accommodation for each student.

Additional comfort from the harsh, hot and dry climate of Karachi is provided and is based on traditional principles of environmental control. For example, those areas which are not air conditioned are designed to take advantage of natural through-ventilation. Windcatcher devices (similar in principle to those found in the few remaining traditional buildings in some of the Gulf States), are used to channel prevailing winds across the hot double-membraned roofs.

The exterior surfaces to the buildings, constructed of double insulated concrete blocks are of a textured cement plaster finish known in the region as "weeping" plaster. This provides a surface texture which casts its own pattern of vertical shadows, thus reducing glare and heat penetration.

The interiors are decorated in a variety of ways, including tiles, calligraphy, ornamental metalwork, wood, marble, plasterwork, fabrics, and carpets. Traditional crafts and workmanship have been refined for use in the hospital.

In a similar way, construction and mechanical devices have been adapted to local labour and material. For example, limiting the project to three floors allows lifts to move up or down from a middle service area, thus minimising the need for mechanical means. The structure is of concrete frame, using the minimum of reinforced steel.

Roof surfaces are terracotta tiles, while pavings are of pre-cast concrete and local red marble. Interior floors are mainly of terrazzo tiles, while a wide variety of screen designs are used to provide shade and privacy and reduce glare.

In a wider context, there are also a number of research projects which currently use the teaching hospital as a base for further study. These include projects which are related to Karachi's under-privileged areas (although by no means the most deprived areas) and also health care in the rural areas of Pakistan. From these initial programmes, it is expected that more ambitious and daring projects will follow in the areas of most acute need.

The conception and principles of design adopted for this complex are relevant to many Third World countries. They are also of particular relevance to the Middle East where there has been such a strong emphasis on the provision of health facilities, coupled with a desire to plan and build institutions which are appropriate to Muslim societies. The whole project clearly

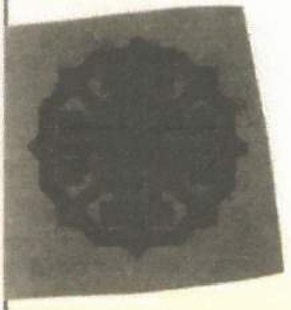


demonstrates that a combination of well prepared briefs, developed over a period of years, together with a sensitive approach to design can result in innovative form, while still applying the principles of Islamic architecture.

HH the Aga Khan has shown profound faith in the future of this project. He strongly believes that "in everything we do we must look to the future, seeking always to think creatively, to innovate and improve." He urges all those involved in the project, "whether they be trustees, faculty, staff or students, never to forget that the future is in their hands. It will be upon them that the performance and reputation of this University will depend and it will be through them that the University will, or will not, achieve the position among the world's institutions of higher learning which its founders have envisaged."

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EXCAVATIONS AT BAHNASA IN EGYPT

Géza Fehérvári

Dār al-āthār al-Islāmiyya, the Islamic Museum in Kuwait, carried out two seasons of excavations at Bahnasā in Egypt during 1985. The excavations were conducted under the joint direction of Sheykha Hussa al-Sabah, Director of the Dār al-Āthār and the writer, Dr. Geza Fehervari of the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. The archaeological work was sponsored by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences. The first short season in the spring was intended only to be a trial excavation and a survey of the site but it soon evolved into a full scale archaeological work and seven trenches were opened. This work then continued during the second season in the autumn when a large team was present.



1.

Bahnasa, which was known as *Per-medjed* in Pharaonic, *Pemje* in Coptic and *Oxyrynchos* in classical times, is situated about 200 km south of Cairo and some 18 km west of Beni Mazar, on the west banks of Bahr Yusuf. Its history can be traced back to Pharaonic times and indeed, three tombs of the XXVIth dynasty (663-525 BC) were excavated not long ago by Egyptian archaeologists. The city became better known after the flight of the Holy Family to Egypt when, according to legends, they stayed at Bahnasa for some time. In early Christian times the city developed into one of the most important centres of Christianity in Egypt and it became a bishopric. According to some early Islamic sources, at times it had more than 300 churches and monasteries with over 10,000 monks and nuns. In Coptic and in early Islamic times it became an important industrial centre, producing textiles, paper, glass and pottery. There are several Arabic manuscripts known today which deal with the history of the city. Among them the earliest appears to be the *Futuh al-Bahnasa al-Garra'* ("The conquest of Bahnasa, the Noble"), which is in the Egyptian National Library in Cairo and which may date from late Fatimid times. Other manuscripts are preserved in the British Library in London, in the Royal Library in Copenhagen and in the University Library of Leiden. These manuscripts deal with the history of the city and with the legends attached to it. They also describe its monuments and the crafts that were practiced and pursued by its inhabitants. We also learn from these manuscripts that the forests around the city had such good and high quality trees that in Fatimid and Mamluk times they were reserved for the use of the sultans in Cairo and for shipbuilding. After the Mamluk period, the city began to decline and by the end of the last century it was only a small settlement with a few hundred inhabitants. Today Bahnasa is a thriving city again and together with Sandafa on the east banks of Bahr Yusuf and Shuruba, some 4km further east, has more than 40,000 inhabitants.

The first investigations of the ruins of the ancient city of Bahnasa began with two British explorers who carried out excavations there between 1897 and 1903. Later in the 1930s Italian excavators continued the work, and then finally a few years ago the Organisation of Egyptian Antiquities brought to light tombs and buildings from the Pharaonic and Coptic periods. The Kuwait excavations were more concerned with the Islamic remains and with the Islamic part of the ancient city. According to the manuscripts mentioned above, one of the earliest Islamic buildings in Bahnasa was the mosque built by Hassan ibn Salih shortly after the Arab conquest of the city close to the river Bahr Yusuf. Indeed, today the mosque, which is still known as that of Hassan ibn Salih, is situated very close to the river. In its present form it may be considerably later than the period of the conquest, probably of the late Fatimid and Mamluk periods. It has a covered sanctuary, an open courtyard and a three-aisled arcade on the north which has now lost its roof, but the columns and arches are still in situ (fig. 1 in colour). The earlier mosque may be situated below the present building and eventually this should be investigated. For the moment the excavators carried out only a strictly limited excavation outside the building at its northeast corner below the minaret (area "B"). The excavation there brought to light some Islamic bronze coins and some Islamic and Coptic unglazed pottery fragments.

The other major Islamic building in Bahnasa is the Mosque of Zayn al-Abidin, situated in a place which must once have been the centre of the city. It was built over the remains of a Pharaonic and a Roman temple on top of an artificial mound (fig. 2 in colour). Part of the *qibla* wall and the minaret are still standing, but they are in a very poor state of preservation and require urgent repair. Some forty years ago the top

of the minaret was still standing but was later destroyed by a storm. Judging from the decoration and style of the minaret, it may date from late Mamluk times, i.e. from the 9th century AH/15th century AD.

During the first season the excavation concentrated inside and outside this mosque (area "A"). In the former courtyard of the mosque a large trench was opened and during the second season it was considerably enlarged. The excavation here revealed the foundations of the mosque, and furthermore cleared the ablution areas in the southwestern part of the building (fig. 3). On the eastern slope of the mound the area was cleared to reveal the steps, a well and a small ablution basin. A large amount of glazed and unglazed pottery fragments were recovered from here, some of the latter type in good condition. These can be dated to Fatimid and Mamluk times. There were also glass fragments, including several tiny pieces of a lustre-painted glass goblet, a small paper fragment and the first example of textile.



3

Further west of the Mosque of Zayn al-Abidin is another long mound with the shrine of Abo Samra at its northern end. On this mound the excavations concentrated in two areas. The first one some 50m south of the shrine (area "C"), where two trenches were opened. Here a long well-built mudbrick wall was discovered (fig. 4). The pottery finds included monochrome-glazed fragments, among them a green glazed pottery lamp and the lid of a vessel, lustre-painted pottery and some sgraffito wares typical of the Mamluk period, glass fragments and some metal objects also came to light. One of them was an earring and one of the glass vessels was a small complete perfume bottle.

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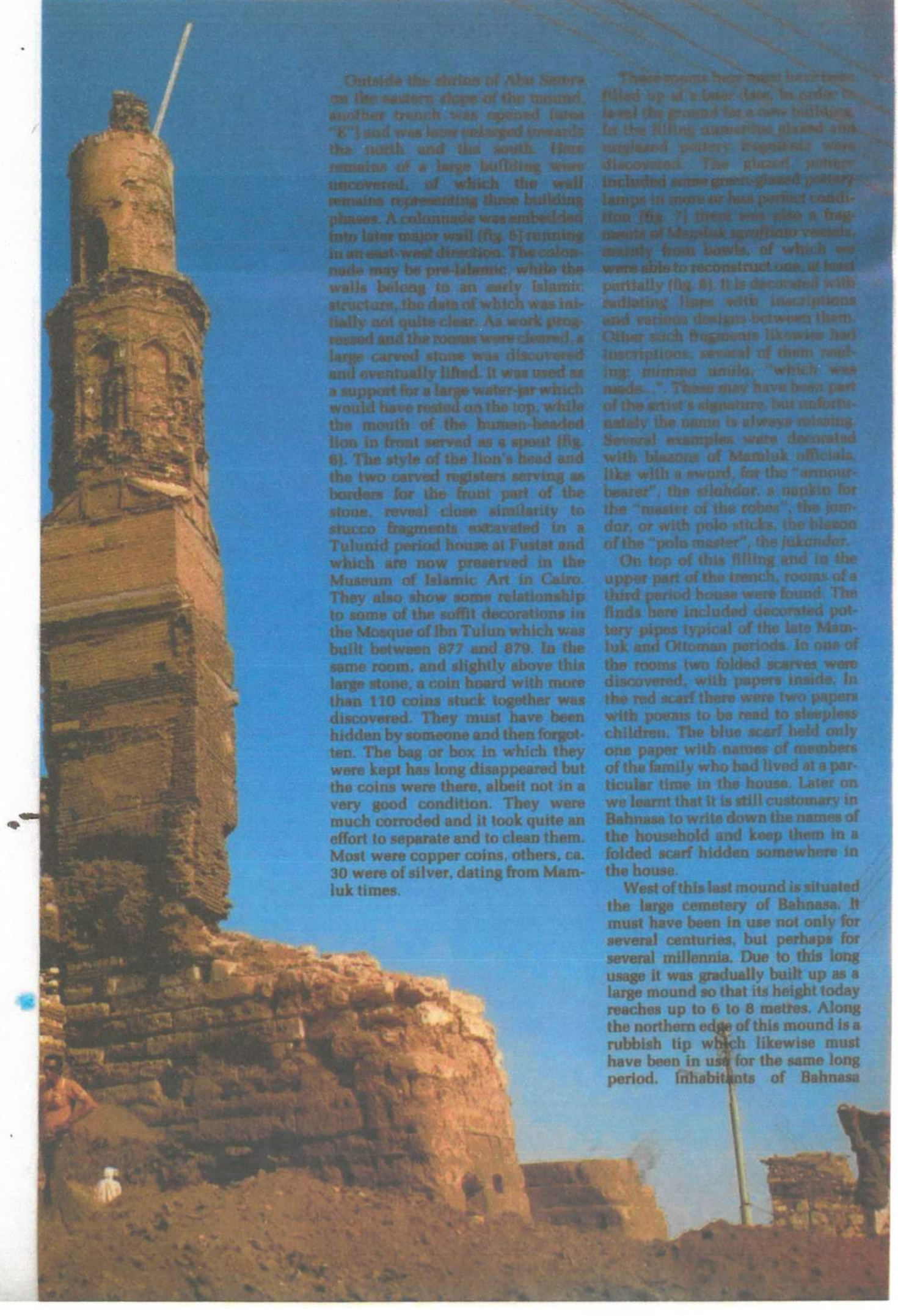


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6

Previous page: *The Mosque of Hassan ibn Salih, seen from the minaret.* **This page Background:** *View of the Mosque and minaret of Zayn al-Abidin.* **Centre:** *View of trench (A) after the excavations, showing the foundations of the building, two cess-pits and the ablution area.* **Right from above:** *View of trench (C) after the excavations, showing the excavated mudbrick wall. View from trench (E) under excavation. In the foreground the main wall is clearly visible with the remains of a Coptic column embedded into it. The large stone with the lion's head. Excavated in trench (E).*



Outside the shrine of Abu Samra on the eastern slope of the mound, another trench was opened [area "E"] and was later enlarged towards the north and the south. Here remains of a large building were uncovered, of which the wall remains representing three building phases. A colonnade was embedded into later major wall [fig. 5] running in an east-west direction. The colonnade may be pre-Islamic, while the walls belong to an early Islamic structure, the date of which was initially not quite clear. As work progressed and the rooms were cleared, a large carved stone was discovered and eventually lifted. It was used as a support for a large water-jar which would have rested on the top, while the mouth of the human-headed lion in front served as a spout [fig. 6]. The style of the lion's head and the two carved registers serving as borders for the front part of the stone, reveal close similarity to stucco fragments excavated in a Tulunid period house at Fustat and which are now preserved in the Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo. They also show some relationship to some of the soffit decorations in the Mosque of Ibn Tulun which was built between 877 and 879. In the same room, and slightly above this large stone, a coin hoard with more than 110 coins stuck together was discovered. They must have been hidden by someone and then forgotten. The bag or box in which they were kept has long disappeared but the coins were there, albeit not in a very good condition. They were much corroded and it took quite an effort to separate and to clean them. Most were copper coins, others, ca. 30 were of silver, dating from Mamluk times.

These rooms here must have been filled up at a later date, in order to level the ground for a new building. In the filling numerous glazed and unglazed pottery fragments were discovered. The glazed pottery included some green-glazed pottery lamps in more or less perfect condition [fig. 7] there was also a fragments of Mamluk sgraffiato vessels, mainly from bowls, of which we were able to reconstruct one, at least partially [fig. 8]. It is decorated with radiating lines with inscriptions and various designs between them. Other such fragments likewise had inscriptions, several of them reading: *mimma amila*, "which was made...". These may have been part of the artist's signature, but unfortunately the name is always missing. Several examples were decorated with blazons of Mamluk officials, like with a sword, for the "armour-bearer", the *silahdar*, a napkin for the "master of the robes", the *jamdar*, or with polo sticks, the blazon of the "polo master", the *jukandar*.

On top of this filling and in the upper part of the trench, rooms of a third period house were found. The finds here included decorated pottery pipes typical of the late Mamluk and Ottoman periods. In one of the rooms two folded scarves were discovered, with papers inside. In the red scarf there were two papers with poems to be read to sleepless children. The blue scarf held only one paper with names of members of the family who had lived at a particular time in the house. Later on we learnt that it is still customary in Bahnasa to write down the names of the household and keep them in a folded scarf hidden somewhere in the house.

West of this last mound is situated the large cemetery of Bahnasa. It must have been in use not only for several centuries, but perhaps for several millennia. Due to this long usage it was gradually built up as a large mound so that its height today reaches up to 6 to 8 metres. Along the northern edge of this mound is a rubbish tip which likewise must have been in use for the same long period. Inhabitants of Bahnasa

Left;from above: *Green-glazed pottery excavated in trench (E). Mamluk sgraffito bowl, excavated in trench (E), put together from several fragments.* **Right;from above:** *Two wooden fragments, probably of a musical instrument, excavated in area (D). Tapestry woven fragment, silk on linen, decorated with Kufic inscription, Fatimid period, 11th or 12th century. Paper fragment with a date: Dhi'l-Qaada,643 AH/March-April, 1246. Excavated in area (D).* **Below:** *Paper fragment, showing the drawing of a man holding a cup in his right hand, excavated in area (D).*



9



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11



12

informed us that numerous textile, papyri and paper fragments and many other objects have been discovered there. It was for this reason that we carried out investigations here (area "D").

Work continued in this area throughout the second season and the result was very satisfactory. Apart from numerous fragments of glazed and unglazed pottery, metalwork, glass and Fatimid glass seals, many wooden objects, textile fragments and some 500 paper fragments were recovered.

The excavated wooden objects included comb fragments, boxes, lids of cylindrical boxes, some of them painted in black and red, spinning wheel weights and numerous pens. Two fragments may have been parts of a musical instrument (fig. 9).

The textiles included Coptic, Fatimid and Mamluk examples, some of them made of wool and others of linen or silk. Almost all of them were decorated, some with Kufic inscriptions. One of these was a Fatimid tapestry woven fragment, probably of the 11th or 12th century. It is silk on linen, consisting of three narrow registers, two of them with Kufic inscriptions (fig. 10).

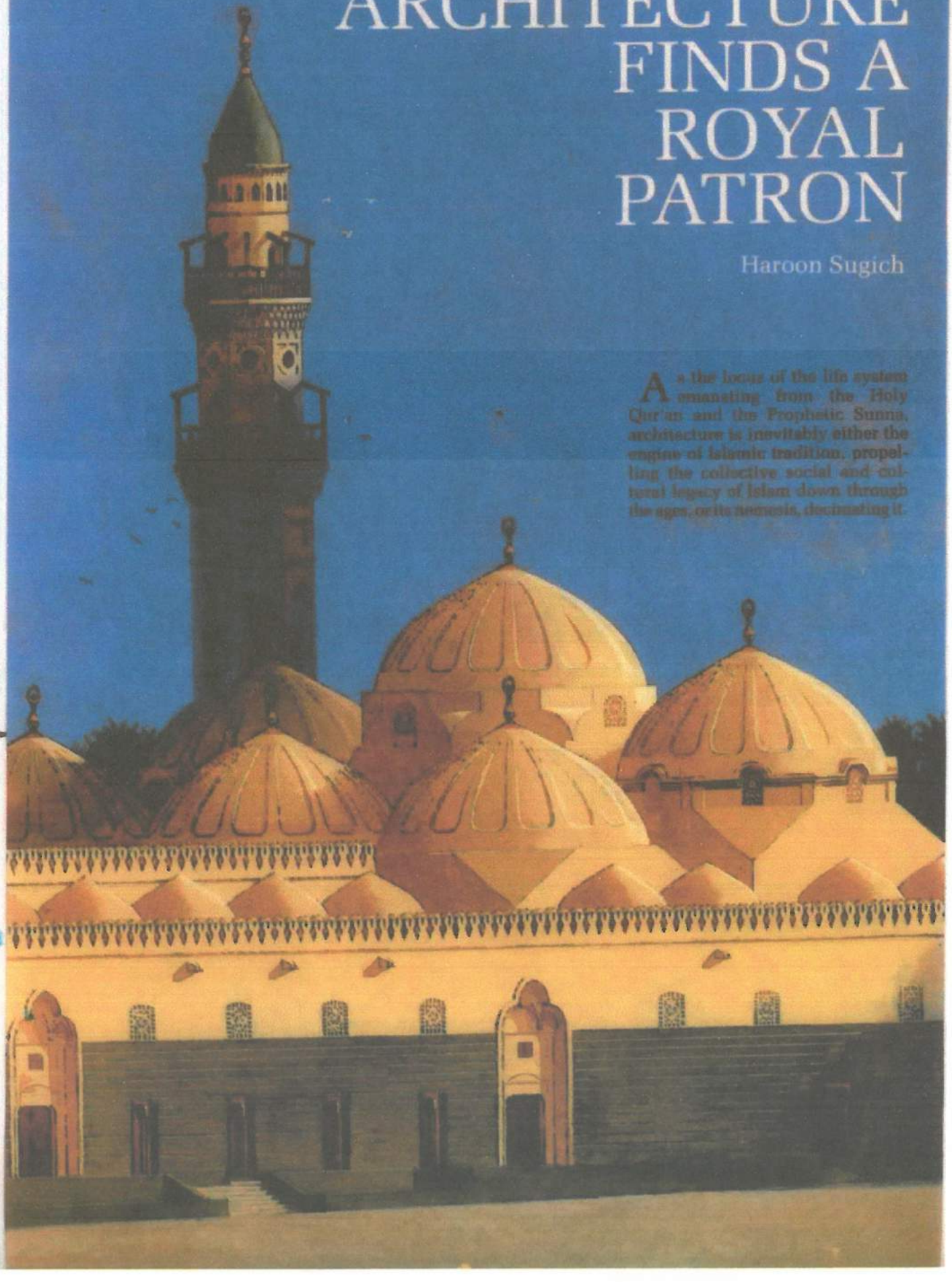
The paper fragments were recorded as they came up every day and after cleaning they were placed between sheets of glass. Almost all the fragments were in a comparatively good state of preservation and were easily readable. Most of them were fragments of different documents, but some may have been parts of manuscripts. Among them was a Qur'an fragment, written in simple Kufic which may indicate a 3rd/9th or 4th/10th century date. Two of the fragments had dates. One of these bears the date of 550 AH/ 1155 AD, i.e. a date towards the end of the Fatimid period. Another one is dated Dhi 'l-Qa'ada 643, which is equivalent to March-April 1246 and therefore almost the end of the Ayyubid period (fig. 11). An interesting piece, most likely from a manuscript, depicts on one side a man holding a cup in his right hand. It is painted in black, now somewhat faded, although the figure is still clearly visible (fig. 12).

In conclusion we may say that the first two season's work at Bahnasa was encouraging and the finds confirmed what has been written and said about this ancient site. It is intended to continue the excavations at Bahnasa later this year.

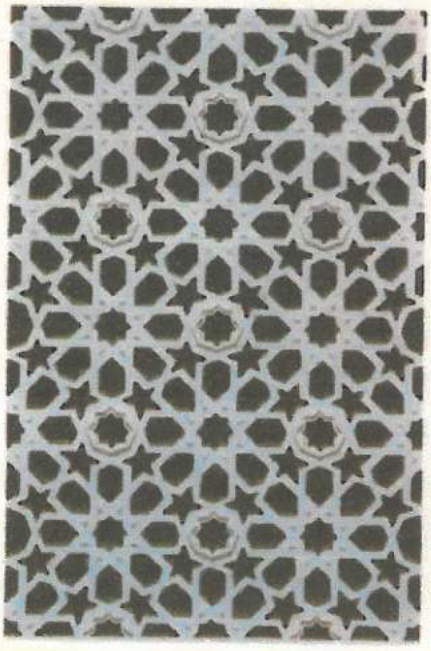
TRADITIONAL ARCHITECTURE FINDS A ROYAL PATRON

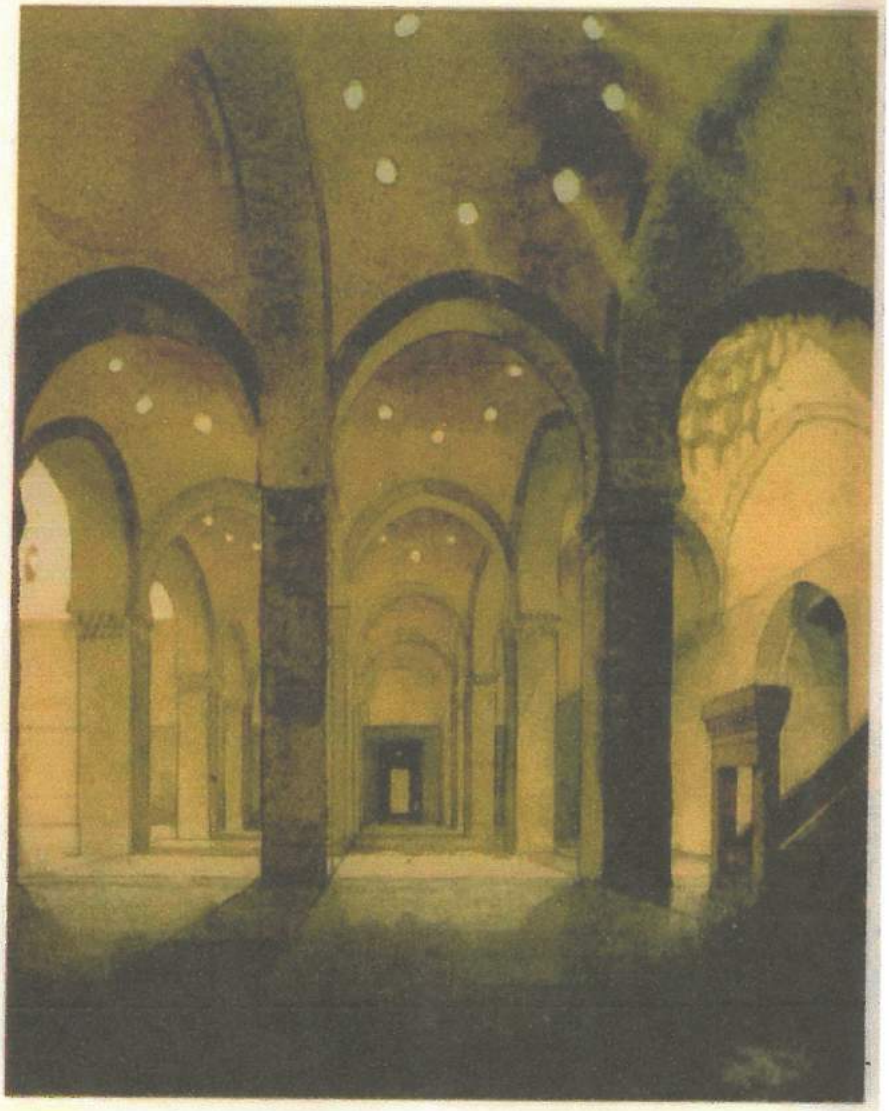
Haroon Sugich

As the locus of the life system emanating from the Holy Qur'an and the Prophetic Sunna, architecture is inevitably either the engine of Islamic tradition, propelling the collective social and cultural legacy of Islam down through the ages, or its nemesis, decimating it.



Previous page: *Quba Mosque, rendering.*
This page; below: *Claustra screen.* **Opposite Top:** *Perspective, interior of Quba Mosque.* **Below left:** *Calligraphy panel,* **Right:** *Mihrab Quba Mosque, illustrated.*
Opposite page: *Quba Mosque; model.*





Islamic architecture is an outgrowth of this sacred system and naturally acts to sustain and facilitate its practice through the inspired arrangement of space and through ornamentation created to induce the remembrance of God. Masterpieces of Islamic architecture and civil planning act as scattered touchstones for each succeeding generation of builders, architects and artisans seeking to revive Islamic expression from its essence. This dynamic interaction between the traces of our past and the creation of our present forms a natural continuum we call tradition. This continuum has existed through upheaval, civil disorder, war and alien domination for 1400 years and yet in the last century it has been seriously disrupted by the powerful force of modernism.

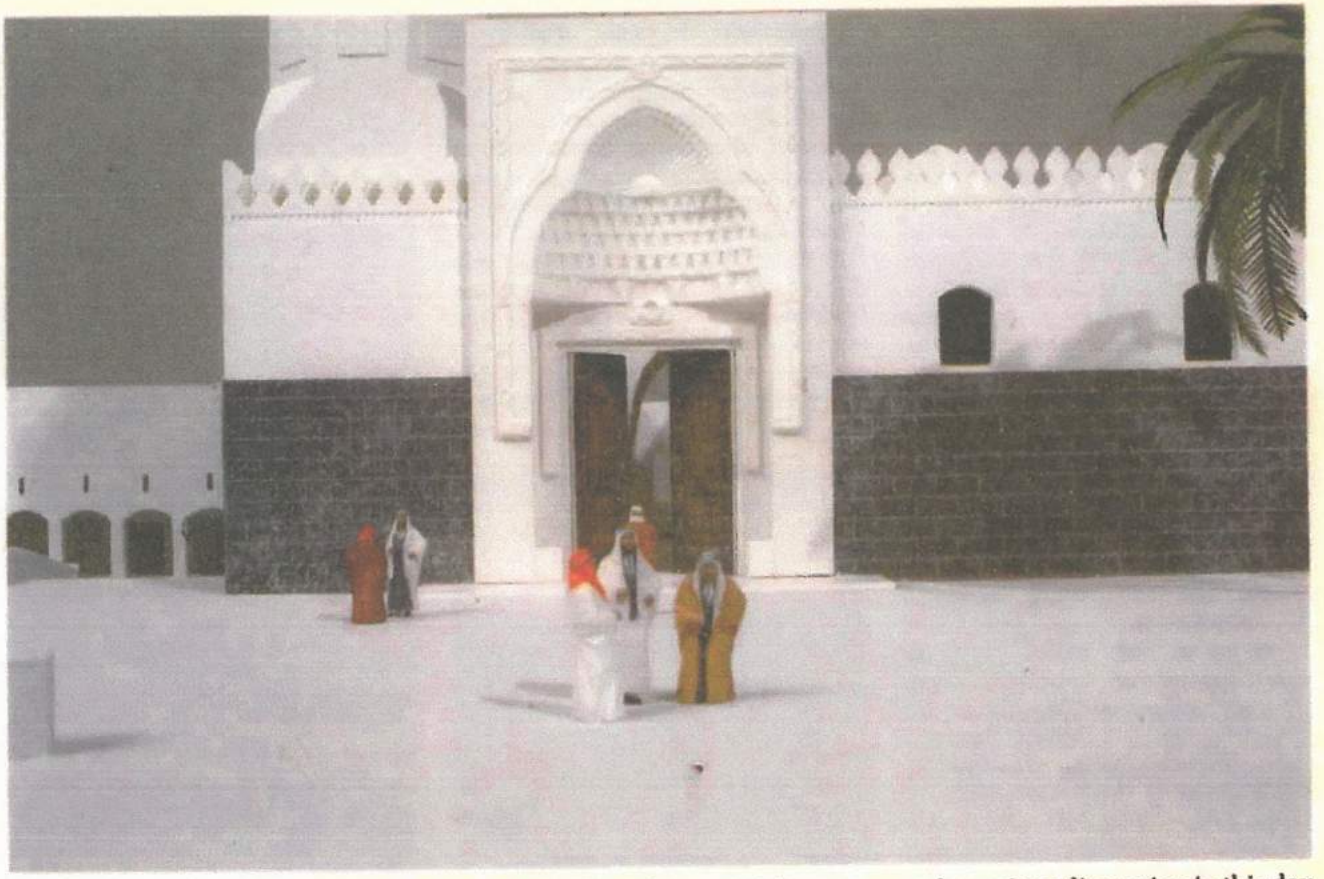
Modern architecture is an outgrowth of the industrial revolution and proletarian socialism. It has been inherently secular and culturally subversive, aimed as it is at





sweeping away all that was before it including theistic archetypes. Modernism came late to the Muslim world but when it arrived it had a devastating impact. More damage has been done to the social and cultural fabric of Islam in the name of modernism during the last century than in all the previous centuries since its sacred revelation.

Modernism rocked the world of Islam largely because Muslim leaders and intellectuals could not find ways of assimilating alien systems into their own social and cultural matrix. Modernist theories and prac-



tices were thus placed in a sharp contraposition to the ways of tradition. For decades Muslim thinkers have been busy constructing intellectual bridges between these two "schools of thought" but existentially the trend has been toward the extirpation of tradition and its replacement by modernist forms. Nowhere is this conflict more evident than in the field of architecture. One need only look to the blighted skylines of contemporary Muslim cities, to the bleak futuristic mosques and the desolate rural development projects to know which side is winning.

Hopeful change has come in an unexpected place. These two seemingly incompatible concepts have begun to mesh in the deserts of Saudi Arabia. This has happened by virtue of two vital but oft-forgotten constituents of the traditional process: the patron and the genius. Patronage has been fundamental to creative expression in the East and in the West from time immemorial. Genius - that ineffable gift - is axiomatic to mastery, essential to the expressive culmination of any given civilization. The genius is the bellwether of cultural expression but without the patron he would flounder because he is driven by a quest for a perfection that transcends prevailing standards and practices. His talent must be nurtured and harnessed; his work underwritten and encouraged. Conversely, without the genius, the beneficience of the patron would go unrewarded. Masterworks are the goal of patronage.

Modernism found its greatest patrons in socialist bureaucracies and, ultimately (and quite appropriately), in wealthy industrial barons like the Goodyears and the Rockefellers. Traditionalism has always been sustained by the higher echelons. As fathers (patres) of the nation and by the very nature of their lineage (patria) they must commit themselves to the preservation of heritage and its perpetuation.

The reigning architectural patrons of the Muslim world today are His Majesty King Fahd ibn Abdul Aziz ibn Saud and His Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan. The surpassing geniuses of Islamic architecture are Dr. Hassan Fathy and Abdel Wahed El Wakil.

Hassan Fathy, the father of modern Islamic architecture, articulated the integral theory of the vernacular for the present age. Without his visionary understanding of the vitality of traditional forms and his unrelenting and uncompromising struggle to give expression to those forms, it is unlikely that Islamic architecture would even come under serious discussion in this day and age. That his buildings were sabotaged, his ideas reviled and his plans subverted has become a part of his legend as an inspired pioneer in a dark age. What most eulogists tend to overlook is that Dr. Fathy neglected for the major part of his professional life one of the primary conditions of the traditional artist. Until late in his life Hassan Fathy failed to find a patron. Architecture for the poor, as his ideology has been dubbed, is a noble but flawed concept. Architectural form can never be established from below. It must instead filter down from the ruling elite. Fathy's work was rejected by the felaheen for which it was built not really because it did not conform to the prevailing fashions and idioms of the urban masses. Fathy's failure to find a patron confounded his mission and confined his contribution to an essentially theoretical legacy

Dr. Fathy's disciple, Abdel Wahed El Wakil, witnessed his ageing master's frustrations and bitter disappointments at close range. He resolved never to replicate the same mistakes in translating his teacher's pristine theories into the architectural mainstream. He gravitated away from the folkloric purism of Fathy's design prototypes toward a flamboyant glamour quite

consciously calculated to attract the fashion-conscious Arab with his preconditioned predilection to all that is modern and progressive. Wakil's first commission, the Agamy House on the seaside near Alexandria, was designed with a subtle eye to intensify the sense of surreality in traditional architecture without sacrificing any of its principles. This house has an audacious appeal, accentuating the romantic complexity of the angles and undulations of Islamic tradition. Agamy was an auspicious beginning for the nascent genius of Wakil but, like most of his predecessor's commissions, was created in isolation - a holiday home in a remote setting. It was not until he arrived in Saudi Arabia that the young architect found his milieu.

Jeddah of the 1970's was an enormous, roaring boomtown construction site sprawling out in all directions in a half-laid foundations, skeletal rising skyscrapers, upturned earth, the broken refuse of demolition, piles of rebar and pipeline, roadblocks and detour signs. It was here that Abdel Wahed El Wakil found his first creative arena. He was commissioned by Ahmad Abdullah Al Sulaiman to design a palace in Jeddah's fashionable Hamra district. "He had obtained a design whilst in California several years earlier. He approached me with his California design and asked me to give it a 'touch of Arabesque'; something to make it look Moorish. I refused and so we began over again from scratch, with a different design philosophy."

What is interesting in this exchange is that Wakil, through a combination of persuasive charm and a genuine desire to please his client managed to persuade someone who had no particular interest in or commitment to Islamic architecture to relinquish modernism in favour of tradition. More significantly, the lavish palace not only succeeded in pleasing its owner beyond his wildest dreams but set a trend toward the revival of Islamic architecture in the city of Jeddah.

One year after completion of the Sulaiman palace Abdel Wahed El Wakil won the newly established Aga Khan Architectural Award for his Agamy House. Hassan Fathy, in the same ceremony, received the special Chairman's Award for his critical role as the reviver of architectural tradition in Islam.

His Majesty King Fahd's patronage of Islamic architecture has, until recently, been less apparent and yet the implications of his involvement are, if anything, even more profound. In the 1970's Prince Fahd, the then Crown Prince, charged Jeddah's mayor with developing a contemporary architectural style that would reflect the Kingdom's Islamic heritage and its centrality to the Muslim world while conforming to the infrastructural needs of a mod-





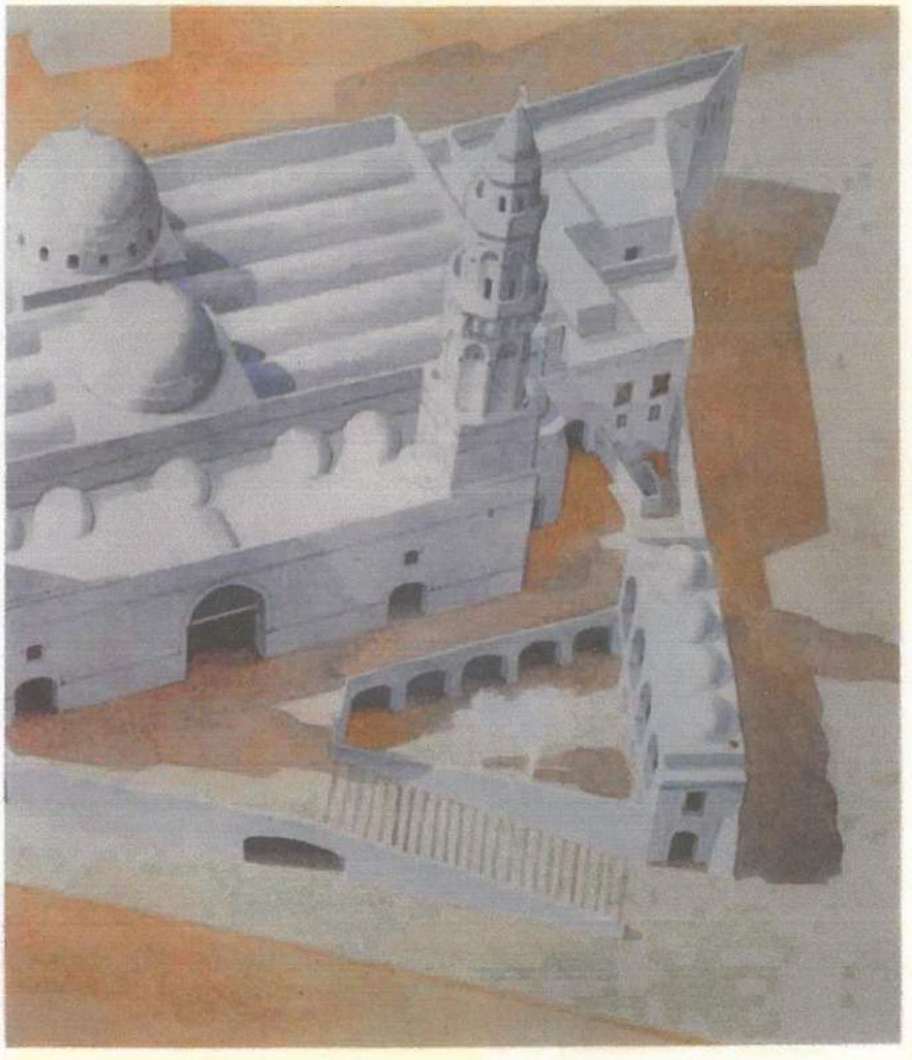
ern society. Despite the preoccupations of the government with developing infrastructure it had become clear to the heir-apparent that Saudi Arabia was in danger of losing its cultural identity unless steps were taken to reconcile modernity with Islamic tradition. He had quietly taken up the gauntlet.

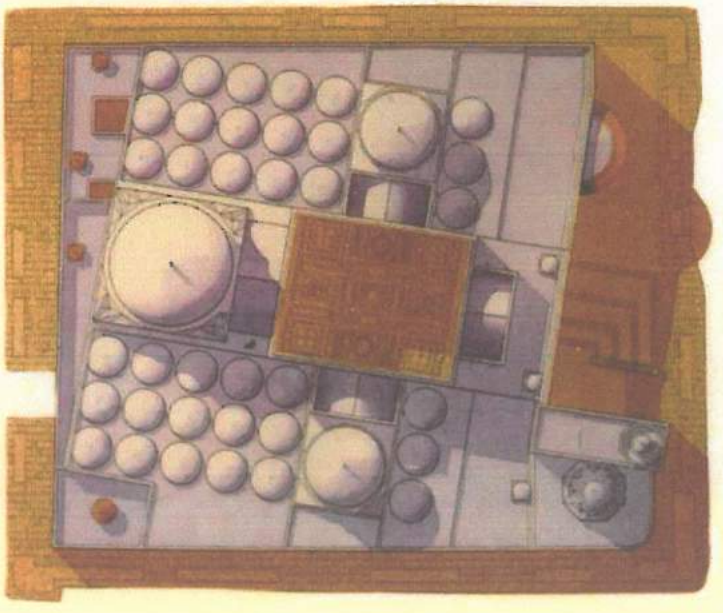
It took the mayor the better part of a decade before he found an architect who could articulate the vision of the King in his designs, blending the traditional and modern with integrity and depth. The architect was Abdel Wahed El Wakil.

The impact of the Sulaiman palace propelled Wakil into Said Farsi's inner circle of artists and advisers and placed him under the indirect patronage of King Fahd. By the early 1980's, with most of the nation's infrastructure in place, the King began focusing attention on the creation of beautiful mosque architecture. Wakil had already designed the elegant Sulaiman mos-









que which was constructed on a site directly across from the palace. It was his first attempt at sacred architecture and it ignited the desire deep within the architect to continue working in this most elevated discipline within Islamic architecture. Among the many beautification projects supervised by the Jeddah municipality, the most controversial has been the decorative sculpture that has been placed throughout the city. Wakil expressed to the mayor his discontent with much of what was on display and the mayor challenged him to create a better sculpture. Wakil accepted the challenge in principle and then countered by offering to design a small mosque as a kind of functional sculpture. Farsi was enchanted with the idea and immediately selected a site on a tiny chersonese standing out from Jeddah's water-front Corniche.

Wakil created a gracefully stunning design inspired in part by the haunting silhouette of the ancient Geyoushi mosque set on a mountain high above the city of Cairo. Before it had even been built the Island Mosque, as it came to be called, won an international award from the authoritative London-based Architectural Design Magazine and proved that Wakil was not only an inspired mannerist, but a gifted classicist. The Jeddah Municipality, in association with the Ministry of Hajj and Awqaf commissioned Wakil to make a series of mosque designs to adorn the Corniche and to provide citizens with ravishing waterside places to pray. Each design is different, each has its own thesis, each is modest in scale and each is breathtaking. Wakil's Corniche mosques of Jeddah are becoming architectural classics.

Madinah Road in Jeddah has, in the last decade, been transformed from a quiet residential street at its beginning and a desert wilderness at its middle and end to the bustling city's main commercial boulevard - a corridor of skyscrapers and shopping malls. Situated along the northbound lanes of the first segment of roadway between the downtown and Palestine street is the site of the King Saud Mosque. First erected in the 1950's during the reign of Saudi Arabia's second monarch when the quality of labor and materials available was much lower than it is today, The King Saud Mosque was condemned in

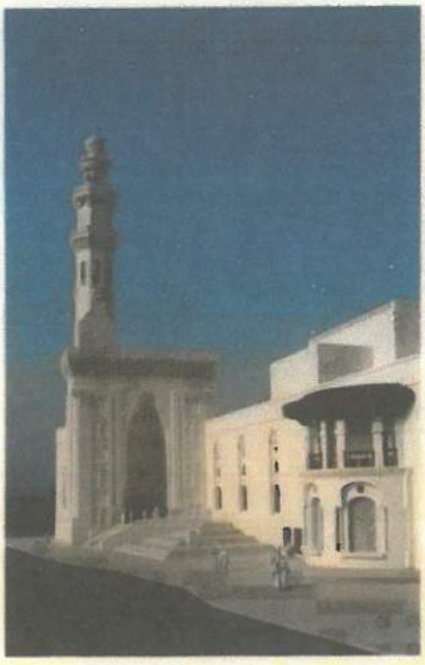


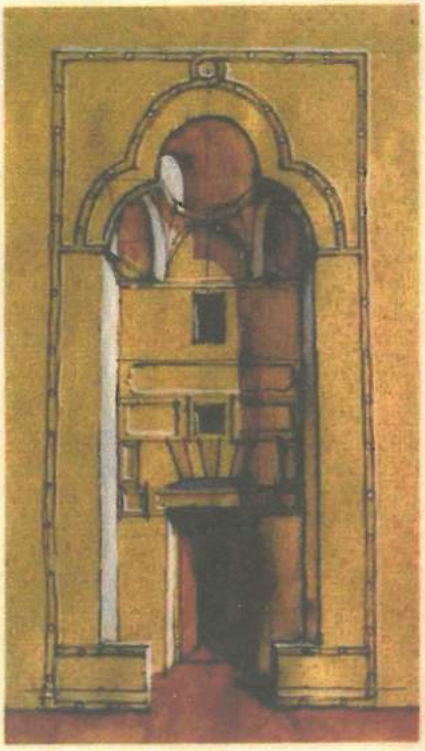
the early 1980's as structurally unsound. Under royal decree from His Majesty King Fahd, the King Saud Mosque was ordered razed and rebuilt. Abdel Wahed El Wakil was commissioned to design the mosque that would stand in its place.

El Wakil is the first contemporary Islamic architect to enthusiastically design against a backdrop of modernism. The King Saud presented the challenge of creating a mosque design that would neither clash with nor be dwarfed by the towering monoliths that dominate the skyline. He looked to the massive Sultan Hassan Madrassah in Cairo and adapted elements from this grand architectural masterpiece. The overall design is, however, boldly original, holding its own against the massive forces of modernity with dynamic, innovative elegance and a soaring minaret.

The culmination of King Fahd's concerns for contemporary Islamic achitecture is centered in the sacred city of Al Madinah Al Munawwara. It is here that the King has chosen to concentrate his patronage. Aside from the ambitious extension of the Mosque of the Prophet that is under way, the King, has commanded the renovation and extension of two of the most sacred subsidiary mosques in Islam. Masjid Quba and Masjid Qiblatain, which will be funded from His Majesty's privy purse. Once again the architect is Wakil, who is working with Bakr and Yahya Bin Ladin of the Bin Ladin Organization, the oldest and largest

continued on page 127





Top:*King Saud Mosque, rendering.* **Below; left:***King Saud Mosque,model.* **Below right:***Entrance, King Saud Mosque, illustration.*
Photographs by Abdel Wahed El-Wakil
Illustrations by Edwin Venn



The Marrakech Festival

Juliet Highet



At the cross-roads of Islam, African ritual and Berber culture, the Marrakech Festival is a unique celebration of preserved tradition. But it is not just a dry cultural jamboree for academics, the word 'festival' for once accurately describes a fortnight-long party for an extraordinary variety of peoples from all over Morocco. More than 600 participants descend into the ancient oasis town of Marrakech, which is the second of the great Imperial cities, the first being Fez. They come from the high Atlas mountains, the Rif, the fertile agricultural plains, the Mediterranean coast, and from deep in the Sahara.

