



# FROM MALACCA TO MANCHESTER

## CURATING ISLAMIC COLLECTIONS WORLDWIDE

Kanaris Lecture Theatre  
Manchester Museum  
23—24 February, 2017  
Workshops and visits  
22 February

*Presented by the Manchester Museums Partnership  
In collaboration with the John Ellerman Foundation*



## WELCOME

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## WELCOME TO *FROM MALACCA TO MANCHESTER: CURATING ISLAMIC COLLECTIONS WORLDWIDE*

This conference is the flagship public event of an ongoing 18-month programme of cataloguing, research, and curatorial training taking place across the Manchester Museums Partnership and funded by the John Ellerman Foundation.

We're delighted to be able to welcome speakers and attendees from all over the world to Manchester Museum. At a time when it is more important than ever for a diversity of viewpoints and voices to be represented in cultural institutions everywhere, we hope this conference will contribute to a global conversation that foregrounds values of understanding, compassion, and curiosity about humanity and its place in the world.

We hope you enjoy the explorative, critical, and exciting presentations and discussions to follow.

You can continue the discussion online using the hashtag [#MalaccatoManchester](#).

With best wishes,

JENNY AND STEPHEN




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## DIRECTOR'S WELCOME

**Dear conference attendees,**

I'd like to extend a very warm welcome to all attendees of *From Malacca to Manchester: Curating Islamic Collections Worldwide*.



For us in Manchester, work to better understand our Islamic collections intersects with our current programming around South Asian art and culture. This will see a number of special exhibitions and collaborations take place across the Manchester Museums Partnership throughout 2017 and beyond. The projected opening of Manchester Museum's new permanent gallery dedicated to the history and culture of South Asia in 2020 – a partnership project with the British Museum – is a key milestone in this celebration of place, identity, history and connections between the North of England and South Asia in all their forms.

As we work to tell new stories, attract a diversified audience, and deliver our mission to promote understanding between cultures, it is ever more necessary to reflect on how to present Islamic art and material culture within the museum setting in nuanced and engaging ways. This conference will be a welcome contribution to that process, and I hope you will all return home inspired and enthused. I am sorry that I am not able to join you: I will be on my first visit to Pakistan to develop partnerships there.

DR NICK MERRIMAN

**DIRECTOR**

*Manchester Museum*





# SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

22 FEBRUARY  
WEDNESDAY

11.30—12.30 and 16.00—17.00

## WORKSHOP

### **Reaching for the Stars: The Astrolabe in the Islamic World.**

Presented by Christopher Parkin, Lead Education Officer, Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford.

This workshop will provide conference attendees with an introduction to the astrolabe, an instrument which was studied and developed by scholars and craftsman throughout the early centuries of the expansion of Islamic civilization. The workshop will explore the significance of this instrument within Islamic culture including its use in a religious context and scope for design and craftsmanship. Participants will be able to handle replica instruments and to make a working model based on one from the Museum's collection of astrolabes from the Islamic world.

*Collections Study Centre, Manchester Museum, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL.*



11.00—12.00 and 13.00—14.00

## VISIT

### **Collection Encounter: Islamic Manuscript Highlights at The John Rylands Library Special Collections.**

Presented by Elizabeth Gow, Manuscript Curator and Archivist, The John Rylands Library. Please allow further time for self-guided exploration of the Rylands Gallery, the temporary exhibition, and the building.

*The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, 150 Deansgate, Manchester M3 3EH.*

13.00—15.45

## WORKSHOP

### **The Practicalities of Working in the Middle East and South Asia: A Workshop Organised by the Subject Specialist Network for Islamic Art and Material Culture.**

Beginning to think about working in or with institutions in the Middle East and South Asia can be a daunting prospect but one which does offer huge benefits in terms of curating your institution's 'Islamic' collections. This session aims to be a practical 'how to' guide, and includes speakers with considerable experience in this area, who will share their understanding of the challenges and benefits from the perspective of their own work. The workshop is divided into three sessions:

- Where to begin? What are the opportunities and the practicalities of organising your visit to the Middle East and South Asia?
- Case studies on the benefits. How working or visiting the Middle East and South Asia can positively impact on the work carried out by you and / or your organisation in the UK.
- Building your relationships with organisations in the Middle East and South Asia.