All of the performing artists are of Berber origin, for although there is a conscious attempt to avoid any political implications in the festival programme, at the same time it is recognised that there needs to be an emphasis on the continuity of Berber culture, a recognition of its worth in the face of an almost overwhelming Arab influence in the cities. In a country where it is the Arabs who have tended to congregate in the urban area, the Berbers, many of whom are still nomads, have jealously guarded their individual cultural traditions, differing from group to group. The annual National Festival of Popular Arts in Marrakech preserves the continuity of those local art forms.

However, the Berbers by no means come swinging into Marrakech off the proverbial palm trees; some are first-class international business wizards too. So for two weeks urbane, sophisticated Berbers will share culture, food and humour with people like the Ait Hadidou, who live on the high plateaux of Assif Melloul in the Great Atlas, at an altitude of around 8000 feet, whose lives are hardly influenced at all by the 20th century. Some of the festival performances epitomise the shifting, cross-over spectrum of influences on their life-styles. The people of Zagora, for instance, present a dance in which there is a certain nostalgia for the nomadic life, which they have abandoned for a sedentary one. The ambience and rhythm of another of their dances recalls the long caravan treks through the desert, overtaken for the most part nowadays by unromantic long-haul trucks.

Naturally the early June festival is a magnet for international visitors to Morocco, many of whom are French. It may be for the music, dance and folk traditions that tourists are drawn to Marrakech, at this time of year, when the climate is mellow, though they are also seeking the sun. This is why it was moved forward from its traditional fixture in May. Yet with or without the tourists, the festival has been celebrated without a break for 25 years in the same dramatic historical location. Every year too more Moroccan spectators converge on the remains of the arly 17th century Badia Palace. Within these red fortress-style walls, for Marrakech is called La Rouge after the red laterite soil of the area, singers, dancers, musicians, horsemen and acrobats present their stunning spectacle.

The Berber craftsmen and traders of Marrakech, known as the Dekka,

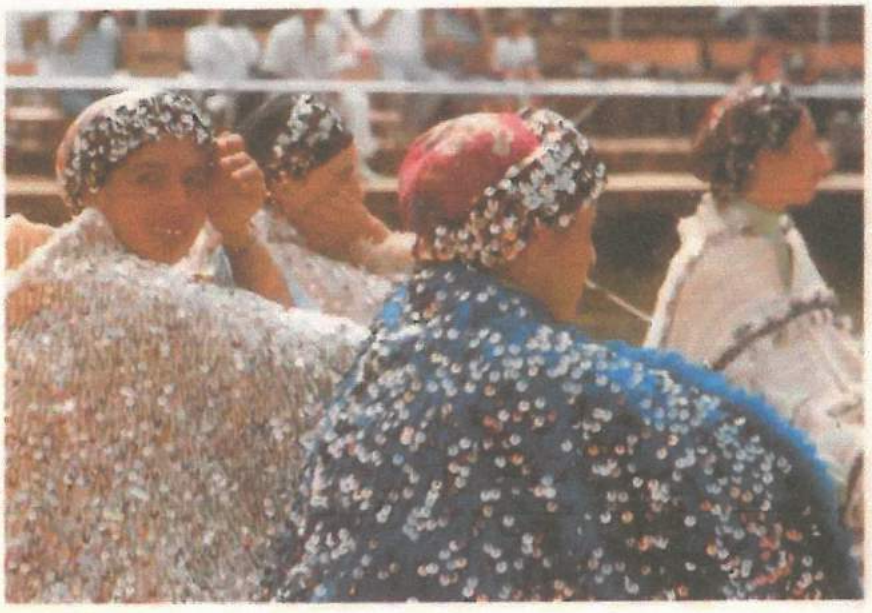
Photographs by Juliet Highet











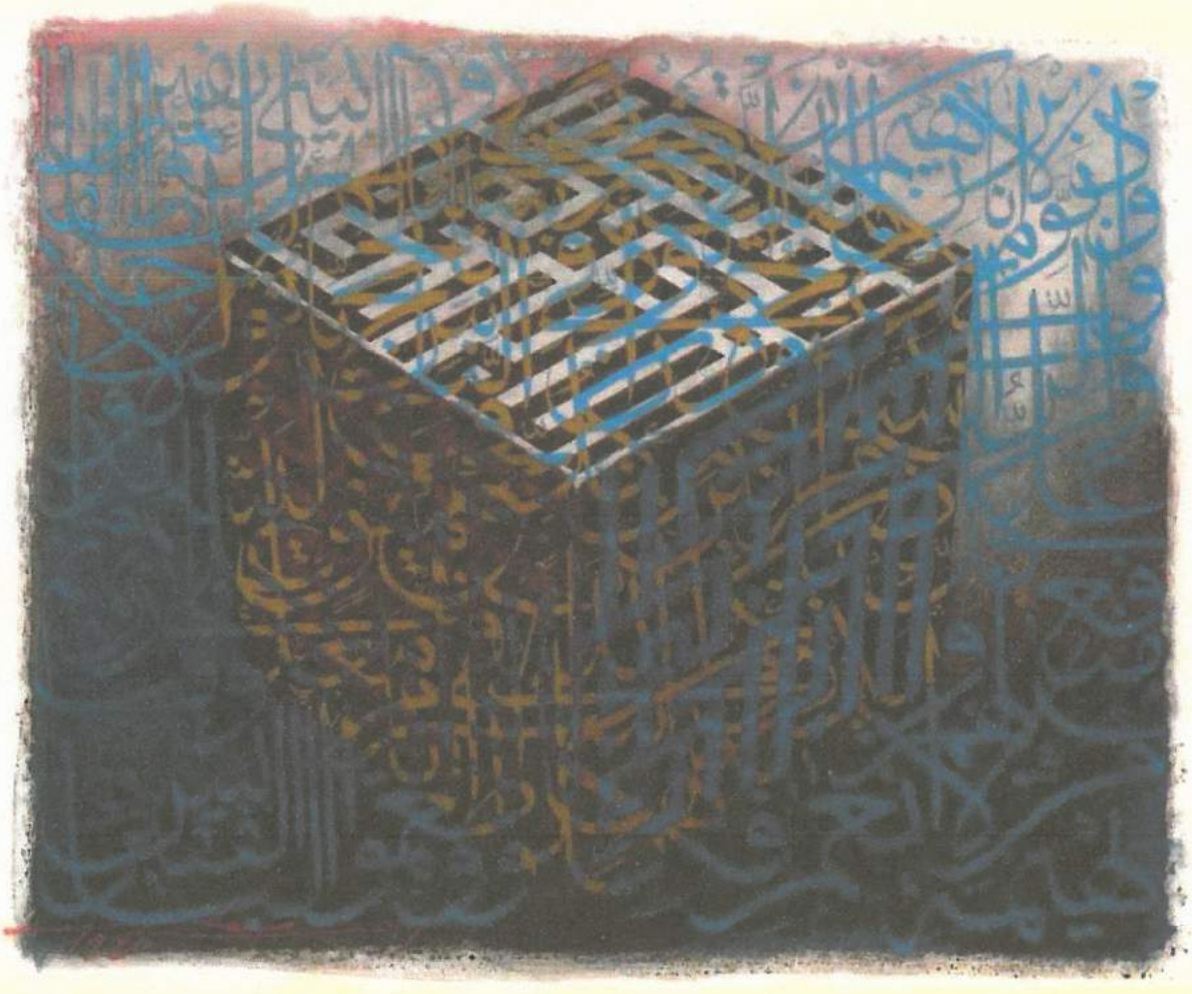
contribute an orchestra composed only of tambourines of various sizes made of earthenware, which emit curious sounds. An insistent rhythm builds up on the 'Cooking-pot' drums of the Guedra people, again composed of terracotta, covered with skin. This throbbing music is appropriate for the sensual nature of their ancient dance. A kneeling woman is suddenly spot-lit in her black veil, moving first only her fingers, then swaying while evenly balancing her head, eyes closed. Gradually she strips off her veils and finally swoons.

The troupe of La Guedra comes from an ancient caravan centre called Goulimine, about 203 km south of Agadir, where camels cross from El Ayoun to Timbuktou. Every Saturday, which is market day, the pastoral Berbers meet with the nomadic camel-riders, called the Blue Men, to exchange products. But in May, the annual camel fair draws even more people to Goulimine, which becomes the location for a vast camp. At night, around the fires, the girls proceed to dance the famous La Guedra.

It might seem that there is little unity in a festival of such a large number of such different peoples, but the show is unified by the choice of a theme, which changes every year. In 1985, the theme was "Sources de Vie" or "Life Ingredients". To the outsider it might appear that the essence of such a festival, celebrating in dance-drama such mile-stones as weddings, birth and circumcision, needs no special emphasis as a theme - these events are the ingredients of life itself. But to the connoisseur each Marrakech festival is subtly different, with its own flavour, although the steps themselves and the nature of the music cannot change, because they are the very fabric of the institutions of Berber life.

The very "Life Ingredients" celebrated in the villages become sacred universal forces, when translated through choreography and music. Such disparate ingredients as love or war are the theme of spectacles which are far more than the social entertainment uncomprehending viewers feel they are glimpsing at the annual festival. Instead of being the individual creations of a director, such ceremonies in the village reflect the soul of the whole community. They are rites, prayers, magical acts - methods of enabling humans to take part in cosmic

continued on page 127



P R O F I L E

AHMED MOUSTAFA

Maureen Ali

As a student and later a teacher of Fine Arts at the University of Alexandria in Egypt, Ahmed Moustafa focused almost exclusively on figurative art. In his teachings he followed the methodology of the neo-classic Euro-Italian school. His landscape paintings won awards including the first prize in the 1968 and 1974 Biennale of Alexandria. In 1974, one of these works was hung in the summer exhibition of the Royal Academy in London. Yet today, Ahmed Moustafa has achieved fame and recognition as a calligrapher of skill and ingenuity.

His "conversion" was brought about by a growing disillusionment with the forms and approaches he had revered in Alexandria. "In

Egypt I worshipped this European-Italian style," Moustafa explains, "I was fascinated by the European schools as we understood them there. When I came here (to London), I began to realise how outdated they were. Instead I became engrossed by the 'marriage' that had taken place between science and art and how this was reflected by modern painters."

Moustafa enrolled in a print-making course at the London Central School of Art and Design and, among other things, began to explore the technicalities of calligraphy. Dissatisfied with some of the academic texts on the mechanics of calligraphy, he decided to conduct his own scientific investigation of the art of Arab lettering in an MA thesis on "The Proportion Script of Mohammed Ibn Ali Ibn Muqlah." His thesis, assessed by Michael Rogers of the British Museum, is acknowledged as an important reference on the subject.

It also changed Moustafa's approach to art and life. Now he works exclusively as a calligrapher, using several media, including tapestry, stained glass, painting and silk-screen. "My works can be divided into two groups," Moustafa says, "One I call universal because in it are recognisable figures: the horse, the falcon, the camel, the tree and so on. Here the scriptural balance is inspired by poetry or man's composed script. The other group is purely abstract, it simply conveys mood, the inspiration for which is derived from the Quran."

Because his work is linked directly to written sources, reading plays a vital part in Moustafa's approach to art. When working on a Quranic theme he spends time studying the relevant Suras before turning to the commentaries on the meaning. Afterwards he tries to capture the most salient aspects of the text. Choice of calligraphic script and the use of background colour are dictated by his understanding of the texts. In one painting *Bismallah* based on the opening line of the Quran: "In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful", compatibility between form and content is sought through the use of stark geometric kufic script which is executed in gold against a jet black background. The sheer monotony of the square kufic shapes indicates the solidity and reliability of the Creator. This progresses along several lines before it is broken up by intricate patterns achieved by a cross-flow of the same words, superimposed over the original square patterns. These swirling forms are representative of God in His infinite variety. "I use black and gold, or dark blue and gold because they are at opposite extremes," Moustafa explains. "They are contrasting yet complimentary. For me this symbolises how life is divided between happiness and misery - divided in a just and balanced way, misery being one of life's tests."





In sharp contrast to the rigorous, formal approach in the *Bismallah*, is the painting of *Four Prancing Horses* inspired by the Muallaqat on the Arab Horse by Umro al-Qais a well-loved piece of pre-Islamic poetry which extols the beauties and virtues of the animal. Executed in muhaqqaq script against a pastel background, the painting seeks to convey the power and movement of the horses, the lyricism of the poetry and even a sense of the environment in which al-Qais lived. Shades of pale blue, dusty pink and dull yellow capture the idea of hazy sunshine in the desert. The horses, drawn in bold calligraphic letters, primarily black, sometimes blending into dark green or brown, leap or prance against the multi-hued calligraphic background which serves to relate large sections of the poem.



"I begin such a work from a purely pictorial point of view, just like any other painter," Moustafa says. "Later it starts to be transformed by its scriptural appearance. When possible, I try to execute the parts of the horse in words relating to those parts, so that the verses concerning the leg appear as the legs, those for the ribs form the ribs and so on. Yet, I consider reading or readability as a secondary or even a tertiary consideration in one's response to the painting."

The subject of the horse has featured often in Moustafa's work perhaps reaching its apex in the now-famous *Trilogy of the Arab Horse*, an awesome 10 metre by 5.20 metre tapestry which hangs in the Exhibition Lobby of the Conference Centre in the Doha Sheraton Hotel in Qatar. Like the *Four Prancing Horses*, this tapestry was inspired by selected verses from Al Qais and





Title page: *God's Holy Abode, Tapestry 2.10x1.80 metres in King Abdul Aziz Airport.* **Opposite page middle:** *Painting from the Diaries Series, this one reads: The pen introduces the daughters of thebrains intothe bridal chambers of the books.(Thuluth).* **Below:** *Weavers preparing the Trilogy tapestry in the French weaving studio in Pinton, France.* **This page above:** *Four prancing horses, Painting, Oil and Water Colour.* **Next page:** *Battle of Badr, Tapestry4.20x2.80m (Private collection).*



from Al Muzarred Ibn Drar. In a similar way it explores the aesthetic beauty of the horse as expressed in the poetry, as well as the rhythmic quality of the verse itself. This is one of four major aubusson tapestries by Moustafa which have been executed by Studio Pinton in France. Eight weavers worked on it for more than a year. The others include, *God's Holy Abode* (2.10 x 1.80 metres) which hangs in King Abdul Aziz Airport in Saudi Arabia, and the intricate *Battle of Badr* (4.20 x 2.80 metres) which belongs to a private collection (see illustrations).

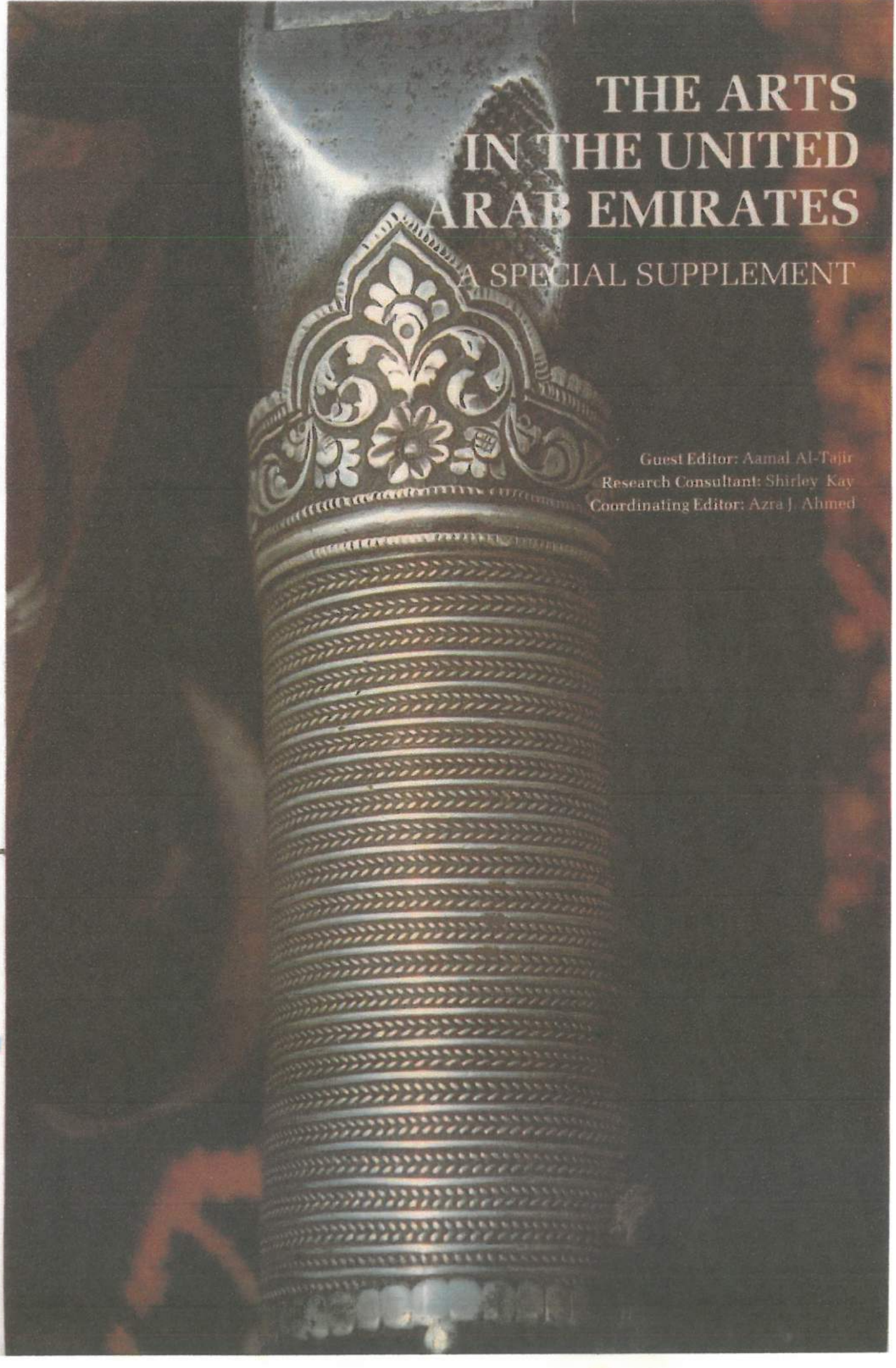
His sensitive work on the Quran has gained Moustafa a major commission for a stunning, fully illuminated Quran to be executed in oil and water colour on specially prepared paper (size 58-1/2 x 68-1/2 cms). This will run into 30 volumes each of which will be bound with a specially designed gilded tapestry. The work will take at least four years. "I have to go slowly and carefully when using the Quran," Moustafa says, "so as not to misuse it."

Moustafa's approach to calligraphy is unlike that of others working in this medium. He shuns the traditional methods of exercises and copying, which he says, denies the artists own creativity: "However talented the calligrapher may be, he merely ends up writing well." Rather, he sees calligraphy as a disciplined scientific medium and a creative process. "It came as no surprise to me to find references to Ibn Muqlah as a great geometrician," he explains, "it only reflects the way he and the other masters understood the harmony between art and science. For my part, I approach my works primarily on a painterly level but I sit down for at least a couple of hours a day to work with my pen."

The type of calligraphic script Moustafa uses in a painting is dictated by the subject matter of the work. He draws a parallel between his approach and the way a composer selects an instrument for part of a symphony. In his *Bismallah* painting, he compares the bold, gold script to the brass section of an orchestra. In the *Four Prancing Horses*, he sees the *muhaqqaq* as closer to the string section.

In his attempt to incorporate several levels into his work: the literal, the linguistic, the lyrical and the artistic, Moustafa sometimes achieves a three dimensional quality in his paintings which allows the viewer to enjoy the effects of optical illusion before exploring for readability and meaning. It is a complex undertaking which needs thorough preparation both in terms of reading and in preparatory sketches.

The full range of Moustafa's work can be best summarized in the lavish desk diaries he prepares each year for Zenel Industries of Saudi Arabia. More like art catalogues than diaries, these are printed in full colour and normally include some 14 multi-layer compositions and 54-56 calligraphic works. Each diary follows a different theme with texts taken from traditional sources: the power of pen; approaches to business; homage to the language and two volumes on the Quran and science. Facing each illustration is a weekly diary page which includes an English translation of the wording in the painting opposite. Moustafa plans to stage a large exhibition in London of some 250 of these diary paintings as well as his tapestries. This will be the first exhibition of his work over the last decade and it will allow art critics an opportunity to make a critical assessment of his prodigious output.



THE ARTS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

A SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

Guest Editor: Aamal Al-Tajir
Research Consultant: Shirley Kay
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INTRODUCTION

Aamal Al Tajir

From its wake, *Arts & The Islamic World* has ventured to provide an overview of the traditional as well as the contemporary art and cultural scene throughout the Islamic World. In devoting part of this issue to the UAE, I hope it will make the individual more aware of his or her cultural heritage and enlighten others, or at least inspire some curiosity in them.

In obtaining material for this issue I am indebted to the contributors of this supplement as well as a number of scholars and experts who have offered invaluable aid and insight. In particular I should like to thank the Research Consultant, Shirley Kay in Dubai, Jana Buresova librarian of UAE Embassy in London, the Department of Archaeology, Al-Ain, John R. Harris Architects for provision of some slides, and Anne Coles and Peter Jackson for the technical data on the construction of wind-towers.

The seven sheikhdoms comprising the United Arab Emirates - Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujeirah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, and Umm Al Quwain - have had their own distinct art and cultural traditions which have been further enriched in recent years thanks to the encouragement and patronage extended to the arts, both at the official level and by the general public.

At the centre of this creative resurgence is the broadening of the educational base on the one hand and the widening of the economic horizons on the other. Vast new avenues have opened up in almost every field and there is a remarkable sense of freedom and enterprise which has brought in its wake an increasing awareness of the historic past, a challenging perception of present day opportunities and an intense desire to create and build for the future.

The resultant cultural and intellectual climate is helping the arts to find dedicated practitioners as well as enthusiastic admirers and connoisseurs. And though it may be early to delineate styles, and schools as such, one can already discern the emergence of individual excellence and integrity as well as institutional growth and continuity in painting and music, in drama and poetry, in architecture and the crafts.

to cite just a few examples, one may begin by mentioning the Emirate society for formative arts, which has hosted exhibitions of the works of indigenous as well as itinerant artists from many countries, and has become its focal point for the promotion of the arts throughout the United Arab Emirates.

The government itself does a great deal to encourage art education. From the age of 6 at kindergarten, and primary level the courses aim at giving the child an awareness of colours and their inter-relation. Then they progress to elementary drawings of animals and objects as well as human beings and their environment. They are taught to model in plasticine too.

At intermediary and secondary levels, pupils are taken to 'life' classes to draw from nature - i.e. still life - a vase of flowers or a scene from the harbour. Although art is not normally a 'core' subject as Arabic or Maths, the student, if he or she is especially gifted or interested, can concentrate on art as a major subject. At this stage the range is broadened to include wood-carving; pottery replaces plasticine as students begin to use their hands to shape objects, some of them showing an interest in ultra modern techniques in collage and applique' work. In addition the girls can also study embroidery and dress-making including embroidery for traditional dresses, since dress-making is considered to be a form of art rather than mere trade. They can learn other crafts too, such as producing rugs and small carpets.

The UAE also hosts many art shows, such as "Tribute to Dubai", which was a collection of 150 works of art with the desert and its traditions as the theme. It was organised by Dame Francoise Tempa who spoke of her quest to discover artists in new regions and to find a new art idiom shaped by their background and culture . "Falcons and Falconry" was another interesting theme for an exhibition. It evoked widespread interest in local circles because of its protrayal of various aspects of this age-old Arabian sport.

The Minister of Social affairs recenlty declared open the Ras al-Khaimah Society for Folk Arts, which aims at preserving, improving, and supporting folk heritage and encouraging folk artists.

In Abu Dhabi, heritage came alive in colour etchings, watercolours, and exquisitely drawn oil paintings reflecting the themes ranging from still life to prancing horses; these figured prominently in the exhibition of Amira Younan, an Iraqi artist, whose works reveal a remarkable dexterity in colour combination and impress with her ability to recapture the breath-taking beauty of Middle Eastern landscape.

In Dubai, a Syrian artist, settled in UAE, Abdul Latif AlSmoudy, held a major exhibition, A member of the Arab Artists Union, he has opened his studio in Ajman.

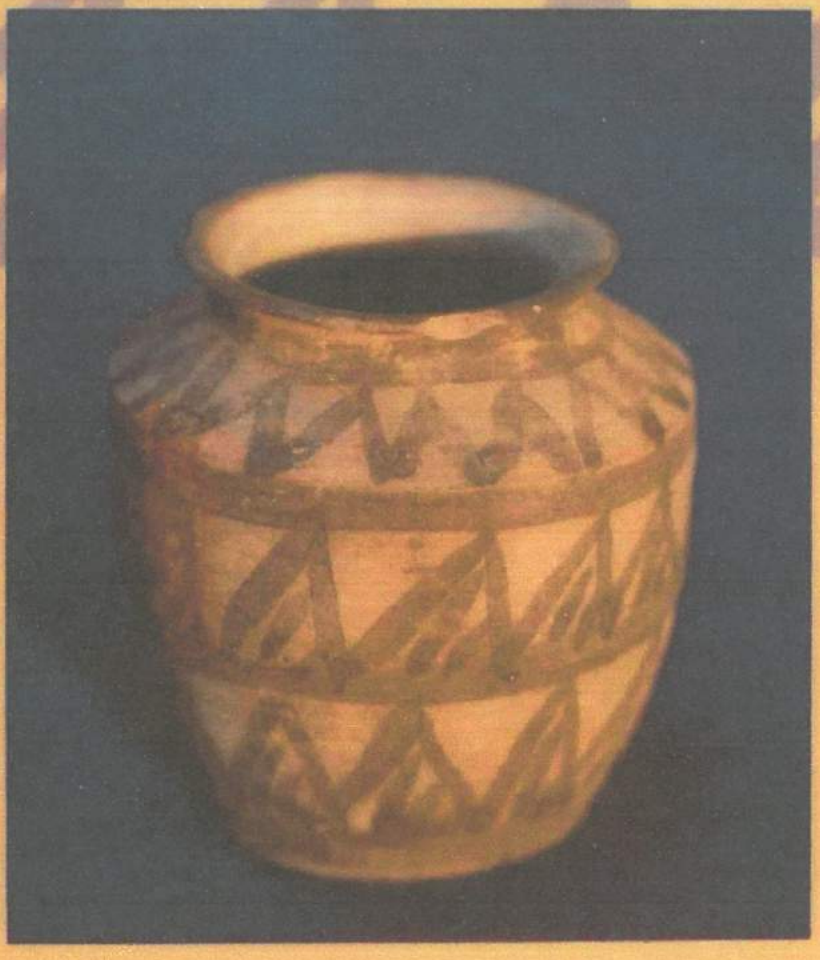
The impressionist influence was very much in evidence at the Dubai Art Society exhibition, featuring the pastels and water colours of two professional artists from the U.K.: Anne Husbands, showing a collection of 30 paintings, of mostly flowers against walls, done in coloured pencil, crayon and wash and watercolour. Among other local subjects she has tackled are old buildings of Dubai whose varying angles and stages of ruin have been captured in a series of sketches.

Eric Paton's pastels are an exploration in light. The settings are Jumeirah, Satwa and Bureimi, but the tonal effects are those of an artist skilled in light and shade effects.

The emphasis has also been on traditional forms of art where advanced students become involved in the design patterns for carpets and the motifs of Islamic architecture. The most prominent form is the way in which words are used to shape different objects. Of course standard calligraphy is practised. Students are encouraged to use words in an artistic manner to express their faith.

Each school exhibits its art forms, often inviting a prominent person to open the exhibition. On a larger scale, the Emirates have been

continued on page 91



Art of the Ancient Past in the UAE

Shirley Kay

Thirty years ago the lower Gulf was not on any archaeological map: from the point of view of ancient history it was a complete terra incognita. And yet, although the Emirates (and Oman) lack obvious monumental buildings, the signs of organised human activity in the distant past were, as in Bahrain, quite clearly visible. The ridges of the Hajar mountains are lined in many places with evident tumuli: mounds in the oases could be seen from the litter of potsherds to be low tells, while along the seashore they are often found to be shellmiddens, also frequently interspersed with potsherds.

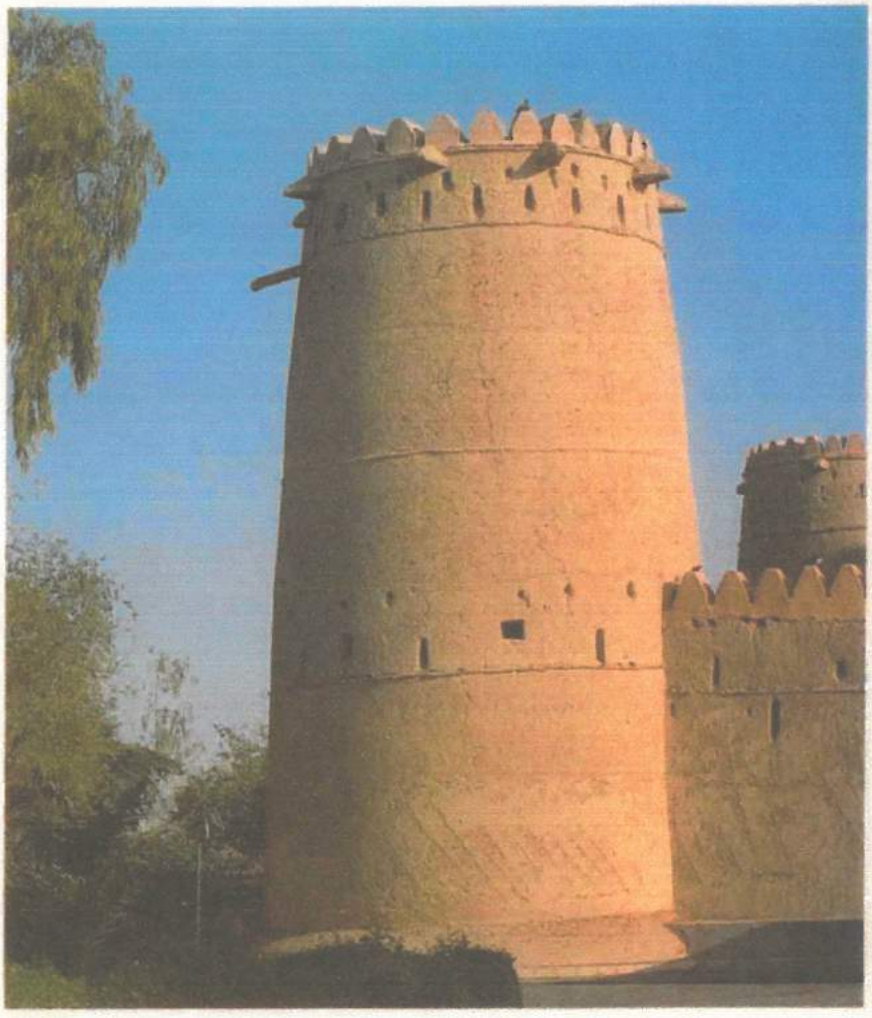
Perhaps the most exciting site in the Emirates to date, however, in that it is the one first discovered and which has given its name to the outstanding local culture, is the flat, waterless island of Umm an Nar, just off Abu Dhabi. Here low mounds, suspected of being tumuli, were spotted in the mid-1950s and the Danish archaeological team were invited in 1958 to visit the place. The following year they came back to dig.

The Umm an Nar mounds were found to cover monumental tumuli, veritable sepulchral structures of a quality quite unsuspected in such an unpromising location. These circular structures were up to 12 metres across, with an outer ring wall and within it a grid pattern of parallel walls creating a series of stone paved burial niches. A corridor ran across the centre of the structure, giving access to the alcoves on either side. The walls widened gradually as they rose, showing that the building must once have had a corbelled roof.

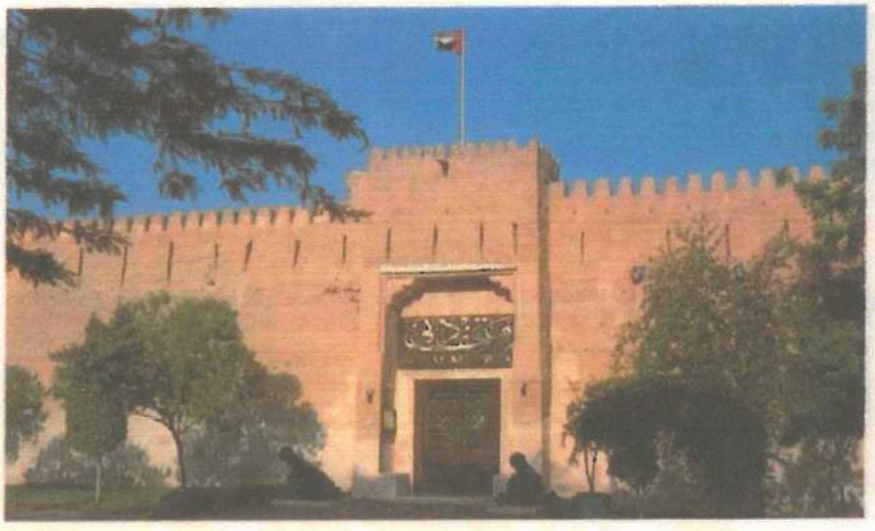
The extraordinary thing about these Umm an Nar tumuli, however, was the quality of the stone facing of the outer wall. Here the builders had not been content to use stones as they came to hand, or simply roughly broken. They had collected large limestone blocks, up to a metre long and half a metre high, and painstakingly chipped and hammered the surface to a fine ashlar finish. But that was not all. These facing stones had been curved to fit the circumference of the circle and to slope inwards slightly as the structure rose, and their edges had been fashioned to fit together like a simple jigsaw puzzle. Finally the Danish archaeologists found that on

Previous Page: *Grey pot with black design from Umm an Nar.* **This page;left from above:** *Fine 1st. millennium chlorite vase from Qusais, Dubai Museum. Metal snake pins from 1st. millennium grave at Qusais. Ceremonial bronze axe, 1st.millennium, Qusais.* **Right from above:** *Old eastern fort, Al Ain where museum is housed. Old Fahidi fort, Dubai which now houses the museum.* **Facing page; clockwise from top left:** *Bronze bowl from 1st. millennium grave at Qusais, Dubai Museum. Entrance door of 3rd. millennium grave Hili tomb, with carvings. Fine glazed jar of 3rd to 2nd. century B.C. from Mleiha, Sharjah. Pottery and boats of a more recent past in courtyard of Dubai Museum.* **Following page:** *Entrance to 2nd. millennium communal grave, Shimal, Ras al Khaimah.*











Photographs by S. Kay.

the largest of the burial structures, the stones flanking the little doorways into the mound were ornamented with relief carvings of camel, oryx and straight backed cattle, moulded to stand out in relief.

These fine, unique buildings could be dated only by the grave goods found within them, for the structures had no known parallels. Among the bones of numerous individuals in each tomb were large quantities of potsherds and a couple of dozen unbroken vessels. The pots were red or grey, fine ware with black painted designs of triangles, zigzags, cross hatching, and the occasional frieze of goats or ibex. They resembled pots of the third millennium B.C. from Baluchistan and southeast Persia. One piece was decorated with a hump-backed bull,

exactly like the Kulli pottery from south Baluchistan, west of the Indus valley. The Umm an Nar pots could thus be dated to around the middle of the third millennium B.C.

A clear impression of these Umm an Nar funerary buildings can be had today from a reconstruction of the best one excavated so far, at Hili in the Al Ain oasis, over 100 kilometres inland of Umm an Nar island. This tomb was also excavated by the Danes who were first taken to Al Ain and shown the mounds and tumuli there by the then governor of the oasis, Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan al Nahyan, now president of the UAE.

When the Danes first dug in the oasis in 1962 they were shown a circle of standing stones of massive dimensions (one was 2 metres long and over a metre high) and of some 25 metres diameter. So huge were some of the fallen stones that for several seasons the Danes could not lift them, until army trucks and winches were brought in to help. But already they had found carvings in relief on some of the stones, and they suspected more on the hidden faces of the fallen stones. In fact this Hili tomb, of similar construction to those on Umm an Nar, was decorated with even finer relief carvings around its small, porthole-like doorways, carvings showing scenes of the life and environment of the time: two lions devouring a gazelle, a man on a donkey accompanied by another carrying a stick, two figures dancing, a pair of oryx with two people standing between them, all beautifully worked in relief.

So fine was this ashlar masonry of the third millennium tombs that it has been much appreciated for building material throughout the subsequent millennia, and well fashioned blocks appear in wells and walls, and even in other tombs. A recent excavation of a first millennium tomb in Hili garden has revealed, built roughly into its wall, a fine ashlar block with a relief carving of a dagger, apparently robbed from a nearby Umm an Nar type tomb.

Excavations have continued throughout the Emirates more or less continuously since the Danes first worked there two and a half decades ago. Although archaeologists have concentrated on the rich and fascinating Al Ain oasis where settlements and tombs of both the third and first millennia B.C. have been excavated, surveys and individual soundings and digs have now taken place in every one of the Emirates and this work is now being extended by French and German teams, building on the early surveys of the Danish, British and Iraqi archaeologists in the 1960s and 1970s.

From the end of the fourth millennium B.C., the period of Jemdet Nasr









in Mesopotamia, the population of the Emirates was in close contact with the developed cultures of all the countries around them. Trade links with Mesopotamia, Persia, Baluchistan, the Indus valley and, of course, Oman, are shown by the goods found in their graves, and in their settlements. On Umm an Nar, for instance, which was inhabited only for some 200 years in the mid-third millennium (and never again until recently when the oil industry sited a refinery there), objects found included carnelian beads from India, lapis lazuli from Afghanistan, pottery linked with that of Persia, Baluchistan, Mesopotamia and Bahrain, chlorite vases from Oman and copper also from Oman.

It was enough to confirm the theory that here (and in inner Oman) must be the site of Magan, to be less settlements in the latter), and again in the first millennium when numerous large settlements were established, thanks it is suggested to the introduction of falaj irrigation. The falaj system of underground tunnels carrying water from the hills has been the basis of cultivation in the area throughout the historic period. It is thought to have come from Persia, and the flourishing first millennium settlements could answer the question as to when.

The fine pottery of the third millennium, with its painted decoration, was the key to dating this culture. Some of the grey pots, however, had incised rather than painted designs and these appear to have been copies of softstone vessels, of chlorite from Oman, also found in the tombs. The characteris-



the third of Mesopotamia's major trading partners of the second half of the third millennium B.C. From around 2300 BC an inscription of King Sargon of Akkad claimed that he "made the ships from Meluhha, the ships from Magan, the ships from Dilmun tie up alongside the quay of Agade." Over the following three or four centuries there are numerous references to the import of copper from Magan; the remains of ancient copper mining in the mountains of Oman indicate the source was here. The wealth and sophistication from this trade spread throughout the region.

The range of goods found in the ancient tombs and settlements of the UAE remained fairly constant, although styles changed, suggesting a break in the culture and way of life between the third and second millennia (at present there are thought

tic pattern on these vessels is of a dot set in the middle of two concentric circles and their shapes vary from round pots to oblong compartmented boxes, both sorts originally provided with fitting lids. The soapstone vessels are thought to have been manufactured in Oman; they continued to be popular throughout the succeeding periods, many having been found in the graves of the second millennium at Shimal near Ras al Khaimah, and in those of the first millennium at Qusais near Dubai. By the latter period the favourite design was slightly modified, to a dot in a single circle.

In the Qusais tombs bowls of another fine stone were found: these are of white alabaster. They include some elegant little vases, either pierced for suspension or with lug handles, and they are decorated with hatched incisions.

Metal was used throughout the period, from the third millennium onwards. Copper swords and daggers and spearheads were found in the Umm an Nar tombs, while from the second millennium come socketed spearheads and blades, and an extraordinary little collection of gold ornaments from a grave in Qattarah, in the Al Ain oasis. These ornaments were thin plaques in the shape of animals, two of them showing a pair of goats(?) joined back to back.

Copper and bronze were still the prevalent metals in the first millennium finds and here the range of shapes is wider. There are many attractive little arrowheads in a variety of leaf designs, and some strange, fluted, presumably ceremonial axeheads. In the Qusais graves a number of large pins in the shape of snakes were found, which might perhaps reflect the Babylonian epic of Gilgamesh, losing the flower of immortality to a snake. Certainly snake burials were found in first millennium levels of the Qala'at in Bahrain, and from Qusais come also pots with snake motifs.

Prosperity continued in the UAE until the end of the first millennium B.C., from which period there is still much to discover. Alhough only soundings have been made there, two major Hellenistic sites are known. One is at Mleiha, an inland oasis in the Sharjah Emirate, where Rhodian jars with Greek inscriptions were found, dating the site to the late third, early second century B.C. The Iraqi team excavated a large building here which may have been a palace. Fragments of iron and glass were also found here.

An even more important site of the same period lies under the sand dunes along the inland shore of a lagoon near Umm al Qaiwain. Here the Iraqi team excavated a fort of a rather later date (2nd or 3rd century A.D.) and found quantities of earlier material nearby, including coins of the Mleiha period, Roman sigillata, and fine glazed pottery. This site, known as Ed Dhoor, covers an extensive area and must have been an important trading town, a precursor perhaps of the later Julfar of Ras al Khaimah, and the present-day merchant city of Dubai. Prosperity then, as now, may well have depended on the validity of a creek or lagoon as a harbour; silting could mean the death of a city which depended on it.

THE DAWN OF UAE CIVILISATION

Aamal Al-Tajir

"A nation without a past has neither a present nor a future." (Sheikh Zayed Al-Nahyan, President of U.A.E.)

The history of the U.A.E., its heritage and its civilization have been the object of particular concern and care. As a result, Arab and foreign archaeological expeditions have been able to start excavations and have joined forces in the quest of remains of the different civilizations that have flourished around Umm an-Nar, Hili, Qattarah and other areas, cradles of human civilization since the most ancient times of history.

These excavations have led to the discovery of sites that were thriving commercial, agricultural and industrial centres as early as the 3rd millennium B.C. The field of activities of their inhabitants had largely stretched beyond the borders of the country to reach other centres of civilization, from the Indus River in the East to the region between the River Tigris and the River Euphrates in the West. This authentic civilization had enabled quite note-worthy industrial, agricultural and urban developments. And since then the village of Hili in the vicinity of Al-Ain has been a large oasis with a flourishing agriculture. It is the benevolent and enlightened leadership of our Ruler that provided the means necessary to the success of the archaeological excavations, particularly those led by the French Expedition. Its purpose was to show the early origins of this civilization which should enlighten the history of humanity in this region of the world endowed with a prestigious past. Moreover, it strives to make the present inhabitants understand the importance of the archaeological heritage and the necessity to preserve it.

The French Archaeological Mission made surveys in the vicinity of Al Ain. They were done jointly with the excavations. The goal was to record and map those sites which were already known rather than to discover new ones. The main problem in the Eastern foothills of Jebel Hafit is the location of a possible settlement related to the tombs of the Jemdet Nasr horizon at Jebel Hafit. Nothing was found. The oldest sites are clusters of worked flint found on the surface of low mounds of cemented sand. The artefacts show a strong reddish-brown patina. None of the objects is characteristic and cannot be dated with certainty. A fragment of leaf-shaped black flint arrowhead with a bifacial covering retouch was shown to the mission. It was discovered south of the Wadi Al Ain. No remains from the middle of the 3rd millennium were discovered. A few potsherds possibly from the 1st millennium B.C. were found north east of the fort of Mazyad.

There are traces of Islamic buildings all over the area stretching between the village of Mazyad and beyond. Towards the border of Oman no remains were found, but large flat stretches of land yielded a few sherds, mostly of a coarse brown-painted brown ware from the recent Islamic period.

The ancient remains of Al Ain city have been destroyed by urbanization. There is still a strong concentration of Islamic potsherds near Qal a'at Hisn al-Jahili, and on the southern bank of the Al Ain Wadi.

The region of Hili and Qattarah is the best known and the richest from an archaeological view point. The sites are located on flat plain covered by busy vegetation and partly invaded by sand. It lies west of Jebel Haqlah.

The sites from the 3rd millennium have been known since the Danish excavations at the end of the sixties. They were aimed at a large circular stone structure, ornamented with reliefs, its ground plan similar to the Umm an-Nar tombs. Six graves of the Umm an-Nar type have since been excavated by Mr Saeed ur-Rahman, archaeologist of the Municipality of Al Ain. Grave furniture was abundant, but settlement goods scarce. The large round stone structure and two Umm an-Nar period graves have been restored by an Iraqi archaeological team.

Quite a number of potsherds and flints lie on the surface of other settlements discovered. In one of the mounds, Mr Rahman unearthed the stone foundations and found in loose surface sand and a steatite vessel with four vertically pierced lugs, ornamented with dotted circles under the rim (Al Ain Museum). The surface was rich in material, particularly a reddish-brown ware, sandy tempered and ornamented with wavy black lines. This pottery is distinctive of the cultures of the south western foothills of the Oman mountains during the second half of the 3rd millennium.

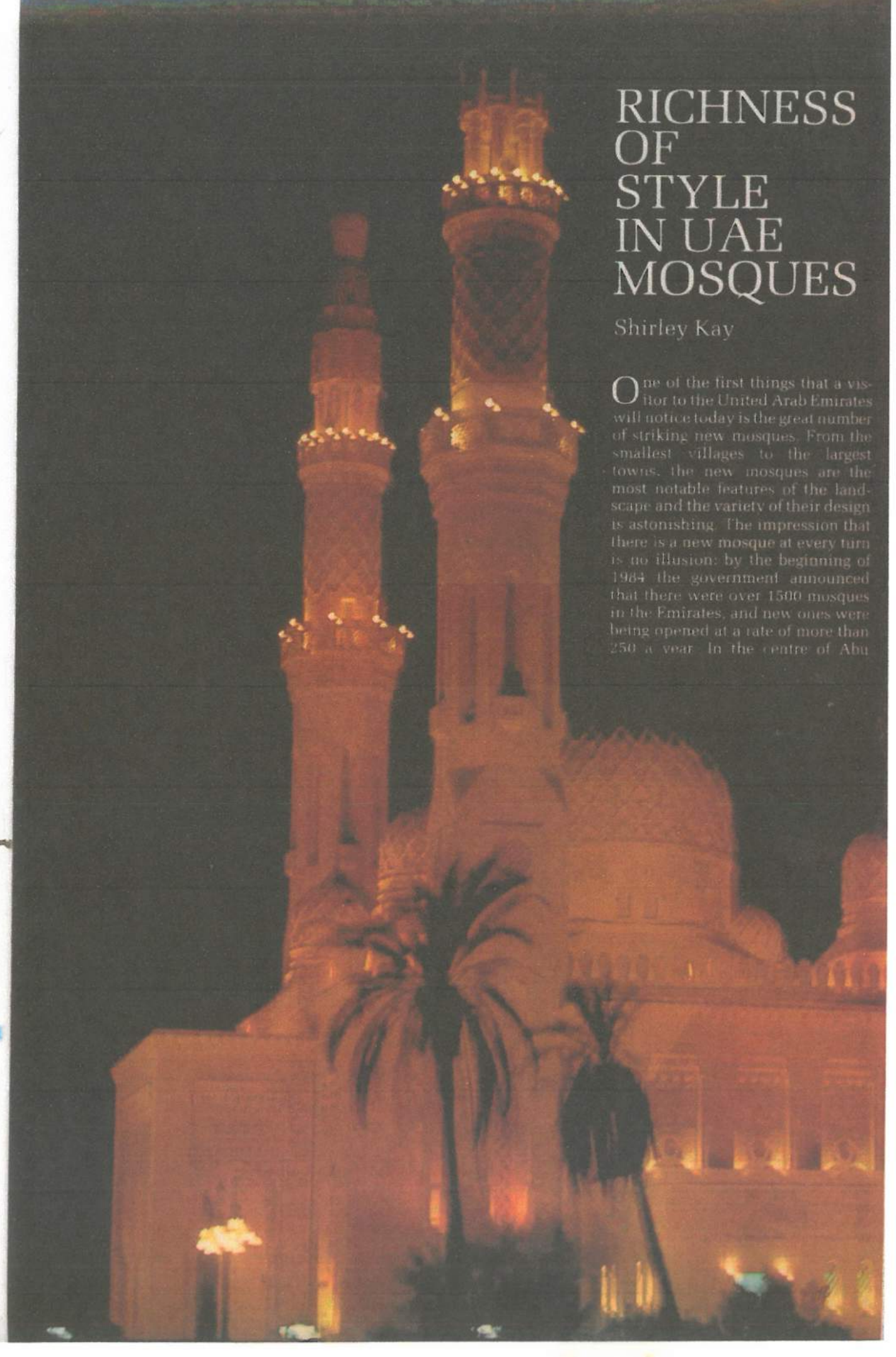
Also found were several fragments of a suspension vessel, a body sherd with lattice pattern belonging possibly to a vase of this kind, a few sherds of the fine black on red painted ware, distinctive of tombs of Umm an-Nar type, a fragment of a small black on red painted bowl ornamented under the rim with concentric half circles alternating with panels of vertical lines. A whole bowl of this kind was unearthed by K. Frifelt in the Wadi Suq. It was associated with a steatite vessel similar to the one discovered in Hili.

The Danish archaeological expedition founded a site of the 1st millennium B.C. between Hili and Qattarah.

Since 1977, Mr Rahman has been excavating a very interesting site. He has already brought to light several houses, one of them with a vaulted cellar. These houses are of whitish mudbricks and had been completely covered by drift sand. Other ground plans of houses can be traced and potsherds are numerous.

It is mostly a rather thick ware with coarse mineral temper or sometimes crushed in the thickest vessels. The paste is buff and is usually covered on both sides (open vessels) with a slip of different shades: brown, plum, red or black. It is rarely decorated. The only technique is incision, cross

continued on page 91



RICHNESS OF STYLE IN UAE MOSQUES

Shirley Kay

One of the first things that a visitor to the United Arab Emirates will notice today is the great number of striking new mosques. From the smallest villages to the largest towns, the new mosques are the most notable features of the landscape and the variety of their design is astonishing. The impression that there is a new mosque at every turn is no illusion: by the beginning of 1984 the government announced that there were over 1500 mosques in the Emirates, and new ones were being opened at a rate of more than 250 a year. In the centre of Abu

abi city, for example, new mos-
es have risen at intervals of barely
0 metres, while in Dubai the aim
that no one need walk more than
lf a kilometre to the mosque.
The new mosques range from
y, intimate constructions
ended to serve a small, local com-
unity, to vast buildings which can
commodate several thousand
rshippers at once. For these new
irates mosques are not all official
nstructions; some are donated by
e government or by individual
lers or members of ruling
nilies, some are donated by pri-
te citizens and some mosques are
ts from abroad, or on the other
nd are gifts from UAE citizens to
her Muslim countries. Thus one
bai doctor funded a new mosque
Bangkok, to replace an old mos-
e where he had been accustomed
worship on his twice yearly visits
the country and which on one
it he found had been pulled
wn.
A remarkable gift to the UAE, on
e other hand, is the King Faisal
sque in the centre of Sharjah,
nated by Saudi Arabia. This mos-
e, which was officially opened in
madan last year, was built to
commodate 5,000 worshippers, at
cost of Dh 33 million, and is
lieved to be the largest in the Gulf.
e mosque, which is built on a
,000 square metre site, incor-
rates an Islamic centre with a 500-
at lecture hall, an exhibition hall,
museum and a Quranic reading
ll. It includes a separate area for
men worshippers.
The best-known mosque in
bai, the Jumairah mosque, was a
rsonal gift of the Ruler, Shaikh
shid. The architectural assurance
d fine stone work of this superb
sque make it one of the outstand-

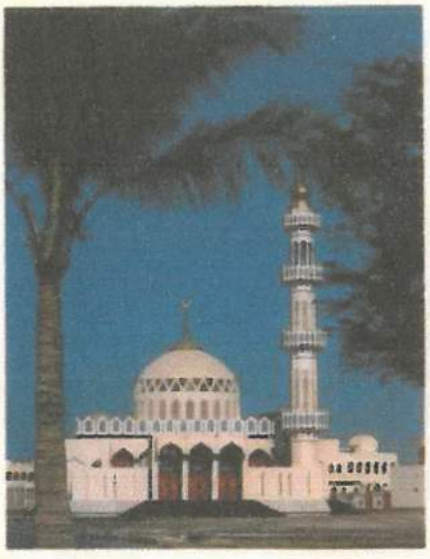
Left: *Jumairah Mosque at Night, Dubai.*
Below: *Ancient mosque of Bidiya showing kibla wall and four domes. Interior of very old mosque of Bidiya showing mihrab and minbar and large central column on right.*

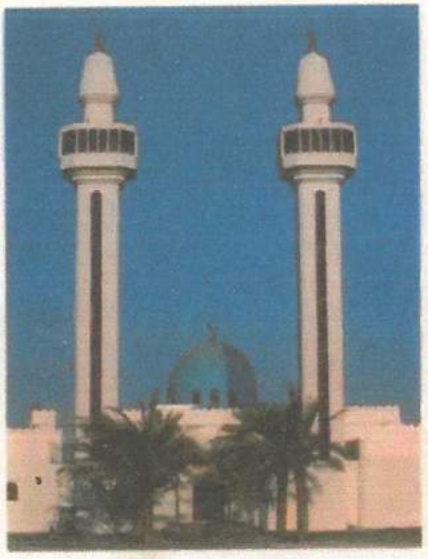


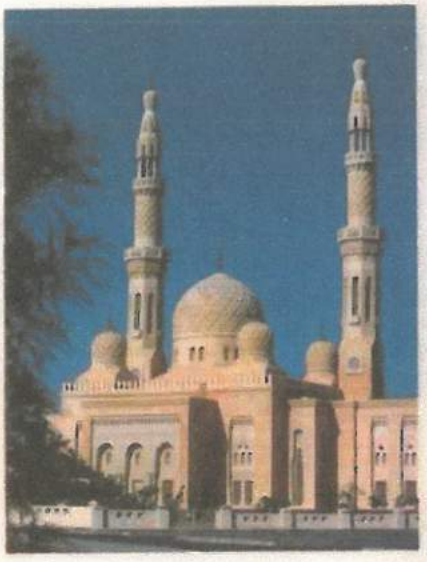


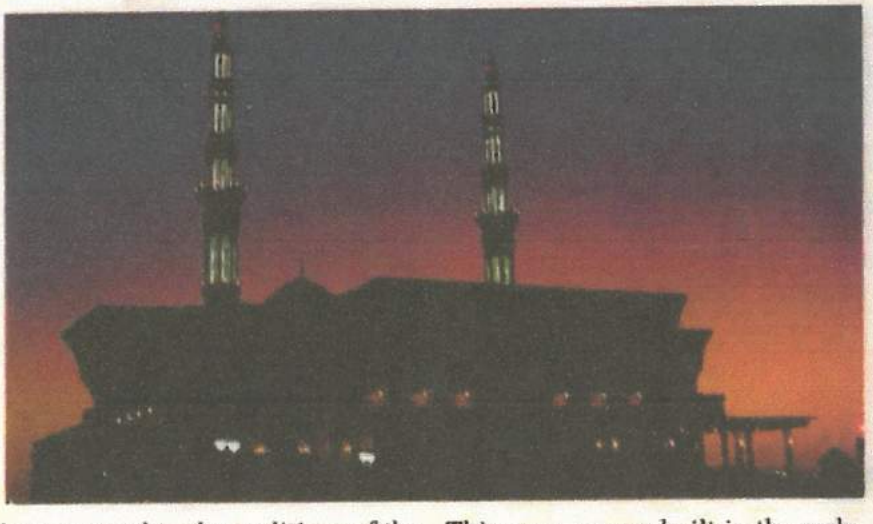
ing buildings of the area. For this mosque Shaikh Rashid chose an Egyptian architect and an overtly Fatimid design. The large prayer hall is surmounted by a high dome with ornate stone carving standing out in relief while around it are four smaller decorative stone domes crowning four separate prayer areas. The entrance archway is flanked by two high and elegant minarets while above the doorway are sculpted Quranic verses picked out in gold. In the interior the roof is supported by groups of engaged marble columns attached to square pillars. The lower register of the interior walls is marble-faced, while above it the walls are decorated with sculpted plaster work and painting and with teak carved with arabesque motifs. Both local and Italian marble was used for the interior decoration and around the windows on the exterior of the building. This mosque is beautifully lit at night, emphasising the warm golden tones of the exterior stonework and the interesting shape of the building, a square with four wings - the entrance and Qibla opposite each other, with a library to one side and an ablution-hall to the other.

Another Dubai mosque which is particularly striking at night also is the pure white mosque of Ibrahim al Khalil. This clean-lined, very modern building stands in an area of white sand, between the Jumairah mosque and the town centre, and the simple arched niches of its exterior are especially effective when lit at night. This mosque has a single, very plain white minaret, relieved near the top by a slightly wider grey band, with small arches above. An Islamic centre and library are attached to the mosque, which was originally proposed by a group of local businessmen who had begun to collect the funds for this religious and cultural centre. They were generously aided before her death by Shaikha Latifa, wife of the









From Left: *Mosque in Karamah district, Abu Dhabi. Elegant new mosque, Batin district, Abu Dhabi. Jumairah mosque of Fatimid style, built for Shaikh Rashid, Dubai.* **Below:** *Sharjah grand mosque of King Faisal, donated by Saudi Arabia.* **Facing page, from above:** *Exquisite little Indian style mosque in Sharjah. Mosque on the beach in abandoned old village of Jazira al Hamra. Ceramic tiles over entrance to Naef road mosque, Dubai.* Photographs by S. Kay.

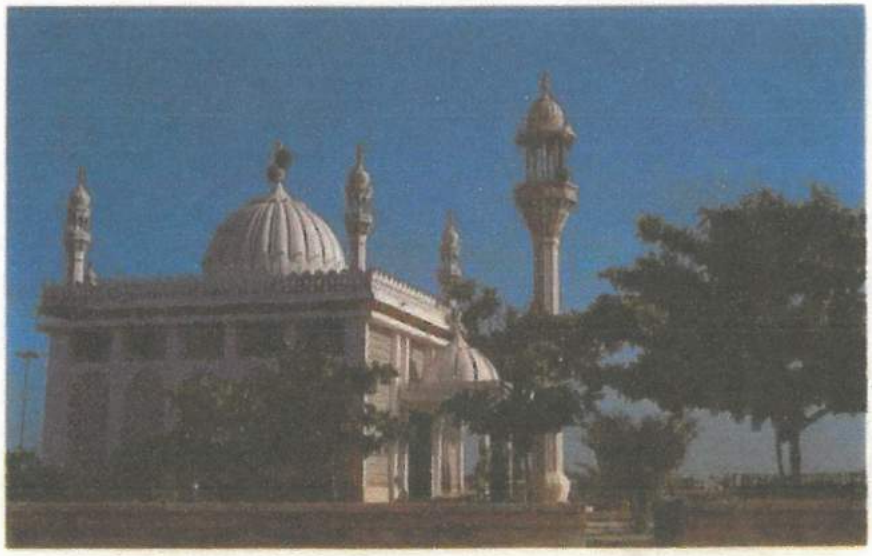
Ruler of Dubai, who herself contributed the entire cost of the construction, thus enabling the businessmen to fund the library and meet the running costs of the complex.

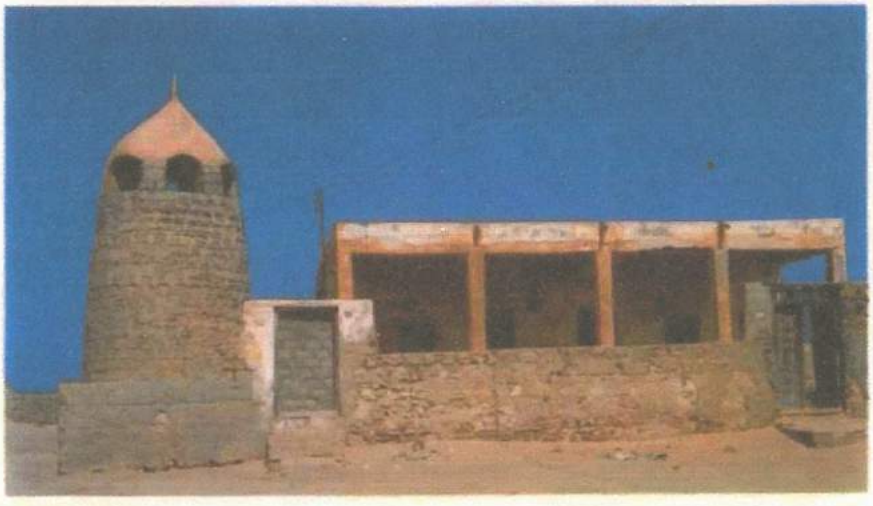
These two Dubai mosques, founded by Shaikh Rashid and his wife, the one of traditional medieval design, the other of distinctly late twentieth century design and construction, are illustrative of the range of styles to be found in the modern mosques of the Emirates. They are in no way representative, however, of the whole richness of architectural styles in mosque design which have come to the Emirates from all parts of the Muslim world. Indeed, the variety of styles and construction techniques visible in the Emirates today is in a way reminiscent of mosque building in the early years of Islam, when Arab traditions were enriched by the skills of craftsmen from all the different countries which came under their sway.

Today, individual donors choose their own architects, who may have been trained in the traditions of the old Arab heartlands, in the styles of Egypt, Syria, and Iraq; or they may favour the slender minarets and heavier domes of the great mosques of Turkey, or possibly the colorful ceramic tile work of the fine mosques of Isfahan. More frequently, however, in the Emirates mosques of today, one sees the influence of the Indian sub-continent and the great Mughal building tradition which at its peak created the Taj Mahal. There is an eastern flavour in the domes and roofs which turn outwards at the bottom, a little like sunhats, in the series of columns which support such roofs in minarets and pinnacles, and most especially in the profusion of little pinnacles which ornament the roof line of so many mosques. These may be accompanied by ribbed domes, and by a massing of floral and vegetal motifs in the decoration of walls and minarets.

Let us look for a moment at a tiny but particularly lovely little mosque in this style in the centre of Sharjah. This mosque was built in the early 1970s. the Indian almond tree planted in its forecourt is now higher than the roofline, and it combines many of these eastern features in a light, lace-like whole. The little square building is painted pure white and is shaded by white screen wall panels. It is topped by a ribbed dome springing from a frieze of outturned leaves. The corners of the roof are marked by four little pinnacles, terminating in a cluster of open columns supporting tiny ribbed domes. The free standing minaret is the most ornate element of the mosque, entirely covered with sculpted flower and leaf motifs and again culminating with a set of open columns and a ribbed dome flaring out at the base like a little hat.

As a complete contrast I might mention the equally small mosque attached to the Rashid hospital in Dubai which is of simple, ultra-modern and also very satisfying design: here the whole mosque is encompassed in a concrete dome rising straight from the ground and







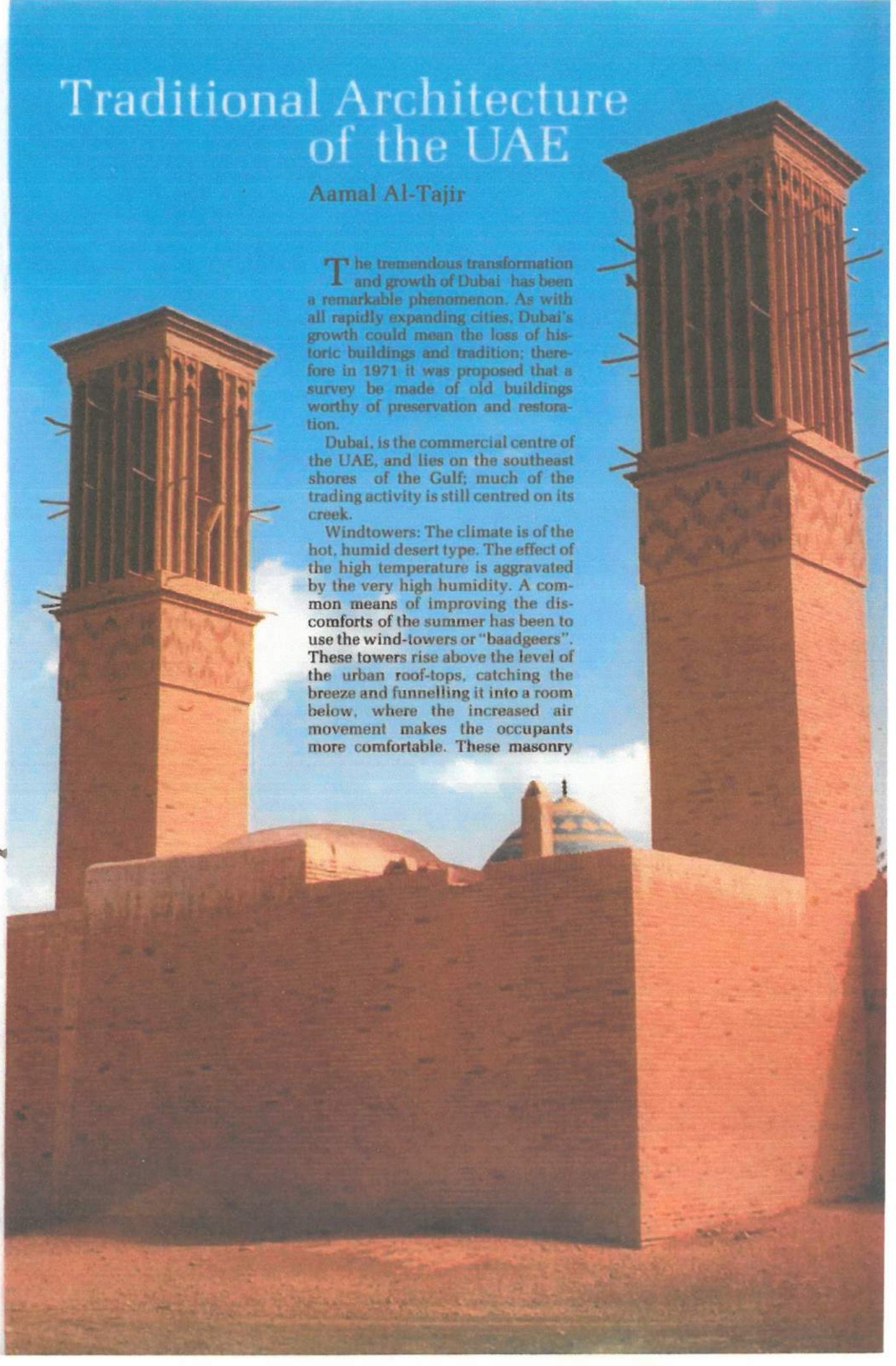
decorated simply with a large crescent on top. The accompanying minaret is of four simple columns, supporting a little platform half way up and joined together in a curving roof at the top, crowned again with a large crescent.

There are, however, more unifying elements common to most UAE mosques than this brief account would perhaps imply. In general the mosques, like other modern buildings, are of concrete construction, and they are usually basically white-painted. Colour is popular, however, and is extensively used to pick out domes, and for details on minarets. On the east coast a standard design of mosque has been built in many of the villages, an individual touch being added simply by the colour used to pick out details. All the new mosques have one, and sometimes two minarets, and most have one or more domes. Other decorative features which are popular are stone or plaster screens for windows, and extensive and often original use of arches. Some modern-style mosques, for instance, have a line of free-standing concrete arches soaring above the roof line. Coloured stone is less often used on the exterior of mosques but where it has been, the effect is very pleasing. The ornate, medieval-style stonework of the Jumairah mosque has been mentioned above; a new mosque nearing completion in Ajman also uses golden stonework for its walls which are of an attractive, plain construction, relieved simply by white arches around the windows, and with a simple, square stepped minaret - a style well-known in Syria, Egypt and Morocco but unusual in the Emirates.

The new mosques of the past 15 years have immensely broadened the style of mosques traditional to the UAE, where the classic mosque style was of a small stone or coral, oblong building, fronted by an oblong courtyard. The simple interior was decorated by niches or windows in the walls and a small mihrab was set in the centre of the long, Qibla wall. Some of these mosques had low squat minarets like small, round towers, tapering to a simple point at the top. An example of a more complex old mosque survives, however, at Bidiya on the east coast. This little building is said to be the oldest in the Emirates and is set close beside two defensive towers. This is a square mosque, built without the use of wood, its roof consisting of four slightly flattened domes, each a little different from the next. Inside the roof is supported on a huge central column, joined by arches to the outer walls. The small windows are shaded by gypsum screens. Little is known of the age or origins of this building; it is not far away from Dibba, site of the devastating but conclusive battle which established Islam, once and for all, in this part of the peninsula. It is a charming little building which merits study and repair.

Traditional Architecture of the UAE

Aamal Al-Tajir



The tremendous transformation and growth of Dubai has been a remarkable phenomenon. As with all rapidly expanding cities, Dubai's growth could mean the loss of historic buildings and tradition; therefore in 1971 it was proposed that a survey be made of old buildings worthy of preservation and restoration.

Dubai, is the commercial centre of the UAE, and lies on the southeast shores of the Gulf; much of the trading activity is still centred on its creek.

Windtowers: The climate is of the hot, humid desert type. The effect of the high temperature is aggravated by the very high humidity. A common means of improving the discomforts of the summer has been to use the wind-towers or "baadgeers". These towers rise above the level of the urban roof-tops, catching the breeze and funnelling it into a room below, where the increased air movement makes the occupants more comfortable. These masonry

windtowers are one of the most distinctive features of the local architecture. They derive from Iran where they occur in a variety of forms. Most of these houses lie in the Bastakia quarter. The name is derived from the inland Iranian town of Bastak from which some of the inhabitants originated.

The distinctive feature of some of these houses is the courtyard garden. The house is built around the courtyard and usually is made up of two storeys.In some even the roof is used to build several rooms. The ground floor rooms and the first floor rooms are usually identical as it was customary to use the ground floor in cool weather and the first floor in summer.

The houses were designed in order to accommodate an increase in the family and to provide proper privacy for the women according to traditional Muslim rule. From the outside the walls of the Bastakia houses rise bare, rough and massive and contrast sharply with the interior where arches and screens achieve an intricate pattern of light and shade.

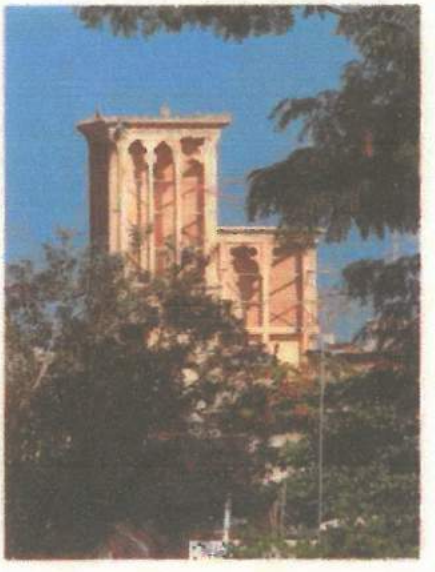
The merchant houses of the Bastakia are heavy masonry sculptures built on the beam and column principle. They were individually designed around evolving family requirements. The building would be planned and built by three masons, with ten labourers and two carpenters usually.

The foundations are a mixture of "sarooj" and stones. Sarooj is composed of a red clay, imported from Iran, mixed with manure, and made into a paste with water. The paste is spread on the ground and is dried in the sun, before being cut into slabs which are built into a mould. A fire is lit inside and left for several days. The baked bricks are powdered and the product is mixed with water to give a strong bonding agent. Sarooj is stronger than gypsum and better than cement which has generally replaced it, as it does not increase the thermal conductivity of the masonry. Consequently the internal wall surfaces remain cool.

At the ground floor level, heavy masonry is used between the columns of the external walls. Internal partitions and the first floor walls are of lighter and finer masonry between columns. The first floor of these houses was usually built when the ground floor structure was complete and the alignments of the columns and walls only approxi-

continued on page 92









Facing page: *Windtowers. Photograph by C. Mitchell.* **This page:** *Windtowers from different areas in Dubai. Photographs by C. Mitchell and W.M. Harris.*

RESTORATION PROJECT

A 'living museum', a unique project to preserve the architectural heritage and traditional lifestyle of the region, is set to take off soon. Work on the Dubai municipality's plan to restore Sheikh Saeed's House, the ancestral home of the ruling Maktoum family, which has been under study for more than four years, has now begun.

The re-building of the house, which is more than a hundred years old in parts, is likely to take around two years after which the house is to be carefully preserved as a relic of days gone by. A detailed plan for furnishing the house with old-style weapons, carpets, chests, bedsteads and antique lamps has also been drawn up by the consultants who have researched every aspect of construction that went into the house.

Sheikh Saeed's House is located at a bend close to the sea on the western side of the creek; it is almost a total ruin now like most of the houses in the Shandagah area, which has a concentration of the wind-towered houses of the past. This necessitates a total re-building of the impressive house which has not been lived in since the 1950s.

Despite the air of desolation that the heavily crumbled facade presents, a tour of the house leaves one with a strong impression of a historic past. Apart from the 'baadgeers' (windtowers), heavily carved doors from India, friezes and more than a dozen decorative arches and screens, remain as a testimony to a past when everything was made by hand.

The house has a large courtyard of 600 square metres, which is less than thirty per cent of the total built-up area. According to the findings of the consultants, Al Makiya Associates, the earliest surviving sections of the house which were constructed towards the end of the 19th Century were built for Sheikh Maktoum, the grandfather of His Highness Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum. Vice President and Prime Minister of the UAE and Ruler of Dubai.

It was then a one-storey building with a roof terrace and stone parapet. The building, which faced on to the courtyard, had two entrances, from the creek and the sea. The house, enclosed by a wall, also served as government building.

Most of the first floor additions were made during the time of Sheikh Saeed, father of Sheikh Rashid. There are separate suites of rooms on the first floor, each with separate access to the staircase and having its own terrace that commanded a good view of the sea and the creek. One of the windtowers is meant for this floor, the other leading down to the 'majlis' or sitting room on the ground floor.

However, in researching the past, Dubai municipality officials found old time residents who recalled a third windtower, all signs of which have now been obliterated. The additions to the house made over the years to meet the requirements of the family have resulted in an irregular shape but "also made it an interesting house with a lot of character," according to municipal architect Dariush Zandi, who is coordinating the project. Pointing to the unique features such as 'breathing walls' (walls so built as to leave a gap for the air to come in). Zandi said the Sheikh Saeed House was testimony to the "innovative technology created by man to make life more comfortable."

In this regard, the first floor, which was the main living quarters during the hot summer, included various achitectural features to provide the maximum ventilation. The entire house is built of coral stone dug from the creek while mortar for bedding the coral was made from a stone available further inland which was burnt with sea shells.

At later stages, the builders used construction plaster from slabs found in Jebel Ali along the coast. Plaster for intricate screen work and cornice mouldings were made from 'sarooj', a red clay which was mixed with manure to give a pasty substance. Apart from the design which was worked out to suit city's trading functions and the type of life prevalent then, the materials used make the Sheikh Saeed House truly vernacular in style.

Zandi, who has worked on a restoration project in Isfahan in his native Iran and also collaborated in the USA on a project to restore Fez which is thought to be the best preserved of the old Islamic towns dating to the 12th Century, said the Sheikh Saeed House derived its special character from the various evidence of its construction over the decades.

In the reconstruction all the wood-work, along with finer details such as the intricate screens and decorative arches will be scrupulously preserved to protect the traditional features of the house. Although the basic construction will rely on a re-inforced concrete framework and slabs, the surface materials and colours will faithfully follow the original by using the same methods of hand constructions.

While dismantling the present structure, coral stones that are free from flaws will be reused in certain areas of the new construction to give it an authentically old look. The ceiling of barasti matting and timber poles which are in excellent state of preservation in some of the rooms, will also be maintained.

Once the project is completed, it is expected to be the best showpiece of the past in the entire region as the architectural details of the house derive from a very old period of building which the consultants say are "visible in the local archaeological evidence more than a thousand years old", and which is part of a wider Gulf culture.

In one of the other Emirates, namely Ras al-khaimah, the Information and Tourism Department has recently completed the maintenance of an ancient military castle opposite the Al-Jazeerah Al Hamra. The maintenance works were aimed at protecting the castle which had shown signs of deterioration in recent years.

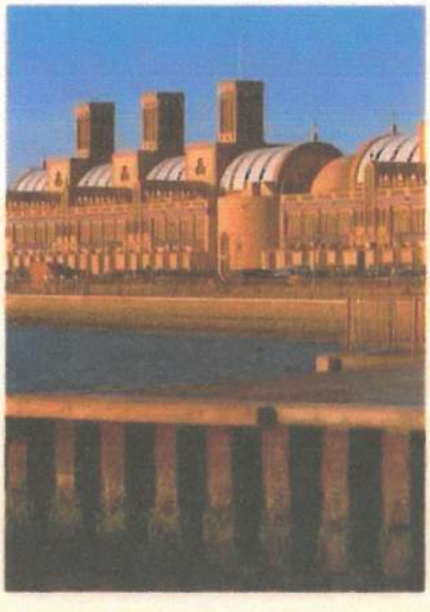
Most of the maintenance materials are local and from same kind of which the castle was originally built.

Meanwhile, the department has framed a plan to construct roads leading to the major architectural sites in Al Ziba Palace, Zaya Castle and Khat Castle.



MODERN ARCHITECTURE MAKES THE MOST OF THE UAE WATERFRONT

Shirley Kay



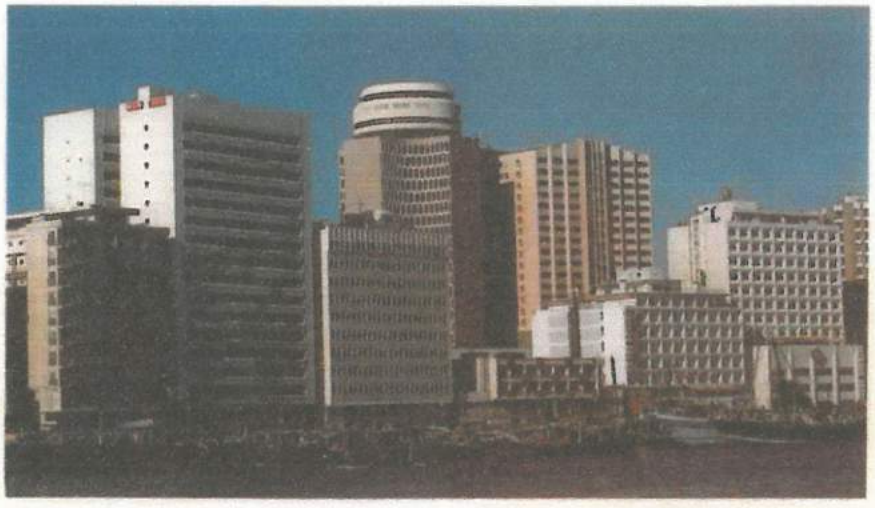
Above: *Unusual shapes of Dubai municipality building.* **Below:** *Sharjah new souq with modern version of traditional wind towers.*

A decade and a half ago the little fishing and trading towns of the Emirates grew straight up from the sand along the seashores, exactly as they had done from the earliest times. The life of the people was dependent on the sea; they walked out of the doors of their houses directly onto the beach from which their wooden dhows and sailing craft set out.

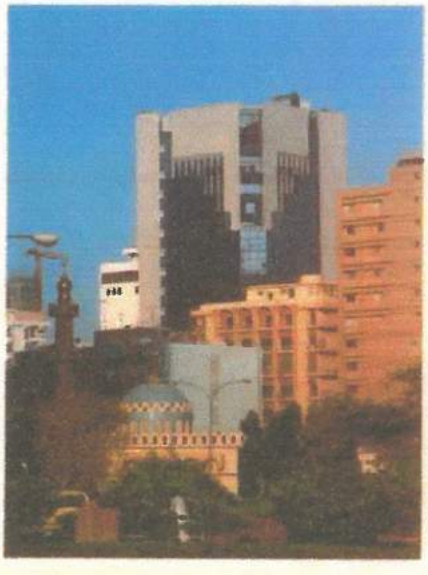
But already oil had begun to bring wealth and with it, merchandise arriving in bigger boats of deeper draught than the wooden dhows. The sloping beaches were no longer ideal for mooring; the sandy foreshore was inconvenient for the vehicles onto which these heavier cargoes were loaded. And so the banks of the creeks and the coastline in the towns were shored up, quays were constructed, roads asphalted, and the land lining the shores became a prime and prestigious building site.

In Abu Dhabi, the town where the physical change has been the greatest and which now has most fully the aspect of a modern city, there are of course many imposing buildings, and many fine sites along the inlets surrounding the town. The most prestigious and fully developed district is however the Corniche, the western waterfront facing out across the blue waters of the Gulf. Here land was reclaimed for the construction of a dual carriageway, gardens and promenades which have much of the atmosphere of a seafront on the Cote d'Azur. An unusual and popular feature of these promenades are the "towers", flat-topped stepped pyramids crowned with fountains, which provide a raised view-point, catching the breeze, from which to enjoy the vistas of city and sea.

The gardens in the centre of the corniche are punctuated by the modern concrete clock tower rising above the greenery of a large roundabout, the clock itself supported on a group of sculptured falcons. Close by an elegant mosque with blue mosaic tiled dome and ornate white minarets also rises from the lush greenery of the gardens between the



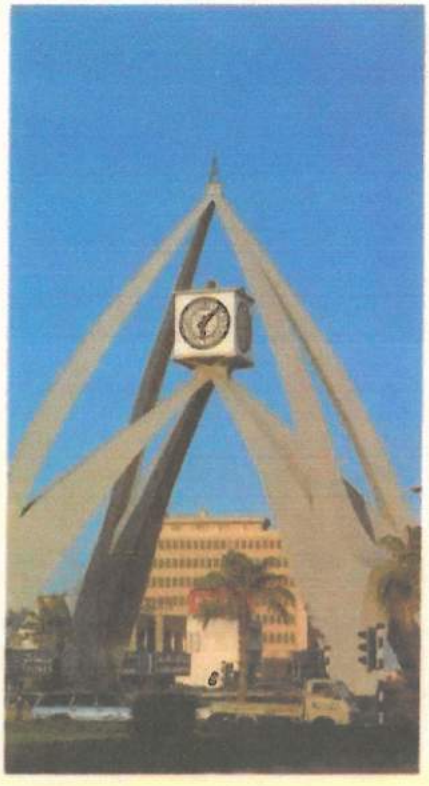
Top left: *New buildings lining Deira side of Dubai Creek. Circular topped Deira tower in centre.*
Below left: *Abu Dhabi Corniche gardens with complex of buildings rising behind.*
Right: *Promenade of Abu Dhabi Corniche in the evening.* **Below:** *Dubai clock tower, first in the UAE, near Creek on Deira side.* Photographs by S. Kay.





dual carriageways. The landward side of this major road is lined with high rise buildings whose architects have tried to produce something more interesting than mere concrete blocks. There are round towers, elliptical towers, semi-circular towers and buildings with a convex or a concave side. Reflecting glass walls or panels are also effective architectural features of some buildings along this coastline which catches a beautiful light from the setting sun, and where strong colours on buildings are set off by the cool greenery of the gardens, and the restrained white and grey of the Corniche sea wall and light globes.

While Abu Dhabi has concentrated especially on its seafront, in Dubai the major development has been along the Creek, the main artery of this merchant city's life. Here the prestige buildings have for the most part been built along the Deira side, facing south across the deep blue water which is always



alive with shipping, from the large dhows and coastal steamers which tie up along the wharves, to the small water buses which constantly ferry passengers from one shore to the other.

The new buildings here form rather a constant line than a series of towers, their dramatic impact enhanced by the dhows bobbing along the water's edge at their foot. Here too unusual shapes have been exploited, as in the concave sided Deira tower with its circular penthouse, or the Sheraton Hotel which slopes inward to the base on the Creek side, reflecting the prow of a dhow. Gold coloured reflecting glass is used on the Dubai bank (now UnionBank of the Middle East) and on the neighbouring BCCI building whose waterfront facade is faced with two large panels of grey-reflecting glass. The decorative effect of this large building is also enhanced by a series of rounded

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TRADITIONAL HANDICRAFTS OF THE UAE

Aamal Al-Tajir

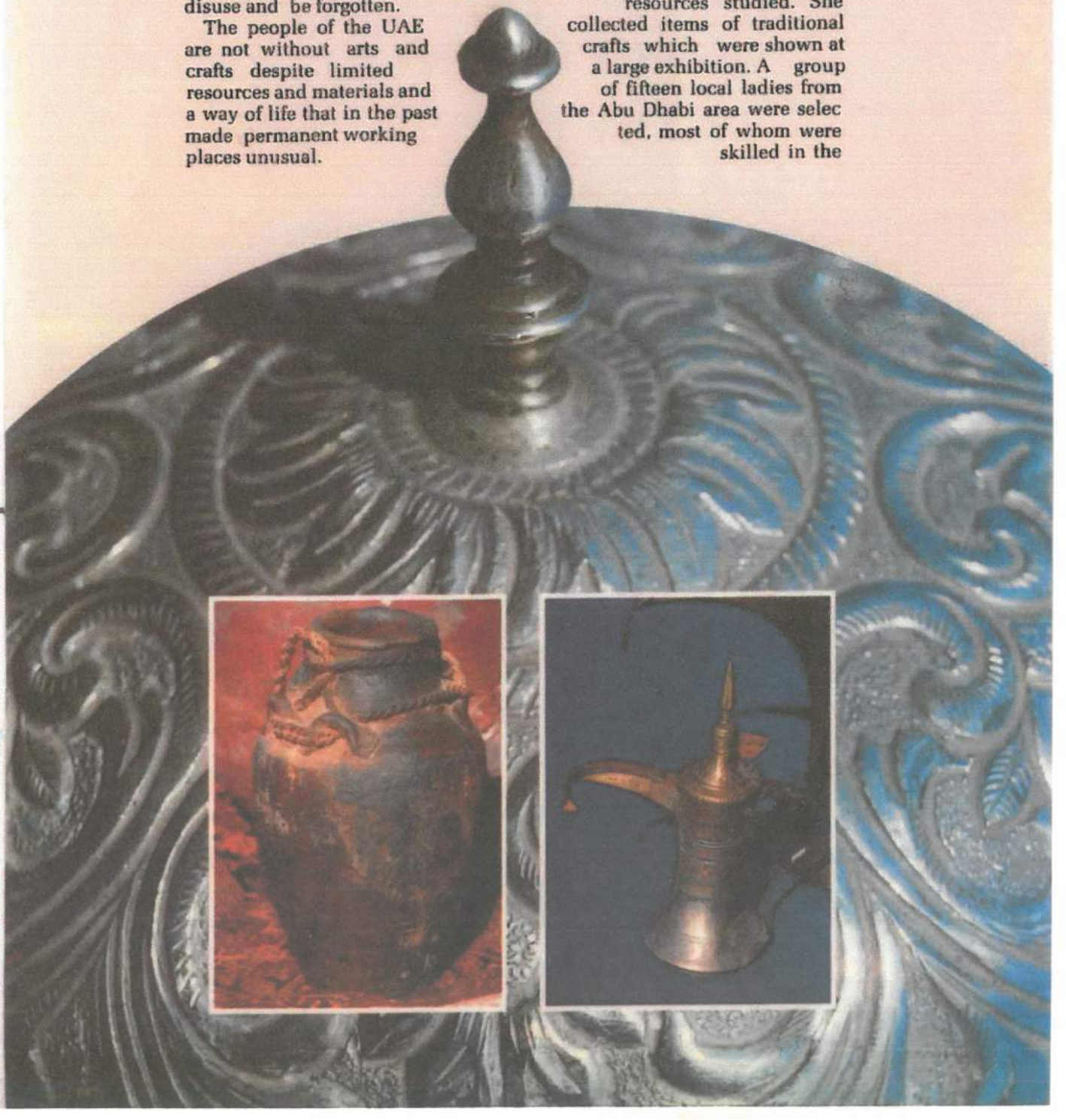
In the East arts and crafts are traditionally carried down from one generation to another. Everything is hand-made using traditional tools which can usually be considered outmoded.

And so the craft continues at its own slow pace. Unfortunately when changes in lifestyle take place in a short time these crafts can fall into disuse and be forgotten.

The people of the UAE are not without arts and crafts despite limited resources and materials and a way of life that in the past made permanent working places unusual.

To ensure local crafts and skills are kept alive the UAE Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, in conjunction with the United Nations Development Programme, has stepped in to provide assistance. The chief technical adviser to the project is Mona Prytz from Norway.

The existing handicrafts of the UAE were surveyed and the natural resources studied. She collected items of traditional crafts which were shown at a large exhibition. A group of fifteen local ladies from the Abu Dhabi area were selected, most of whom were skilled in the





Pages 73, 74 & 75: *Examples of traditional crafts in the shape of utensils, jewellery and ornaments. Photographs by S. Kay.*





crafts. Now, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs has scheduled 13 social centres for women, one of which will handle handicrafts, as its major objective is to preserve local tradition.

The art is elaborate and time consuming but results in some exquisite items.Handicrafts from the Emirates basically involve three distinct arts: Palmfibre braiding; Tallis making and traditional weaving.

Palmfibre is one of the few natural resources available. This is a true handicraft and no equipment is necessary. Some fibres can be dyed to blend in with natural palm colours and form a distinctive pattern. The women sit on the floor with a beaker of water beside them to wet their hands which helps quicken work. In this craft a variety of items are produced, such as floor-mats and prayer-mats, food covers, bags, baskets, bowls, fans and items of domestic use. Plastic items are now replacing palm-fibre products jeopardising the survival of this art.

Fortunately there still exists the generation of women who excel in this craft. It is 'tallis' elaborate hand-braiding using a small pillow resting on a locally made metal stand or 'kajouda'. With cotton and real gold or silver threads, the women weave long strips of braids into exotic patterns. This craft is somewhat similar to lacemaking. The tallis decorates many fine local costumes on belts, cuffs and little mascara or kohl bags.

The traditional weaving uses the simplest looms. Until recently the Beduin women wove beautiful bags out of cotton, silver and gold thread. They kept a few sticks handy and whenever tents were pitched they got busy with this work. The sticks were stuck in the sand to make the 'warp' and the women then walked back and forth to weave the 'weft'. When they were ready to move the sticks were simply pulled out and the 'loom' was carried to the next camp. Simple introductory

looms have been introduced at the centre to ensure that the basic technique is not changed. There are plans to obtain a weaving expert who will live in local settlements, study the weaving system and construct looms which will be acceptable.

One large room is full with finished traditional items and modern items with traditional application. Local Arab women's clothing is practical and flamboyant. A 'serwal' or loose trousers that come together to cling tightly around the ankles, shows off a broad patterned border of handmade silver taille. A 'kandora' or a loose, midi length, full-sleeved dress is worn over the serwal. It is created from Indian silk or cotton, it has an exquisite taille decoration at the neckline and cuffs.

The 'thaub' is the most lavish. It is a full length loose overdress of gossamer fine chiffon, decorated all over with tiny silver sequins and a broad gold or silver tallis pattern around the neck and running down the front.

There are so many hours of hand work involved in these exquisite crafts that much encouragement is required to keep them alive. There has been a good response to this scheme from the local people and of particular significance is the interest taken by Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the UAE President and his wife Sheikha Fatima bint Mubarak. The first stage of this development shows that with technical assistance, sufficient funds and organised sales outlets, the UAE handicrafts will hold a place of pride in today's world.

For the first time, the Handicapped Centre in Dubai is taking part in the annual handicrafts exhibition organised by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The 12-day exhibition was inaugurated by H.H. Sheikha Jawahir Al Qassimi, at the Al Montazah Club. It is a showcase for the handicrafts made at the nine Social Development Centres in Dubai and the Northern Emirates.

The Handicapped Centre has contributed to a big collection of ceramic items to the exhibition. Other items were clay vases and hookahs (hubble-bubbles) among of course the traditional goods.

The Social Affairs Department hoped to organize handicraft exhibitions abroad "to give people in other countries an idea of the traditions of the UAE".

BEDOUIN JEWELLERY OF THE UAE

Man, however wealthy, has always felt the profound need for personal adornment. By the 4th millennium BC, Siver, long a traditional form of jewellery, was being worked in areas surrounding the Gulf. Silver and gold seemed to satisfy not only a need for adornment but, being steeped in mysticism, were also believed to have properties of protection against the evil eye. Hence the use in Bedouin jewellery of anthropomorphic objects, old glass bottle stoppers, dried seed pods, pieces of wood, bone and stone, even animal teeth, set in silver and worn on elaborate necklaces.

Islam generally forbids the representation of the human form, but among the silver craftsmen of the Gulf area pre-Islamic tradition may have been preserved in a variety of little silver figures, either hanging on chains or etched on the back of medallions which appear amongst the Bedouin jewellery and are apparently, surprisingly, made by women who wear them during pregnancy as an aid to child birth and lactation. Precious stones, being naturally uncommon in the area, appear infrequently but beads, pieces of stone, glass and coral are used, usually for amuletic purposes.