*The Whitworth Art Gallery Study Centre, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M15 6ER.*

THURSDAY  
23 FEBRUARY

# MAIN CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

*Kanaris Lecture Theatre, Manchester Museum, University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL.*

09.00—09.20

## REGISTRATION AND REFRESHMENTS

09.20—09.40

## WELCOME

09.40—10.30

## KEYNOTE LECTURE

**Stefan Weber**, Director, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, Germany; *Pulling the Past into the Present – Islamic Art and the Museum in Times of Migration and Extremism.*



10.30—10.50

## BREAK

*Refreshments provided*

10.50–12.20

## THE QUR'AN IN THE MUSEUM

**Chaired by** Elizabeth Gow, Manuscript Curator and Archivist, The John Rylands Library, University of Manchester, UK.

10.50–11.50

*A Shared Identity: The Birmingham Qur'an – from Academia to Community.*

Rebecca Bridgman, Curator of Islamic and South Asian Arts and Curatorial Team Leader, Birmingham Museums Trust; Susan Worrall, Director of Special Collections, University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham; Alba Fedeli, Postdoctoral Researcher, Central European University, Budapest; Sarah Kilroy, Head of Conservation and Programming, Special Collections, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham; Mohammed Ali MBE, internationally acclaimed artist, founder of Soul City Arts.

11.50–12.10

Nicoletta Fazio, Former Curatorial Trainee, Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin and PhD Candidate, University of Heidelberg, Germany; *Words that Matter: Exhibiting the Qur'an in the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin.*

12.10–12.20

Panel discussion.

12.20–13.20

## LUNCH

*Provided*

13.20—15.00

## PUSHING THE LIMITS: DEFINING ISLAMIC ART AND MATERIAL CULTURE

**Chaired by** Emma Martin, Lecturer in Museology, University of Manchester, and Senior Curator of Ethnology, National Museums Liverpool, UK.

Chiara Formichi, Assistant Professor in Southeast Asian Studies, Cornell University, New York, USA; *Islamic Art or Asian Art?*

Mirjam Shatanawi, Curator, Tropenmuseum, Amsterdam and Museum of Ethnology, Leiden, The Netherlands; *Islamic Art and Ethnographic Collections.*

Francesca Leoni, Yousef Jameel Curator of Islamic Art, Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, UK; *Occultism and the Museum. The Case of Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural.*

Silke Ackermann, Director and Christopher Parkin, Lead Education Officer, Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford, UK; *Interpreting Scientific Instruments from the Islamic World in the Museum.*

15.00—15.20

## BREAK

*Refreshments provided*



15.20—17.00

## FAITH AND IDENTITY ON DISPLAY

**Chaired by** Fahmida Suleman, Phyllis Bishop Curator for the Modern Middle East, The British Museum, London, UK.

Heba Nayel Barakat, Head Curator, Curatorial Affairs Department, Islamic Arts Museum, Malaysia; *Representation of Faith in Islamic Galleries: Where Do We Go Wrong?*

Beyza Uzun, Independent Researcher, Turkey; *Display of the Sacred Relics Gallery in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art, Istanbul.*

James Bennett, Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, and Sam Bowker, Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia; *Not Melaka but Marege: Islamic Art in Australia (Or, 'What Have the Umayyads Ever Done for Us?')*.

Ana P. Labrador, Deputy Director and Chief Curator and Cyril A. Santos, Museum Researcher, National Museum of the Philippines; *Representing the Bangsamoro in an Exhibition of Ethnography at the National Museum of the Philippines.*

17.15—Onwards

## DRINKS RECEPTION AT KRO BAR

325 Oxford Rd, Manchester M13 9PG.



09.00—10.40

## INTERPRETING AND EXHIBITING ISLAMIC ART AND MATERIAL CULTURE

**Chaired by** Lara Eggleton, Independent Art Historian  
Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History, 2016-2017, Department of Visual Arts, Wells College, New York, USA; *Border Crossings at the Museum: Interpretation, Integration and Empathic Curatorial Strategies in an Era of Trauma and Displacement*.  
Klas Grinell, Curator of Contemporary Global Issues, Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, and Associate Professor in the History of Ideas at Gothenburg University, Sweden; *Labelling Islam: On the Lack of a Structuring Idea in European Exhibitions of Islam*.  
Benedict Leigh, Project Curator, British Museum, UK; *The Role of Archaeology and 'Context' in the Display of Islamic Material Culture*.  
Sophia Vassilopoulou, Free University of Berlin and Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, Germany; *Bringing Academic Research into the Museum: The Exhibition Trail Objects in Transfer in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin*.