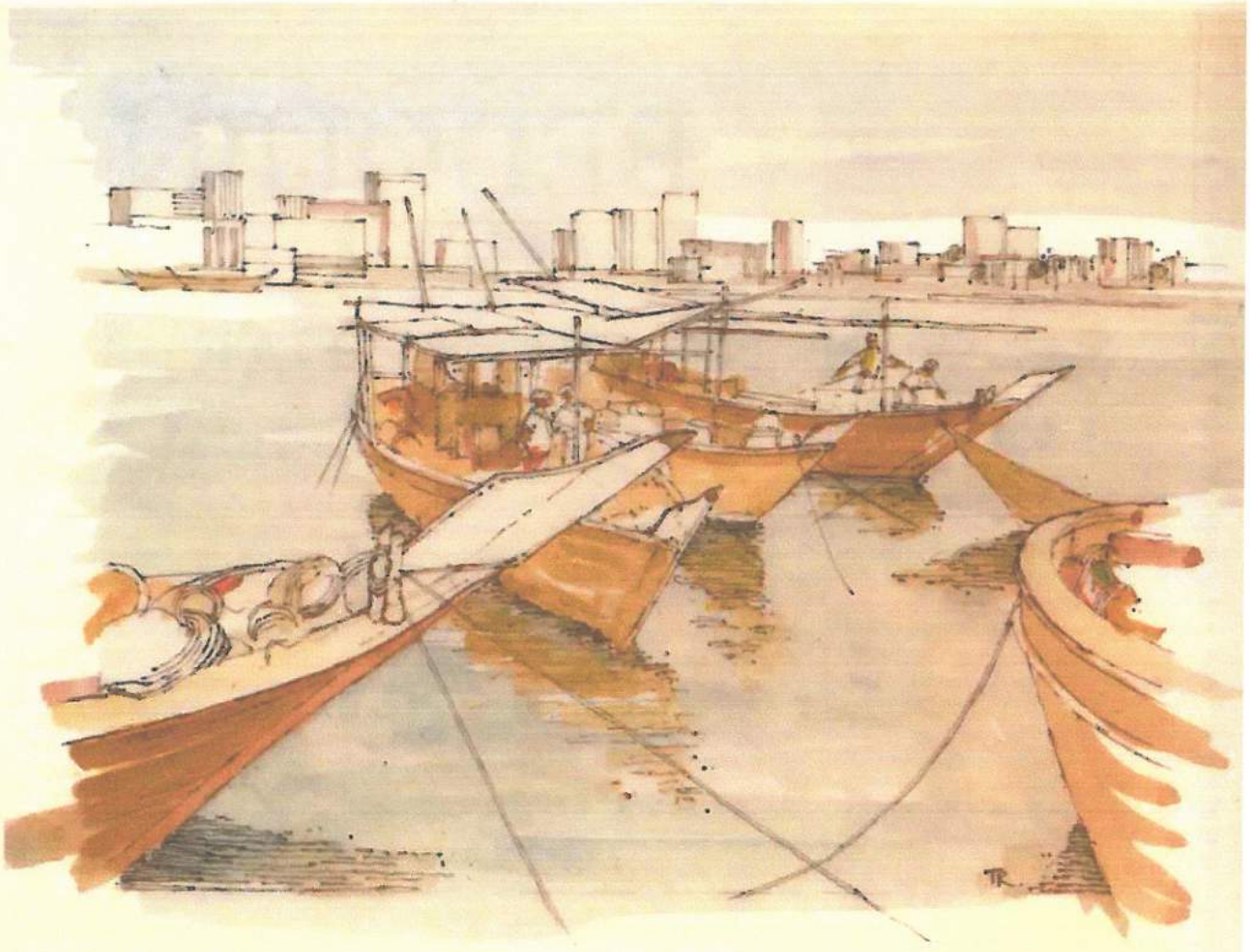


Many designs found in the jewellery of the United Arab Emirates have been influenced by the surrounding area, in particular Oman, Baluchistan, India, Yemen, Saudi Arabia and East Africa. Connections between the UAE and Oman have throughout history been the closest and this is illustrated by the intermingling of villages in the Buraimi Oasis. It is therefore not surprising that there should be many similarities between the jewellery of the two areas. Further, silversmiths originating in Oman used to work in the Dubai and other souqs along the coast. Latterly, the Bedouin have become increasingly sophisticated and gold is being used more and more for jewellery and ornamentation.

The motifs include such traditional symbols as the tree of life and appear not only throughout the whole of the Middle Eastern area and subcontinent but were found even in the ancient civilizations of Babylon, Sumer, Egypt, Western Asia, Somalia and Ethiopia. Designs too involve techniques used by early civilizations. These include chasing and engraving piercing, filigree and granulation in which minute balls or grains of silver are sweated or soldered to a background. Filigree and granulation were important techniques in making the royal jewellery of Ur; filigree, granulation and repousse techniques had been well mastered by the 3rd millennium BC and filigree work has long been in evidence in India and elsewhere. The geometric design, particularly of a diamond pattern cut from a sheet of silver and welded to the object or produced by embossing from the rear, probably originated in the Yemen.

Much of the silver for old Bedouin jewellery came from Maria Theresa Dollars melted down as the coin was renowned for its high and constant silver content. This was important, as before the days of the bank account, a man would be inclined to

continued on page 95



DHOW BUILDING: SURVIVAL OF AN ANCIENT CRAFT

Tessa Rikards



Illustration of dhows in Dubai Creek by Tessa Rikards. **Below:** *Designing a dhow with a piece of chalk on a plank of wood.* **Facing page, from above:** *Sharjah dhow yard. Shu'ai propped up and nearly completed on Ajman beach. Skeleton framework of dhows under construction. Nail holes recently caulked with putty. Two fine sailing dhows in for a repaint, Dubai Creek.* Photographs by S. Kay.

In an age of rapid technological development, with new airports and container terminals springing up at most ports, it comes as a surprise to find in a country keeping up with all the latest and most sophisticated developments, a thriving industry relying on traditional Arab craft - the dhow.

To any visitor the dhows along Dubai Creek provide a stunning spectacle, not least because of the proximity to the modern skyline and the fast business world of Dubai. But they are more than purely decorative reminders of traditional craftsmanship for the enjoyment of the tourist: these dhows have not yet been superceded and are an integral part of Gulf trading. Dubai is a great entreport and a major port in the Arab world, yet still a large percentage of its merchandise is moved by dhow. Moreover, the dhow is also the traditional fishing vessel used in Gulf waters, fishing being, of necessity, an expanding industry with increased demand from a growing population.

Gently dipping and creaking majestically they demand attention, with their bold sweeping prows high above the quayside. I was fascinated to see the amount and variety of goods carefully packed on board and to learn their destinations, sometimes countries in the Gulf such as Iran, Qatar and Kuwait, sometimes further afield to ports in India and Pakistan. But I was more interested to find out where and how they were still being built, about the craftsmen who made and

repaired them, and about the skills that must have been handed down. Records show that vessels used in Bahrain in 2,000 B.C. were not very different in design or materials from those in use today.

The opportunity to discover more about the dhow was soon realised. In my wanderings to find interesting places to draw it did not take me long to seek out the dhow building yards. The Creek had its limitations. Lack of shade and hectic environment made life fraught, but more particularly the method of mooring the dhows side by side, often as many as four deep, made it hard to see much more than the decks of the vessels so that finding an attractive composition was difficult. In the building yards, I found an abundance of subjects to draw and also the possibility of finding out more details about the craft of dhow building.

I first explored the shoreline between Sharjah and Ajman. A recent road development has cut through the yards, but has in no way diminished their activities and construction takes place both on the top stretch of the beach and on the other side of the road close to the villages. These yards have been established for generations, perhaps for centuries, and remain unfenced and unguarded. The skeleton forms of the dhows in various stages of completion, rose starkly above the single storey dwellings, dwarfed only by the tall palms. A smell of oiled teak, rich and pungent, combined with the salty air from the nearby waters of the Gulf.

At first sight, the building areas looked disorganized, with wood of all shapes and degrees of finish lying strewn across the sand between the half finished dhows. The effect of chaos is misleading, for everything is eventually put to use, and order is gradually apparent. The smallest scraps of wood provide an ample supply of fuel on which to boil a kettle, a frequent occupation. A stroll along the shore at night reveals only the small bright fires, scattered here and there amongst the awesome wooden frames, giving the craftsmen some cheer late in the evening when the temperature finally drops.

When I had explained to the builders my reason for being there, and shown them my drawings, I ventured some questions about their work. With the keen help of the more able English speakers to aid translation, I found the workmen proud to tell of their craft and eager to welcome me with cups of tea amongst the sun-baked timber.

As I wandered around the yard, I anticipated finding electrically driven tools as essential items, but this was not the case. Carving and sawing were more often painstakingly carried out using simple hand tools in the hot sun. I also found no evidence of building plans being followed. The method of construction practised by the builders, planking up a boat without a frame or mould inside it, is not only very difficult and skillful but also makes it impossible to build a dhow to prespecified dimensions. Each dhow relies on the eye and instinct of the craftsmen, an individual creation of the masterbuilder.

To help me understand the whole process of dhow building I was led to a dhow whose construction had only just begun - it was merely a substantial log which had been squared off and placed on wooden blocks in the sand. This was the keel, which had been carefully lain to ensure a level waterline. From this the stem and sternposts are set up, and it is then ready for planking. The success of this latter job is crucial, for the balance of the completed dhow depends on the equilibrium of its cross section. By planking without a frame the craftsmen follow a very different method from western boatbuilders, who fit the planking to the completed frame.

Stepping across the hot sand, littered with wood shavings and stray planks of raw teak, I found a dhow in a more advanced state of construction. Here the planking was nearly finished and work had already begun on the framing from the base. From the top of a ladder, enabling me to see inside the shell of the boat, I watched as the men chose pieces of wood for the 'best fit' from a pile of crooked branches, and carefully hewed off the outer side with an adze so that it fitted against the planking. This skillful job was accomplished with dexterity, the men holding down the log with their bare feet. The inside of the boat began to look like the rib cage of some enormous extinct mammal.

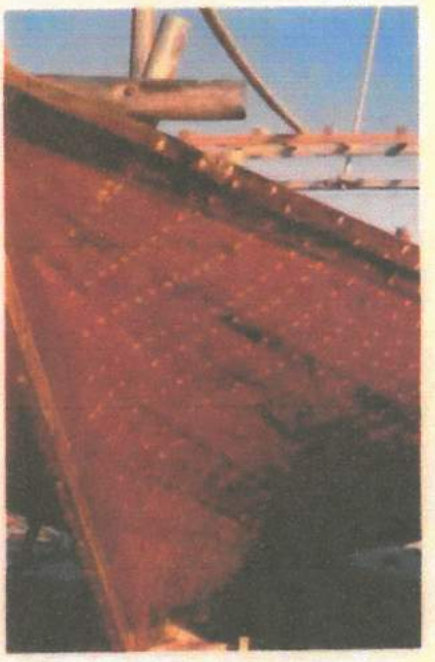
Close by on a dhow nearing completion, long thin nails were being used to fasten the planks to the frames, and the craftsmen were boring holes to take them. The drills they used worked on a spinning top

continued on page 96











FINE ARTS IN THE UAE

Shirley Kay







From above: *Husain Sharif, The Lamp. Muna al Khaja, Traditional bedroom in an old Emirates house. Hisham al Mazloum, Surrealist scene on chequered background.* **Facing page:** *Mohammad Yousif, Pottery sculpture based on seashells.* **Page 80; left from above:** *Obaid Surour, Women grinding food as they used to do. Mohammad Yousif, The Door, wall panel of traditional door and carpenters tools. Hassan Sharif, study in greys.* **Top right:** *Obaid Surour, trees growing in the sand near Ras al Khaimah.*

In the UAE the fine arts have found a welcome home in the Emirates Fine Arts Association, based at the headquarters in Sharjah and with branches in Abu Dhabi and Ras al Khaimah. In effect this covers almost the whole of the Emirates, since artists from Dubai and Ajman can easily frequent the centre in Sharjah, only 20 minutes' drive away.

Painting really took off in the Emirates in the mid 1970s', when a considerable number of students were studying art in colleges abroad, especially in Cairo but also in England, Damascus, France, England, and the United States. As these students returned to the Emirates they felt more and more the need for some place to meet and discuss their work, to practise their art and to store their paintings. Their needs were met by the provision of a modern villa by the government of Sharjah, and there the Association of Fine Arts was founded in 1980.

The Association, which clearly plays a central role in the lives of Emirates artists, is financed by the Ministry of labour and also receives support from the Sharjah government. By 1985 the membership had risen to 67 artists, their director since 1981 being the active and versatile painter/sculptor/potter/and man of the theatre, Mohammed Yousif. All the artists have other careers as well, most of them working for the Ministry of Education in the arts field, but in the evenings the Association's villa really comes alive. Artists drift in and out, work or chat in the studios or the photographic darkrooms, or are busy setting up or visiting the exhibitions which are frequently organised on the ground floor.

For any artist, the opportunity to exhibit his works is vital to his development. Since the Emirates does not yet have an established infrastructure of art galleries in which such exhibitions may be held, the work of the Association in this field is all the more important

Not only are regular exhibitions of its own members's work held there, but also shows by foreign artists, bringing the local painters into close contact with modern trends from abroad. The Association also organises exhibitions in other halls in Sharjah or elsewhere in the Emirates, and sometimes in the big hotels too. Perhaps even more important is its work in taking the paintings of its members overseas, to exhibitions in Kuwait and elsewhere in the Gulf and the Arab world, and in participating in exhibitions of Arab art further afield, in Paris, in India and recently in Tokyo. Paintings to be submitted to these exhibitions are democratically chosen: a group of three selectors are nominated by the members of the club, and these three together make a choice from the new paintings put forward by members who wish to take part.

From among so many members it is invidious to select a few for mention and I can but try to indicate the range of styles and materials, with which these artists are experimenting. Among long standing members of the society active today and painting representational or derivative scenes from traditional life are Muhammad al Qasab whose sympathetic painting of a boy lying face down across a bed is well known and the subject of a print, Ibrahim Mustafa who studied fine arts in Baghdad and has some confident and attractive paintings of traditional and historical scenes, especially in his native Dubai (again some of them now in prints), and Abd ar Rahman al Zainal, producing traditional scenes and landscapes in which the element of drawing plays a strong role. Muhammad Mundi from Abu Dhabi paints strong representational pictures with simplified line and is interested also in calligraphy, while Abd al Karim Sukar, who studied arts in Damascus, has produced some interesting portraits and scenes of daily activities.

Working in a quite different direction, Salih al Ustadh, who studied arts, design and photography in California, is active in all these fields. His paintings have been clearly influenced by the surrealism of Dali and he is particularly fascinated by the idea of passing time; clocks figure prominently in his pictures. Following this same trend of semi surrealist paintings with a warm and delicate handling of colour is one of the younger local painters, Hisham al Mazloum, who studied at Al Ain universtiy. Another very active painter from this younger group is Hussain Sharif who is working with the effects of collage and colour.

While the majority of the Association's members are men, there are also some active women artists painting in the Emirates. Among them are Muna al Khaja who studied fine arts in Cairo and has



A BRITISH ARTIST'S IMPRESSIONS OF UAE

Chester Williams



My introduction to the Middle East came about accidentally - in 1976 I was invited to visit some friends in Dubai on the proviso that I would paint and exhibit some of my work under the auspices of the Dubai Art Society.

I knew very little about Arabia, although I was familiar with the work of many of the Orientalist painters who visited Egypt, Palestine, Syria and other north African countries in the 19th century. For them the mystery and exoticism of the Orient was very compelling and furthermore, since this region was the cradle of 3 great religions it provided an authentic setting for Biblical pictures, and was extensively used by some of these visiting artists.

Time has not stood still and the Emirates (and other Arab States) as I know them would hardly be recognisable to my predecessors, except perhaps in desert areas and the small mountain villages where life has only altered marginally.

What the Orientalist painters and I have in common is an element untouched by man, the light and colour "the excess of solar light, enhanced by its diffusion" to use the words of Eugene Fromentin. No painters of the Middle East can ignore the extraordinary quality of the light and to obtain verity, the artist has to respond to it in the use of colour and detail. It is essential to put down enough accurate detail of ancient buildings, but not so much that the work becomes a measured drawing rather than part of the scenic environment.



Previous page: *Painting of H.H. Sheikh Rashid al Maktoum.* **Above:** *Painting of Creek in Dubai.* **Below:** *Mosque between Tibba and Khor Fakkan.*



In exploring and painting in the Emirates I found my reactions were mixed - in large cities the streets were thronged with cars, banks and electronic equipment.

I recognized that the Emirates were undergoing a technological revolution transported from the west. I wondered why a better compromise in providing the much needed technology, but still maintaining well tried solutions could not have been evolved. I refer, particularly to buildings, to open courtyards with trees, small windows, shutters, massive walls, and interiors cool and uncluttered.

Inevitably I found myself searching for an older Arabia; thus I was drawn to the souks at Deira and the fishmarket at the turn of the creek. My eye was caught by carved doorways and wind towers, but it is the creek itself which dominates Dubai with its bustling activity - booms, belems and sambuks moored along the quayside.

Knowing that I had to contribute to an exhibition I went to Abu Dhabi, to Al Ain which I found visually to my liking, a town half Arab, half modern where camels were paraded in the souks. It was there that I saw for the first time a falaj in the date gardens, and I wandered through the one time fort which now houses an interesting museum.

My travels took me to Kkatt and there I saw the watch towers and Bedu villages in the Hager mountains - excellent material for paintings. I remember driving through Dhaid and over the mountain pass to Fujairah and along the coast towards Oman where there were settlements of Balrachi and their impressive barasti homes.

From inland to coast I found Ras Al Khaimah and the great southern fiords of the Gulf, dramatic and excellent subject matter for my purpose. These trips gave enough visual information to contribute to the Dubai Art Society's exhibition.

The Dubai Art Society, under the patronage of Oscar Mandely, was started in 1976 by Caroline Jackson and Mary Jose. It was superbly organised by Mary Jose, who is a considerable artist in her own right, and held exhibitions of local artists in the Intercontinental Hotel. During Mary Jose's period in Dubai, artists from abroad were invited to show including Tom Merrifield, sculptor, David Leach, son of the internationally known potter Bernard Leach, and myself. Since 1976 the Society has expanded and now has over 200 members of 15 different nationalities. The Society now has its own premises in the Jumeira Beach Road and gives 25 classes in arts and crafts and has a large private library. The Dubai Art Society's address is PO Box 11816, telephone Dubai 444 398.

On my second trip to the Emirates I was asked to paint the then new Sheraton Hotel for Turner International, but my most intriguing commission was offered to me by the President of the Dubai Petroleum Company; to paint a portrait of the Ruler, HH Sheikh Rashid al Maktoum. I attended a series of Majlis's, but I was told not to make any drawings during the Majlis. I took one photograph but on each occasion I would return to Howard McKinley's office and put down on paper some images of the Ruler.

On the last occasion I showed the President a drawing which I thought would make a good life-size portrait and he nodded acceptance fortuitously enough the following day, I saw Sheikh Rashid emerging from a conference; suddenly he turned and the portrait was born. It now hangs in the offices of the Dubai Petroleum Company. Apart from the Dubai Art Society, Lesley Heathcote organised exhibitions from her home which is now owned by Alison Collins and she too puts on 3 exhibitions per year. The Gallery is known as the Majlis Gallery. It is broadly based, showing mainly European artists in the field of sculpture, weaving and engraved glass. The address is The Majlis Gallery, PO Box 11934, telephone Dubai 436 546.

I am told that in Abu Dhabi a cultural centre has just opened under the supervision of Reem Mutwalli. It had its first exhibition in January 1986, and shows local Arab artists and expatriate Arab contributors. It will provide for a growing number of collectors of current art, both representational and abstract. The Abu Dhabi Cultural Centre, telephone Abu Dhabi 331 300.

In the Emirates and in other Arab countries art classes are part and parcel of education, and there is much evidence of a growing awareness in the field of visual art. I think there is also a desire that the heritage of Islam should not only be preserved but brought into the 20th century - evolutionary concepts may well lead to a new form of Islamic art.

FIRST ISLAMIC ART SALE IN DUBAI

Pascale Villiers le Moy

Sotheby's December sale of "Islamic and European works of art, paintings and jewellery" in Dubai, was the first of its kind ever to be held in the Gulf, and demonstrated the dangers of over-optimism and insufficient appreciation of local conditions and susceptibilities. The final figures for the sale, $1.4 million, spectacular, including the 6-day exhibition which accompanied the three evening sales.

The organisation was superb, thanks partly to World Trade Promotion, a company well-known for its successful handling of international trade fairs that Sotheby's had chosen as a partner. The huge air-conditioned Exhibition Hall of the Dubai Trade Centre was warmed up by the display of large colourful carpets high on the walls or on panels surmounted by draperies recalling tents. More of the 140 carpets to be sold were lying on a bed of sand—the most precious ones on low platforms. Arms were harmoniously displayed on navy blue felt panels. Coins and jewels were safely locked up in glass-topped tables. The furniture was gathered in a bright corner and the various works of art scattered in the hall.

The exhibition was a great attraction and a large number of people turned up, but it would appear that in this part of the world the system of public auctioneering went against a tradition of discretion and of bargaining when buying. Indeed few 'locals' turned up during the sale, although Sotheby's had arranged for its electronic panel to show the biddings simultaneously in the currencies of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the U.A.E. It has also been argued that Sotheby's sale was badly timed, that it could have been mor esuccessful a few years ago, that the politicial and economical situation in the Gulf is not favourable at the present time, and that people would hesitate to spend publicly big sums for works of art.

A major contributing factor could be the selection of goods and unrealistic estimates on some items and their provenance. The aim appeared to be to offer goods that would be accessible, easily understood and appreciated by the new collectors: decorative objects that anyone in the Gulf would want to have at home, not austere museum pieces. But it may be argued that if the sale had included a good selection of collectors' items, the traditional European and American buyers would have shown up or bid by telephone (As it was the case for one of the arms). As for the potential Arab, Iranian, Turkish or Indian buyers, they must have done their 'home work' somehow, it seems that if they had hoped for new buyers who would suddenly emerge from the desert sands. But if so, the mirage soon vanished. The auctioneer then, so today, had to operate without 'safety net', that is without the security that is given by the presence of numerous dealers in an auction room, who know the price of things, and are ready to cash in on any worthwhile items which do not find a buyer.

The sale itself started with a section on decorative art, 'Bazaar' pieces from the beginning of this century, with a series of Qur'an stands that did not sell very well, like most things Indian in the sale. the attendance appeared to be that of spectators more than buyers. To many empty green seas were showing in the subdued light. The atmosphere was not going to warm up, especially as the Rostrum, covered with red hangings heavily covered with thick gold embroideries, was put on the stage of what looked like an open air puppet theatre in the middle of the cold and windy hall.

The sale went on with a few early 20th Century inlaid brass, some of which were sold within the estimates, including a Qur'an box sold a few months before at Drouot (at the time, for twice its estimate, for about $4,500): It fetched $7500 in Dubai.

A 19th century Silver inlaid hexagonal *kursi* in the Mamluk style was sold for $38,000, a good price considering those obtained for similar pieces in Paris and London in the past few years. These copies of a *Kursi* in the Cairo museum were made as commemorative gifts for important guests at the opening of the Suez canal. Perhaps the most interested piece in that section was a 19th century Ottoman silver '*kettle*'. There appeared to be no bid for it. It had belonged to Prince Neguib Abdulla of Egypt. Its heavy round body with a sober decoration and a strait short neck was elegantly adorned with a piedouche and a curved handle. The two Moroccan astrolabes were sold 'near the lower estimate.

A celestial globe - an instrument to learn the movements of the planets - was bought by Ahuan which had exhibited it in Riyadh in the 'Unity of Islam' exhibition. The

set of gold jewellery, also from the Riyadh show, did not sell (it had an estimated price of $25,000-35,000), nor did the unique 9/10th century glass spoon that followed. Although it was the only piece that could have interested a museum, its estimated price of $150/200,000 frightened even those keen to but it.

Nicholas Rayner, one of Sotheby's Geneva directors and specialist in jewels, took over from Jack Franses with a self confident voice and an aggressiveness, in a desperate attempt to cheer up the attendance. But there were no fierce fighting from the locals for the possession of arms their ancesters had made. One buyer complained when he learned that he could not use his precious guns and Sotheby's had to promise to havespecial bullets made for him in London. Although the 73 arms and armour pieces selected by Robert Elgood, Sotheby's Consultant, were reasonably priced, only half of them were sold, for a total of about $90,000. The record price of $1700 was reached for a 19th century Omani *Khanjar*. The top price was obtained for an Ottoman sword with horn grips and gilt brass mount: estimated between $6-9000 and was bought for $7,000 by a Scandinavian private collector bidding on the phone. It looked he would have been ready to go on bidding if there had been any competition in the room. Indian and Iranian (*Qajar*) arms did not sell, and neither did the most ornate pieces such as a 18th century flintlock pistol with corals set in silver mount or a 19th century Bosnian sword with garnets, chased decoration and silver niello. But the decent results show that a number of new collectors from the Gulf were ready to spend an average of $3000 per item, to make a safe investment but not to pay any price.

Julian Thompson opened the second evening session with the sale of some 70 coins that brought a total of $230,000. His soft voice and reassuring manner seemed to encourage new bidders and indeed it was the most active part of the whole sale. Robert Darley-Doran, Sotheby's Consultant, had selected mostly gold coins of good quality from all parts of the Muslim world and from the 8th to the 17th century. According to him, they were acquired for about 20 per cent less than they would have been in a London sale. Arabs are fond of history and genealogy, they will be first interested in coins with a prestigious historical background, something they can immediately relate to. There is a great future in the Islamic coin market in this part of the world, especially as it is almost impossible to find a genuine coin in the souks".

Another reason for the success of the coin sale was that, more than any other items in the sale, they reflect the essence of Islamic culture, calligraphy and this leads to the big question of why Sotheby's did not include any manuscripts, calligraphic pages, Qur'ans and miniatures in its catalogue. The most interesting coins were the very rare 11th century Omani coins which were bought for the Sultan of Oman (although the bidder was Spink buying for an 'anonymous' collector): a Dirham (AH 319) fetched $5,600 and another, dated AH334 $7,800 (both were estimated between $1,000 and 2,000). Another dated AH385 fetched $11,500. A record was reached with an Ummayad Dinar of Yazid II (AH 102) which fetched $21,000 (The previous record was $10,000). An Abbassid Dinar (AH170) was sold for $15,500 more than twice the estimate. The price was justified by that fact that this coin, struck at the beginning of Harun al Rashid's reign, is of the highest rarity and demonstrates the earliest instance of the name of a Caliph appearing on a gold coin, as Darley-Doran argued.

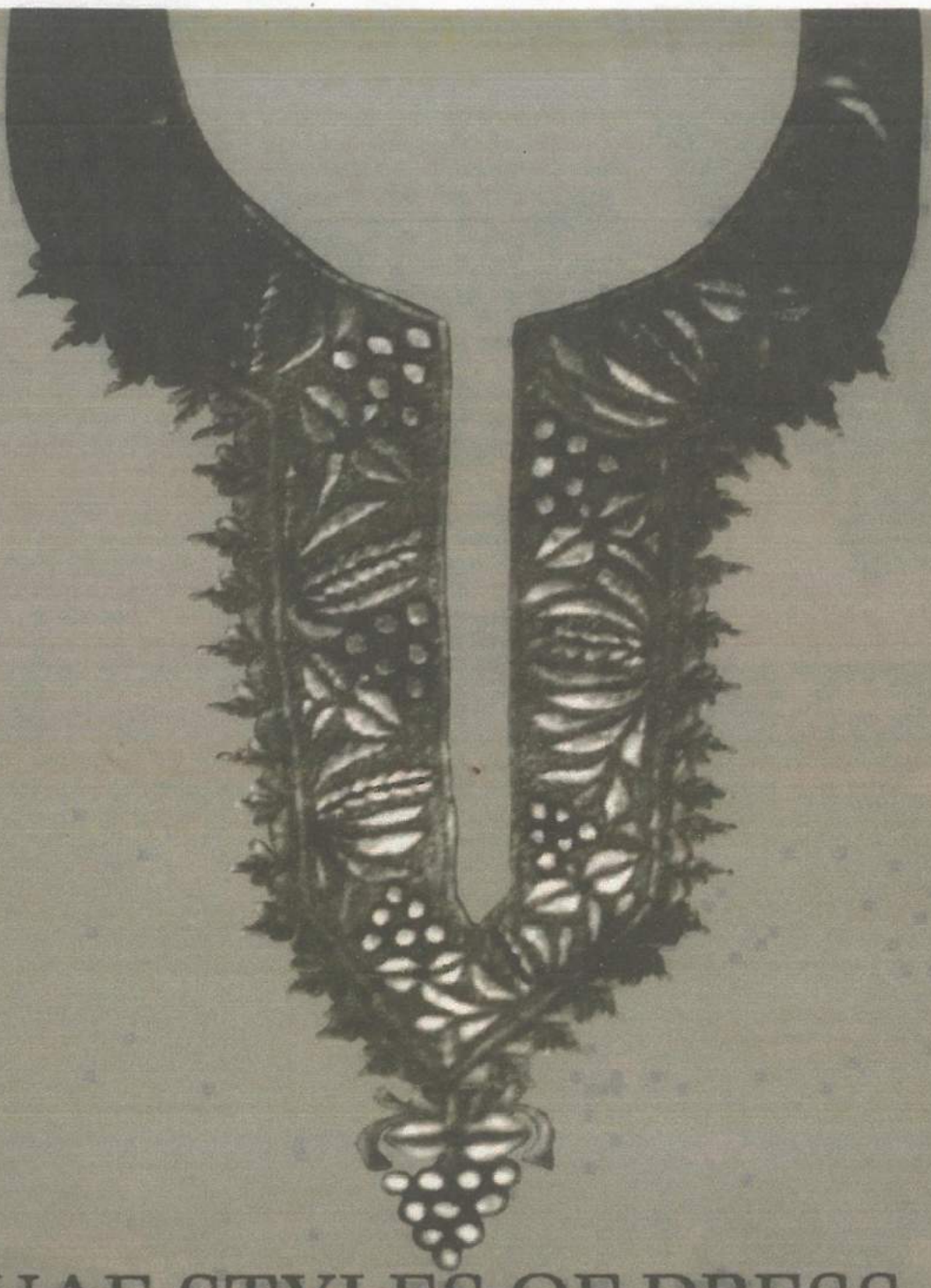
The carpet section that ended the session and started the last one was much too important. Only 13 carpets out of a total of 122 were sold. First of all the numerous Tribal and Caucasian carpets did not sell, apparently because they did not correspond to the local taste. Secondly the many Iranian carpets (mainly Kerman, Kashan and Tabriz) were for a large part, of a quality and of a price that put people off. It was bold of Sotheby's to come all the way from England to present to the local Arabs the kind of carpets they are used to seeing by the hundreds, specially in a place, like Dubai, a free port where goods can be acquired at reasonable price.

The best carpets - and there were some wonderful ones - such as the Kum Kapour ones - were estimated much too high (sometimes three to four times the normal price) and in some instances had a known story. The star of the sale was a large Kum Kapour silk and metal thread carpet with a lattice motive of stylised vegetation in pale shades of ivory, green and pink. There was no bidding on it. At $1.5-2 million, there could have been only a very limited number of potential buyers anyway, and the problem was that the owner, a dealer, had already offered it on the market. As one important collector put it: "Why should I bother to bid on those carpets when I know that the owner will come to my house the next day and I will get a chance to get them for at least half of the price?"

The textiles did not seel either. The Suzani were twice more expensive than they would have been in a shop in Europe. A superb prayer hanging from the estate of Sultan Mohamed VI of Turkey, embroidered in silver and soft colour threads with flower and architectural motifs in the European manner would probably have found a buyer in a London sale and with a lower reserve price.

Most of the 12 pieces of furniture that followed the carpet sale came from various European dealers' shops, among them a rare small late 19th century cyliner bureau veneered in walnut and inlaid in ivory and wood, from Morocco or Syria which had been acquired some years ago in one of Ader Picard Tajan's specialised sales at Drouot in Paris. A group of late 19th century French Orientalist bronzes and a 20th century Bronze representing two eagles fighting by Righetti were sold within the estimates. The three Orientalist paintings were sold too, which led one to think that there could have been more of them. The widely publicized ceremonial stick made of nine pieces of enamelled gold that used to belong to the Maharajah of Baroda was sold to an Indian collector for $50,000, the lowest estimate. The sale ended with 68 lots of European jewels, only 8 per cent of which were sold for a total of $2.5 million. But even with that, Sotheby's investment of £500,000 was not covered.

It does not seem likely that Sotheby's will try again such an experiment. Does that mean the end of an era? According to David Sulzberger, of Ahuan, "there is still a healthy Islamic market, but most important deals are done privately and the best objects are not sold at auction. Also there are a limited number of collectors and, in this particular field, auctions are not necessary to set new records". But this is a dealer's point of view.



UAE STYLES OF DRESS

Jessica Hansen

The history of the U.A.E. goes back to the 4th Century B.C. when the area was the seate of a number of sister civilizations then appearing in the Arabian Gulf. The U.A.E. as it is today, evolved from the seven 'Trucial States' of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Fujairah, Umm Al Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, Ajman and Sharjah which were united in 1971. Civilizations of the U.A.E. bore many similarties to those of India and the Far East and there is enough evidence to suggest that women in these civilizations were greatly influenced in their clothes, their textiles and various other traditions. Consciousness amongst Arab women was rapidly awakening during the 50s. When referring to consciousness among women we speak of the minority which is educated and who have had exposure to contacts and interactions by being well-travelled. It is mostly these women who have undergone any noticeable changes in regard to their dress.

The originality and versatility of



Arabian costumes has for centuries been admired the world over. Indeed influences of Middle Eastern dress can be traced as far back as the 11th Century. The wealth of style and colour depicted in Arabian clothing forms an essential ingredient of the U.A.E.'S regional heritage.

Arabian dress is both modest and mystical as would be the case, due to the great influence of the Holy Quran within the Islamic World. There is a verse in Holy Quran which reads:

"Enjoin believing women to turn their eyes away from temptation and to Preserve their chastity; to cover their adornments (except such as are normally displayed); to draw their veils over their bosoms..."
(Al-Nur 24:31)



but apart from the dictates of modesty, full coverage of the body was also warranted by the harsh climate. Tradition stipulates that clothing be suitable for the movements and positions adopted for the prescribed prayeres. It must never cling to the body and it should conceal while conforming to every movement. Hence somewhat loose garments are worn.

Tribal women who are known as 'Bedouins' are the original 'makers' responsible for the Arab costumes and dresses. They are the only ones that combine elegance and utility with the minimum amount of stitching. On original pieces of clothing brilliance of colours, variety of form and ingenuity of decoration are all very remarkable, considering they were all hand stitched and decorated with various sequins in the midst of the desert sands. Like all women the world over, Bedouin women too possess the universal quality of vanity, even though they do not have the frequent opportunities to show it. Bedouin women are usually hidden in layers of garments which have the purpose to conserve moisture and protect the body from the harshness of the desert, the black cotton overgarment known as a 'thawb' being one of the necessities. However each piece of clothing they wear is a reflection of Arab culture in itself.

The love of beautiful attire, is in the blood of all Arabs. Even before the discovery of oil, well-to-do Arabs dressed themselves in fine garments as they still do today. Ladies wore fashions from Baghdad and Damascus and dresses made of Chinese silk. Persian influence is also present, but the U.A.E.'s trading routes ventured more to the East. The simplest indigo-dyed calico garmentes featured exotic applique embroidery and were bejewelled.

Often metallic threadwork, known as 'telli' and sequins cover each pattern segment and seam. Originally this was not as popular. An example of this is the veil. With the influence of Indian tailors coming to the Emirates, and being nimble fingered, they produced colourful and intricate designs that would decorate the edge of the sheila. Colours that are most favoured, both by the Bedouin and the urban population include crimson, rose, purple, green, orange, blue and cerise. However the material is the aspect that tells the two societies apart. The poorer Bedouins of the desert mostly wore and still wear cotton and wool, due to practical and financial reasons. The prosperous Arab women wear silks, brocades, satins, chiffons and velvets.

As in the Western World, the Eastern regions also go through spells in which clothes are 'in' and 'out' of fashion. The rate at which this takes place is by no means comparable to that of the West, but women in the U.A.E. today are now wearing what their grand and greatgrandmothers used to wear, just as the Western fashion repeats itself. The initial local designs have undergone little changes throughout the centuries, but it is the constant acquiring of new and fine textiles from the East that keep fashion going.

It can however, safely be said that this Century is probably one in which the greatest changes have taken place, especially in the wardrobes of women who travel to the West. Gowns labelled 'London', 'Rome', 'Paris' and 'New York' seem to be emerging rapidly as well as the persistent local attire. Social gatherings, weddings, celebrations such as Eid Al Fitr, Eid Al Adha and birthdays are all fashion shows of a kind one rarely sees other than in Dubai.

One should not be fooled by the black 'abbaya', the well known outer mantle, for underneath it, and the shiny course silk mask, lies a world of tradition that is frequently a spectacle for the connoisseur.

Various and intricate patterns in embroidery which adorn Arab costumes.



THEATRE IN THE UAE

Abdul Ilah Abdul Qadir

History of the Arab Civilization through the centuries emphasizes the special nature of the Arab-Islamic art, rooted in the traditions left in Andalousia (Spain) and reflected in Calligraphy and Architecture as well as music and other artistic heritage, reaching many countries in Asia, Europe and Africa.

Art of the Theatre though not too actively pursued in the recent past can be traced back to a tradition of play-acting and Muppet shows - such as by the story-teller 'Phantasmagoria' and the "Magamat". Certain religious rituals in pars of Southern Iraq point towards the roots of drama in its very basic form.

The famous poet Abul Faraj el Ispahani author of the book 'Al Aghani' has mentioned performing groups who wandered the streets of Baghdad and Samara during the Abbasid period, who painted their faces, mimicked and imitated others voices. These groups of entertainers were known as 'Al Samxajah'. Another Arab author of the time 'Al Shabishti' speaks of similar groups in his book 'Al-Dayarat'. Expression of this dramatic talent could well be called the beginning of 'Theatre' in the contemporary sense. During the





Previous page: *Sharjah National Theatre in "Tale of our friend Banjeto", directed by Abdul Ilah Abdul Qader.* **This page:** *Abdul Ilah Abdul Qader. Photographs by Abdul Ilah Abdul Qadir.*

17-18 centuries many such groups were active in Egypt, but their performance was not dependent on any form of written text.

The part of drama in the Arab world was different from its known traditional form in Greece, France or even England. Arabs greatly valued poetry and developed a strong tradition of poetry-reading which was carried from the Pre-Islamic to the Pan-Islamic era. The poet, not only in the Arab peninsula but all over the Arab world assumed a privileged and honourable position, as the mentor and intellectual and spiritual leader of the tribe.

Theatre as a contemporary movement well known in other Arab countries in the middle of the 19th century took shape in U.A.E. only in 1958. Formation of the state of Union in 1971 added a multidimentional aspect to the development of the social structure already going threough a decade of sweeping changes in every field as an actively performing art including that of culture. Consequently theatre started growiong on a practical level leading to Formation of 17 performing groups all over U.A.E. The programmes include local as well as international plays produced in collaboration with other theatrical groups from various countries. Many experienced Arab artists such as the late Kuwaioti artist "Saqr Al Rushud" and the Iraqi "Ibrahim Jala", the Tunisian "Al Munsif Al Suwaisi" along with other Arab academics have been invited to plan and promote better performances in this field.

The emirate of Sharjah has a distinguished record of producing a number of cultural festivals some of these opting exclusively in favour of theatre. Sharjah National Theatre is one of the foremost groups in U.A.E. formally established in 1976. It has produced a number of well-known plays and represented U.A.E. in many theatre festivals such as Qartaj Theatre Festival (Tunisia) and Damascus Theatre Festival in 1984. Their latest artistic endeavour led to the production of the Journal 'Al Rollah' presumably the only magazine of its kind in the Arabian Gulf region.

The new art movement in U.A.E. is looking towards its roots for inspiration leading to a search for local traditional subjects and themes in the Arab World and to create equations with its modern and contemporary environment and to present a balanced and cohesive cultural picture of a developing society with a powerful sunse of continuity. And the most hearteniong factor in this development is the substantial moral and maerial support coming forth in this field from the Federal Government as well as all the local administrations and agencies of the U.A.E.

Following is a list of some theatrical groups in U.A.E.

Abu Dhabi

1. *Union Theatre Group.*
2. *Layla Theatre Group for children*
3. *Abu Dhabi Popular Theatre Group.*

Al Ain

4. *The Free Theatre Group - U.A.E. University.*

Dubai

5. *Awadh Donkhi Theatre Group*
6. *National Youth Theatre Group*
7. *Dubai Popular Theatre Group*
8. *The Experimental Theatre Group*

Um-Al Quwain

9. *Um-Al Quwain Theatre Group*

Ras Al Khaimah

10. *Saqr Al Rushud Theatre Group*

Al Fujairah

11. *Al Fujairah National Theatre Group*

Ajman

12. *Ajman Theatre Group*
13. *Ajman Popular Arts Association and Theatre Group.*

Sharjah

14. *Sharjah National Theatre*
15. *Khalid Theatre*
16. *Khorfakkan Popular Theatre*

TRADITIONAL CRAFT OF METAL WORKING

Nasser Hussain Aboudi

It is always said that every country has its own specialities in design and the arts, and that this is noticeable in a variety of fields. Naturally the arts did not arise from a vacuum: rather they are the product of a succession of civilisations and cultures and traditions which have left their imprint on that country. The Emirates, as a country whose tereritory has encompassed a number of the civilisations which have left their mark int he Middle East, has its own particular style which can be discovered by examining the traditional local artefacts which are plentiful in some of the shops in the old souqs of the Emirates. A student of the cultures discovered in the U.A.E. observes that there is an artistic link between objects of the third, second and first millennia B.C. and certain traditional artefacts today, as well as with finds from the ancient Hellenistic, Persian and Islamic periods. But methodical, in-depth specialist studies are lacking in the U.A.E., as they are in many Arab Gulf states. Hopes rest, however, on the new generation of students who are now pursuing their higher studies in the fields of archaeology and traditional arts.

There are clear indications that the archaeological sites went on producing these artefacts from the earliest times until recent centuries in a continuous artistic development. This applies to sites in Ras al Khaimah, and the eastern region such as Dibba, Khor Fakkan, Fujairah and Kalba, and in the central region at Dhayd and Milaiha. But it is regrettable that most traditional crafts are rapidly dying out since modern industry relies on machines. This problem is not, of course, restricted to one country only. All the Gulf states have become aware of the foreign influences on their culture, and have agreed to set up a centre for their popular heritage, with headquarters in Qatar.

I must make it clear to the foreign reader that the Emirates are not just a source of petrol; that here there is a rich heritage which continued until



Design of traditional coffee pot on UAE dirham coin.

the early days of this country. There were many industries, such as silver, gold, copper, bronze and jewellery making, and famous craftsmen whose familyu names were linked with these industries, and souqs specialising in metalworking in Sharjah, Dubai and Ras al Khaimah. Artistic styles were local, and were influenced by the arts of neighbouring states, both Arab and non-Arab. The craftsmen borrowed certain artistic elements from similar or corresponding industries, but the principal characteristics of their production go back to ancient Islamic art which was widespread throughout the Gulf from the earliest times.

Silver and gold were both widely used but silver was especially popular for the adornment of both men and women. As for precious stones, such as local pearls, and imported carnelian, sapphire and turquoise, they were always set in gold and silver jewellery. The women wore such jewels on their heads, to attach their burqas (veils), on their noses, hanging from their necks down to the stomach, on their hands and their ankles. The women of the Emirates was distinguished by the quantity of jewellery she wore, so much so that a foreigner, not aware of its value in relation to the economic circumstances of the time or the customs, might have asked how many kilos of gold, silver etc. she was wearing. The men mostly wore silver with pearls, in signet rings, khanjars (daggers), cartridge cases for their rifles, and adorned their rifles with strips of silver and gold; indeed wealth led them to use silver boxes for antimony, for kohl sticks, for tobacco, and in strips around their hubble bubble pipes. They also had silver knife handles, silver chains to their pocket watches, silver buttons on their clothes, and even silver handles on their sticks which were not worth more than a few Annas (coins) at the time.

Then why all this and wherefor? I say it was material wealth, the UAE population being merchants who had profitted from trade in pearls as well as trade with neighbouring countries, especially India, Basra and Africa... and also Islamic principles which require men and women to show the legitimate riches which God has granted them, and love of art which is visible in the diversity of style of gold and silver artefacts and in the varied techniques and influences in their production, and finally they were not unaware that the best investment was in gold and silver jewellery.

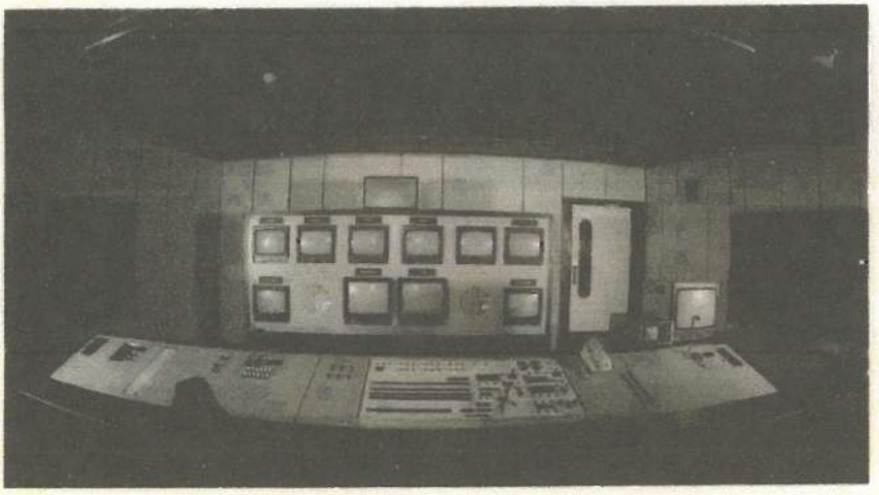
A secondary metal industry in copper was of no less importance and no less sophisticated than that of gold and silver. I can state as a fact that all the daily requirements were made of copper, from household utensils to personnal needs and working tools. Copper was preferred to iron, despite its cheapness and recent introduction into the Emirates.