FRIDAY  
24 FEBRUARY

10.40—11.00

## BREAK

*Refreshments provided*

11.00—12.40

## CASE STUDIES: NEW INSTALLATIONS WORLDWIDE

**Chaired by** Professor Dr Stefan Weber, Director of the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, Germany.  
Sharon Laor-Sirak, Curator, Museum of Islamic and Near Eastern Cultures, Be'er Sheva, Israel; *From Mosque to Museum - the Museum of Islamic and Near Eastern Cultures in Be'er Sheva, Israel*.  
Idries Trevathan, Islamic Arts Curator, and Laila al-Faddagh, International Exhibitions Curator, King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Saudi Arabia; *Islamic Art in Saudi Arabia: Reconnecting Communities with Collections*.  
Kimberly Masteller, Jeanne McCray Beals Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, USA; *Curating Islamic Art in the Central United States: New Approaches to Collections, Installations, and Audience Engagement*.  
Venetia Porter, Curator, Islamic and Contemporary Middle Eastern Art, Department of the Middle East, British Museum, UK; *From Mali to Malacca: Redisplaying Islamic Material Culture at the British Museum*.





12.40—13.40

## LUNCH

*Provided*

13.40—14.40

COMMUNITIES, OUTREACH  
AND EDUCATION 1

**Chaired by** Fareda Khan, Head of Special Projects (Change Makers), Manchester Museum, UK.

Jennifer Siung, Head of Education, Chester Beatty Library, Ireland; *Exploring World Faiths in Museum Collections*.

Laura Weinstein, Ananda Coomaraswamy Curator of South Asian and Islamic Art, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, USA; *Looking Out and Looking In: Islamic Art at the MFA, Boston in the 21st Century*.

Qaisra M. Khan, Independent Curator, Nasser. D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, UK; *Presenting Islamic Art and the Muslim Community: The Hajj Exhibition at the British Museum*.

14.40—15.00

## BREAK

*Refreshments provided*

15.00—16.40

COMMUNITIES, OUTREACH  
AND EDUCATION 2

**Chaired by** John Reeve, Former Head of Education, British Museum, and Honorary Lecturer, UCL and IoE, University of London, UK.

Melissa Forstrom Al kadhi, Doctoral Candidate at the University of Westminster, London, UK and Adjunct Professor at Manhattanville College, New York, USA; *Reinterpreting Islamic Art Exhibition and the Mass Media*.

Galina Lasikova, Curator, Mardjani Foundation for Support and Development of Research and Cultural Programmes; *In Pursuit of Islamic Art in Moscow*.

Generoso Urciuoli, Islamic Department Manager and Projects and Temporary Exhibitions Manager, Museum of Oriental Art, Turin, Italy; *Outside the Showcase: Cultural Mediation Projects of the Islamic Department of the Museum of Oriental Art, Turin*.

Yannick Lintz, Director and Carine Juvin, Curator for Medieval Near and Middle East Islamic Art Department, Louvre Museum, Paris, France; *From the Louvre Museum as a Universal Museum to Communities*.

16.40—17.00

## SUMMING-UP AND CLOSE.

KEYNOTE  
LECTURE

PULLING THE  
PAST INTO  
THE PRESENT –  
ISLAMIC ART  
AND THE MUSEUM  
IN TIMES OF  
MIGRATION AND  
EXTREMISM

**Professor Dr Stefan Weber,**  
Director, Museum of Islamic  
Art, Berlin, Germany.

Our societies on a global level are currently experiencing a time of rapid change. In most of our urban societies hybrid and multi-layered patterns of life are typical. Nevertheless, the search for clear and simple notions and answers in response to an increasingly complex reality is reflected in a widespread rise of populism and extremism. These movements are based on a very simple understanding of 'me and my world' or 'me and the others'. This is the moment when museums of Islamic Art come in, as they – especially those big ones with a several hundred thousand visitors each year – are one of the primary platforms of negotiating questions of collective identities.

And how can we make the museum more meaningful for us today? Here galleries function as a zone of interaction of our contemporary world. 'Islam' as a notion is so strong that many visitors search our galleries for answers to questions relating to today – whether we want them to or not. Everyone comes with his or her backpack of questions, fears or expectations. How do museums meet these needs?



The answer lies probably in the objects themselves. No object in our museums exists without migration – every object is an expression of transregional connection and the exchange of techniques, thoughts, pattern, fashions and ideas. Many cultural realities are interwoven, and both sides of the Mediterranean were formative for each other over very many centuries. We live with an entangled past and in an entangled present.

PROFESSOR DR STEFAN  
WEBER

Professor Dr Stefan Weber is the Director of the Museum of Islamic Art at the Pergamon in Berlin, Germany. Previously, he was Assistant Professor of Material Culture at Aga Khan University in London. Between 1996 and 2007 he was a Research Fellow at the German Archaeological Institute (DAI) in Damascus and Senior Research Fellow for Urban History and Art History at the Orient-Institute Beirut (OIB).

Dr Weber is currently organising the re-conceptualisation of the Museum of Islamic Art / Pergamon Museum in Berlin, which is exploring new grounds in communicating the legacy of art, architecture and archaeology of the Islamic Middle East and beyond. The Museum's programme on refugees as guides for refugees (Multaka) has won several awards. He has curated large exhibitions and directed research, restoration and documentation projects on cities and the cultural heritage of the Middle East.

Dr Weber has published widely on Middle Eastern heritage. He is a member of the international board of the Congress of Turkish Art, corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute, member of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) and other relevant organisations.



# ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

# A SHARED IDENTITY: THE BIRMINGHAM QUR'AN - FROM ACADEMIA TO COMMUNITY

## Organisers and Speakers

Rebecca Bridgman, Curator of Islamic & South Asian Arts and Curatorial Team Leader, Birmingham Museums Trust and Susan Worrall, Director of Special Collections, University of Birmingham, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham.

## Further Speakers

Alba Fedeli, Postdoctoral researcher, Central European University, Budapest; Sarah Kilroy, Head of Conservation and Programming, Special Collections, Cadbury Research Library, University of Birmingham; Mohammed Ali MBE, internationally acclaimed artist, founder of Soul City Arts.

In July 2015, the results of radiocarbon analysis of a Qur'anic manuscript held at the University of Birmingham's Cadbury Research Library dated it to the late sixth or early seventh century CE, making it one of the earliest examples of the Islamic holy book in existence. This discovery was hugely important not only in an academic context but also to Birmingham's Muslim communities. The Birmingham Qur'an, as this manuscript is now known, forms part of the Mingana Collection cared for by the University of Birmingham. That collection comprises a group over 3,000 Middle Eastern Manuscripts assembled during the early 20th century for the chocolate magnate, Edward Cadbury. As a Quaker, he assembled that collection to develop his and others' understanding of world faiths.

The dating of this manuscript was the culmination of a detailed programme of research, conservation, display and engagement stretching back over a decade. Since July 2015, three organisations have built on that earlier work displaying the manuscript in different contexts and building a programme of engagement and events around it. Those projects incorporate collaboration between the University of Birmingham, Birmingham Museums and a locally-based and internationally acclaimed Muslim artist. This panel presents the experiences, opportunities and challenges presented by the discovery of this internationally important manuscript.

It will also reflect broadly on how this recent on the Birmingham Qur'an contributes to understanding of the display of 'Islamic' objects that have historical importance but which are also central to the faith of many people in the UK and beyond.