The artesans made household objects of copper, from cooking pots to coffee pots, beakers, spoons, dishes, incense burners and handles...Another complementary profession arose, that of the brass founders, who specialised in plating vessels with other metals such as lead and aluminium, making a barrier layer to protect the copper from harmful rust.

They used their copper to make rings to which they tied up boats and animals; for door hinges; to decorate clothes chests with patterns and stars in the form of nails; and for nails of different sizes for general use. Then came iron and iron workers appeared to produce society's requirements from iron, and particularly for use in wooden boats and for iron tools, and they smelted iron by using coal and wood.

FILM STUDIOS IN AJMAN

Shirley Kay



Top: *Master control unit with sophisticated vision mixer and talkback system.* **Below:** *Scene from the Ibn Taymiah serial. Photographs by S. Kay.*

In the quiet Emirates town of Ajman, but a mile away from the white sandy beach where traditional dhows are still built by centuries' old skills, two ultra-modern film studios are producing films for television stations throughout the Arab world. Here in a technological setting of film cameras and vision mixers, computer-controlled lighting systems, sound recording and sophisticated editing facilities, a number of religious and historical television series have been produced and exported to other Arab countries.

The film studios are part of a whole complex of photographic and editing facilities developed in Ajman by Abdullah Mohammed Murad. It was the case of a hobby becoming a profession. Abdullah Murad was an extremely keen photographer who decided to develop his own facilities to further the scope of his hobby, and that of thousands of others in the UAE at the same time.

In 1974 he set up the United Colour Film company on a now 50-acre site in Ajman. This was the first professional photo finishing enterprise in the Emirates and today the UCF signboard is a common feature of the shopping streets in all the towns. At its peak the photographic laboratory was handling a daily intake of over 4000 films for processing; it was held out as the leader in the area and was used by Eastman Kodak as a model laboratory.

The photographic company was followed three years later by the establishment of a publishing company in a new adjacent building. This company publishes magazines and directories, including the UAE telephone directories, and has expanded abroad with associate operations in Hong Kong, Australia, the Caribbean and England.

The Jewel in the Crown for this Adjman studio was, however, the opening in 1980 by the President of the UAE, Shaikh Zayed al Nahayan, of its television film studio. This complex consists of two large recording studios whose equipment has been supplied by such well-known international companies as Pye Tvt., Rank, Carrier Ampex and Bosch, and a large stores and supporting building. There is also a seven-storey guest house, across the road from the studios, with a flexible arrangement of apartments, suites, single rooms and a restaurant, for the accommodation of visiting crews and actors. Most of the external films to date have been made by teams coming in from other Arab countries; now the Ajman Independent Studios (as the complex is called) is trying to interest film teams from the west to take advantage of its modern facilities, lower production costs and guaranteed sunshine for outdoor shots.

So far a total of 1000 film hours has been produced in the Studio, consisting of its own production and programmes for outside organisations. Ranging from everyday comedies to major historical epic films. The historical films have taken subjects covering the whole Islamic world from "The Fall of Granada" (in Andalusia) to "Mohammed al Fatah" (conqueror of Constantinople) and "The Poet and the Butcher".

The most ambitious of Ajman's historical films was made this year. This was the 22-part serial of "Ibn Taymiah", the life of the great scholar and defender of Islam who lived



in Damascus at the time of continuous attacks by Tartars and Crusaders. The serial runs for 17 hours and a large number of actors as well as 50 horses were involved in its production. It was made as a co-production between Qatar television and Ajman Independent Studios.

The films made in the Emirates at Ajman are shown throughout most of the rest of the Arab world, by television stations in Abu Dhabi, Aden, Algeria, Bahrain, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Sana'a, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria and Tunisia. In a totally modern context, they carry the name of this small state across the world, just as the traditional dhows, built on the beach nearby, have always done.

Introduction - *continued from page 58*

invited to join international competitions in various countries, including where the UAE students were within the first 3 prize places.

The UAE artist's Union exhibits work in the UAE, but members are encouraged to exhibit elsewhere too, and have special links with other Gulf countries. Some artists specialise in the performing ars devoting their attention and skills to video and films. A number of them have become successful film produceres with the UAE television or become commercial artists. A skillful woman artist, Wafa Hussein Al-Sabbagh, is renowned for her calligraphy and silk-screen painting and works at the Design Centre in Dubai.

Cultural shows are also organised intermitently, some include carnivals, theatrical works, exhibitions and seminars on children's Culture. Book fairs are antoher event and courses are arranged for librarians to promote their skills. In Sharjah, the Society of Plastic Arts has decided to open a permanent exhibition at the hall of the new premises. The exhibition will display the works of national, Arab and foreign artists, resident in the country in addition to the works of art, of certain invited artists. The exhibition seeks to encourage artists and help them market their works while providing opportunities for public viewing of the works of various artists and the progress made in this field.

A Book Fair and Arts Bazaar was held at the Expo Centre in Sharjah. In the last pavilion 300 works of art ranging from paintings and photography to ceramics and calligraphy, produced mostly by the UAE, Fine Arts Society, were on view. The bazaar is an effort to take art to the people, leading to a wider understanding of the artist's role in society.

Theatre movement is also coming up steadily in U.A.E., many plays are offered, some of them are locally produced, others are staged by invited foreign troupes, Drama festivals are often aimed at encouraging healthy competition among troupes in the country to improve their performance. The UAE theatre troupe also takes part in regional drama festivals such as the one held in Damascus. Such participation leads to an enriching exposure to diverse experience. Poetry evenings are becoming increasingly popular, in which a number of national poets take part. An Arabic Festival is part of the Art Festival, which is aimed at strengthening wider cultural relations.

Music has an important place in U.A.E. culture, and in 1982, a school opened in Abu Dhabi, offering piano and guitar lessons. Now, students of the Music House are awarded certificates from the Trinity College of Music, London. Forty five students have already passed the first grade exam in piano music theory; at grade two. The centre is to hold written and practical tests twice a year. A group known as Dubai and Sharjah Singers and Orchestra, has 130 members who are usually involved in several functions annually; comprising a major orchestra concert, a Christmas Concert, and Carols and a big stage production.

It is quite encouraging and richly rewarding to follow the cultural flow throughout the U.A.E and to observe the rapid progress and growth in the art field which has manifested itself within such a short span of time. Indeed official as well as popular patronage at all levels has played a key role in promoting the arts all over the Gulf and the Middle East.

Dawn of the UAE Civilization - *continued from page 63*

hatching, groups of wavy combed lines. The most distinctive shapes are flat-based bowls with a vertical and undulating upper part and a thinned rim, large basins either with a grooved flat rim, or with an externally thickened rim, jars with a larghe band-like rim and a ridged body, the ridges often decorated with incised cross hatching and jugs with bridged spouts. A rare kind of pottery is one painted black on red. The ware is either with a red slip, or a very fine red with a fine mineral temper. The most distinctive shape is a small cup with a high rounded carnation and everted flanges recalling some Iranian shapes of the Iron Age. There are also several pots with sinuous sides, jugs and teapots with bridged spouts. They are mainly decorated with groups of oblique lines, zigzags uinder the rim, very elongated hanging curvilinear triangles. Scarcer are the chains oflinked concentric circles giving an effect of a chain of spirals. This pottery has also been found in the gardens east of the village of Qattarah.

On another site at Hili, were found some sherds of a beige ware with a beige slip and a brown painted decoration, mostly hanging triangles under the rim. This ware is now known in the whole Oman Peninsula: at Ghalilah, Ras al-khaimah; at al-Qusais, Dubai; at Qarn Bint Sa'ud, Al Ain; at Dibba, Fujeirah and at Amlah in Oman.

Islamic ware is also found on some sites of the first millenium in Quttarah, and at Hili.

Qarn Bint Sa'udis a rocky outcrop isolated among the dunes. It yielded remains of different periods. It is a long plateau with a narrow flat summit. Along its western foothills, the Danish archaeological expedition and the Department of Archaeology excavated tombs of the Iron Age at the summit. The material (bronze, axe, arrowheads and daggers, steatite vessels) is similar to that of al-Qusai's, exhibited in the Dubai and Al Ain museums.

The cairns of Jebel Hafit, usually dated end of the 4th millenium have also been the object of several excavations - 40 cairns by the Danish team - 17 by the Iraqi archaeological expedition and more than 10 by Al Athar, the Department of Archaeology. No settlement has been located. Almost all of them have been plundered and their destruction was recently accelerated by the collection of stones for gravel-crushing needed by the growing modern city. All the cairns were built with twoconcentric ringwalls and a corbelled roof.

The cairns generally were a simple facing of blocks roughly set in

courses, separated from the inner wall by a core of small stones. The blocks are set in headeres in the corridor. It is covered by more or less flat slabs and filled with small stones. The floor is natural ground. The funerary chamber was filled with drift sand. The floor was paved with small flat stones set on the natural soil. Two ong bones only were found above the paving. Two perforated shells were found between the paving stones. In one of the cairns two skeletons were identified.

The most interesting object is a copper socketed spearhead. It was found in the fill. Also a flat circular bead of mother of pearl, perforated in its centre, was found among the bones together with a diamond shaped bone. In another cairn, in the fill, two bronze pins with a curving end and parts of a necklace; small beads of fritte amongst other shaped beads.

The excavations brought tolight the remains of three mudbrick buildings. Isolated walls relating to these buildings were found - they were curvilinear with only the outer facing preserved. It is built of planoconvex mudbricks (the convex side up). Layers of pebbles were found and a few traces of burnt material, some fragments of furnace wall. Two quadrangular rooms were traced. The plano-convex mudbricks are cemented by thick layers of mortar. Both rooms were filled with compact clay.

Almost all of the potsherds came from the floors. It is generally a rather thick ware, from orange-buff to brown, often covered with a slip of different shade, buff, red, brown or greyish. The temper is mineral, sandy looking. Pots are usually ornamented with a brown to black paint. The main shape is a large jar with a flat orbevelled rim or a club rim. Folded over thickened rims are also frequent. Some of these jars have flattened meandering ridges with vertically pierced lugs. They recall the suspension vessels common in the graves at Hili, but are much larger. Little globular pots with everted rims are also frequent. Open vessels are less represented. Flat based beakers occur with a rounded internally thickened rim or slightly everted rim. There are also large bowls, straight sided or slightly curved inwards, with a thickened cut rim.

The most distinctive shape is a bowl with curving inward sides and a flat or rounded rim grooved outside. The ornamentation is mostly parallel wavy lines on the shoulderes of the jars and on the outside of small bowls. In a few cases, two wavy lines intersect. Sometimes, the vessels with an added cordon have an ornamentation of curvilinear vertically hatched motifs. This ware is common to all sites of the Western foothills.

Among the pottery, one should note a buff-ware sherd with polychrome decoration of a hatched curvilinear motif that can be matched with that of the large pots with suspension lugs.

A few sherds of the very fine ware with black paint on red slip, and no sherd of the grey ware (painted or incised), were found.

From the same levels came a pestle of granite. Flint artefacts are scarce. A few flakes and a small polyedric core were found on the surface. The layer of pebbles and the floor yielded a semi-elliptical fragment of copper and a piece of copper furnace wall. From the other floors came several large fragments of unworked mother of pearl.

Recently a series of successful winter-season digs in the Hili region unearthed fresh evidence, and archaeologists hope it will throw new light on the UAE's earliest known communities.

One of the most interesting recent discoveries - according to Dr. W. Al Takriti, is an oval tomb filled with the bones ofmore than fifty skeletons. Preliminary assessments suggest that the remains date from the time when the 'Wadi Suk' culture, which endured for 300 years, absorbed the earlier Umm an-Nar culture. These early cultures have left remnants of their civilization scattered all over the Emirates: and, judging from discoveries of stone and pottery vessels, they were traders who had links with distant lands. Mesopotamian text from this period refer to imports of turtle oil and copper from Magan.

Animal bones found in Umm an-Nar settlements show that the people ate a wide variety of meat. Inland, the diet included cattle, gezelles, sheep, goats and orynx: while coastal villagers devoured cormorants, flamingo and heron.

The team of German archaeologists, this past winter, has examined three second millennium collective tombs, in which they found soapstone vessels and lids, pottery, arrow and spear heads, sea sheels and beads made from several different materials.

Future research is planned and evidence from the digs will be presented at international archaeological conferences were staged in Denmark and Britain last year.

Traditional Architecture of UAE
continued from page 69

mately match between floors.

Spaced intermittently, the pillars are built of petrified coral blocks dug out from the inland end of the creek. The sixty centimetre walls possess very low thermal conductivity, because of the cellular nature of the coral and the low destiny of the bonding Sarooj, where the walls are not dry built. The fine decorative columns are cylindrically cast in timber shuttering.

The finer masonry is built of slabs of limestone and laid on edge in a diagonal pattern. The slabs are used to form partitions, the modesty screens along the first floor perimeter and the high diagonal cross-walls of the windtowers.

A finishing plaster is generally applied to most of the masonry, as a paste of chalk and water. The plaster is also used for the intricate screens and elaborate arch facings. Both are cast on the ground in wooden moulds and dry quickly in the sun before being lifted into place. The arch facings are in two pairs and are spaced apart, the gap being filled with coral and plaster. No further framework is required as the paste dries so quickly.

The floors and roof finishes are a compacted mixture of silt and straw. On the roof the render is modelled into falls towards long timber gargoyles, which throw water into the courtyard. The roof is made water-tight each year by additional renderings of silt to fill the cracks which open up through the summer. As the houses age, they become less and less water-tight. The gargoyles often project through the upstands of screen walls or from beneath a capping of limestone slabs.

Floor and roof finishes are applied either to timber boards spanning hardwood beams ore palm lopg 'chundles', laid at stiffening sticks across the beams. Where the loading increases, usually when masonry is supported, composite beams are formed of chundles strung together. The string also pro-

vides a key for rendering. Where ceilings are required in a living or reception rooms, timber boardingis pinned to the underside of the chundles, often with decorative plaster cornices or scalloped, painted timber edging.

All the doors and windows built into the masonry are standard units in frames. They are not glazed except in the recently modernised rooms. The window frames are barred for security, and have an upper and lower pair of shutters opening inwards. In this manner the room can be insulated against the extreme heat and be opened up to allow the morning and afternoon breezes to cool it.

The most decorative element in the Bastakia houses is the many different types of screens. Whether of diagonal or louvered timber strips, wrought iron or cast plaster, they serve a number of purposes. All create a degree of privacy across the house between different areas, breaking up shapes and movement into a network of light and shade. The plaster and the metal screens above the doors and windows ventilate the stores and winter rooms.

On the first floor are three main types of screen, which permit air movement through the summer rooms. Modesty screens or panels are a means of achieving ventilation with privacy. Typically, they are found on the external walls of the building. Air from outside passes down a double section of wall and enters the room at a low level suitable for cooling people who are sitting on the floor. There is usually a timber closer that can be slid across the gap to eliminate the draught if wanted. These modesty screens are knwon as 'baadgeer' or 'windcatchers'. (The proper term being 'baadkash'.)

The most beautiful screens are those of intricate cast plasterwork, which form the safety balustrades (shorbaak) around the courtyard. These diffuse the bright glare ofd the white reflecting surfaces of the courtyard walls, and permit air movement around the summer quarters. There are many screen designs, and the motifs are varied. Birds are a common feature, but the most dominant design is the geometric representation of flowers and foliage arranged in a vase. The moulded side of the screen has the most elaborate detail, and the plainer side always faces into the house-space.

The timber louvres (dustandaaz) give privacy to the woman in their household task,s and provide a very pleasant subdued light.

Windtoweres are the most spectacular means of increasing ventilation and thus comfort in the hot season. They are open on four sides - and therefore multi-directional. (They only work if a wind is blowing.)

Windtowers on two storey buildings often rise about 15 metres abovethe ground. At least half the length of the windtower is an enclosed funnel and air passing down it increases considerably in velocity. Traditionally, cushions were placed beneath the windtower and people sat there for eating and entertaining. Alternatively, there might be beds beneath for sleeping.

The vents of the windtower are blocked off when additional ventilation is not required. Eight numbered wooden triangles slot into the base of the tower. Near the top of the tower there is a metal grille which prevents birds flying in. When the windtowers were built, poles were tied together to stabilize and to give strength to the masonry structure. The projecting ends of the poles were often left after the tower was complete to serve as scaffolding when the tower needed maintenance.

Windtowers have declined in importance since the introduction of electric fans and air conditioners. Some have even fallen into disuse. They do have the merit of having no running electricity costs!

Traditionally the practice of summer migration from the ground to the first floor took place for more comfortable living conditions.

Basically each family has a personal living area. It consists of an outer room (teedumee) or more commonly a covered verandah area where the activities of daily life are carried on, and an inner, more private room (jaadumee) for sleeping. A low ceilinged washroom (gateya) and above it an open cupboard space (madanee) for storage. The inner room usually contains mats for the children to sleep on and a bed for the parents. There are pegs (gulmeekh) for hanging lamps and clothes, and sets of hanging mirrors are popular. Shelved alcoves (baalak and taakheechah) are built into the thick outer walls and these are used to display vases, china and other decorative items.

In most Bastakia houses a well, laundrey facilities, kitchen and lavatory occupy a separate wing of the house.

Traditionally, cookiong was done at ground floor level using wood or charcoal as fuel. The work surfaces of the kitchens (matbakh) are traditional in design and are tile faced for easy cleaning.

The wells (chaah) are only a few metres deep and because of the proximity of the creek the water is brackish. In the past householders arranged for sweet water for drinking to be delivered by donkey. Nowadays piped water is used for drinking but the wells are still used for general household purposes. The traditional lavatory (mostaraab) was a hole in the floor with a wide vertical pipe which fed into a pit.

The back door (takhee) was used by the women. The courtyard (minsera) is paved and drains towards the centre. The trees here provide shade and the living greenery which is so highly valued in a desert environment. Many of the families keep chickens and tethered goats in their yards.

The roof, accessible by stairs, is surrounded by a safety wall. It is used as a sleeping place. Traditionally, the roof was used for preservation of food. Apart from the main storage rooms, houses commonly had mezzanine stores built over entrance halls and in stair wells.

As for the future outlook of the houses of the Bastakia quarter it seems unlikely that they will survive for much longer. Many of the houses are in a poor structural condition. The water table is tidal and has resulted in weak foundations. The weight of the masonry windtowers can cause vertical cracking in the walls beneath. Further weakening of the masonry has been caused by thermal stress. Most houses are already dilapidated through neglect.

The houses themselves adapt poorly to the more westernized life style that is evolving.

The Bastakia is the last windtower quarter left on the Arab side of the Gulf. Elsewhere, a few isolated ones survive amid more modern buildings. The quarter is physically compact, distinct and separate from the surrounding area. It has an architectural unity for the houses were all built within a short time span and by relatively few builders. The quarter is of more than architectural interest for the houses express a way of life that is fast dis-

appearing. There is a need to design housing now that is as appropriate to the social, economic and environmental conditions in the Gulf.
(The names used for parts of the house are the Bastaki names.)

Bedouin Nomads: The black goat-hair tents of the Bedouin nomad are still to be seen in the desert areas, but gradually the tribes are being settled and soon the Bedouin tent will be a thing of the past. These tents are well adapted to the nomadic way of life, as they are easily erected, dismantled, and transported on the backs of camels. They are low-lying and seem to hug the ground. They are scarcely six feet high and the side flaps can be raised to allow any cooling breeze there may be to pass through the tent. The walls do not act as heat accumulators as do those of concrete houses. But, lacking all modern conveniences and amenities, they have outlived their day.

Al Ain: Historically the oasis has always been of importance. Its importance in more recent times is confirmed by the many fortifications which survive. Fort Jahili, unusual because of its concentric plan, was built in 1898. The fortress of Al Ain has been converted into an archaeological museum.

Sharjah: The standard house is made of concrete block as an infill between a re-inforced concrete frame. Concrete blocks retain the heat of the sun and continue to radiate heat inside the house after nightfall.

Barsati: These houses consist of mangrove poles, palm fronds and cord, not only do not store heat but allow the breeze to enter. In recent years the old technique has been updated by prefabrication with the matting imported in finished lengths from Muscat and Iran; the poles from India.

Many of the houses, amounting to some 40% in the Federation, are flimsy structures of the 'barasti' type, which are constructed from date-palm leaves and branches. Usually, except in some towns where space is limited, the barasti has a courtyard in front bounded by a barasti fence and consists of one or two rooms. Occasionally there may be five or six rooms or even more, but this is unusual, and most of the houses have one room only. Generally, however, there is no overcrowding, as extra rooms can be easily built or a new barasti may be erected should the household increase in size. Barastis have compacted sand floors and normally lack such services as electricity, piped water, or sewage. The walls, unlike those of concrete houses, do not retain the heat and therefore cool down much more rapidly after sunset.

These houses are numerous in Fijeirah where 80% of the houses are of this type. The trend now throughout the Federation is towards the replacement of the barasti by more permanent types of houses such as mud-brick houses, tents, boats and even caves.

Mosques: New mosques, often large and of elaborate design, are being constructed at the merest sign of civilization. The old mosques have a nobility which derives from simple forms, sometimes embellished by limited areas of decoration. (I shall not elaborate further as mosques are treated as a separate topic.)

Ports: Forts and watch-towers have always been used as an organised form of defence. In the Gulf they have existed probably since the 7th Century. Today, they still survive throughout the UAE. Most of the forts are quadrilateral on plan, with ranges built against the curtain walls on the inside, square or round towers at the corners, and a fortified entrance gate in the middle of one side.

The Old Palace in Abu Dhabi has acquired an outer and an inner court. It has a very elaborate screen wall. It is at present the subject of a rehabilitation study - to turn part of the building into a national centre for visitors - with an information centre and an area for exhibitions.

Sun-dried mud bricks was the material generally used in the construction of forts and watch-towers. The major exceptions occur in Ras al-khaimah where the mountain quarries provide an abundance of stone. A model of sensitive restoration is Fort Fahidi in Dubai.

Souks: Souks are an introspective world. These retain a character and easy charm. Merchants sit cross-legged in small, square shops with their goods stacked high about them and festoons of fabric provide an ephemeral architecture of brilliant colour. Spicy, congested, they wind between close-packed buildings, 'do-it-yourself' architecture - essentially temporary, adjustable to the needs of the moment. Besides, their present flowing form, which has evolved naturally in response to human need, produces an enviable free and easy attitude in shopkeeper and purchaser alike.

Other Houses: In Carton and Al Qusais most of the poor live. They are built out of the boxes and crates in which goods are imported (hence the name Carton). The pride which the people there have for their houses in evident from the luxurious growth of trees and plants which bursts over the fragile walls. Each house has a large planted courtyard and wind-towers made out of four sticks of wood with sack cloth stretched diagonally between and a sheet of cardboard for the roof. The layout is regular. Only the main mosque is of masonry, ornate, monumental and incongruous. The materials used in the making of these houses are flimsy and do not hold the heat - they let in a breeze, gaps being left between the splintered planks.

Modern houses in the Emirates are built either of cement blocks for bungalows or villas, or of re-inforced concrete for multi-storeyed apartment and office blocks. Stone-built houses are confined to those areas such as Ras al-khaimah, where stone is to be found, but, as might be expected, there is no tradition of stone buildings in the desert areas; there even castles and fortresses are built out of mud-brick.

In the larger towns, notably Abu Dhabi and Dubai, the trend is towards the erection of large blocks, centrally air-conditioned and rising four or more storeys. These blocks usually have shops or offices on the ground floor with the apartment flats confined to the upper storeys, which are generally served by lifts. Large mud-brick houses were never numerous in Abu Dhabi town, and few of the older houses, large or small, have been left standing in the rush towards modernization.

UAE Waterfront - *continued from page 72*

arches along the roofline. For the most part, however, the use of colour along the Dubai creek side is restrained and variety is provided by different building heights.

Undoubtedly the building which attracts the most attention for its innovative style is the new municipality, its complex geometric patterns dominating those of the dhows at its foot. This building makes its impact not by height, but by the slot-

ting together of a series of different shapes: a basic white square from which protrude a brown, elongated cylinder and a quarter circle. The cylinder, furthermore, is supported on a series of white pillars rising from the waters of a deep-blue pool in front of the building.

We cannot close without mentioning one of the Emirates' most colourful new waterfront buildings, the new souq at Sharjah. This impressive structure consist of two parallel rows of vaulted halls, cooled by modern versions of windtowers, and extensively decorated with blue and green glazed tiles, frotted gypsum window screens, silvery cupolas and pinnacles, and ornate facades. The souq stands on the creekside and benefits form the breeze off the water: within all is cool and shady, the harsh sunlight filtered through the screens or cut off by the vaults.

Sharjah is soon to have yet a newer new souq, set again by the side of the creek, this time beside the main trading wharves where the dhows tie up to the quay. The design of this second souq, currently under construction, is influenced by that of London's Natural Science Museum in Kensington, cleaned in recent years to restore the freshness of its interesting pink and blue stone work. Here again, beside the Sharjah creek, the same attractive blue grey and pale terracotta facing stones are used to clad a building based on a series of large arches enclosing smaller arches for doors and window openings. The design is restrained, the colours pleasing in the Gulf sunlight, particularly as they catch the rays of the setting sun.

The waterfronts are the main assets in landscaping the Emirates' coastal towns; they merit the most careful and considered development of all and should be envisaged, as they are so often seen, as from a boat coming in to land, or plying along the shore.

Bedouin Jewellery *continued from page 75*

invest his wealth in jewellery to adorn his wife. It would be for her a sign of an appreciative husband and for him a mark of prestige as well as a form of security. It may also have been included in marriage gifts. No wonder that the Bedouin of the Gulf, both male and female, set such store by their jewellery: it is not only beautiful but has amuletic properties, confers social prestige and is a possible form of currency in time of need. Increasingly as modern tastes favour new articles, old jewellery has been melted down, but many fine antique pieces may be seen in all the museums of Al Ain and Dubai where they are beautifully displayed in a traditional setting. One can still find in the souqs of all the major Emirate towns fascinating old jewellery and pieces of great variety and fineness.

Bedouin jewellery should be divided into two categories - that which is purely ornamental, i.e. the rings, necklaces, head-pieces, anklets and bracelets, and that which is functional as well like the 'khanjar' or dagger, the thorn picks, key holders, kohl sets, powder horns, purses and the like.

Many Bedouin women wear several finger rings; traditionally in certain areas there is a set of ten rings, made in five pairs with a different ring on each finger and thumb. The design varies according to the finger on which it will be worn and thumb rings are normally a solid silver band looking like three rings joined together. There does not seem to be a specific wedding ring though the set of ten may be given at the time of marriage. Toe rings are also common and are usually simple round rings with protruding bosses. Some rings are obviously more significant than others, like those inset with bone or horn, and may well have amuletic qualities. Nose rings are also quite frequently worn by Bedouin women.

Earrings are common and even quite young girls may have a set of four or five ornate circular hoops through holes all the way round outside the rim of the ear. Not all earrings fit directly into a hole: Many form part of an elaborate headpiece. Typical of the embellishment of earrings is a set of silver shapes hanging on a chain. These shapes may perhaps represent the hand of Fatimah, daughter of the Prophet Muhammed, considered an embodiment of all that is divine in womanhood. Another common decoration is a barrel-shaped piece with bosses round it terminating in separate silver balls welded on and an inverted pyramid of small silver beads. The chains and hooks that go with these earrings may be either a double silver loop-in-loop, or of knitted silver thread.

Hair pieces worn at the back of long braided hair are quite often worn with little chains and danglers or bells that jingle as the wearer walks. Or they may consist of a set of decorated tubular silver pieces with the familiar inverted pyramid of silver beads and jingling danglers. Little girls often wear a silver coin on a chain hanging over the forehead and elaborate forehead decorations on chains around the head form part of traditional costume.

The variety of Bedouin bracelets and anklets is enormous. The most usual bracelet is round, often decorated with protruding bosses. Sometimes two or three of these are joined together so that they cover much of the lower arm. All are made in pairs. Anklets always have a hinged opening unless they are a simple silver band for a child; many have little bells hanging from them and both anklets and bracelets may have little stones in them traditionally so that a man may know by sound which of his womenfolk is approaching. It is interesting to note how similar is the bossed design to the decoration on pottery of the Umm al-Nar period, dating from the 3rd millennium BC. Heavy anklets are normally given to a girl by her father at puberty and worn until she marries when they become part of the bridal jewellery. Anklets worn by little Bedouin boys tend to be flat or simple twist of silver.

Necklaces, often worn several at a time, form a very varied and ornate part of the jewellery of the Gulf Bedouins. They may be silver beads attached to the neckline of a dress or they may hang on a variety of chains. Silver beads both large and small are popular among the Bedouin and are often threaded on rope or string, sometimes with a significant central bead. Maria Theresa Dollars may be threaded on and little silver boxes, beads, figures and shapes. Large medallions, sometimes richly decorated with gold leaf, may hang alone; also the embossed or appliqued decorated silver box called a 'hirz' which is usually square or rectangular and may contain a piece of the Qur'an. In the south of the Emirates one might find a distinctive necklace consisting of a central gold covered bead flanked by imitation coral set in silver and with a heavy hinged chain on either side. Another interesting Bedouin piece from this area is made up of a series of silver

rectangular shapes covered in gold leaf, interspersed with coral beads hanging in three rows on a chain. A flat silver band necklace with embossed decoration and possibly pendant danglers is also worn.

The Maria Theresa Dollar forms a link between the ornamental and the functional as it is often used among the former and is still sometimes used as a weight for assessing the value of a particular item. Named after Maria Theresa, the Empress of Austria who died in 1780, most dollars, or thalers, still to be found in the souqs of the Emirates bear this date. It was first minted in 1751 and was much in demand in places like Dubai for trading with the East. It continued to be minted until the last World War but is now increasingly becoming a collector's item.

The khanjar, that distinctive and often richly decorated curved dagger, is part of tribal and ceremonial dress. Typical of Oman and parts of the Lower Gulf, it is sometimes worn by Bedouin men in simpler form, with less ornamentation and sheathed in leather.

Bedouin men and women, often have various silver chains with useful objects hanging from them. These may include beautifully embossed little silver purses, powder horns, pipes, toothpicks, ear cleaning spoons and picks and tweezers for removing thorns from the foot. These latter may be in a silver cartridge-shaped container which for the wealthy might be decorated with gold leaf, or it may be suspended on beautiful chains. While a man will wear these things on his belt or bandolier, a woman will probably take hers into her clothing.

Both men and women use kohl around the eye which is believed to strengthen the sight. A man will wear his kohl pot with its screw top and applicator stick in his belt; a woman will keep hers in the house.

The tradition of fine craftsmanship remains in the Gulf to continue making new pieces, with gold more and more the medium; but old silver Bedouin jewellery will continue to find its way on to the market for display in museums and for purchase in the souqs.

Dhow Building - *continued from page 77*

principle and were driven by a sort of bow. It was staggering to learn a large dhow could require anything up to ten thousand of these borings. Finally, after the deck had been laid, the tapering gaps in the planking were filled up and the seams caulked with cotton. When I returned a few days later, the timber was being treated with linseed oil giving the teak its warmth and characteristic depth of colour, and making the dhow glisten.

One frame on each bow had been left standing above the level of the last plank. Although the ones I saw here had not been finished off I remembered seeing them on the working dhows. They were decorative pieces, often carved, and yet functional too, being used for the anchor cable and for tying the luff of the mainsail.

I asked about the wooden railings at the back of the dhow, some of the most delicate detail apparent on the boat. These, I was told, were carved from all the offcuts of teak which had collected during the building of the dhow, again showing that nothing was wasted.

The atmosphere was stimulating for me to work in, drawing alongside the craftsmen. While I crouched, hiding from the sun, under the bows of an almost finished dhow they would be more vigorously occupied in shade created by lengths of sacking. This would be draped across poles from one end of the dhow to the other, or possibly a make-shift awning of palm fronds would be used over some of the smaller dhows.

In the Al-Ras area of Dubai, where the creek widens, fishing dhows were not being made, but repaired. Here I could not only be drawing but could watch the heavily laden dhows heading out to sea. Other allied industry was taking place beside the beached dhows and I investigated a group making the distinctive fishing traps. They were sitting round in a large circle and manipulating the wire mesh into the semi-spherical shapes, and making a framework of cane for the base.

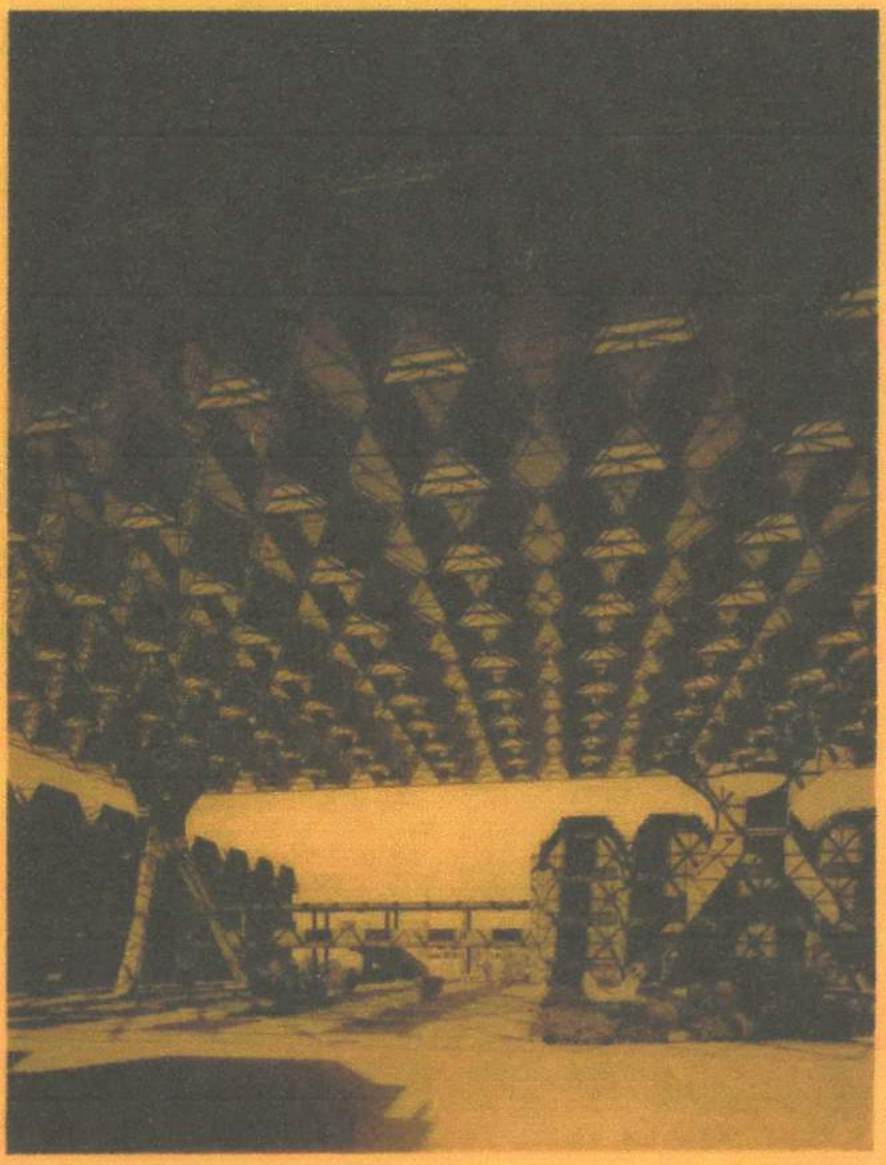
No conclusion has yet been reached about the origin of the word dhow. It is not an Arabic word, but is used as a general term to describe these Arab and Indian teak vessels. In fact, there is not just one kind of dhow but seven or eight, with many different names for them, and the crew refer to their boat by these names rather than as a dhow. The types of dhow are most clearly distinguished by their size and by variations in the shape of their stemheads and sterns.

The Boom is one of the largest wooden ships still in use. It is a trading ship, broad in beam, deep, and anything up to two hundred feet in length. The stemheads are long, with rounded, painted, tips. Walking along Dubai quayside, I found the majority of the trading ships were Booms. Another trading dhow much in evidence was the Sambuk, traditionally used for pearling. This is never as big as the Boom, seldom reaching one hundred feet in length. Its most conspicuous feature is the curved extension of "wings" at the stern which, I was told, used to support an extension to the deck, but now remains as decoration. Further along the Creek were the Shu'ai which differ from the Sambuk in the shape of the stemhead, and are a smaller kind of ship. Mainly used for fishing, they can often be seen going out to sea with the large fishing traps piled high on the wooden structure that also carries the awning. The Ganja are often seen in the Gulf, but they are probably all built in India and bought from the Asian building yards. I found them easy to distinguish by the carved figure head formed into the stylised head of a bird looking backwards over its shoulder. Much smaller, most slender and faster than any of these dhows is the Zarook. It is not as widespread as it once was, but has a curious projecting stem almost like a snout. The only Zarook I saw during my visit was in the Dubai museum.

For at least forty years, people have been saying that dhow building is on the edge of extinction, but it remains a flourishing industry and the dhow retains its essential role in distributing goods throughout the Gulf. Engines have superceded the grand lanteen sail in most instances - doubling the dhow's trading capacity and thereby improving its ability to compete with cheaper air cargo rates and modern container ships. Apart from this concession to the modern world, it has not been necessary to change the construction methods or principles of dhow design for they have proved themselves reliable over the centuries. The dhow has survived the dramatic changes which have taken place in the UAE over the last ten years, and there is no reason to doubt that it will continue for many years to come.

ARTS NEWS

DAR AL ATHAR AL ISLAMIYA IN KUWAIT: Three Years



For an institution that is only just three years old, Dar Al Athar Al-Islamiya at Kuwait's National Museum is already proving to be a lively and vigorous entity with a wide range of activities and achievements.

The enthusiasm and discernment of the founder of the collection, Sheikh Nasser Sabah al-Ahmad al-Sabah, has endowed Dar al-Athar with an unparalleled treasure of all aspects of Islamic Art. His wife, Sheikha Hussa Sabah al-Salem al-Sabah, Director of Dar al-Athar, has made her own dynamic contribution to the institution's success in a thoroughly creative and imaginative way. The result is a lively and innovative establishment that is far removed from the mundane view of a museum as a dry depository of antiquities.

As Director, Sheikha Hussa has guided Dar al-Athar into its role as a unique educational and cultural centre with an impressive list of exhibitions and publications to its credit. When Dar al-Athar was opened in February 1983 a commemorative Catalogue was published by Dr Marilyn Jenkins of the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. The Catalogue detailed 139 selected pieces from the collection together with full colour plates and scholarly descriptions. But the collection is of such high quality, and continually growing in both size and scope, that just one year later another catalogue was published entitled, "Selected Recent Acquisitions." Written by Visiting Curator, Manuel Keene, with contributions and translations by the current Curator, Mrs Ghada Hijjawi Qaddumi, the catalogue listed a further 47 pieces of the highest possible quality. Each was described in detail and the text was accompanied by a folder of superb colour plates. This catalogue is currently being reprinted by the Kuwait Foundation for the Advancement of Sciences.

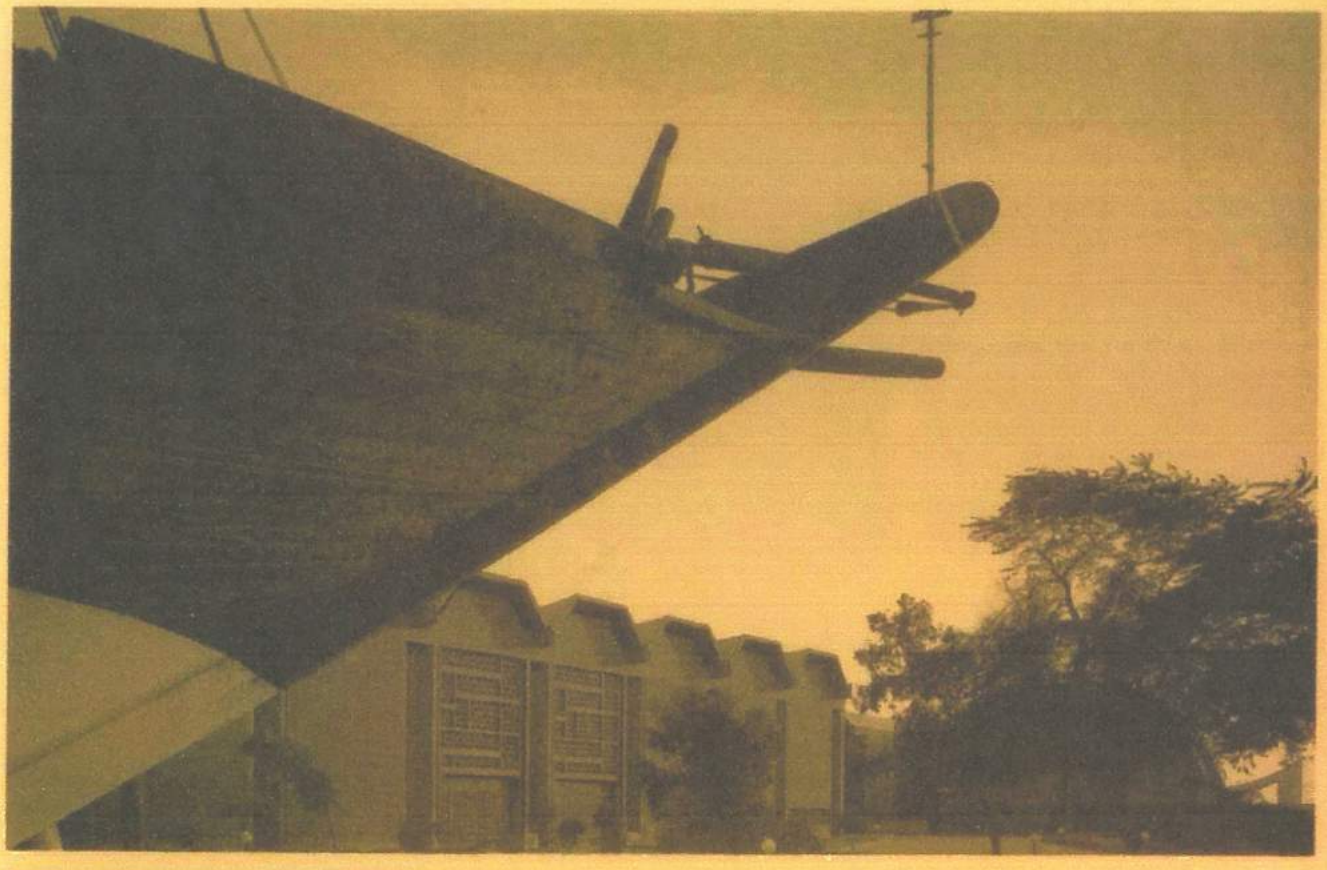
Dar al-Athar's first exhibition, "Science in Islam", was the forerunner of what was to be a major international coup, the exhibition of Quranic manuscripts from Sana'a, which took place last spring. Described by Dr Marilyn Jenkins as "the most significant event in Islamic art in years", the Masahif San'a Exhibition aroused world-wide interest. Altogether over eighty pages from early Qurans found in the Grand Mosque in Sana'a were on display in Kuwait for the first time. German experts, Dr Gerd Puin and Ursula Dreibholz, who were involved in the cataloguing and preservation of the manuscripts, joined Dr MarilynJenkins and Qadhi Ismail al-Akwa, North Yemen's Director of Antiquities, in a symposium outlining the importance of the manuscripts.

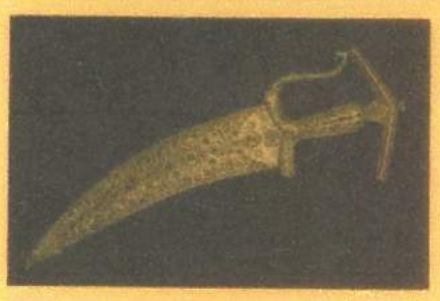
A scholarly catalogue, entitled simply "Masahif Sana'a" was printed in both Arabic and English to accompany the exhibition and to provide a permanent record of the event.

Dar al-Athar is also building itself a reputation as a major contributor to international exhibitions outside Kuwait. Perhaps the most important of these was the "Treasures of Islam" exhibition held in Geneva last year. Dar al-Athar loaned sixteen pieces, in a wide variety of media, to the exhibition which was held at the Musee Rath. Moreover, Dar al-Athar undertook the translation of the magnificent "Treasures of Islam" catalogue into Arabic.

Simultaneously, Dar al-Athar contributed pieces to two other major international exhibitions. Twelve objects were loaned to the "Islamic Art and Culture" exhibition in Stockholm, Sweden. Four superb items from the collection were loaned to the "INDIA!" exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York during the autumn. These included a golden Mughal dagger and jewelled scabbard that was one of the highlights of the show.

Another important international project sponsored by Dar al-Athar has





Previous page: Exterior view of the Kuwait National Museum. Above: Near the entrance of the museum. Below: Dagger in gold set with rubies, Mughal India, 17th century AD.

been the archaeological excavations at Bahnasa, in Egypt. Under the leadership of Dr Geza Fehervari the expedition has been working on the site for several months and has already made some important discoveries from the Fatimid era. Work is still going on at the site.

Indeed, visiting lecturers and eminent scholars have been frequent visitors to Dar al-Athar where they have conducted a series of seminars and symposia on a wide variety of topics. James Allen, Esin Atil, Marilyn Jenkins, C.E. Bosworth, Michael Bates, Manuel Keene and Michael Rogers have all helped to make the lecture series both popular and intellectually stimulating. Eminent scholars from the Arab world have also visited Dar al-Athar including Abdul Raouf Yusuf from the Islamic Art Museum in Cairo, Edward Said, Salah Hashim, Kamal Bolata, Abdul Hamid Sabra and Yusuf Ghulam. Local scholars and experts have also been encouraged to give lectures and seminars including, Abdul Aziz Kamel, Shaker Mustafa, Saeed Ashoor, Abdul Mohsin al Medeig, Hussein al Messri, Rasha al Sabah and Ahmad al Zaila'e.

The lecture programme demonstrates that the Director of Dar al-Athar, Sheikha Hussa, has been at pains to ensure that it fulfills local, national aspirations as well as international ones. A major ingredient in this policy has been the educational programme whereby school children are encouraged to visit the collection. The children are provided with creativity sheets which enable them to record their impressions of the works of art on display and their reactions to them. Dar al-Athar is currently accepting entries for a Children's Art Competition whose results will be announced in April. The response so far has been enthusiastic, to say the least, and the judges will certainly have their work cut out for them.

On average, over three hundred children visit Dar al-Athar al Islamiya every month, and judging from their faces it is an exciting and revelatory experience to come face to face with the greatest achievements of their Islamic cultural heritage. Other visitors regularly include Heads of State, visiting Ministers and official delegations whose sojourn in Kuwait is never complete without a tour of Dar al-Athar.

The educational function of Dar al-Athar is not only limited to lectures, seminars and tours, it also includes practical demonstrations of the skills involved in the creation of the objects on display. Last winter, visiting art-jeweller Claire Bersani conducted a course in the techniques of traditional Islamic jewellery. Altogether, thirty-five students each made a piece of classical cloisonne enamel set in fine silver. As Claire Bersani herself remarked, "The jewellery course was a great example of the way Dar al-Athar is constantly expanding its cultural horizons." Kuwaiti artist Abdul Kareem al Ghadban, Public Relations Officer of Dar al-Athar, is planning to hold a course in ceramics starting in April.

Currently, Dar al-Athar is holding a course in Islamic Art and History. This major course consists of weekly three hour sessions in both Arabic and English conducted by Dr Ramzi Bikhazi, Curator of Coins, Mrs Ghada Qaddumi, Curator, and consultant Dr Ahmed Abdul Razek. The course began last November (until the end of April) and has been received enthusiastically by participants of many different nationalities.

Dar al-Athar's latest venture is the establishment of a bookshop with a large range of titles in both Arabic and English. All of the Dar's activities are publicised and co-ordinated with the help of a bi-monthly Newsletter, a bilingual publication which is distributed throughout Kuwait and to museums and institutions throughout the world.

All in all, Dar al-Athar al-Islamiya is a thriving, innovative institution that is constantly breaking new ground in its attempts to enhance the cultural and artistic horizons of the community it serves. As described in the Spring issue of "Arts and The Islamic World", Kuwait's artistic endeavours have a pretty impressive range and diversity. In such a context, Dar al-Athar is rapidly evolving as a major national resource. Three years is a very brief period for such an important institution, but Dar al-Athar has already shown it has the energy, resources and imagination to become a crucial asset to the world of Islamic Art.

Keith Wells

ISLAMIC ARCHITECTURE SEMINAR in Granada

A seminar on architecture education in the Islamic world opens in Granada on 21 April, organised by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture. It will be inaugurated by King Juan Carlos of Spain, and is the tenth in a series of seminars held in different parts of the world, covering the problems of architecture education in contemporary Islamic societies.

Papers and discussions will deal with four main themes - Islamic culture, Modernity, and Architecture; Architecture as Art; Technology, Form, and Culture; and Architecture and Society. Case studies will be presented from Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Turkey, as well as from the Aga Khan Program for Islamic architecture at Harvard and Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Craterre - the international centre for the research and the application of earth construction of the University of Grenoble, France.

Professor Don Emilio Garcia Gomez, the distinguished Spanish Professor of Islamic culture will make the keynote address, followed by speeches by Mr. Jose Rodriguez de la Borbolla y Camoyan, President of the autonomous Government of Andalucia and the Mayor of Granada, Antonio Jara Andreu.

Among leading academics participating in the Seminar will be Dr. Jamel Akbar of Saudi Arabia, Professor Mohammed Arkoun of Algeria, Rifat Chadirji of Iraq, Professor Ilhan Tekeli of Turkey and Professor Oleg Grabar of Harvard University. With its emphasis on architectural education in contemporary Islamic societies, the Seminar will focus on vital issues such as how architecture and the way in which architects express themselves relate to the cultural systems for which they are intended and the relationship between architecture and other arts.

MUSCAT SYMPOSIUM on Traditional Omani Music

Oman marked its 15th National day celebrations with a number of cultural presentations, including the First International Seminar On Traditional Omani Music last October, which brought together outstandiong scholars and produced a remarkable wealth of material on the subject.

Not much is known outside Oman itself about the substantial strides taken by this young country in the art and cultural field, and the Seminar itself provided a good opportunity to be introduced to the more colourful aspects of Omani life and landscape. At this time the whole of Muscat was lavishly decorated; the town itself and the roads leading to it were covered in lights in what could perhaps be described as a typical English art form; it reminded one of Regent Street in London at Christmas, but of course on a much grander scale encompassing a whole city, not just a few streets.

Oman has undoubtedly benefited immensely from being one of the last of the Gulf states to undertake large scale development. For here one could see very few buildings that did not fit the landscape architecturally and culturally, the buildings looked and felt like they belonged, despite their modern construction. This in itself is no mean achievement and is an eloquent testimony to the strong sense of identity that we were to discover more of and appreciate in the days to come.

As the Minister of National Heritage and Culture His Royal Highness Sayyid Faisal Bin Ali Al-Said emphasised in his opening address Oman has had a long heritage and past with particular characteristics that reflect the country's traditions which had taken their origin from Islam. Most of the songs have the Islamic flavour, both working songs and the songs sung at celebrations. He recalled that with its great knowledge of the sea and stars Oman had established its maritime empires to the east coast of Africa and to West Asia. Omani travellers brought back influences which have been passed down and now enrich the country's traditional music and dances and are a reflection of the country's history. His Majesty Sultan Qaboos's vision and deep personal interest has greatly inspired and encouraged the preservation of this legacy.

In his speech on this occasion His Excellency Abdel Aziz Bin Muhammed Al Rowas, the Minister of Information, underlined how throughout development process, Oman has never lost sight of its way of life and deep rooted heritage. Oman's traditional arts can be described as a vivid record of its way of life and each of the folkloric dances reflects the different aspects of social life in Omani society. He also mentioned that the Ministry of Information had taken a major step to compile and document the folkloric music and dancing by setting up a centre for traditional music. The traditional music, dancing, and literature had been recorded on video film, tapes and photographs. It had taken 2 years to set up this centre in order to preserve national folklore and this symposium was another step forward in promoting the work done by the centre.

The symposium's participants were scholars in the field of musicology as well as dance and sound specialists. They covered a wide range of topics and included noted experts like Prof. Mantlehood from the United States of America whose paper was on the voice prints of traditional Omani music, in which he said "Traditional Omani music offers a unique potential in basic research that could alter our comprehension of stylistic studies. Also this music offers an ideal laboratory for documenting the full range of application in some analysis.

Another paper by Salima El-Shvian Castelo Branco from Portugal dealt with the role of women and music making, and noted that women also engaged in music-making as non professionals, integrating music into their work, child rearing, worship and other aspects of their daily life . Other wide ranging themes were ethnomusicology and the history of music, theatrical and methodological considerations in the study of dance in Omani folklore, Oman and the African diaspora in song, dance and aesthetic expression. These and many more themes were spread over long and indepth sessions. After a few days of discussion came the colourful displays of music and dance demonstrating the charm and skills of the Omani dancers. It also well and truly dispelled assertions previously made by some of the delegates that women were not included in dance with men, for one of these dances contained a line of women on one side and groups of men with a drummer on the other. One of the men would dance away to the side of the women and choose a partner and dance with her back towards the drummer and the men, almost as a challenge to the drummer, sometimes stopping halfway and dropping on one knee only to dance on towards the drum. Encouraged all the way by her male partner she finally reaches the drums with an almost defiant gesture, turns and dances back to the women, on the way collecting a small token sum of money from her partner. The other most memorable song from that evening's entertainment was a working song of sailors at the oars. Aimed at keeping a

steady rhythm it worked perfectly and went well with movements and team work of rowing a boat at sea, and could be seen as a direct parallel of our own sea shanties and songs of old. After the night's all too brief entertainment it was back to the conference hall: it would be fair to say that we learnt more about Omani music in that night than the preceding days in conference. As things progressed it became apparent that many of the musicology experts knew very little about Oman or its music and what they were doing was laying down ground rules for its further study.

Undoubtedly important but the conference then seemed unbalanced in its contents, this was a pity as the impression previously given by the Omani Centre of Traditional Music was that it was equipped with all the ground rules it needed not only well equipped but had made huge progress in such a short time, in cataloguing, recording and preserving their musical heritage. Discussions with the Omani staff at the Centre confirmed the hard work and dedication that had brought them so far. One wondered perhaps if some of the Seminar participants had let them down a little.

Our next surprise came when we were all flown down to the south of Oman, to Salah, for here the land is greener and the people are darker skinned and more African in appearance, a strong reminder of time when Oman was an empire herself from Asia to Zanzibar in Africa. On the second day there we were taken up the coast to a small town to witness a very colourful music and dance event, again a most educating experience. The colour of the costumes being in bright reds and gold etc with the headdress of gold filigree and coins all displaying a beauty that one would not have imagined here as the people as well as the dance and music showed something of the African influence but now truly Omani in flavour. Oman's musical heritage lies not only in the past for there is now a modern symphony called Omania, a full and strong symphony with a definite Omani feel to it. A comment was made by some: was not this becoming westernised: surely a very misguided view point, as indeed it must be the reverse. This was a Western medium that had become Arabised.

By the end of the symposium it was an obvious triumph for Oman as many of the Western experts left with more questions than when they came. 15 years is not a long time in the history of a nation but what has been achieved in Oman in this short time is a great milestone for the nation, as a country whose government and people realise that there is more to a nation than just roads, buildings and industrial growth. Oman's future points to a rich and rewarding role in the art and cultural field of the region.

Ken Chapman

COSTUMES OF OMAN

One of the most attractive by-products of attendance at the International Symposium on the Traditional Music of Oman was the opportunity to see and admire the handsome costumes worn by Omani men and women as both natural everyday dress and as an indispensable element in the impact of music and dance programmes. The evolution of costume is the result of a combination of diverse and often complex features which reveal important information about the culture and society in which it is worn. In Oman historical, regional and ethnic factors have contributed to its costume tradition.

Evidence of a long and eventful history of trade and settlement in India and East Africa is seen, for example, in the embroidered Kashmir twill wool textiles of men's turbans and sashes, and in the colourful printed cotton kangas of Kenyan origin which are worn as women's shawls or *laysu*. Geographically Oman falls into distinct regions encompassing fertile coastal plain, mountain and desert terrain, where difficulties of communication fostered local culture. A striking expression of this in costume is seen in the black face mask — *burqa* and *batula* — worn by Bedu women of the northern Batinah and interior regions which traditionally had closer contact with the Arabian heartland than with other parts of Oman. While Oman's population is predominantly Arab, immigrant communities have also played significant roles, which may be reflected in the survival of their original costume styles. Baluchi women of the Batinah region still wear the voluminous trousers and dresses with tight embroidered bodices and full skirts which are related more to the Baluchi costumes of Pakistan and Iran rather than to any indigenous Omani tradition.

Mirbat, female dancer and drummer.



Omani costume as currently worn indicates the natural respect which Omanis have for their heritage. It functions as a symbol of national identity but continues to evolve through the use of modern fabrics and sewing techniques. Interesting sartorial distinctions are common to both men and women's dress. The main garment worn by men is the long loose robe or *dishdasha* which may be bought ready-made or tailored to the customer's taste often from a cotton and synthetic fabric of Japanese origin. The Omani *dishdasha* is distinctive for the elegant simplicity ofits tailoring. The robe falls in a smooth unbroken line from a neat yoke, sleeves are loose, and the neck is fastened to one side with a braided cord. White is the most usual colour and is indeed obligatory for government staff during office hours and at functions.

The informal *dishdasha* can range through beige, grey, blue, green to various shades of pink and even a vibrant flame red. The *dishdasha* is still worn over a long sarong-like wrap — *wizar*. This is often of finely patterned printed cotton imported from Indonesia or of local manufacture since the Ministry of National Heritage and culture has sponsored a textile weaving centre for the revival of this specialised handicraft. The *wizar* can be worn alone as a working garment for example by fishermen and manual labourers. His headdress ensures that the Omani man is easily distinguishable among his ArabGulf neighbours. Its basic unit is a small white pillbox cap — *kima* — with scrolling motifs embroidered in white or coloured threads - green, blue, crimson. This is worn at a jaunty angle depending on the wearer's taste and personality. For formal occasions it is always covered by a deftly folded turban — *masar* — which ranges in texture and colour of fabric from plain white cotton through fine wool in beige, black, scarlet, green etc. embroidered or printed with floral designs of Kashmiri inspiration. A broad sash of the same fabric swathed around the waist adds an elegant accessory to the *dishdasha* which otherwise is worn loose or with a leather belt.

The flowing *bisht* cloak common to other Arab Gulf states is worn on formal occasions where its black colour and gold braid contrasts with the white of the *dishdasha*. The *khanjar*, a curved dagger inserted into a finely worked silver sheath and belt is worn on such occasions. The costume

is completed by a pair of open flat leather sandals — *nal* — which are practical and comfortable in the Omani climate. Certain features of men's costume are especially effective in dance performances notably observed at Mirbat. Here the fluid lines and the harmony and contrast of colour of the *dishdasha* came into play during the swaying movements of line and circle dances. A brightly coloured sash and the *khanjar* were waved and brandished to emphasise the sharp jumping steps of solo and couple dances.

Omani women excel in the brilliance of colour and texture of their costumes which they combine effectively with the traditional conventions of modesty. The basic components of women's dress are ankle-hugging trousers — *sirwal*, a long dress — *fustan* or *dishdasha*, a plain face-framing head scarf — *lahaf*, and a large all enveloping wrap — *lisu*, all of which are receptive to infinite variations of cut, shape, proportion and decoration. A flowing black cloak — *'abbaya*, common also to other Arab Gulf states may be worn as an outdoor garment.

The wealth of fabric available ranges from cottons and rayons to velvets, and brocades in colours such as emerald green, purple, deep pink, yellow, orange, scarlet, often richly embroidered in gold and silver and liberally encrusted with sequins and imported from India, Japan, and Korea. Trousers are generally tight fitting and of a single colour but often decorated at the ankles with embroidered bands. The dress offers more scope for variation and indeed different styles are seen throughout Oman.

A style in favour in Muscat and its suburbs is a long narrow dress with wristlength sleeves set into neat armholes and a skirt slit at the sides. This shape lends itself to a wide choice of fabric and decoration depending on the formality of the occasion. Certain European details may be included such as a full skirt, waisted bodice and puffed sleeve. The head scarf may be a long length of fabric framing the face with ends trailing behind the wearer or a square folded and tied under the chin. A personal fashion detail is the use of a single colour for trousers, dress and scarf to create a matching outfit.

The most popular fabric for the all enveloping wrap is still the East African kanga printed in bright colour combinations such as yellow and green, scarlet and black on white, with bold patterns. Now such wraps, while faithfully preserving traditional colours and patterns, are imported from China. As with men, dance performances provide occasions for a dazzling display of costume. At Mirbat the women participated in a range of pair, line and circle dances concentrating on slow rhythmic steps. They wore the striking Dhafari regional costume of a wide loose embroidered velvet dress over tight trousers and swathed their heads and shoulders with silver and gold Lurex wraps. An interesting example of fashionable transmission of costume was observed at a wedding party in Muscat where the bride's relatives among other costumes wore lavish and brilliantly coloured versions of Dhofari dress. The spectacular richness of the occasion was completed by the bridegroom's relatives of Baluchi origin who wore their traditional costume of loose trousers, full skirted dress and diaphanous veil in matching combinations of green, turquoise, fuchsia pink, and soft blues and mauves.

Jenniffer Scarce

INTERNATIONAL CRAFT MUSEUM IN MALAYSIA

Kuala Lumpur's newly opened International Craft Museum is a project inspired by Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, the Malaysian Minister of National and Rural Development. The museum, situated within the Karyaneka complex along Jalan Raja Chulan, Kuala Lumpur, is a project of Ministry of National and Rural Development and managed by the Malaysian Handicraft Development Corporation.

It provides not only a permanent exhibition of handicrafts from all over the world but also serves as a centre for the dissemination of information on the production of such handicrafts. In addition, the Museum periodically features topical exhibitions on local as well as foreign collections.

Khanjar (curved dagger) from Sultanate of Oman



The Museum's educational programme includes the use of film, slide and video presentations as well as organised workshops in the form of lectures, discussions and demonstrations for handicraft enthusiasts. The Museum also publishes various catalogues, booklets and other material as part of its role in providing a permanent source of written information for public circulation.

In the grounds of the Museum is an ethno-botanical garden, the Taman Karyaneka, where plants and trees useful to the Malaysian people have been planted. The garden will give the visitor a first-hand look at plants commonly used not only in the production of handicrafts but also for food flavouring, dyes and medicines as well as those used for ceremonial purposes and decoration.

Together the Museum and the garden provide invaluable learning experience for the visitors, in addition to the already established Karyaneka Centre which offers a wide range of Malaysian handicrafts for sale.

The Museum also has a permanent international exhibition of handicrafts contributed by diplomatic missions and foreign agencies based in Kuala Lumpur. The permanent display includes the "Seri Perdana" collection of State Gifts received by the Prime Minister. The Museum is anxious to expand this exhibition and would welcome more items from any country wishing to participate. Among the items already received and being displayed are the following:

Raku jar from Australia; 'Fujara' (Shepherd's flute) from Czechoslovak Socialist Republic; brass oil lamp from Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka. Set of tall glasses from Denmark; bowl and vase in the 'Poetry in Glass' series from Federal Republic of Germany; lace table cloth from Federal Republic of Brazil; silk shawl from Islamic Republic of Pakistan; letter-writing set (of handmade paper) from Japan; Rya wall-hanging from New Zealand; traditional Norwegian wooden bowl from Norway; cloisonne jug from People's Republic of China; Clelia vase from Republic of France; 'Hwagak' jewellery box from Republic of Korea; lion dance mask from Republic of Singapore; 'Khanjar' (curved dagger) from Sultanate of Oman; multipurpose box (made of birch bark) from Sweden; 'Samovar' (teapot cum kettle with tray) from Union of Soviet Socialist Republics; rivercane basket from United States of America; leather bag, belt, baby crocodile tusser and handwoven material (used as wall-hanging, rug or table cloth) from Mali; ceramic Rine jug, ceramic plate, hand-woven material and shepherd's flute from Socialist Republic of Romania;

Wedgwood Barberini (Portland vase) from United Kingdom; cowbell with ornate strap and ceramic Roseti plates from Switzerland; ceramic plate from Finland; and hand-woven material from People's Republic of Bangladesh.

JOURNEY IN ARABIA: Water-colours by Chester Williams

An exhibition of paintings by Chester Williams of Oman, Jordan, United Arab Emirates and the Yemen Arab Republic will open on 1 July (until 18 July) at Spink & Sons, 5/7 King Street, London SW1.

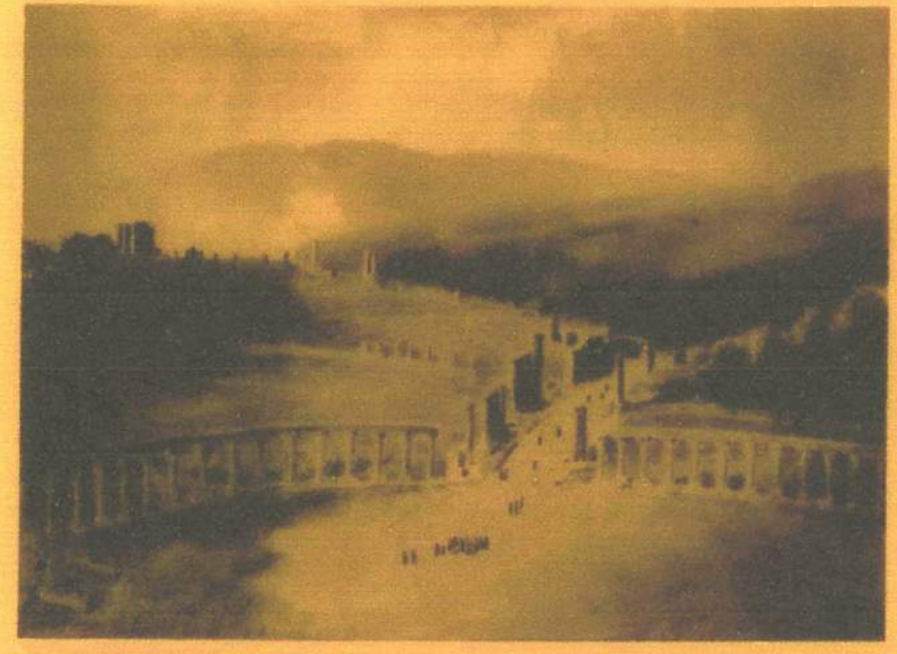
Chester Williams has spent the last decade painting in the Arabian Peninsula. He began painting in the UAE where his work was exhibited by the Dubai Art Society. It was the beginning of many journeys to Arabia.

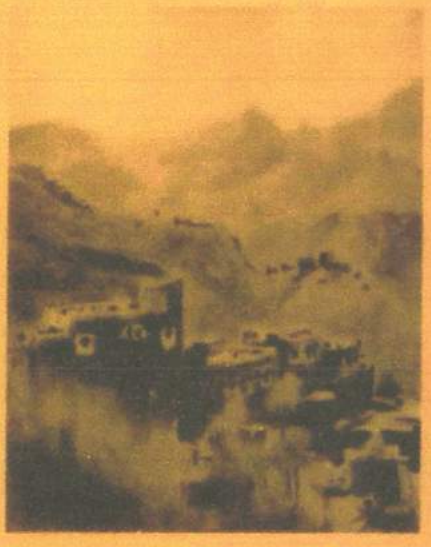
From the Emirates, he went to Jordan and spent 2 weeks in the guest house at Petra; everyday he rose with the sun and climbed or rode over the terrain. He visited other sites and on his return to the UK had a London exhibition. Some of his work now hangs in the National Gallery at Amman and some was also acquired by the Jordanian Royal Family. This exhibition will contain about 10 pictures of Jordan.

Chester Williams having visited Oman many times in the past 4 years expects to show 25 works, mostly landscapes, but there will be a few studies of people he encountered on his journeys.

The Yemen Arab Republic was a marvellous country to see from a painting point of view; not only does it contain some of the most unique and varied architecture in the world, but its topography is equally remarkable.

Chester Williams is one of a number of artist travellers to be exhibited at the Spink gallery. This long established company has for years been designing and fabricating orders, decorations and medals and from 1959 it has had links with the Sultanate of Oman. The most recent occasion has been an issue to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the Accession of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to the throne.









Top left: A view of Jaresh seen from the Forum (Jordan), water-colour 13½"x18, 34x46cm. Top right: A village between Hajjah and Kuhlan (N. Yemen), water-colour 9"x11, 23x28cm. Left: Petra, the Obelisk Tomb, water-colour 10½"x14½", 26x37cm. Above: The south elevation of the Great Mosque at Rada (N. Yemen), water-colour 9"x11", 23x28cm.

PARIS NEWSLETTER

The Bibliotheque Nationale is exhibiting, until June 16, a selection of 183 Mughal miniatures from its own collections and from that of the Musee Guimet. This show marks the end of the Year of India in Paris and is sponsored byTotal. Some of the miniatures are shown to the public for the first time, like the Albums Gentils (in the Bibliotheque Nationale since the 18th century) or the Sher Jang Album (acquired in 1906). The catalogue has been written by Arlette Negre, Amin Okada (Curator at Guimet),Gerard Colas and Francis Richard (Curator at the B.N.) It contains 22 colour and 200 black and white reproductions and can



Emperor Farrukh Siyar on an elephant. 1715 Bibliotheque Nationale

be ordered at the Bibliotheque Nationale, 58 rue de Richelieu, Paris 75002 (150 F). The show is completed by manuscripts, calligraphies and coins including Jahangir's Zodiacal series.

The Custodia Foundation. For the first time, the 100 Indian and Persian miniatures of the Custodia Foundation were exhibited at the Institute Neerlandais in Paris, until the end of March. The core of the collection was formed by the late Director of this Institute, Fritz Lugt, whose tastes reflected the Dutch tradition of Indian miniature collecting, initiated in the 17th century because of the commercial links between Holland and the Mughal Empire.

Erits Lugt was charmed by the combination of Persian sophistication and Indian vitality of the Mughal paintings. His first acquisition was, in 1920, a drawing by Rembrandt after a Mughal miniature. Over the next decades, he bought about 20 pages, some at the Manuk sale in 1949, nine at the Sevadjian sales in Paris in 1960/1 (including a miniature of Shafi Abbasi, dated 1641, bearing the seal of Shah Abbas II and representing a bird on a bush. After his death, in 1970, the collection was taken care of by the Custodia foundation which acquired the same year seven miniatures at the Hagop Kevorkian sales (including a full portrait of Shah Jahan under a Chhatra and holding a Sarpech, by Abid, circa 1645, and three pages at the Pozzi Collection sale. The new Director, M Van Hasselt, and the Curator of the collection, Mrs. Van Berge Gerbaud, have bought 82 pages in the last 15 years, with the aim of building a comprehensive collection, representing not only the Mughal school, but all the major provincial schools of painting in India over a period of four centuries.

A Catalogue Raisonne has been published, with colour and black and white illustrations, with an introduction by Robert Skelton, of the Victoria and Albert Museum, (the original



Picture courtsey of Foundation Custodia

English text was published in Apollo in October 1976). It may be ordered from the Institut Neerlandais, 121 Rue De Lille, Paris 75007.

Soustiel Exhibition of Oriental Miniature. The 4th in the series of Oriental miniature exhibitions was held in April at the Galerie Jean Soustiel (146 Bld Haussman), one of the oldest Islamic Art Galleries of Paris which opened in 1926 by Joseph Soustiel. Jean Soustiel and his assistant, Marie Christine David, divided the exhibition into three themes: the influence of Europe on Islamic India, the influence of Islam on traditional India and the influence of India on Iran.

Like their three previous exhibitions of Oriental miniatures, they also published a well-documented catalogue. Among the rarest pages are the only known miniatures signed by Sanwala, one of Akbar's painters, the powerful depiction of a man trying to dress a fiery horse, an album page (Circa 1660) signed by Muhammad Zaman, the only known work of Zaman with an Hindu influence (it represents a night scene with European influence as well), and another night scene in chiaroscuro by Govardhan, circa 1625, yet another, more recent version is in Leningrad.

Shafic Abboud. The Galerie Faris, 50 Rue De L'Universite, Paris 75007, specialising in contemporary painting, celebrate its seventh anniversary with an exhibition of recent works of the Lebanese painter Shafic Abboud. It is difficult to describe Abboud's style, at the junction between abstraction and figuration, with no real Middle Eastern connotation. One thing is certain, it is that Shafic Abboud has already been widely exhibited in Europe (including at the F.I.A.C. in Paris) and that several Museums have already bought his works, such as the Museum of Modern Art of Paris.

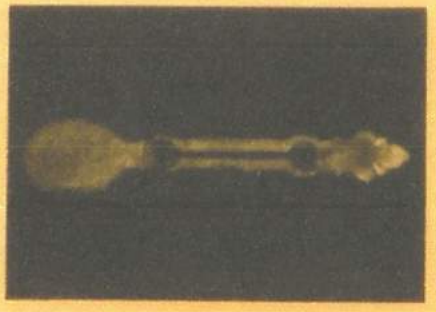
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An important auction of Islamic Art was held by Ader Picard Tajan (APT) on March 3 & 4. It totalled 5 million F.F., more than what was expected by the specialist Lucien Arcache. During both sessions, the room was full and late comers were stuck at the door. The attendance was international with a high percentage of private buyers. Some new important private buyers emerged, making up for the absence of expected Arab and Turkish collectors.

The sale included all kinds of works of art of varying importance (400 in all). There were 44 lots from the Trampitsch collection. Mr. Trampitsch was a beer tycoon at the beginning of this century with very eclectic tastes as witnessed by the various sales by APT. He collected Islamic miniatures, textiles and arms, among them a unique silk fragment from Nasrid Spain (Granada, 14th, 15th) with geometric star patterns and two inner calligraphic borders (in knotted Kufic). Although it was faded and slightly worn out, it was bought by Spink for 160,000 F.F. (est 20/25,000 F). Its size, though, was impressive : 120x116cm.

The collection included some pre and early Islamic Egyptian fragments and a Byzantine silk roundel with two inverted mounted hunters pointing an arrow towards a lion (8th/9th C). It was bought by British dealer Petsopoulos for 90,000 FF (est 12,000 F). Mr Arcache often puts very low estimates, generally half of what he expects for the lot as he thinks that it encourages the bidders to start the competition.

A number of miniatures belonging to M Trampitsch fetched high prices, compared to the estimates. O Hoare, who did not succeed in buying most of what he wanted, got a Shiraz 16th Century page for 11,000 F.F. (est. 15/2,000 F.F.) representing a recreation scene. M Atigechi bought a Herat 15th Century Hammam Scene for the same price. A Swiss dealer bought a Shiraz



Early Islamic colourless glass spoon 9/10th century, courtesy Sotheby's.

16th Century double page for 8,500 FF (it was restored). Jean Soustiel bought two very early 18th Century Punjabi miniatures of a man and a woman conversing on a terrace for 20,000 & 38,000 F.F. respectively.

Spink bought a rare 16th Century Manuscript (IBRATNAME) of 167 folios including 24 miniatures. Several Turkish buyers wanted to acquire it, which explains its price (140,000 F.F.) from an estimated 30/40,000 F.F.

The sale included part of the Schramm Collection (The first part was sold last October) of Moroccan Berber jewels from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th Century. It was the weakest part of the whole sale and the bids were slow to come. The prices ranged between 700-1500 F.F., often under the estimates, with peaks at 4,800 F.F. for a Kabyle Silver Bracelet and 2,500 F.F. for a necklace (Khelkal) from the Atlas Mountains (Zaian).

The selection of Berber jewels from the Schramm Collection sold last October was of much higher quality: A pair of enamelled earings (Dewwah) with cloisonne and filigree (410 GR) had fetched 1700 F.F. and an anklet (Khelkal in gilded Silver (260 GR) from Mogador, 14000 F.F.

The collection of 'Madame R', a member of princely Ottoman family, seems to be inexhaustible too. The third part was sold last October (mainly Mughal jewels and 17th/19th Century textiles, including an Ottoman silk hanging with an undulating vine pattern for 39,00 F.F.).

This time 'Madame R' was selling her 18th - 19th C jewels. A rare matching necklace and bracelet formed by grapes of tiny rows of pearls linked by four elaborated enamelled gold cylinders, was bought by a Swiss collector for 32,000 F.F.

The Mamluk silver inlaid copper casket that featured on the cover of the catalogue belonged to yet another collection: that of Mr Delaporte, Consul General of Egypt in the last century. It was bought for 450,000 F.F. by Spink (est. 100/120,000 F.F.).

Another collection of illustrious provenance was included in this sale. It was sold by the daughter of a French Ambassador in Egypt.

Pascale Villiers le Moy

CAIRO NEWSLETTER

The new Minister of Culture, Dr. Ahmed Heikal, comes from Cairo University where he is a professor of Arabic Literature. He has a doctorate from a Spanish University and has served as Egyptian Cultural Attache in Madrid. With this traditional and academic background Dr. Heikal is well equipped to tackle the awesome job of caring for Egypt's incredibly rich heritage of monuments, works of art, literature and folklore, as well as the contemporary scene, and the cultural education of the burgeoning new generation.

It was appropriate that the first exhibition to be inaugurated by the new Minister was of the work of the well-known modern master of calligraphy and art educator Khamis Shehata, whose influence has been widely felt both within Egypt and throughout the Arab world over the past quarter century. In his opening remarks Dr. Heikal urged all artists working in whatever area of the arts not to forget their essential Egyptian and Arab character. He expressed admiration for Khamis Shehata who draws inspiration from traditional sources, such as verses from the Quran and folkloric poems and stories, but interprets them in a creative contemporary style and in a rich variety of media.

Meanwhile an unfortunate event has focussed national attention on one of Egypt's most valuable historic collections. Three Ottoman Qurans disappeared from the Dar al Kuttub during the latter part of August 1985. They were removed from a glass-fronted case at the back of the hall in the new building on the Boulaq Corniche, where the cream of Egypt's priceless manuscripts are on display. The Qurans were of a relatively small size which could easily be concealed, and were evidently spirited out of the country by a sophisticated and selective thief of international calibre. All three bore a colophon with the name of the scribe, and all three dated from the great period of Ottoman calligraphy, sometime between 1450 and 1550 AD. The marketability of such Qurans was confirmed last year when a similar one was sold in London for 75 thousand sterling. The matter is being investigated by both Egyptian and international police, and local security has been tightened up. With so many antiquities to care for it is almost impossible to prevent some losses, but stricter surveillance and better maintenance are necessary, and may have the added dividend of increasing the respect and appreciation of the Egyptian public for their national treasures.

A palpable decline in the market for contemporary art has gone along with the winding down of the oil bonanza. A few years ago it was considered very trendy for the affluent to buy modern Egyptian art to enhance the decoration of new hotels, villas and apartments. Prices rose accordingly, and artists were reaping the benefits. Unfortunately prices are still high, but the money is no longer flowing so easily. First class works of art are no longer snapped up, and the fickle public are thinking twice about investing large sums in Egyptian art.

The situation in the art market is somewhat ironic because at no time in the last twenty years have there been so many attractive and well-run galleries, both public and private, which give good and regular exposure to Egypt's artists. As well as excellent shows organized by the Ministry of Culture, including the work of Hamed Nada, Khamis Shehata, Adly Rizkalla, Rabab Nimr, Nazli Madkur, and others, several enterprising women are maintaining or starting up galleries of their own.

Laila Foda of the Arabesque Gallery, Shahira Mehrez, and the proprietors of the al Ain, the Patio and others have now been joined by two distinctive new galleries.

At Kilometer 6 along the Sakkara Road, Ayda Ayoub and her husband Mahmoud Sadek have realized a long-cherished dream. Among the plam groves they have built a beautiful villa with an art gallery attached. The gallery grew as an integral part of the villa. The whole complex is low, white and Islamic in style, but is complete with every modern comfort and convenience. "Much as I love the old houses of medieval Cairo, I don't think I'd want to live in one," confesses Sadek, "so my husband and I and our young architect, Fathi Adham, a student of Hassan Fathi, broke all sorts of sacred taboos in the process of building the house." It is decorated with mosaics and murals by Ahmed Nabil, beautiful traditional woodwork and marble, and the Sadeks' large collection of modern Egyptian art hangs on the walls of the domed salon.

The gallery is across a flowery flagged courtyard with a green fountain in the middle. It is managed by Yusri Hassan, himself an artist of growing reputation. The first show, which was opened by the Governor of Giza on a gala night in April 1985 comprised works by a group of established painters and sculptors. Paintings included work by Salah Taher, Zakaria Zeini, Mustafa Abd el Moati, Ahmed Selim, Farghali, Mustafa al Razzaz, Sabri Mansur and Ingi Efflatoun; and there was sculpture by Salah Reda, Ramzy Mustapha and Sabri Nashat among others.

Subsequent shows have acquainted interested foreigners and Egyptians alike with the charm of this unique gallery. The warmth, generosity and friendliness of the Sadeks make

the trip out to the edge of the desert doubly worth while. They painstakingly assembled all the work of Abd el Hadi al Gazzar, cleaned, restored and framed it, giving Cairenes the opportunity to see first-hand the work of this extraordinary artist who died twenty years ago, but whose reputation as an original has grown steadily since. He tried to free Egyptian painting from an overwhelming foreign influence, and he painted popular life in a sometimes satirical and even brutal manner. There has since been an exhibition of jewelry by Nimet Riad, using semi precious stones in a modern style; an exhibition of five printmakers; and most recently a joint show by sculptor Salah Reda and painter Farghali.

Another new gallery nearer the centre of town has opened on the top deck of the Papyrus Institute which occupies a houseboat moored on the Giza Corniche. Under the sponsorship of Dr. Hassan Ragab, well-known in paper-making circles throughout the world, Mme. Ursula Schernig, the manager of the gallery, assembled the work of five contemporary calligraphic artists to inaugurate her pleasant, airy gallery. As well as showing established artists, Mme Schernig plans to introduce lesser-known younger artists to the public. Her second show will be of woodcuts by Fathi Ahmed and some of his students from Minia University. Mme Schernig was also instrumental in the selection of young artists' drawings to be sent to an international exhibition in Nurnberg, where they earned special mention.

Also on the top deck of the Papyrus Institute, Liliane Karnouk has started an art school, with lessons in drawing and painting, as well as art appreciation and special classes for children.

At present the students of the Faculty of Art Education of Helwan University in Zamalek (Egypt's only institution specifically designed for the training of art teachers) are out on strike. They are protesting the possible loss of autonomy of the Faculty, and its projected merger with the Faculty of Education. It is long established and respected school, fulfilling a very valuable role, and it would be depressing to see it swallowed up by a larger and more impersonal body. This institution should surely be given more, rather than less, attention. That Egypt's schoolchildren are full of latent talent is proved by a show of children's art at the Goethe Institute, and also by a delightful calendar brought out by the Ministry of Culture.

Another very unsatisfactory and depressing state of affairs is reflected in the trouble that Dr. Magda Saleh, at one time Egypt's leading ballerina, has had in attempting to pull the Ballet School back into shape since she was made Dean eighteen months ago. Although she managed to win a placement for the company at an international ballet festival in Moscow last summer, and has made every effort to bring up the standards, without the whole-hearted cooperation of other members of the staff her gallant attempt may be doomed to failure. After such a fine start and high hopes her giving up at this stage would be nothing less than a tragedy.

NEW BALLET

A blue-green god lies prone, as if in sleep. To the haunting notes of a flute he slowly awakens and starts to dance, now languidly, now swiftly, in a series of movements reminiscent of the swirls and eddies of the great river. Suddenly, wrapped in a gauzy veil, a delicate girl makes her appearance. She flickers like a burnt-orange flame casts off her veil, and drawn towards him by an urgency she herself does not quite understand, she advances to where he once again lies in repose. They embrace as fiercely as two elements coming together, and a *pas de deux* ensues, enriched with eastern movements and hieratic gestures that look like New Kingdom friezes brought to life. Their idyll is brief. In triumph he carries her aloft, but finally, wrapped once again in her veil, she sinks to her doom while he, appeased, settles back once more into his primeval oblivion.

A striking dramatization of the legendary annual sacrifice of a bride to the Nile, a rite which was supposed to ensure the continued fertility of the land, is the theme of a brand new ballet by the Cairo Ballet Company. It is the creation of Magda Saleh, who not only choreographed the piece, to flute music recorded inside the Great Pyramid by Paul Horn, but, taking her cue from vivid New Kingdom tomb paintings at Tell al Amarna, designed the stunning costumes. The young dancers perform with a verve, poise, and, above all, finish, that may well put them into an international class.

With a back-up of other classical pieces, this new ballet was the *piece de resistance* of the Company as it set off for an international competition in Moscow in early June. The Cairo Ballet's new lease on life is in large part due to the brilliance and energy of Magda Saleh, who two years ago returned from a long stint abroad to her early training ground at the Academy of Arts on the Pyramids Road, as a professor, and last year was made Dean of the Ballet School. In one short exhausting year she has whipped the company back into shape and if she manages to maintain her present almost incredible elan, Cairo may well have some exciting dancing to look forward to next season.

Another extraordinary woman in Cairo's art world managed to realize a long-cherished dream this year. Ayda Ayoub, the wife of Mohamed Sadek, opened a new gallery for modern Egyptian art attached to her lovely house among the palms and clover fields along the Sakkara Road in mid April. The Governor of Giza, Dr. Abdel Hamid Hassan, officiated and over 600 artists, critics and friends thronged the Sadeks' private collection, hung in their capacious domed salon, as well as the temporary exhibition in the cool stone-flagged gallery across the coutyard.

"I wanted to do something for Egypt and for Egyptian artists," declares Mme Sadek, a small intense woman, whose own radiant personality illuminates every corner of the house and gallery. "I wanted to show not only foreigners, but Egyptians themselves what could be done with native talent and native materials.

"We wanted the house to be in the Islamic mode or style, but to be liveable and have all modern conveniences," confesses Mme Sadek, adding frankly, "We chose a young architect trained by Hassan Fathi and imbued with his values, but no older than my son, so that we would not be intimidated! His name is Fathi Adham. Much as I love the old houses of medieval Cairo, I don't really think that I would want to live in one. But so many of the features are beautiful and well-suited to the climate and to the Egyptian way of life — the *mashrabiyya*, the window seats, the stone floors, the domes, the fountains and

Dr. Magda Saleh, Manal Zakaria, Ahmed Ezzat, Moscow June 1985 V International Ballet Competition.



the courtyard. And the rugs and cushions and plants can be moved around, so that surfaces can be easily washed and taken care of. So Fathi and my husband and I myself actually designed the house together, breaking all sorts of taboos in the process! And the gallery grew alongside it as an integral part of the project."

Nearly all of Egypt's major contemporary painters and sculptors are represented either in the gallery, the garden or in the Sadeks' private collection. Sculpture includes works by Salah Reda, Sabri Nashat, Ramzy Mustapha and fifteen others. There are fine paintings by Salah Taher, Zakaria Zeini, Mustafa Abd el Moati, Ahmed Selim, Farghali, Mustafa al Razzaz, Sabri Mansur and many others. The work of two artists in particular is prominent in connection with the creation of the house, and with the arrangement of the pictures.

The first is mosaic by Ahmed Nabil, who has executed several daring pieces throughout the house. Before the front door is a watchful peasant girl who, in the words of critic Hussein Bikar, "is an ever vigilant guardian entrusted with the care of this beautiful house." In one corner of the main salon Nabil has created a blue mosaic cone-shaped fireplace, and decorated the mastabas that flank it. More mastabas enhance the flowery courtyard, and imaginative mosaics decorate the bedroom and bathroom in the master suite. Though this versatile artist is actually a teacher of painting at the School of Fine Arts, his work on the Sadeks' house in mosaics earned him a full professorship.

The other artist closely associated with the enterprise is Yusri Hassan, who is not only the manager of the gallery, but also has a studio on the premises. He is a relatively young man but nevertheless a veteran of twelve years of gruelling service as a commando on Egypt's eastern border. The experience left him with a deep horror of war and a loathing of politicians, which he expresses in his powerful allegorical paintings. These form a good part of the private collection, and Yusri's work is represented in the gallery as well.

Both Mohamed and Ayda Sadek are intimately acquainted with the artists and their work, and are usually on hand to give visitors a well-informed and enthusiastic commentary. The generosity of spirit and the vision of this warm and enterprising couple is a great benefit in every way to contemporary Egyptian art, which cries out for discriminating patronage.

The 15th General Exhibition of Plastic Arts at the Nile Hall which ran from March until the end of May was somewhat marred by electrical troubles which completely did in the lighting for at least two weeks, so visiting had to be done during hours of broad daylight or not at all. The show was however very competently presented with many well-known artists participating, though its tenor could have been improved by a few omissions. There is now sufficient depth, richness and variety in current Egyptian painting for only the best to be selected for an exhibition of this kind. The avant garde was perhaps led by such artists as Ramzy Mustapha and Liliane Karnouk, while graphics by Awad al Shimi, Atteya Hussein, Ahmed Nawar and Fathi Ahmed were particularly accomplished.

The Salon du Printemps put on by the Association of Graduates of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the Akhnaton Gallery maintained a high standard throughout. While many of the artists are occupied with a rather inward-looking abstrct style of painting, there is evidence that others are taking a new look at the wonders of their real surroundings. Two paintings of fishermen by Husseini Fawzi and Sayed Abd el Rassoul were particularly striking, and there were others of the oases, and the seacoast.

Two other ventures brought Cairene artists to the international scene. Expresing a new and refreshing relationship with her culture and physical environment, Nazli Madkour showed her paintings of Upper Egyptian villages and the Oases at the Egyptian Cultural Centre in Paris; and the work of twelve young artists was selected for an international exhibition of drawings in Nurnberg, Germany.

Of the one man shows in Cairo this spring Rabab Nimr's at Leila Foda's Arabesque Gallery displayed a good sample of the work of this delightful artist, who is the wife of Mustafa Abd el Moati. Her quizzical little characters with current eyes and sad faces engage in solemn activities of an enigmatic nature. Her surfaces are flat and her colours quiet, with an occasional use of lemon-yellow, or turquoise or dusty pink. One wonders where her unique imagination will lead her next.

DAVID ROBERTS EXHIBITION AT MATHAF

Mathaf Gallery has announced the opening on 19 May of an exhibition of David Roberts comprising about 90 of the original lithographs, some in their tinted form and the rest with modern hand colouring, as well as two of the original watercolours on which the lithographs were based.

These lithographs, printed between 1842 and 1849, were the result of Robert's journey through Egypt, Nubia and The Holy Land in 1839 and 1840. Lithographed by Louis Haghe and published by F.G. Moon, they were acclaimed as one of the major achievements of the century in this field. Now, almost 150 years later, they are as popular as ever, being appreciated both for their artistic value and as an accurate pictorial record of Egypt and The Holy Land in the early 19th century.

Roberts was first and foremost an architectural painter and the exhibits will put particular emphasis on the Cairo Street and Mosque scenes. There will be, however, views from all six volumes showing the variety of Robert's lithographed work.

INTERNATIONAL CALLIGRAPHY COMPETITION

The International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Heritage, an affiliated establishment of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference, has announced an International Calligraphy Competition instituted in the name of the famous calligrapher Hamid El-Amidi. The purpose of the competition is "to revive and encourage the development of the Classical Islamic Calligraphy, within the framework of its original principles and traditional spirit."

The late Hamid El-Amidi was born in the year 1309 A.H./1891 A.D. in one of the old cities of the South East Turkey, then known as Amid and now called Diyarbakir. The real name of Hamid El-Amidi was Musa Azmi. He learnt the art, when he was a middle school student, from local masters. In Istanbul, he understood that his acquirements were not sufficient at all. He joined the Army Printing Office named 'Erkan-i Harbiye Matbaasi' and gained further experience and developed his skills. He also learned from the experiences of the past and present masters of this art. He studied their works carefully and made use of all the literature then available on the subject. Thus he was able to develop his artistic talents to the extent that he became an authority and a master in this field.

The Jury of the Hamid El-Amidi International Calligraphy Competition consists of acknowledged authorities in the field of Calligraphy: Prof. Emin Barin, Fine Arts Faculty, Mimar Sinan University, Turkey; Mr Ahmet Ziya Ibrahim, Lecturer of Calligraphy, Saudi Arabia; Mr Yusuf Zunnun, Calligraphist, Research Scholar, Iraq; Prof. Mahmud Hilmi, Expert Calligrapher and Teacher, Egypt; Dr. Muhammed Sharifi, Lecturer, New Fine Arts Faculty, Algeria; Prof. Muhammed Yusef, Lecturer Malaysia University, Malaysia; and Prof. Dr. Ekmeleddin Ihsanoğlu, Director General of Research, Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture.

Further details of the competition, including the Competition book-

ARTS EXHIBITIONS

A UNIQUE EXHIBITION IN AMMAN

Cultural exchanges of a certain standard hardly take place among Third World countries; yet in November 1985 an artistic exchange of the highest quality took place between Egypt and Jordan. On the occasion of H.M. King Hussein's fiftieth birthday, the Egyptian Ministry of Culture sent to the Royal Society of Fine Arts in Amman an exhibition of forty three works by forty two contemporary artists of the twentieth century to be shown at the Jordan National Gallery.

The works consisted of oil paintings, graphics and sculptures forming a panoramic vista of modern Egyptian art from the turn of the century to the eighties. Heading the list was Mahmoud Mokhtar (1891-1934), the father of modern art in Egypt. His most famous works are his public monuments in Cairo and Alexandria, yet, the two small statues representing him are of his favourite subject, Egyptian peasantry. Their simple lines betray an unrealistic sensitivity mixed with a strength only a highly talented chisel can lend to a piece of cold stone. Mokhtar was the first artist to revive classical Egyptian sculpture. Because of this revival based on Pharaonic traditions, sculpture in Egypt flourished more than in any other Arab or Muslim country. His influence was felt on almost every sculptor that followed him.

A strong and powerful artist Gamal El Seguini (1917-1977) was unfortunately not well represented in this exhibition; the small brass bas-relief being a poor example of this giant sculptor. The works of Adam Hunein (1929) and Abdel Badee Abdel Hai (1916) showed definite traces of their great Pharaonic heritage, while Abdel Kader Rizk (1912-1978) remained within the classical school.

In painting almost all of the early pioneers have been represented. Ahmad Sabri (1889-1955) had an impressionistic portrait of the well known Egyptian philosopher and writer, Tawfiq Al Hakim. Other pioneers were Ragheb Ayyad (1892), Mohamed Naji (1888-1956) Youssef Kamel (1891-1974) and Hussein Fawzi (1905). Their works depict genre scenes from popular city life and the serene countryside in a well defined classical frame. In the Middle East orientalism was born in Egypt when the armies of Napoleon set foot on its sandy beaches at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The first painting exhibition, not only in Egypt but in all of the Arab countries, was held in Cairo at the end of the last century and it was of European Orientalist artists. Surely this must have left some kind of imprint on those who immediately followed the coming of the Orientalists, if not on their style then on their subject matter.

The king of genre scene is without doubt Mahmoud Said (1897). His treatment of the surface both in relation to line as well as mass, along with his strong, almost expressionistic colours lend his canvases a highly individualistic style and despite his Western training and travels his style could be defined as modern Egyptian. Two portraitists, Hussein Amin Bikar (1913) and Sabri Ragheb (1920) represented another form of painting which was extremely popular in Egypt before the advent of abstract art. With their quiet and muted colours and classical lines they mostly painted society men, women and their own offspring. Seif Wanli (1906-1979) almost forms the bridge between the early classical pioneers and the modernists. A highly prolific artist, he left behind him, between oil paintings, drawings and water colours, a legacy of more than ten thousand works. He is also known for his imaginative stage designs. His work in the exhibition was a landscape of a gypsy village in Hungary. Through simple lines and ungraded colours we once again encountered an artist with an individualistic style. It is unfortunate though that a work by his equally talented and famous brother, Adham Wanli, was not included in this collection.

Marguerite Nakhla (1908) joins Wanli in forming the above mentioned bridge. Her work which was influenced by the ancient traditions of Coptic art also showed the impact of impressionism. The group of modernists in this exhibition included Salah Taher (1911), Ezzeldin Hammouda (1919), Abou Khalil Lutfi (1920), Hamed Nada (1924). Abdel Hadi El Gazzar (1925-1966), Ahmed Maher Raef (1926), Sayyed Abdel Rasoul, Mounir Kanaan (1919), Inji Efflatoun, Mohamed Taha Hussein (1929) Tahia Halim (1919),



let, may be obtained by writing to: The Secretariat, Hamid El-Amidi Calligraphy Competition, International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage, P.O. Box 16, (IRCICA;) Gayrettepe, Istanbul, Turkey, Phone: 160 59 88-89 Telex: 26484 ISAM TR.

The competition covers the following categories and styles:

a. Thuluth and Naskh. In this style the work shall be composed in accordance with the classical Thuluth-Naskh Qit'a arrangement; one line of Thuluth shall be followed by Naskh, in smaller character, either parallel to Thuluth or in oblique dispositions.

b. Jaly Thuluth

c. Talik or Jaly Ta'lik

d. Diwani or Jaly Diwani

e. Any other classical form which is not mentioned in items (a) to (d), or following one of the three calligraphies written by the late Hamid El-Amidi and included in the Competition booklet.

The composition of the texts given in categories of styles mentioned in items (b), (c), (d) and (e), as one or more lines is left to the discretion of the competitor who may decide the arrangement in compliance with personal taste and understanding. In the category (c), following the classical way, vowels, except (tashdid) and (tanwin) are not allowed.

A total of US$32,500 will be awarded for excellence in the Classical Islamic Calligraphy. The Jury will nominate one of the Five First Award Winners, to be invited to Istanbul in order to carry on research on the Clasical Islamic Calligraphy, at a date and for duration which will be determined by the International Commission for the Preservation of Islamic Cultural Heritage.

Zainab Abdul Hamid Al Zarkani (1919) and Gazbia Sirry (1928). Each and every one of those artists tried to find a path of his or her own in painting. Sometimes their modernism had its roots in the ancient past or it took its inspiration from the present. Their styles differed as much as did their diverse personalities. What they had taken from the West during their training would sometimes surface, often it would lay hidden between the shades and lines of their canvases yet, somehow always got sifted and mixed with the Egyptian ambiance, climate and configuration.

The modernists of later years are Moustafa Abdel Moati (1938) Abdel Wahad Morsi (1931), Zakaria Elzini (1933), Mohamed Riad Said, Ahmad Fouad Selim (1936), Mostafa El Razzaz (1942), Farghgali Abdel Hafiz (1941), Rabab Nimr, Hussein El Gebali (1934), Ahmad Nawar (1945), Sabri Mansour (1943) Fathi Ahmad (1939), Farouk Shehada (1938), Farouk Shehada (1938) and Mahmoud Abdullah (1936). Contrary to the earlier modernists, most of this later group grew, trained and worked within the local atmosphere where modern art had laid its roots and art appreciation had had its effects on society. Artistic training in the country had reached a high standard based on the fact that those who preceded them were securely bridging the gap between their serene artistic heritage and the Western influenced training. Their artistic trends are still reaching for a clearer identification and this search is what will ultimately define and identify Egyptian contemporary art in the coming decade or so. They are the portraitists of our times, with all the insecurity and conflicts; so also the ones to face the dilemma of every contemporary Arab artist: how far in the past can he go without regressing and how involved can he get with the rest of the world, without losing his own identity.

Such an exhibition would essentially benefit the public with a wide scope of the modern art scene in Egypt, a glimpse into a rich and colourful world that leaves the spectator with a growing need to divulge deeper into the subject and get to know the different artists from a closer range, through more of their works over a span of different periods in their career. Hopefully this exhibit will be the opening reception that would lead to small intimate gatherings of Egyptian artists in the Jordan National Gallery. It is for the first time that Egypt sends such an exhibition to a sister country but it is the first giant step towards more of such cultural exchanges. In 1987 there will be an exhibition of Jordanian artists from the permanent collection of the Jordan National Gallery both in Cairo and Alexandria.

Wijdan Ali

ISLAMIC ARTISTS' FASCINATION WITH THE COSMOS

Smithsonian's Freer Gallery of Art in Washington DC has announced an exhibition of Islamic art from 13th-18th centuries entitled "Wonders of Creation, Oddities of Existence" (3 March - 10 October) in celebration of Halley's comet. It includes 21 paintings, two pieces of metalwork and a ceramic bowl.

Although none of the objects in the Freer Exhibition refers specifically to Halley's comet, each in its own way relates to the cosmos for inspiration. The first part of the exhibition title, for instance, is English for "Adja'ib al-Makhlukat wa Ghara'ib al-Mawdjudat", an encyclopedic cosmology by Zakariya ibn Muhammad ibn Mahmud Abu Yahay, known as al-Kazwini (1203-1283). Included in the exhibition are 20 miniatures from a 14th - century copy of al-Kazwini's text featuring painted illustrations of signs of the zodiac and distinctive interpretations of the planets and constellations.

In the Islamic world, studies of extraterrestrial bodies were based on the classical heritage of the southern Mediterranean basin. Greek Manuscripts by Ptolemy, Antiochus and other early scientists were revered and studied, and by the 13th century, many important classical texts had been translated into Arabic.

Similar manuscripts also were used for the study of astrology, then considered as important for the understanding of the universe as astronomy.

Celestial themes were not restricted to manuscripts. According to the Persian inscription on the tang of a forged-steel blade of a 17th-century knife from India that is also in the exhibition, a meteorite fell during the reign of Nur al-Din Jahangir (1605-1627), the fourth Mogul ruler of India. Jahangir then ordered that two swords, a dagger and the Freer's knife be made from the remains of this meteorite, as it was believed to have magical qualities. Of those four objects, only this knife appears to have survived.

Another painting on view depicts Ulugh Beg (1393-1449) and his court. A grandson of Timur (or Tamerlane as he is often known in the West), Ulugh Beg was a proficient theologian, historian, mathematician and, above all, astronomer. From 1408 until his death he resided in Samarkand where he built a large observatory, parts of which still survive. Under Ulugh Beg's patronage a celebrated "Zij," or table was compiled in an attempt to use direct observations to correct Ptolemy's computations.

WINDOWS ON THE SECRET SELF: PAINTINGS BY NAZ IKRAMULLAH

"My work evolves from memories of times and places," artist Naz Ikramullah stated. "Sometimes I begin working with an image of a particular thing, a wall or a field, and while I am working it develops into a particular place. At other times I recall vividly on emotion and try to recreate the imagery of the mood. Inevitably, the contradictions and conflicts that aroused me are left on the shore and the images that emerge from the fragments are softened and romanticised. I have begun to believe that this is my way of finding equilibrium."

The London born artist, daughter of Pakistani diplomat parents, works in acrylic, mixed media, etchings, lithographs and coloured xerox to build up her collages which are intensely personal and her exhibition at the Edward F. Monaghan gallery in Ottawa last autumn, was called "Windows on The Secret Self", based on a poem by Louis MacNiece.

She has travelled extensively and often in search of her identity. For many years now, she has been fascinated by the concept contrasts between physical reality and the invisible reality of the mind, at the same moment.

In a more simple form, she has intersected an early etching "Grand Canyon" with a later one of a beach in Pakistan and called the composition "Intersection of Timeless Moments." But it is in her collages and paintings that she worked this technique with infinitely greater complexity and her compositions are built up layer upon layer of tiny pictures, each of which tells a story. "Over the years, I have been doing two kinds of work," she said. "One is the reflections of things that I see from memory. The other, which is thought processes."

Some of latter has been strongly influenced by feminist literature, "Frogs in the Well" and "The Hidden Faces of Eve" which centres on Muslim women and she has used these ideas very effectively in "Reflections on the Mall" in acrylic, where lighted windows reveal miniature images of far away places. A shrouded figure - a Muslim woman - hemmed by the multi storey buildings of Ottawa, recalls taboos and inhibitions which will never leave her and remembers lives of other girls in distant lands, who live within the confines of a courtyard and sleep in the open air on string beds.

Another evocative collage "Reliving the Past", conveys all the longings and sadness of exile. She deliber-

ately uses the stylized pose of an Indian miniature to depict the central figure of a girl, standing by a window, in Canada and focusing upon different lives and memories, filled with golden sunsets, frayed old houses and narrow streets, which she, a Pakistani woman, now living in Ottawa, has left behind, long since.

An associate at the Edward F. Monaghan Gallery, in Ottawa, Naz has had solo and groups shows in a number of countries and was only 13 years old when her first work was accepted at an exhibition "Artists From The Commonwealth" in London. She was still at school when she entered a portrait of her younger sister for an art competition and was given a third prize with words: "This young person wants very badly to be an artist. The struggle is so evident and I think so important, that I want to give her an award."

Delicate and petite, Naz went on to The Byam Shaw School of Art in London and went through a period of cultural conflict where she had decided exactly what she wanted to say through her work.

"In England," she said "my teachers kept telling me that I had a fantastic heritage and that I belonged to the tradition of the Persian and Indian miniature. I kept saying that I grew with A.A. Milne and the drawings of Edmund du Lac. Of course I knew there were painters in the sub-continent, such as Jamini Roy but they seemed very divorced from me. I wanted to paint like the new Raphaelites. But as time went by, I looked at the early Siennese painters and they seemed to link to me and my own traditions. I also liked Matisse because he had been to the Orient. "When I came to Pakistan, people said my work was very British. In Britain they said it was Oriental. But I finally learnt not to worry about that and do just what I had to do. I am a product of several cultures and I think it is a great advantage.

"The country which visually reflects the work I would like to do most, is Morocco," she said. "It is to me, a perfect blend of east and west and is quite the most beautiful place I have ever been to."

She made an elegant collage entitled "Morocco" in the late seventies. It is a delicate blending of whites and beiges with textures of brown and touches of palest green. While an early black and white etching of hers "Winter Garden", also portrays a similar dreamland of cypress trees and winding paths.

She was still at art school, when Professor Shahid Suhrawardy, the well known art critic and also a relative, began to take a great interest in her work. He would take her to art galleries in London and he would discuss various works with her. His pet aversion was exotica. "My dear," he often said "beware of *couleur locale.*" She has







Above: Winter: a day in November, collage. Left: Corner of my garden, monoprint and ink. Below inset: the artist. Below: Intersection of Timeless Moments. Etchings of the Grand Canyon and Gadiani Beach, interposed to form a single composition.



The Red Door and other places, collage in mixed media.



Reflections on the Mall, acrylic.

never forgotten his words and he has been a very important influence on her.

Her work has always been immensely controlled and very understated. "I like the fact that less is more," she said. "I like to make one colour do the work of several. That is why I am inclined towards printmaking. Because it is like expressing yourself in a brief poem, or couplet."

She held her first solo exhibition in Pakistan in 1960 at the Pakistan American Cultural Centre (PACC) and in subsequent years, she has exhibited at the Karachi Art Gallery, the Indus Gallery and the Arts Council. She also worked at the studio of artist, Hamidur Rahman at the PACC, while a women's magazine asked her to illustrate their covers. She returned to England, when her father fell ill and joined the printmaking department "which was virtually empty in those days" at the Slade School of Art. She wanted to be a printmaker and do lithographs, because she admired Bonnard and Vuillard.

In September 1963, her solo exhibition at the Woodstock Gallery in Bond Street, was overshadowed by the tragic death of her father. She stayed on in London to study typography at The London College of Printing, with a view to advertising as a means of subsistence, while she continued with printmaking in the evenings at the studio Birgit Skiold.

In subsequent years, this was to be the normal pattern of life for her: she would go to office or teach at a school in the day and paint in the evening. In Karachi, she joined J. Walter Thompson and soon became the first woman account executive in Pakistan.

At the same time, she learnt etching at a PACC workshop run by Michael Ponce de Leon and this was followed by an exhibition "Printmakers of Pakistan" which was sponsored by the Smithsonian Institute and travelled to various parts of the U.S.A. Naz then set up a small studio of her own in Karachi and wanted to put some presses there, but this never quite materialized and she moved to Canada after her marriage.

There, she joined a group of Ottawa artists who had an etching press. She took up teaching and helped set up the graphics arts department at Canterbury High School in Ottawa. A year later she painted a highly political collage, "The End of a Dream", based on T.S. Eliot's poem "There was a door we did not open.There was a garden we did not enter" - and the doors in her composition were barred and the entrances, full of fire. "I started doing collages during the late 1960's in Karachi," she said "but I used oil paint and tissue at the time and it did not quite work. Acrylic fascinated me because I had seen the work of Sidney Nolan there and I thought it was marvellous. So I had to try it, the moment I came to Ottawa."

Innovative and passionately involved in her work, Naz has lived in Canada for most of her married life. But she has continued to have exhibitions in well known galleries, whether she was in Karachi, Dacca or Ottawa. Nor has she ceased to explore new mediums through which she could express herself and she became particularly interested in Canadian artists using photography for their imagery and she too began to use it more consciously in her work. But the one artist whose work impressed her very much and who was "using photographs really well" was Jennifer Dickson, R.A.

Naz was at a workshop run by an artist, Evergon, learning to do coloured xerox, when she met Jennifer Dickson for the first time. The two women have become close associates since and Jennifer introduced Naz to the The Canadian Artists Representation (CARFAC). Naz became a member of the organization and in the following year, was elected on to the executive board of the local branch. She has also taken a show to England of Jennifer Dickson's work with the Edward F. Monaghan Gallery and hopes to exhibit her own in England soon.

Naz Ikramullah's prints and paintings are in several public and private collections including the Ottawa Civic Hospital, the Library of Congress, Washingto D.C., the Argyll Education Council Gallery, Scotland, the California College of Arts and Crafts.

Muneeza Shamsie

TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY — An Exhibition by Afshan Shoaib

'Twenty-first Century' offered images of an eerie grey world of intense suffering and bleak despair in which intense human suffering is pitted against a backdrop of global warfare and manic expansionism. Afshan Shoaib's 23 canvases dealt unvaryingly with this theme, and every work portrayed tired figures whose bodies cracked from sheer exhaustion. The exhibition was interesting because of the artist's vision of the future that we are presently building for ourselves and because of the manner in which this vision was presented: bleak emaciated figures living in neon-landscapes dotted with collage touches of *Newsweek* clippings.

Some canvases were especially worthy of mention. *Screaming Mind in Silent Pain* which depicted a female figure against a city skyscape was a work heavily reminiscent of Edouard Munch's *The Scream* and was as effective as the latter. Another canvas depicted a man's figure seen from behind trying desperately to break free as brick walls closed in upon him from both sides. Although this was a powerful image its title of *Man Without A Dimension* detracted from it somewhat. This problem of the visual images not living up to their titles was evident in various pictures whose visual or technical effect failed to match the intensity of their titles. An example of this was 'Atom People on a Spring Morning' which depicted figures with some resemblance to the images of holocaust survivors and contained clippings of an interview with Qaddafi and a headline declaring Zionism a crime. Although the picture might add up as an intellectual concept it did not as an image.

Though the exhibition was interesting one feels that the artist could have been a little more selective and in that way allowed her quality work to stand out more. Often one had the uncomfortable feeling that several of the canvases had been put together without sufficient conceptual involvement and were merely the result of using a formula made up of: some desperate figures, some empty landscape, a few press clippings and a white rose with a neon green stem. The latter we are meant to equate with the artist's signature but unfortunately in most of the pictures it was too glaring an intrusion and hence a rather too self-concious trademark.

This was a thought provoking exhibition dealing with a highly contemporary theme, but certainly one in which greater selectivity could have been exercised. One hopes that such a talented artist as Afshan Shoaib will continue dedicated to the twenty-first century but be able to inject her work with more genuine intensity and greater originality; the grim prospects of the next century deserve after all to be depicted in a heartfelt rather than formulaic way.

Umber Khairi

LONDON EXHIBITION OF EASTERN LACQUER

An exhibition of Turkish, Persian and Indian lacquer will be on display at Bernheimer Fine Arts (32 St Georges Street, London W1R 9FA) from 10-17 June. An illustrated catalogue for this "commercial" exhibition will be available with annotations by Basil Robinson, Keeper Emeritus of the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The 50 pieces on display include two reproduced here, a papier mache pen-box, painted and lacquered (Persian, mid-19th century), and a casket with flattened domical fitting lid, the interior lined with gold leaf. (Persian, early 19th century).

The pen-box is oblong with rounded ends, slightly convex top, and sliding compartment. Black, the top and sides are very finely painted in two shades of gold with panels of roses and carnations on a background of creeper design.

The casket has the top of its lid painted with the court of Fath Ali Shah "seated on the Peacock Throne (not the one brought from Delhi by Nadir Shah) on an open veranda overlooking a walled enclosure with tanks of water, and trees appearing over the wall.

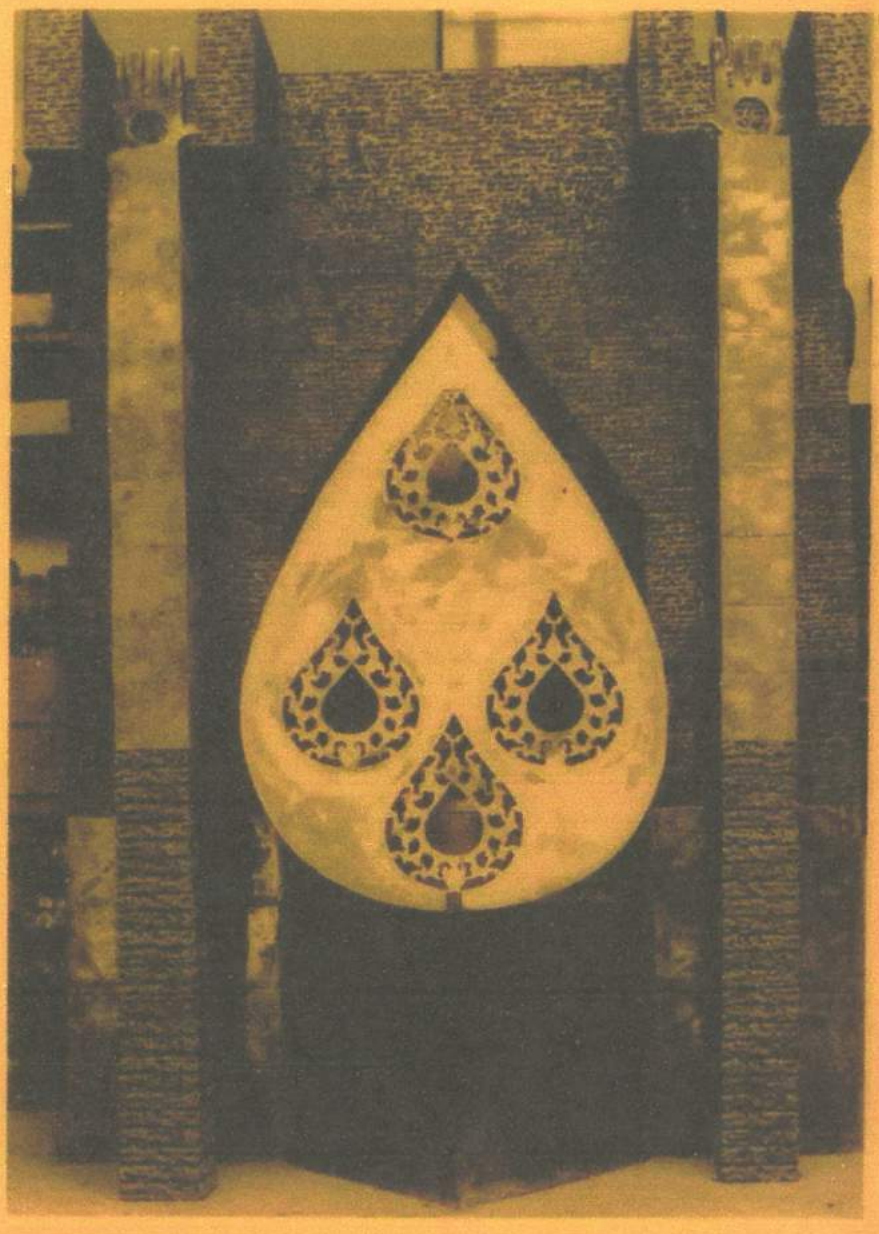
Above: Papier mache, lacquer pen-box.
Below: Lacquer casket at the exhibition of Eastern Lacquer at Bernheimer Fine Arts.





TANAVOLI'S WALLS OF IRAN

After the Islamic Revolution of 1979 many Iranian artists left Iran and settled in Europe or the United States. Parviz Tanavoli, Iran's foremost sculptor, was among those who preferred to remain in his country and continue with his work throughout the revolutionary years. Tanavoli has produced some ten tons of bronze sculpture - a work entitled "The Walls of Iran", during the past seven years. They are architectural, massive, each composed of hundreds of bronze bricks and surfaces richly ornamented with calligraphy. Despite this description, however, they still belong to the realm of true sculpture. This is due to their scale as well as their tone and style: they are large without giving the appearance of an architecture, and seem indeed fashioned to fill architectural spaces in the genre of a "petit monument". The "minbar" shape pieces are admirable in this respect, for they are not only artistically relevant to large interior spaces, but provide the same harmony and grace engendered by the traditional "minbar" in mosques. "The Walls of Iran" are the synthesis of Tanavoli's work, the culmination of 30 years of uninterrupted effort to achieve an independent and personal style of sculpture. It is Tanavoli's belief that with the rich heritage of Islamic art, there is no need to conform to western schools. He feels that if Islam proscribed figurative representation, and if thus there was no place for sculpture in the traditional sense of the word, there was instead tremendous scope for the development of three-dimensional art in conjunction with architecture. The result was the splendid flourishing of architecture with its









Top left: The Wall and the Cypress Tree, Bronze 1979. Left: Perviz Tanavoli. Above: A shady seat for the Mountain Carver to rest, Bronze 1985. Below: A seat for the Mountain Carver, Bronze 1982.

uniquely artistic "sculptural" component.

Tanavoli, who is now retired from Teheran University, has exhibited in international shows, such as Venice and Paris biennale. His sculptures can be seen in different museums, such as Museum of Modern Art in New York, Walker Art Museum and Art Institute in Minneapolis, Museum of Modern Art in Vienna, Museum of Neue Gallerie in Aachen (Germany), Museum of Contemporary Art in Teheran and numerous private collections all over the world.

Tanavoli has a deep feeling for the traditional arts of his country, Iran. His greatest passion is tribal life. He has travelled throughout villages and tribal areas of Iran collecting and documenting textiles and other artifacts. He has written several books and articles on tribal arts and other art forms, among them 'Lion Rugs of Fars', 'Pictorial Rugs of Iran', 'Locks from Iran', 'The Lion in the Art and Culture of Iran', 'Shahsavan Textile'.

Maziar

FACES AND OTHER FRAGMENTS: Batiks and paintings by Umber Khairi

The recently opened New Century Art Gallery (5A Bathurst Street London W2) offers batiks, paintings and drawings by Umber Khairi (21 April — 3 May) in one of a series of exhibitions to introduce the works of visiting artists including those from the Arab and Islamic countries.

Batik is a traditional South Asian medium in which pure fabric is put through a lengthy process of waxing and dyeing. The batiks in this exhibition do not, however, rely on the traditional batik design elements but on the free and energetic use of colour suitable to the modern subject. Umber regards it as "a fascinating medium" and wants, in time, "to explore its many possibilities and make this traditional medium able to express contemporary images."

The Garden Gate, sketch in crayons and ink.



Umber Khairi is a Karachi-based artist who works in batik as well as watercolour. "Faces and Other Fragments" is her first solo exhibition, although she has earlier exhibited in group shows at Princeton University in USA from where she graduated last year.

FINE ART SOCIETY AND ORIENTAL ART

On walking past the doors of the Fine Art Society in New Bond Street few could imagine that the light of the Orient had hung so often upon its walls, the mysterious fantastic Orient pursued so voraciously by writers, scholars and artists in the 19th century.

Since its establishment in 1876 the Fine Art Society has been one of the leading picture galleries in London, its diversity of interest is evident in the two thousand or so exhibitions it has so far presented. Of these, the theme of the Traveller in a distant land would account for well over 70 exhibitions. In recent years with the general revival of interest in works of Orientalist painters the Society has produced several major exhibitions beginning in 1974 with 'North African Traveller, Casablanca to Cairo' followed by 'Eastern Encounters' in 1978 and 'Travellers beyond the Grand Tour' in 1980.

Within the body of works presented the same artists recur and have recurred over the years: great British Orientalists like John Frederick Lewis, David Roberts and Edward Lear, the latter two both having had individual shows here within the last five years. The upsurge of interest in these artists was reflected most recently in the prices achieved through the sale of the Coral Petroleum Collection in New York where Lewis's 'Intercepted Correspondence' achieved a million dollars.

In an age when Christian Evangelism and a strict moral code had far more force, there was an element of forbidden fruit about the Orient that we can scarcely discern today. Yet there was also a genuine historical and documentary interest in the unexplored, beyond the Grand Tour, the uncharted and unrecorded beckoned to those who sought civilisation not based on western Christianity.







From above: Jean Levi Gerome, 1824-1904, Mounted Horsemen. Left: John Frederick Lewis, 1805-1876, Prince Hassan and his Servant. Right: Ludwig Deutsch, 1855-1935, The Palace Guard.

Many artists became residents of this other world. Like John Frederick Lewis who lived according to Tackeray 'like a languid lotus eater — a dreamy hazy, lazy, tobaccofied life.' Or like Roberts who when travelling assumed Eastern garb, adopting the mores and customs of the host country.

To ordinary citizens of Northern cities the Ottoman Empire offered exotic stereotypes such as the Turkish Pashas in their seraglios, wild Circassian warriors or the perilous journeys of camel caravans. For anyone depicting these popular fantasies there was a ready market.

The Fine Art Society has played an important role in fostering the original fantasy and since the early 1970's has again played a leading role; for instance the single main source for works in the Searight Collection of Orientalist pictures (recently acquired by the Victoria and Albert Museum) was The Fine Art Society. It has also been instrumental in providing ideas and material for two recent major exhibitions at the Royal Academy: The Orientalists, that was also shown in Washington, and Edward Lear. Which both testified to the public's enduring desire for glimpses of the unfamiliar.

Simon Peers

ZAMANA GALLERY: TWO MAJOR EXHIBITIONS

Private Housing in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco

The Zamana Gallery, London's first exhibition hall devoted to the arts and architecture of the Third World — with an emphasis on Islamic cultures, opened its doors to the public late in June. Occupying more than one-third of the site of the newly-completed Ismaili Centre (which neighbours both the Victoria & Albert and Science Museums), the Gallery's entrance is, nevertheless, independent of the Centre. Just past its entrance is a bookshop which carries material on contemporary trends in the literature, art and architecture of developing countries. Zamana plans to offer its premises to exhibitions organized jointly with other museums, as well as to send its exhibits on tour. Its space will also be used for lectures, meetings and seminars.

The first of the Gallery's exhibitions concentrated on developments in private housing in Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco. Five professional architects dominated the display — Hassan Fathy and Abdel El-Wakil of Egypt, Tarak Ben Miled of Tunisia and Charles Boccara and William Willis of Morocco. Their work differs greatly, but the stark purity of line that marks buildings designed by Fathy and his pupil, El-Wakil, pleased at least this visitor by far the most. Fathy, now 85, has been the greatest single influence in prompting young architects of the Third World to seek their inspiration in traditional sources. Championing Nubian mudbrick structural forms, Fathy's preaching and example have encouraged architects in the Middle East and Western Africa to look toward indigenous building materials and to their native architectural heritage.

On a more prosaic level, unrestrained increases in the cost of imported goods and raw materials, following the 1973 oil crisis, have also played a role in encouraging poor countries to rely on local resources, especially for construction. Nevertheless, as the organizers of the exhibit point out, "it remains exceptional to find instance of buildings which reveal a combination of modernist innovative spirit with traditional spaces, materials and ornamentation."

In contrast to Fathy's and El-Wakil's structures, the examples of architectural trends in Tunisia and Morocco, as selected for Zamana's exhibit, often seem overly elaborate. True, all the homes chosen for display

belong to very wealthy people who are able to afford architects. But in the context of an exhibition devoted to a return to tradition in developing countries, it is difficult to discern just what is "Third World" or Islamic about some of these homes (apart from a few decorative elements). Various European cultures have indeed made a greater impact on the Maghreb than they have on Egypt. However, when one sees a local architect (notably, Tarak Ben Miled of Tunisia) unabashedly mixing Islamic structural themes with a pot-pourri of Western motifs — British, Viennese, Italian, Spanish, as well as classical Roman and Greek — one is left rather confused about the message that such a design in the context of this particular exhibit is supposed to convey.

All of the houses displayed do at least have one trait in common. They respect the traditional Muslim Arab architectural pattern of distributing living areas around a central space which is open to the sky. The dwellings are not more than three stories high and stand on thick structural walls. Privacy for the family is assured by providing an entrance corridor which is bent to block visibility from the street and by arranging reception rooms in a diminishing heirarchy of formality. Areas considered to be impure, such as the kitchen and the bathroom, are situated at the periphery of the building. And lavish ornamentation — apart, perhaps, from a decorated door — is reserved for the interior of the house.

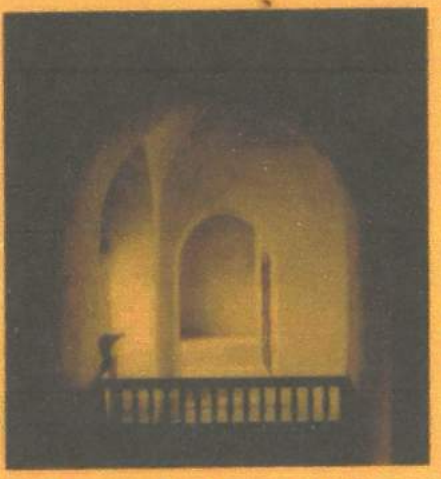
Irene Ertugral

Rococo and the Vocabulary of Traditional Muslim Design

The Zamana Gallery in London, which made its debut last year with an outstanding architectural exhibition, mounted a major display (18 February-10 March) of late 19th Century Orientalist Paintings depicting the peoples and places of the Near East and North Africa, which was inaugurated by His Highness Prince Amyn Aga Khan.

The exhibition was organised by the Mathaf Gallery of London who, as Prince Amyn emphasised, "have contributed a great deal over the last decade towards a reappraisal of Orientalist Painting, unfortunately and unfairly long neglected in the earlier part of this century".





Left: Abtan House, Morocco, Architect Charles Boccara, photograph by Lignon. Above: Ka'a House, at Sidi Krier. Below: Zamana Gallery interior, photograph by Chris Cormack.



In his thought-provoking address—which he opened by mentioning amidst laughter that "I have never taken the slightest course in either art or art history and my knowledge of painting, be it Orientalist or any other genre and period, results exclusively from the readings of an amateur and the tastes of a would-be collector"—. Prince Amyn spoke of the present revival of interest in the work of Orientalists. He referred to the broad sample of works borrowed from public and private collectors in six countries that constituted the exhibition mounted by the Royal Academy of Arts and the National Gallery in Washington two years ago, and noted that Orientalism, which is traditionally associated with the 19th century, "had its origins long before that time. Presumably originating with the Arab conquest of Spain in the 8th century and the consequent Crusades that studded the 11th through the 13th centuries".

He traced some of the early contacts Western Europe had with the Islamic world, which were further strengthened by the fall of Constantinople in 1453, thus making Constantinople "an essential stage for this cultural dialogue between East and West". So too, he thought, was Venice where Gentile Bellini started what turned into a fashion for Orientalism. But of course the really serious interest in the Orient started in the 18th century and he wondered whether "the relationship between Rococo and the vocabulary of traditional Muslim design is not a subject desiring some serious thought and study". Here are other extracts from his address:

"At the court of Louis XV, a type of Orientalism was already well in place. In literature Montesquieu was turning out his satirical Lettres Persanes more or less while Rameau was producing Les Indes Galantes and while Goldsmith in England was writing against a similar backdrop. This is the period when the images of the East are largely stereotyped and present urban inhabitants of distant miraculous lands, these inhabitants however almost invariably set against Western backgrounds. A typical example of this interest and aesthetic was the fancy dress party that all the students and faculty of the French Academy in Rome held in 1748 and which has given us the remarkable series of drawings by Vien, Carle van Loo, Jean Barbault and other first rate artists. Only a few years later, the improving relations between the main cities of Western Europe and Constantinople had encouraged various artists actually to establish themselves more or less permanently on the Bosphorus and one has the panoramic paintings of artists such as Jean-Baptiste Van Mour and I would have thought perhaps more interestingly, of

ARTS PUBLICATIONS

A FRESH HARVEST OF BOOKS CONNECTED WITH ORIENTAL RUGS

The glories of Islamic Art are expressed in many different forms of which all but one has a counterpart of no lesser merit in other cultures. This one exception is the field of rugs and carpets where the sole ranking rival is China and even then, there are those who believe that the craft was taken there from the rug heartlands of Iran and the neighbouring states. Yet the modest space usually allotted to rugs in general books on Islamic Arts could lead one to believe that rugs are an insignificant part of the whole. How wrong this is! One has only to pause and think: the Oriental Rug is the unique Islamic artefact to have successfully transcended all cultural borders, and to have done so on a truly massive scale.

One is, therefore, led inevitably to wonder why so delightful an artefact should be treated in so cavalier a manner, and one reason might well be the sheer scale of its success. After all it is so easy to see rugs, and it is still so cheap to acquire them, that perhaps there is not mystique enough to tempt art historians and their peers into writing monographs in which their many prejudices and certainly their lack of knowledge would shout at the reader on every page. On the other hand the weavers' own countrymen have never shown any particular interest in writing about rugs, perhaps because these were objects of everyday use and therefore unsuitable to elevation onto an academic pedestal.

Whatever the reason, the fact is that even the standard bibliography (1) lists fewer than 670 items, of which a goodly number are sales aids, auction catalogues, and the like. Serious writing in this field is very limited indeed and, even if one counts works in every language, probably does not exceed around one hundred books.

So it was with much pleasure that one welcomed this year's crop of publications some of which are noted below. The new generation of publications are beginning to reflect the new, higher, standards of colour printing that can be achieved with modern techniques in the hands of printers who take care, and at highly competitive prices. For this reason one is inclined to be harder on those items which are poor in this regard. It does not seem right, in so visual an art form as the Oriental Rug, to fob off the reader with second-rate colour and fuzzy monochromes. Hence the poor reception generally accorded to books that are printed in the USA though, at last, even here there is a glimmer of light as publishers arrange to have their work done in Japan!

One further, technical, comment is perhaps necessary. Readers do not appreciate that, in order to take a satisfactory photograph, a rug is normally far better lit than in a museum, at home or even in a rug shop. The sheer intensity of light lasts but a fraction of a second so that no measurable damage occurs to the fabric or to the colours. The camera is thus enabled to see, and to record, colours concealed from the naked eye. This is why the illustrations in books are frequently more colourful and more brilliant than one remembers from visiting the dimly lit recesses of most museums! It is a sad fact that museum employees often add insult to injury by also failing properly to display the rugs in their care so that even if one can see them, few but the committed will come away enlightened, let alone enthused.

If an example of this be needed, one has but to remember the dramatic difference between the appearance of rugs from the famed McMullan Collection firstly, as known to many in the glorious pages of that now rare book "Islamic Carpets" with its breathtaking colour plates printed by Bruckmann of Munich; and the dowdy reality (if reality it was) of the actual pieces stretched out like so many dead carcases within

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that ubiquitous Swiss artist Jean-Etienne Liotard. Liotard interests me quite especially because his studies have a brilliancy that I think his contemporaries often did not succeed in obtaining and, in my view more significantly, because he painted oriental subjects in a technique that was both naturalistic and detailed and which concentrated heavily on interiors. His concern with veracity in the depiction of the oriental social milieu, I would have thought, prefigured much of what the 19th century orientalists were subsequently to seek to do."

"Another element that comes into play in this history of cultural relations between Western Europe and the Orient is the growing preoccupation in Western Europe with archaeology, paralleling in the rise in the West of what we generally term neo-classicism.

"I think it fair to say that, until the 19th century, Western interest in the near and middle East was largely topographical or amateur or concerned with classical antiquity and, with the possible exception of Liotard, artists had little taste or even eye for the details and realities of contemporary daily life in Islamic countries.

"All this seems rapidly to have changed during the Romantic period and after 1820. First of all Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 brought back to France an interest in the aesthetics of the early Egyptians of pharaonic times. Simultaneously, painters like Baron Jean Antoine Gros started a tradition of evocating the confusion of battle in Muslim countries, characterised by violence, colour and force. His painting of the "Plague of Jaffa" in 1804 depicts a most interesting hybrid of architectural styles that purport to be Islamic and that shows all too clearly, that he, like a large number of the Orientalists of this period, had in fact never travelled to the East nor verified the details of his work.

"However, this seems to be the beginning of a whole new revival of the sort of Turquerie that painters like Jean Francois de Troyes were painting over a century earlier, characterised by rearing Arabian horses, colourful flashing saddles and exotic decorative objects. This is a time when the writings of the Romantics, fascinated by the Orient, parallel a rapid colonial expansion which in turn brings increased diplomatic and commercial links with the Near and Middle East. There is also an emergence of Arabist Scholars at this time doing research into philology too and the interest in the Orient that had been shown earlier by the rational Encyclopedists and their predecessors has now become the inspiration of philosophers and poets. Gone is the desire to show that the Orient and its ways are, they too, ordered and rationed. In a Western Europe increasingly industrialized, there seems to be a search for the unknown and for lands and cities of light and colour whose customs, architecture, clothing and styles of life provide an escape from a world growing increasingly grey.

"Indeed many of the Orientalist painters, unlike the Baron Gros, now take to spending years in the East either living in the more westernized

the grim concrete walls of the utterly unsympathetic confines of London's Hayward Gallery, with dull lighting supposedly to avoid fading the colours of these valuable artefacts.

The first item which we welcome is that by Siawosch Azadi and Peter Andrews on "Mafrash: Woven transport packs as an art form among the Shasevan and other nomads in Persia". One is immediately struck by the brilliance of the colour plates which might well lead an existing collector to complain that the book will generate a new circle of competing collectors! For those unaware of what a Mafrash is, just imagine a single piece woven in the form of a stunted cross whose central area is roughly 75 cm by 50 cm. the arms stand proud by about 40 cms. The arms are brought together and bound firmly to make a box with an open top. When in use, the base can't be seen. So the nomads weave out their fantasies in the arms and plan their work generally in stripes which will appear to go right round the stitched up article. On the long sides there can often be a central pattern or encircled by a border design.

The authors have analysed many pieces and have published a grammar of standard designs which, with minor variations are to be found on most such bags. It is, however, the peculiar merit of nomadic handicrafts that all look alike, all are different and to this the Mafrash is no exception. The variety exhibited in nearly one hundred examples is delightful. The texts that precede the catalogue section of the book (for this is in fact a catalogue raisonne of a particular collection) are useful both regarding design and regarding the ethnic background to the Shahsevan. Azadi and Andrews had each done field work in Iran and it shows: the most attractive illustrations are those that Andrews himself took whilst there. One should perhaps add that the patterning is almost always in flatweave techniques, rarely in pile. Pieces in pile work seem to come more from central Iran (in the 1950's the huge parcels that were shipped through London of such items were usually described as being "Veramin").

The summer saw the Swiss being regaled by a fabulous show in Geneva called "Treasures of Islam" whose handbook-cum-catalogue is a mouth-watering collection of Islamic artefacts. It is a heavy item running to some 360 pages of texts and illustrations, covering eight major sectors, and illustrated with over 750 colour pictures most of which are of high standard to which Belgian colour printers have long accustomed us. The book's sole lacuna is in the field of rugs, here lumped together with textiles, and treated with that disdain already referred to: a mere 20 pages of the whole and a petty 19 colour pictures (though, to be fair, some are full page and, to be frank, many of them printed in poor colour!).

Apart from the Islamicist, and the art Historian, both of whom will profit from this wealth of illustrations and the seriousness of the brief essays, there is obviously also a market for this book in the gift world: it is an ideal item for favourite aunts and other relatives, and it could well be a useful peace offering to a recalcitrant bank manager!

For many years now Prof. Parviz Tanavoli, one of Iran's leading modern artists, has been hunting for the so-called lion rugs with which he had fallen in love back in the 1950's and 1960's. His collection has been exhibited in Iran and in the USA and there have been several catalogues to date on these. Now, with the latest round of exhibitions which commenced in Basle in the autumn of 1985, there comes what would appear to be his definitive monograph on the subject. Being printed in Switzerland the finished product was technically faultless though one might have wished that it had been possible to exhibit all 62 items in colour, instead of only 24 but, even in art, costs are problems that cannot be avoided.

The reason this book is important is that he has written a most informative essay on this peculiar, naive, art form. Its very primitiveness means that it has only survived amongst nomads whose real lives are not influenced by the sophistication of the big city and this means, in Iran, mainly the peoples of the lower Zagros mountains: the Bakhtyari and the Shirazi. These people can still remember sufficient of their ancestral lore and mythology that such patterns are meaningful for them. The author shows how the lion had significance in Iran right back in the high days of Persepolis, and, probably, even earlier. Interestingly he has been able to acquire a couple of pieces from the N.W. (theShahsevan area) and even a maverick piece from the N.E. (Meshed).

London also had its exhibitions this summer :"Egyptian Landscapes." Weavings from the Ramses Wissa Wassef School. The catalogue is a modest 64 page item with many colour plates. Whoever attends the show (it is

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cities such as Constantinople and Alexandria or even travelling with nomadic tribes, bringing or sending back to the cities of Europe Oriental decoration, artifacts and a whole aesthetic of interior decor. Books like the Wilder Shores of Love show that the very fabric of society in England and France produced psychologies of escapism steeped in the fantasy world of people like Burton. Sethi was perhaps the last of those poetic ladies.

"Soon the Orientalists can be divided into relatively distinct groups: those who paint from fantasy scenes of sensuality, luxury, violence and portraits of subjects with strong ethnic characteristics; those who paint people and landscapes, largely from North Africa, in a naturalistic way; and the Gérôme school who study Oriental figures and architecture with the most careful precision. Many of the painters of this school were excellent topographers and in fact interestingly enough, trained as architectural draughtsmen.

"In some ways, these genre paintings which, I suppose were the photographs of their day, remind me of the approach that prompted Guardi to churn out countless postcard paintings - and we are back to Venice. We are also back to the religious origins of orientalism, for this is the period of the Victorian revival of religious fervours when interest in the East is related to the study of Scriptural subjects and many artists are looking for the most appropriate backgrounds for their religious paintings.

"I think there were, in the paintings of this period, the seeds of most interesting things to come. Edward Lear's free and uninhibited spaces, the search for brilliant colour and the effects of bright sunlight, research into new types of chiaroscuro where shadow is both dark and yet transparent, coloured and yet luminous, in fact another form of light, must surely have their place in the history of the origins of impressionism - and this despite Ruskin's conviction that it is impossible to paint an effect of sunlight truly, that it has never been done nor will be, that sunshine is brighter than any mortal paint.

"Now that impressionism is past, one wonders why we seem to be witnessing a revival of interest in Orientalist art, not only among European connoisseurs and historians, but chiefly, I think, as an amateur, looking from outside, among Muslims themselves. Are they searching for representations of their traditional environment before it was so fast and so vastly changed under the social and economic pressures of first the colonial and then the modern world?

Is this an exercise in sentimentality? Why do Muslim collectors choose to study their own social past as it was seen through Western eyes? Have they been, indeed, so Westernised during the past century that their aesthetic has become, in truth, western. I think it is ultimately their assessment of Orientalism that will tell us something new about the richness and significance of those artistic works of light called Orientalist and I look forward to reading, soon I hope, an appreciation of Orientalist art seen, as it were, from within."

a travelling one, so many Britons will be able to see it) and whoever studies the catalogue, should pay very special attention to the weavers' ages. What they will find is a revelation: for the fact is that these inspired works are the unforced outpourings of young people, some no more than 10or 11 years old. Their sole guidance was to have been shown how to create the designs that they saw in their mind's eye :What they did they were allowed to do without any adult intervention whatsoever. There are many who felt as they entered the half toros in the Barbican that they had been wafted away into a world of dreams. It really was, it still is, hard to credit that work of such originality, sophistication, and sweetness (for there was none of the brash, aggressive, abrasiveness of so much of what passes for art in the Western world) could have been conceived, let alone created, by those so young and, by our Western European standards, so untutored educationally and so deprived socially. If this is what can be found and released in this direction under inspired guidance, what other talents are there awaiting release by other guides? The implications of this could well be politically dynamite in other hands!

Later in the autumn came the long-awaited launch of a book whose concept goes back two years and more: "World Rugs and Carpets". In this David Black has managed to bring together over twenty different writers to comment on one or other aspect of rugs, from Prof. Mark Whiting of the University of Bristol: a professional chemist whose pet subject is dyes in Oriental Rugs, down to a brief commentary on Decorative Carpets by Vojtech Bleu, one of the great names in New York antique rug retailing. The book has been pretty well printed in Italy and there are nearly two hundred colour illustrations. If some of these are not altogether as good as one would like, reference to the price tag immediately soothes the mind! A detailed analysis of the contents shows an abundance of maps: in fact there are really not as many as would appear since each individual section of the gazetteer has its own and this is frequently repeated.

When this review was being , prepared, the first shipment of Prof.Tanavoli's other book, on "Shahsevan. Iranian Rugs and Textiles" was on its way to the USA but none, yet to Britain. However we have had the privilege of seeing the loose sheets and have had a limited amount of advance information all of which indicates the importance of this work which is the biggest so far undertaken on any one type of Persian rug. Briefly the book consists of texts and catalogue raisonne; the former has some eighty pages and includes many monochrome illustrations as well as an abundance of drawings. The latter, amounting to 300 pages of which half are pictures with a page of text facing. Of these pictures more than half were in colour. In this connection one should add that the colour printing was skilfully undertaken by Busse, who are also the publishers of "Heimtex" and of Iten-Maritz' "Enzyklopedie des Orienttepichs", so they have long experience in the art of reproducing rugs in colour. Unhappily, as this is a book "packaged" in Switzerland, it had to return there for the binding and, as has been the Office du Livre's practice for many years with all its other rug books (by Gans-Ruedin, Iten-Maritz, and Petsopoulos), once more they have cut corners and glued. It has long offended book-lovers that to increase their profits by a few centimes, the Swiss should choose to use a system of bookbinding which is totally inadequate for such heavy rug books. That each volume always arrives in a slim, thin, slip-case is to many the proof that the publishers know that the books would fall apart in transit without it.

For those who read, or are prepared to cope with German here are two items of interest to the "Turkomaniac" fraternity: TURKMENEN-FORSCHUNG Band 6 and Band 7. These small red paperbacks are now a familiar part of the Turkomaniac scene, bringing to our attention some of the lesser known writings from the Russian world, many of considerable age. Previous publications from this source included the German translations of Moshkova's magnum opus on the Carpets of Central Asia, as well as the paper by Baron Folkersam, issued in two parts in Stariye Gody during the first world war, on the same subject.

The reader may like to consider the irony in the fact that most central Asian rugs (the so-called Bokhara rugs) manage all to look the same yet, on examination, are all different whereas the richly intertwining designs of the fine qualities of Persian carpets (such as the products of Tabriz, Kirman and elsewhere) which all look different nevertheless on close inspection turn out often to be identical in design with many of their fellows - only different colouring has tricked the eye...

Jack Haldane

THE EMBROIDERIES OF NORTH AFRICA by Caroline Stone

The history of Islamic Art is the history of an art that relies strongly on pattern and design and the manner in which these elements are integrated into architecture, ornaments, fabrics, book illustrations and so on. Motif and design is, hence, central to what we recognise as the tradition of Islamic art; motif and design is what Caroline Stone deals with in her book "The Embroideries of North Africa" in which she examines works of this region and explains them in their various contexts—from the technical and practical to the cultural and traditional.

This book is extremely well arranged in that text and illustration interact with great effectiveness. We are treated to coloured illustrations on nearly every page and the visual material can be enjoyed even as it is explained. The text is organised regionally and a map is provided for easy geographical reference. Apart from the indigenous traditions of Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia the local 'Turkish' style of embroidery in these areas is also dealt with. The distinction between the indigenous embroideries and those done "in the Turkish manner" is an interesting and useful one and reveals quite a different aesthetic in terms of colour and motif. A final chapter deals with stitches and application and eagerly invites the reader to try his or her hand at recreating the motifs and patterns that the book examines. The glossary at the end is according to dialectical rather than classical pronunciation and is useful for learning both the literal meaning as well as the cultural context of many a word or object. The bibliography is not extensive but provides useful reference points for anyone who is further interested in the study of embroidery and traditional motif.

The author attempts to place this tradition in its socio-cultural context and succeeds by including in the study traditional proverbs and accounts of various traditions and rituals associated with embroidery and embroidered garments. Thus the author writes always with "an awareness that everything even the most banal straw basket woven with a pattern of camels...has a significance". Also commendable is the author's efforts to record and revitalise this art for as she points out, it can take many years to evolve and perfect and its knowledge can be all too easily lost in the rapidly changing trends of today's world.

It is a pity that the section on Algeria is so brief but the other chapters compensate for this to a great extent.

The book is priced at £25 but the quality of its illustrations, especially, makes it well worth that amount, "The Embroideries of North Africa" is a good addition to your library whether you are interested in textile art, Islamic art history or just in colour and design.

Umber Khairi

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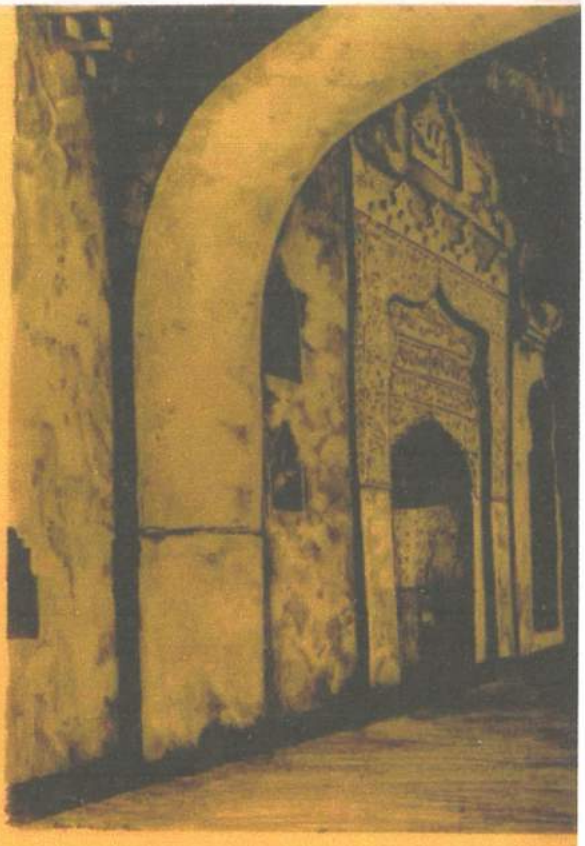
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An international panel of judges in London will select the first five prize-winning entries, which will be published in the journal *Arts & The Islamic World*. In addition to these top awards, there will also be 20 secondary prizes and Certificates of Merit.

A selection of works received for the Competition would be put on display at an exhibition in London to be organised in early 1987. Later the exhibition may also tour some other countries interested in hosting it.



Photo: Lehnert and Landrock





Top: Interior of Mosque, al-Durayhini by John Nankivell. Above left: 'Bayt al-Faqih' watercolour by Keith Brockie. Above centre: 'Wadi Mawr. Hut Exterior', pencil drawing by John Nankivell. Above right: 'Hodeida Man Smoking', pencil sketch by Antony Bream. Right: Dark chanting Goshawk', pencil detail from sketchbook by Keith Brockie.

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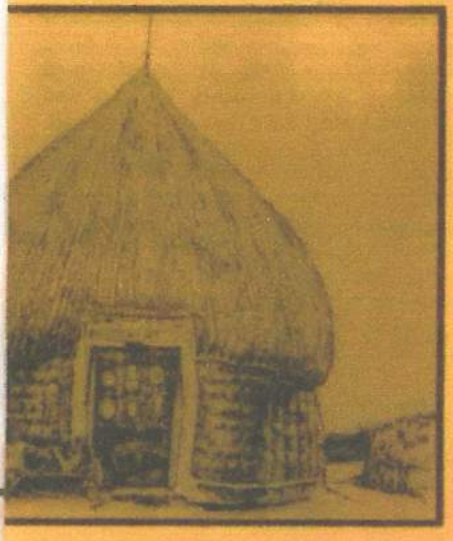
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STUDIES ON THE TIHAMA

Francine Stone

In 1762, the Danish explorer, Carsten Niebuhr mounted an expedition to look at the flora and the fauna of the Yemen and to study the customs and manners of the then virtually unknown people of 'Arabia Felix'. But the climate was such that of his team, only he survived and the detailed notes of his travels and adventures were to form the basis of his book 'Description de l'Arabie'. This extraordinary project inspired the enterprising Francine Stone with the desire to organize a modern expedition to the Tihamah - the arid coastal plain of the Yemen - with similar all encompassing aims. With the musicologist Anderson Bakewell, she conceived an expedition that was highly unconventional. Perhaps unconsciously sympathising with Baudelaire's proscription against the evils of photography (which even in the 19th century he felt was 'invading the territories of art'), painters and not photographers were chosen to record the landscape, the birds, the architecture and the people of the Tihamah; in fact the camera was banned.







Anthony Bream, who of the three artists captures most successfully the elusive spirit of the Tihamah tells how he left England with oil paints and panels intending to paint large dramatic landscapes but was instantly defeated by the regular afternoon sandstorms that swept down the coast. Instead, wrapped up like a Beduin, he stuck to watercolours. He is conscious that his work falls into the 19th century Orientalist tradition and certainly there is much of Lear in his tiny, exquisite paintings.

John Nankivell was chosen to record the architecture and although the details are accurate and give an excellent sense of the carved stucco and the interiors of these beautiful buildings, his often curious sense of perspective lends them a slightly eerie quality. The third artist, Keith Brockie was to paint the wildlife which he does admirably and amusingly describes in the final section of the book, the trials of being endlessly watched, and the animals and birds he was trying to sketch constantly being frightened away by the understandably curious local people.

Yemen is still, both to historians and travellers largely uncharted territory and the Tihamah plain even more so for the recent spate of 'coffee table' books have tended only to deal with the highlands. So this book is useful in many ways. Particularly interesting is the ethnographic section written by Francine Stone who although is contantly apologising for the paucity of her information has done a tremendous job collecting fascinating information on all sorts of subjects such as the local food. Slightly tongue-in-cheek, she describes how the daily selection at the baker's in the Luhayya suq (in the northern Tihamah) included ginger muffins and pink-ice cup cakes! She describes the role of Sufism on the Tihamah, the team actually having witnessed a ziyarah (saint's day ritual) where youths shinned up long greased spiked poles and dancers got into a frenzy and pierced themselves with janbiyyas. It is very rare in Yemen for foreigners to be allowed to witness such sights.

In another chapter, Andersonkewell describes the music of the Tihamah particularly that of the itinerant musicians (mutabbil) who perform at weddings and festivals and who generally come from the akhdam class. These people about whose origins there is much speculation live outside Yemeni tribal society and are distinctive both in physical appearance and style of dress. Performing menial jobs such as road sweeping, they are universally accepted as entertainers.

The expedition was a brave under-

taking and the book despite the disappointing quality of reproduction of the paintings is a valuable contribution to the field of Yemeni Studies.

OXFORD STUDIES IN ISLAMIC ART

This is a new series devoted to various aspects of Islamic art "from calligraphy to architecture, from studies in patronage to archaeological reports, from the 7th to the 20th centuries, and from Spain to Indonesia." It aims at filling an important gap in the publication market, presenting subjects more concisely than full-length books but in greater detail than the average journal. It is proposed to publish two or three titles each year: prices will be variable and kept "below the commercial average, thanks to a generous private endowment."

The first in the series (Volume 1) is entitled *The Art of Syria and the Jazira 1100-1250 A.D.* and has been edited by Julian Raby. It comprises the proceedings of an Oxford colloquy, with papers on the history of the period by Carole Hillenbrand, on architecture by Robert Hillenbrand and Tom Sinclair, on painting by Rachel Ward and Nahla Nassar, on glass by Marian Wenzel, on ceramics by Helen Philon, on metalwork by James Allan, on combination locks by Francis Maddison, and on coinage by Nicholas Lowick.

The next two volumes are: *Animal Symbolism in Warqa Wa Gulshah,* by Abbas Daneshvari, a study of the iconography of the animals in the miniature cycle of a 13th century Persian manuscript, from Western Iran or Anatolia; and *Pots and Pans,* a colloquium on precious metals and ceramics in the Muslim, Chinese and Graeco-Roman worlds, edited by Michael Vikers.

There is a special offer to save £3 per paperback edition, and details may be had from Oxford University Press, (116 High Street, Oxford OX1 4BZ.)

A NEW HISTORY OF ISLAMIC CERAMICS

Jean Soustiel's *La Ceramique. Le guide du connoisseur* (published by Vilo, Paris 1985) is a monumental book — fruit of more than ten years of study, researches and travels. This book is available in Paris and will be soon on London's market. It offers to collectors, a large panorama of this wide and interesting subject.

Products of a civilisation which spread from Spain to India, during more than twelve centuries in some countries, Islamic potteries are very numerous and extremely varied. The history of ceramic in Muslim world is growing richer, year after year. Jean Soustiel's book presents us all the aspects of this art. It collects the issues of excavations and publications achieved during a century. This kind of synthetical research was becoming more and more necessary because a very important number of documentations — difficult to consult — has been established. The writer gives the Islamic ceramic its real importance in the world history of the arts of fire. He starts with a survey of various techniques used simultaneously or successively in the pre-Islamic periods. However, it is difficult to follow at present, the journey of each of them; many zones of shadows still remain.

The Islamic world came into a double inheritance by conquering, at first, lands — rich in civilisation — where Byzantine Emperors and Sassanian Kings were fighting each other. Oriental legacy came from Elam and Assyria through Parthian and Sassanian periods. The ceramics from late ante-Islamic levels found at Nippur, Kish and Niniveh, are clay-bodied wares with alkaline glaze. But lead was sometimes used as colouring agent of glaze, sometimes as melting agent, on Dura-Europos sherds for instance. Occidental legacy included Hellenistic heritage of Rome then of Byzantium, with some original contributions from certain provinces. Under Pharaohs, Egypt developed a fine production with nearly vitrified siliceous body. In other respects, Roman potteries with moulded decoration and colored lead-glaze have clay-body. So, in these lands, where the art of glass was born and where various influences interlaced, techniques of ceramic were, before the spread of Islam, very diversified.

During the early times of Caliphate, the Abbassids intensively promoted intellectual activities. So many of scientific books were translated into the Arabic language with the aim of compiling the acquired knowledge. On this fertile field, the Islamic science made great strides. The progress of chemistry might be connected with the blooming of Abbassid ceramic. Chinese exported wares were possibly the starting point of new researches. But the necessary raw material (kaolin) was unknown in that time. Manifold tries, some of them very fruitful, were undertaken from existent processes.

In Mesopotamia and probably in Persia, potters perfected the important know-how of "faience". In French, this term is used "stricto-sensu" for wares with clay-body and tin-opacified lead-glaze. The common use of the word "faience-body" for ceramics with siliceous paste like objects of ancient Egypt and some Islamic potteries is very ambiguous and creates some confusion when reading English and French publications. In the present published book the use of the word "faience" is justifiable because this technique spread out from Mesopotamia and reached first Egypt and Magrhib and then Spain and Italy. It was the beginning of the European production of "faience" and its expansion.

In the same time, potters applied to ceramic a previously used technique in Egypt and Syria for the decoration of glasses and which is the lustre-painting. Those rich golden-brown or sometimes polychrome reflects are obtained by painting on the fire-glazed ware a mixture of copper and silver salts. Then the piece is fired again (around 600) in reducing atmosphere. The physical and chemical mechanism of this complicated process was understood only ten years ago, owing to the new scientific methods of analysis. It could be thus simplified: first, on the soft (headed) surface of the glaze, an ion-exchange happens between silver ions of the mixture applied on the surface of silicate which composes the glaze. The exchange occurs readily because the silver ion and the sodium ion have approximately the same size and the same charge. Then, as there are reducing conditions in the kiln, the silver is chemically reduced and precipitates out as colloidal dispersion of metallic amber-colored silver. With the copper the ion migration and the reduction are more difficult to obtain. Different colored effects can be observed according to the successive stages of the reduction which gives cupric and cuprous oxides, and metallic copper. If the metals, and particularly the copper are refired under correct conditions, they can migrate out to the surface and deposit a coating which looks like a mirror. The concentration of the mixture with salts of silver and copper, the presence of some secondary elements like iron, the temperature of the kiln, the more or less reducing conditions of firing, the length of heating, all these factors affect the final result and can explain the beauty and the variety of the coloured effects obtained. This technique used very complex phenomena which required deep scientific knowledge even if craftsmen used them empirically. Jean Soustiel thinks that correlation between chemistry and crafts specially metalwork, art of glass and ceramic, became more and more conceivable.

The discovery and the spread of white siliceous soft-paste wares, under the Buyyids, is probably connected also with previous assump-

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tions. Very much prized during many centuries in numerous countries of the Islamic world, lustre-painting was often used to decorate "faience" and reached Europe the same way; in Italy and in Spain, it gave birth to a sumptuous production; it was still used ten years ago, in the district of Valencia (Spain).

Towards the East and Far East, trade roads and particularly the old Silk-Route enabled China to receive some contributions from the Islamic world. In books about Islamic ceramic, writers often mention Chinese influences on shapes and ornamental patterns. However, Chinese art experts feel contrary streams. For instance, blue and white pattern, so readily associated with Chinese porcelain, was used under the Abbassids in Mesopotamia as early as the nineth century; potters put cobalt-blue on the raw glaze and fired the whole at once. Furthermore it looks rightly as if it was after seeing underpainted blue and white Iranian wares of XII-XIIIth centuries that Chinese craftsmen made their first "blue and white" from imported cobalt or "mahometan" blue. Extremely valued in the Islamic world these Chinese porcelains affected the evolution of its own production from the XVth century.

These contributions of the Islamic world to the history of ceramic in the East as well as in the West have been particularly well set off by Jean Soustiel.

After this scrupulous inventory, the writer offers us some original interpretations. This part of his work is most unconventional and thought provoking. These new interpretations will probably be methodically studied in the near future.

Ceramics, jars, pitchers and oil-lamps were part of daily life and each town of some importance had its own production centres. More often than not, potters used plain processes and cheap materials. But besides these simple and useful potteries, craftsmen made others with fine decoration for their own enjoyment and that of users. In other respect, if local authorities wanted to show their power and prestige, they commissioned renowned artists and craftsmen: a luxurious pottery in workshop, the life of which was sometimes transient. These two kinds of production, the "traditional" one and "official" one, as the author calls them, could be more or less close to each other. Besides the well-known production centres (Fustat, Raqqa, Kashan) we discover that many others existed.

Aleppo for instance. Two tiles bearing the date of 1699 and the place of making - Aleppo - have recently been sold on the Parisian art market. We know nothing about the previous output of potteries in this city. We only have two landmarks: the date of 1699 and the acquaintance of a potters' district attested by the toponimy.

In the museum's storages or in some private collections, one can find pieces, more numerous than we generally think, which are not exhibited for lack of satisfactory attributions. Let us hope that this book will involve their study.

How could we possibly believe that capitals or very famous cities, like Shiraz or Isfahan under the Buyyids or the Seljuks, did not produce any ceramic? Some main political and cultural centers, Baghdad for example, suddenly vanished from the ceramic's history, even if during the IXth and XIth centuries, many processes flourished, like faience, soft-past and lustre-painting. Art historians keep on commenting on its architecture or its art of the book but do not speak any more of its ceramic under the Seljuks, the Ilkhanids and the Jalairids. Jean Soustiel fills partly this gap referring to the treatise of Abdul Qasem al-Kashani, who was born in a family of Kashan where several generations of potters followed one another. In 1301 he composed a work entitled "Arayes al-javaher va nafayes al-atayeb". In the chapter related to ceramic, he mentions Baghdad and Tabriz besides Kashan, as production centres. Showing up the differences between some wares and contemporary Iranian pieces, the writer suggests to attribute them to Mesopotamia (why not to Baghdad?) or to Syria. A dated plate (probably 1403-1404) shows that under Jalairid dynasty, the craftsmen kept on using the same processes of underglaze painting as before.

Gradually, the jigsaw constituted by the history of the ceramic covering vast geographical areas and a time span of centuries completes itself piece by piece. An original style of production is attributed to Turcoman states; on this pottery, Egyptian or Syrian features mingle with Iranian patterns.

The presence of Christian communities in Anatolia, Georgia and Northern-Syria could explain the similarity between medieval Byzantine wares, Agkhand ceramics and those excavated at Qasr al-Hair al-Sharki or al-Mina. For siliceous pottery close connections exist between North-Syria and Anatolia: the wares exposed in the museum of Konya do not differ very much from those found at Raqqa. But at Alhat, another town of Anatolia, the sherds found from the nearby kilns, present Iranian features.

North Africa, which took a prominent part in the transmission of the processes of faience and lustre-painting, is well studied with its three components: Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, and also its trade relations with Spain, Italy and Egypt. The author even enters the field of rural Berber pottery.

Pottery from Central Asia and India has not been forgotten. Under the Ghaznavids and Ghurids, some siliceous ceramics were produced as well in Nishapur as in such a distant city as Bamiyan, in Afghanistan.

Up to now, India did not appear in the history of Islamic ceramic: the writer has meanwhile found in the storage of the "Musee National de la Ceramique" in Sevres some pieces made in Hyderabad during the XIX century.

In addition to that, some apparently well-known fields are widened: Ottoman production is far richer and more complex than it was thought to be. Some old denominations, Damas for example, find a new dimension. The study of the Turkish production of the last century is interesting because the European impact is obvious, not only in pattern but also in technique. The same could be said about the Iranian wares made under the Qajar dynasty.

What conclusions could be drawn? First, that the public and private French collections intentionally set off by Jean Soustiel to illustrate its book, are of an unknown richness. This work opens a large field of research and specially the necessity of proving all the hypotheses which are exposed in it.

Archeological excavations on cities, neglected up to now, should be undertaken. Chemical and physical analysis in laboratory of the main but also of the secondary constituents should be performed to differenciate the workshops of a same country. The non-destructive methods of analysis should allow, in the near future, the systematic study of important collections. One should not forget to take also the epigraphy into account. The research and the discovery of unpublished historical or literary texts would be equally interesting.

How were the relationships organised between the different craftsmen involved in the making of a pottery? What were the respective ratios of the men of science (chemists, mineralogists) and the artisans (potters, painters, glass-makers or metal-workers)?

This should be completed by a careful study of other works of art such as dated metal-works, and manuscripts of sure origin. Computers will be necessary, because the accumulation of various information will enable us to exploit and compare them. It will be a new look on Islamic ceramic, perhaps more scientific but we hope as hearty as Jean Soustiel's one, in which he puts not only his great learning and his passion, but also his close relationship with objects and people who like them.

J. Moulierac

ARTS SALES

IMPORTANT COLLECTION OF ISLAMIC COINS

It is surprising that Spink long since regarded a doyen of Islamic numismatics, has been so long in devoting one of its auctions held regularly in London, Sydney, Melbourne, and Zurich to the past currency of the world of Islam.

However, the situation was remedied on 18th February when the company held an auction of such material in Zurich. It was worth the wait, for as usual Spink, the world's oldest and largest coin dealers, excelled. The venue was the Superior Deluxe Dolder Grand Hotel, only minutes from the city's centre, yet adjacent to a forest with impressive lakes and mountain views.

Just over 225 lots were offered. The material spanned both time and wide geographic area. It was decided to arrange the catalogue geographically rather than on a purely dynastic basis so as to allow prospective purchasers to see the range of coins of an entire region. Each coin is illustrated and described in detail so that the catalogue may take its place among other reference works in the area of Islamic numismatics.

The sale itself was well-attended, with every major Swiss bank being present. Collectors who preferred anonymity either left commissioned bids, made use of the telephone bidding system or instructed agents. The events totalled SwFr 890,000.

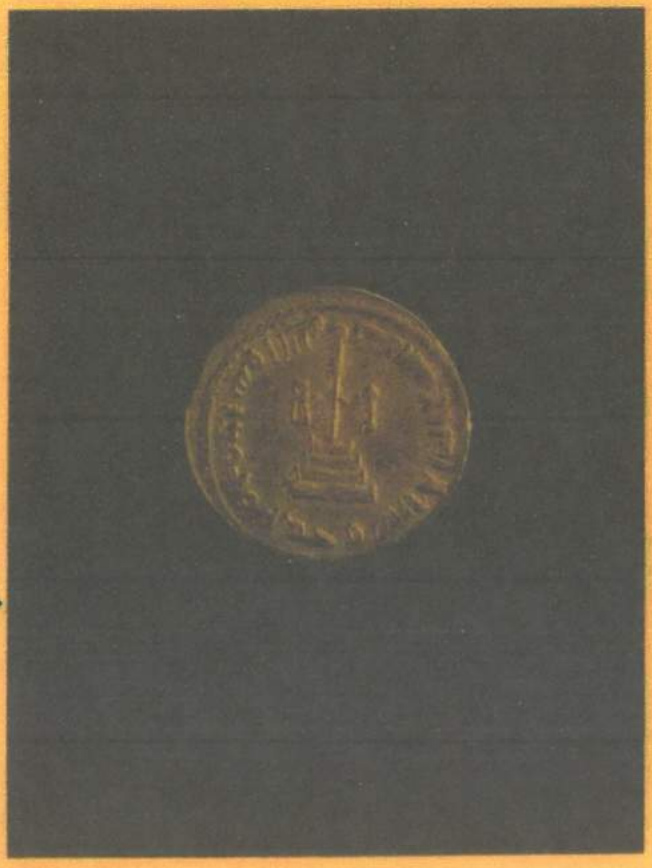
The highest price, SwFr 280,000 was paidfor an Arab Byzantine solidus, struck by the Umayyads in 72 or 73H. It is an example of the earliest Arab coin to bear the words of the 'Kalima' in its legends. Technically the piece is an Arab adaption of a solidus of Heraclius, Heraclius Constantine and Heraclonas. Its obverse features three standing figures, but which are entirely de-christianised in portraiture. The reverse bears a shaft with a globe on top with the legend 'Bismillah la illa ila Allah Wahdahu Muhammad rasul Allah' around in Kufic script.

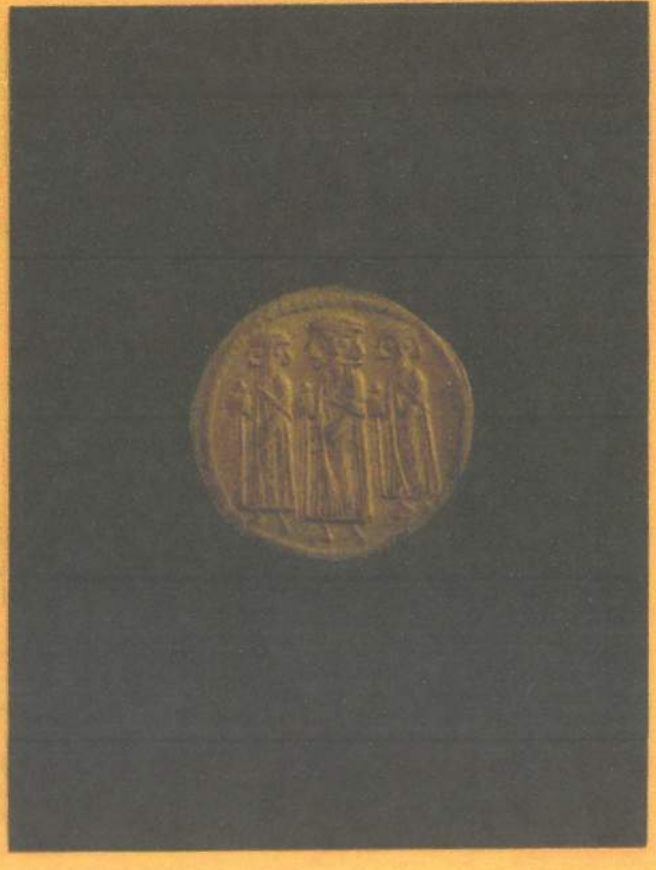
Altogether, three Arab Byzantine solidi, which provide evidence for the earliest Arab gold coinage, were offered. It was the first time that such a remarkable group had ever been offered at a single auction. All three are extremely rare. The other two examples sold for SwFr 41,000 and SwFr 48,000.

The sale was not just devoted to classical Islamic coins—modern issues were also included. For example, there was a specimen set in gold of the second currency issue of the Jordanian Hashimite Kingdom. Dated 1387H, it comprises the six coins from the 100 fils dirham to 5 fils half qursh. It was one of only two sets reported struck. This outstanding modern rarity sold for SwFr 13,000.

Coins were not the only material on offer—other numismatic items were also placed on the auction block. For example an Ottoman Gold Medal of Mahmud I b. Mustafa II (1143-1168H) attracted great interest. This extremely rare item is the earliest recorded Ottoman decoration. It is known as the ferahi, "gorget" medal because it was sewn to a riband or chain and worn on the chest of its recipient. It realised SwFr 15,000.

An intriguing offer was in the Egyptian section. This was an Umayyad 'Abd al-Malik b. Marwan (65-86H) aquamarine glass weight bearing the name of the ruler. Of the many thousand Islamic glass weights known





Arab-Byzantine dinar AH 74-75 (AD 693-694) Left: reverse, right: obverse

today only three or four bear the name of the ruler who introduced their use into Islamic commercial practice. It found a buyer at SwFr 1,400.

Other highlights from the sale include:

Egypt. Ottoman: Ahmad III b. Muhammad IV (1115-1143H). Unpublished five Ziynet ashrafi. This exceptional piece was produced by sticking a broad, thin flan prepared to the weight of a five ashrafi with the dies of a one ashrafi coin. The mint thus guaranteed the purity of the gold, making the piece suitable for inclusion amongst the jewellery of a rich Egyptian family. SwFr 11,500.

Kuwait. Abdallah B. Salim. 1379H. Pattern sovereign or 3-dinars. Extremely rare. SwFr 8,000.

Kuwait. Abdallah II al-Sabah. 1304H, copper paisa. 'The Story of the currency in Kuwait' (Ministry of Information 1404/1984), states: "it seems that this currency was minted to affirm the independence of Kuwait, but it circulated only one month. Thereafter it was withdrawn from the markets following the Ottoman authorities' protest against the issue, although it is said that circulation continued for a further five years before it was finally withdrawn." Extremely rare. SwFr 39,000.

India. Mughal. Jahangir, portrait muhur (the portrait of Jahangir is marvellous) no mint name, 1020H SwFr 11,250.

The event was a great success and confirmed the strength of the market for Islamic material. For example, a specimen comparable to the Arab Byzantine solidus that realised SwFr 280,000 at this sale, sold at Basle in October 1982 for SwFr 110,000.

In order to offer a more fully comprehensive service to its specialised customers and potential clients, Spinks has decided to hold a sale of Islamic coins each year in Zurich. This can only be a benefit to collectors.

J. Pearson Andrews

Contemporary Art in Qatar
continued from page 36

technique is somewhat impressionistic, yet there is much distortion in the arms of the boy. He extended them parallel to the lower edge of the painting making a base for the pyramidical shape of the girl sewing. The girl's face is oval. It reminds one of the facial features by Amedeo Modigliani (1884-1920).

Jassem created his interest around traditional subjects in Qatar. This is also shown clearly in another painting called "Qatar National Museum". This painting is a sort of collage where he mingles different materials together. One recognizes in them nails, weaving patterns, spider's net and few fading Islamic patterns. But the technique which expresses his personality is clearly shown in his love of the browns and oxide colours where no brightness is allowed. In this painting some materials are seen in the collage like brass and leather in addition to pins and nails.

Ali Hassan Algabir

He was born in Doha, in 1957 and obtained his B.A. in literature from Qatar University. He expresses his interest in visual arts by using Arabic calligraphy as his main medium of abstract expression.

Arabic calligraphy is used by several artists in different ways. With Ali Hassan, he does not distort the letters, or the words. Following almost the Persian script, he builds his painting around one circle or more, by putting verses from Quran in different sizes allowing some letters which have horizontal and extended shapes to appear repeatedly all over the painting stressing rhythm in a way. In the circle he changes those by changing the direction of the script. He also plays with light as he makes some of these scripts whiter or lighter while the rest are left a little darker. When he sticks to traditional Arabic calligraphy, he is usually very skilful in handling the detailed composition, and freer in use of colour. The overall pattern looks lighter. One can not help but appreciate this rather conservative way of using the Arabic script because it reflects something of the oriental spirit of detailed expression.

Issa Al-Ghanem

He was born in Doha, 1954. After completing intermediate studies he acquired general training in archeology and is now working in the Ministry of Information, Division of Tourism and Antiquity. He is one of the very young painters who developed himself in the "Free Atelier" of Doha. His first one man show was held in Gulf Hotel, Doha, 1983. He had several trends, the one prevailing is the non-objective. One of his expressions is full of vital colours with horizontal patches, few Arabic letters and circular shapes. He has other symbolic paintings showing distorted human faces. According to the first catalogue of Qatar Society of Plastic Arts, where his work has been described, 'what distinguishes Al-Ghanem from others is his desert homogeneous colouring'. The main work of the artist which involves him in archaeological excavations, has enriched his imagination to a great extent. When creating a painting, he starts from the very centre of it, seeking for its subject, and not creating the subject or the painting before the stage of execution.

Al-Ghanem had another mystic symbolic trend expressed very well in groups of womens faces, sometime in soft colours. Whether he is going to limit himself to one or more trends in future, is going to depend on his changing moods as he experiments with his paints.

Sultan Alsileity

He was born in 1945. His painting "A Qatari Girl", is very expressive. It represents a native figure visualized in front of a niche. The girl has long hair formulated as a long rope over her chest, in the shape of a plait. The figure is much decorated in line with the usual custom in Qatar, with rings in the ears and a necklace round the neck. The treatment in this painting replaces the artist in the expressionistic school. The painting exhibits a quality in the technique of water colour. There is also a sense of geometricism in the display of the bars behind. These are nearly vertical, but all the frontal details of the figure itself are spread with various adjustments which creates a subtle movement - a rhythm of distinctive vibrations.

Mohammed Al-Jidah

Jidah was born in 1956. He is one of the contemporary Qatari painters who is fond of realism. He depicts his subjects from Qatari environment. He uses the palette knife as a means to give richness and texture to his paints. He is fond of detail and expresses rhythmic movements in his figures. His paintings are in big sizes. "Catching Fish" is one of the well known paintings which represent his style.

Yussuf Alsharif

He was born in 1956. He has participated in several art exhibitions held in Doha and abroad. His style is very realistic. He illustrates native scenes. One of his paintings "Forenoon" is in oil and clearly shows his realistic trend. Native houses - a

mosque, some local inhabitants are well expressed in the painting. He does not use much colour, only grades of yellow ochre suffice. They represent houses, mosque and ground but pale blue represents the sky. The whole structure is geometrical. To some the painting evokes an aura ofpeace and tranquillity.

Mohammed Ali Abdullah

He was born in 1955. He has shared in exhibitions both at home and abroad. Having completed his study of art in U.S.A. he has recently been elected president of Qatar Society for Plastic Arts. His style is analytic - sometime decorative. In the first catalogue of Qatar Society for Plastic Arts, his style 'tends to adopt the desert colours, even if he is depicting a sea object. Most of his works deal with images of the Gulf heritage in an attempt to reveal the way of thinking of the old Gulf artists'. There is much to be expected in his future efforts.

A General Outlook

In Qatar today there are many other painters, just to mention a few more: Ahmed Al-Subeiy, Sultan Al-Ghanem, Farag Edham, Mohammed Hilal, Mohamed El Kawary, Seif El-Kawary, Wafai el Hamad, and Badria El Koubeisy, Soliman Ibrahim, Magid Hilal. The general art movement in Qatar has proved to have many trends: modern or naive, liberal or conservative, abstract or realistic. Arabic calligraphy has some influence on the local abstract trend. Some of the traditional subjects like: fishing, fish-market, boats, sailing, native dance, old houses etc., are all expressed in Qatari paintings.

Besides the individual artists, there are Qatari governmental establishments which play their role in enhancing the contemporary art movement in modern Qatar.

The liberal "Atelier" where some of the gifted Qataries are admitted to practise art under specialized supervision. Students are given art materials free. An yearly exhibition is held to show the work of that year. Among the Qatari artists who has had his training in this Atelier is Ahmad Abdullah. In a portrait of a young girl he expresses the native quality.

The Art Education Department, Qatar University, is starting to have its influence. Some of its girl students managed to hold a private exhibition of painting in Doha Sheraton Hotel last summer and attracted much attention. Wafai El Hammad had some dazzling paintings along the line of Victor Vazarely. Badria El-Koubessy was more conservative, but expressed herself very well in some of her abstract paintings. Other students of the department of art education, Qatar University, have the chance of showing reproductions of their work in *Doha* magazine and other publications.

The department of visual arts, Ministry of Information, and Qatar Society for Plastic Arts are playing a great role in organising exhibitions in Doha. Art education supervision by the Ministry of Education also helps a great deal in developing taste among the general public by presentation in public schools.

So the whole contemporary art movement in Qatar is diversified and distinguished by its very promising modern artists, and backed by the systematic training in the establishments mentioned.

Traditional Architecture finds a Royal Patron - *continued from page 50*

contracting firm in Saudi Arabia.

Masjid Quba, the first mosque in Islam is set upon an intersection on the outskirts of Al Madinah overlooking one of the city's last remaining date groves. From the moment he began designing Quba, Wakil was enwrapped in the blessing of his task and by its enormous responsibility. When he finished the designs he wept. The building which has taken shape is infused with this intense dedication.

One of the distinguishing features in the new Masjid Quba is the architect's re-instatement of the courtyard. "Today there is a tendency to eliminate the courtyard from mosque architecture as an irrelevant element. The courtyard is among the most important symbolic spaces in the mosque. It is the opening to the heavens. It need not be covered. It should be open. Functionally it allows for spill over. Instead of people praying in the street outside which they do everywhere in Saudi Arabia, they can pray in the courtyard. The courtyard is to the mosque what the garden is to the house."

The use of traditional technology in the building of Quba instead of poured concrete and steel has allowed for an unexpected blessing that has nonetheless been inherent to mosque building from the beginnings of Islam. "It is easy to pick up a brick and carry it. There are no machines or pre-cast units. With a shovel and a brick and some mortar anyone can come and build. The site engineer found an old man working on the mosque like this. He went to find out who hired him. He checked and found he was not even on the payroll. He went back to the old man and said, "What are you doing?" The old man said, "I want to have thawwab (a divine reward)". There was another old man of Madinah who when he saw the unshuttered domes rising up came to us and said, 'The angels are working with you,' because he could not imagine bricks floating like this in mid-air. When a technology induces a believer to say that the angels are present, this is beautiful. This is a human technology rather than a speculative one. This would never have happened with poured concrete."

With Qiblatain the architect was presented with an entirely different challenge. "The act of changing directions must be expressed in the design of the mosque. This is critical. Beyond this Qiblatain has a more rural aspect than Quba." Both mosques have an integrated housing scheme as part of the design. "The mosque tends to be isolated now from the rest of the community. These two mosques are calculated to re-establish the architectural connection between the community and its places of worship. The mosque should extend its influence over every aspect of society."

His Majesty King Fahd ibn Abdel Aziz has undoubtedly recognized the reality of this statement and has chosen to focus his patronage on the first community of Islam to revive the inspired traditional art of mosque architecture. With the recent establishment of the King Fahd Prize for Islamic Architecture, with His Majesty's active support of International Heritage Trust and with his support for the genius of Abdel Wahed El Wakil, King Fahd ibn Abdel Aziz has emerged as the pre-eminent patron of Islamic architecture in the Muslim world today.

Marrakech Festival *continued from page 52*

forces. The act of dance enables the participant to extend his body

through rhythm in time and space, so that he escapes the gravity which normally holds him back, imprisoning his real being.

Every year a different theme is chosen to highlight one aspect of both the outstanding and everyday life of the people. One year it may be marriage, another the seasons. One of the most successful themes illustrated "The Waking-up of the Medina". A simulated Medina (or ancient city) was created on the huge stage; a cock crowed, women cooked breakfast and poured mint tea. The themes are not completely isolated from world concerns; in 1977 the choice reflected the growing interest in ecology by its theme of "The Green Sahara."

Apart from the very real drawback that the cultural heritage of each troupe is concentrated into a performance lasting approximately seven minutes, tourism and modernity seem hardly to have affected the festival. Obviously if one went to the home of the Tissint people, south of Agadir, one would anticipate performances lasting all night, of delicate rhythm evolutions and many apparently repetitive yet subtly different dance patterns. Yet these men and women, dressed entirely in indigo blue, perform their Wedding Dance like the sacred rite it is. This dagger dance would seem to have a clear symbolism that risks little change by exposure to undiscriminating audiences. A young girl and man detach themselves from the dancing circle, the man extending a cord on which hangs a dagger. He turns, circles round the girl, finally facing her and passing the dagger on its cord around her neck, while she continues to dance. Finally he kneels before her.

Yet the dances must be ruthlessly choreographed so that the whole spectacle is over within an hour and a half, the object being not to bore the uninitiated visitor, that all important foreign exchange earner - the tourist. Actually, I could easily have coped with another hour of performance, if not two. No sooner were the troupes on stage, than they were off again; and being huge troupes, providing so much to look at, too much was packed into too short a time. Within that encapsulated period of seven minutes per troupe, it is hoped that the continuing integrity of Moroccan folklore will be preserved. For the primary aim of the festival is to guard intact for the future, without any change, this rich tapestry.

But what of modernity, what about the young blood, what of contemporary Moroccan dance and music, I asked Raguige El Mostafa, the eloquent Director of Public Relations for the Tourist Department? His reply was unequivocal - that the Marrakech Festival was no place for such expression. "We don't want to change our folklore," he insisted. "We are against national troupes who are disfiguring the popular arts, defiling a part of ourselves. The festival was designed to guard the authenticity of Moroccan folklore."

To this end, production is intentionally almost non-production, the emphasis being on natural spontaneity, "to safeguard the rhythm of village life," as Raguige put it. In fact the producer is now specifically chosen as someone who grew up with the artists, who knows their traditions, costumes, music and dance patterns. naturally he must supervise the order of appearance, so that the 22 troupes glide on and off stage without careering into each other.

One year a producer from urban professional theatre tried to introduce modern ideas and artists. Apparently the experiment was not a success; indeed it was much criticised by the Moroccan people. Therefore the festival committee believes that modern and traditional arts are best kept separate.

For the performing artists, the festival has become a place of pilgrimage. Many have been participating since its inception and abandon everything back home, jobs and families, to stay in Marrakech for three weeks, one for rehearsal and two for performance. Although they are all amateurs, many have now travelled extensively to participate in international festivals sponsored by the Moroccan Tourist Board.

The symbolism of the performances is in some cases quite obvious, in others obscured by time and migrational moves. Many of the dances celebrate specific occasions such as baptism, a battle or the arrival of a caravan. One is left in no doubt that the dance of the Taskiouine people is for warriors, in which women have no part. Wearing silver powder kegs on their shoulders, the men dance shoulder to shoulder in an athletic, powerful, unambiguous war dance.

But there are other curious, subtle performances, weaving together the shifting strands of Berber culture. The Gnaoua dance, for example, of African origin, is performed by descendants of the numerous families who accompanied el Mansour Ed Dehbi (the Golden One) to Marrakech in 1591 from their home in Timbuktou. Gradually these tumblers, who now perform regularly in the famous central square of Marrakech, Jamaa El Fna, have evolved a secular entertainment, worthy of professional acrobats, with huge leaps, never breaking their rhythm. Yet their instruments, which include large drums and castanets, and the cowrie shells and glass beads, remind one of their African origins, maintained so many centuries in richly symbolic ritual.

Though many of the female performers must be used to the gaze of international visitors, yet they lower their eyes modestly throughout their dances. However, I noticed some quick glances from Khol-rimmed eyes. The married women and widows of the Ait Hadidou use 'akilous', a type of henna in elaborate patterns on their hands, and all the women wear large necklaces of amber or heavy silver jewellery, of which the most fabulous must surely be that of the Tissint women.

The costumes at the festival are truly spectacular. The young girls dancing the Ahouach sparkle with multi-coloured bangles, while those from the Middle Atlas performing the Ahidous wear pale, urban-influenced colours of pretty, floating diaphanous material. The most extraordinary costume was worn by their leader, the Ait Bougemaz. His towering, pointed bonnet was covered by a strip of white muslin, the whole construction reminiscent in a sinister kind of way of the Ku Klux Klan. Amazingly there are few books or studies to explain the significance of such costumes or dance patterns, or even of Moroccan folklore, though a team of local researchers are currently making a study.

So Marrakech and its festival retain their enigmatic hooded character. The atmosphere of the city itself is discreet, the traditional homes hidden from view behind 12th century walls. Perhaps the very reticence of the participants to be overtaken by 'progress' will ensure the continuity of the culture. Whatever happens in the outside world, they will all be there at the festival again next year, whether the tourists come or not.



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