## REBECCA BRIDGMAN

Rebecca Bridgman is Birmingham Museums' first specialist Curator of Islamic and South Asian Arts and holds a leadership role within the curatorial and exhibitions team. She moved to Birmingham in October 2012, where her work focuses on researching collections, renewing displays and putting on exhibitions that will attract and engage new and diverse audiences to the museum. Rebecca is also chair of the national Subject Specialist Network for Islamic Art and Material Culture that shares knowledge and expertise in these areas throughout the museum sector. These roles follow research on Islamic ceramic collections at The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge and doctoral studies at Southampton University.



## SUSAN WORRALL

As Director of Special Collections for the University of Birmingham, Susan Worrall has overall responsibility for the University's extensive collections of rare books, manuscripts, archives, photographs and associated artefacts. The Mingana Collection of Middle Eastern Manuscript forms a key part of the collection. Following postgraduate work at the University of Liverpool, Susan started her career at Rhodes House Library, University of Oxford. As a first job in the sector this was a wonderful introduction, including work with the Truth and Reconciliation process in South Africa. She has worked in the UK and Australia in both the public and private sectors in the areas of records management, archives, libraries and heritage. She was part of the management team responsible for the redevelopment of the Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry, joining the University of Birmingham in her current role in 2005. Susan has contributed to a number of national initiatives in support of evolving the role of special collections and research libraries. She is a board member for Archives West Midlands, a newly formed charitable trust made up of universities, local authorities, cathedrals and businesses to protect the region's heritage and history.





## ALBA FEDELI

Alba Fedeli is research fellow at the Centre for Religious Studies, Central European University, Budapest, working on the transmission of early Qur'anic manuscripts through phylogenetic analysis. She stirred up media frenzy after the BBC announcement that the 'Birmingham Qur'an' manuscript dates to Muhammad's lifetime. She received her PhD from the University of Birmingham, after studies in Italy with Sergio Noja Nosedo. She was drawn to Birmingham's Cadbury Research Library after more than a decade spent studying early Qur'anic manuscripts in locations as diverse as Sana'a, Cambridge, Doha, Dublin and St. Petersburg. Fedeli taught at the University of Milan from 2004 to 2012 and was Director of the Ferni Noja Nosedo Foundation from 2004 to 2008. Her publications reflect her research interests in early Qur'anic manuscripts. Alba's work on the Mingana-Lewis palimpsest has been uploaded on the Cambridge Digital Library ([cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/minganalewis](http://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/minganalewis)), establishing a pioneer system for encoding the text of early Qur'anic manuscripts through TEI (Text Encoding Initiative). She is *assistente accademico* at the Ambrosiana Library and honorary research fellow of the Institute of Textual Scholarship and Electronic Editing (ITSEE) at the University of Birmingham, UK.



## SARAH KILROY

Sarah Kilroy graduated from UCL in 1995 with a BA (Hons) in History of Art and started her career as a volunteer researcher of portrait prints at Sir John Soane's Museum, London, before moving to the Royal College of Art to work in public relations. Sarah trained as a conservator of works of art on paper at Camberwell College of Arts, qualifying with an MA Conservation in 1999. From 2000-2003 Sarah worked as paper conservator for the Museum of London, specialising in the treatment of 17th to 20th century prints, drawings and watercolours for exhibition. She was appointed Head of Conservation at the Museum of Domestic Design and Architecture (part of Middlesex University) in 2003.

SARAH KILROY CONTINUED - Since 2004 Sarah has been responsible for the preservation of the University of Birmingham's extensive Special Collections of manuscripts, rare books and artefacts, where she is Head of Conservation and Programming. This has included overseeing the technical analysis and conservation treatment of the Birmingham Qur'an manuscript that made international headlines in 2015 following radiocarbon dating to the early 7th century.



## MOHAMMED ALI

Mohammed Ali Aerosol MBE is an award winning UK artist, curator and creative producer and has been a pioneer in the street-art movement, fusing street art with Islamic script and patterns, delivering powerful and moving messages. Art meets faith, identity and social change in Ali's work, adorning the canvas of walls and public spaces and continues to change the visual landscapes of the cities we live in. His art has inspired and informed a new generation across the globe, to boldly express their identity and ideals. His ethos of 'taking art to the people' has evolved to combine street art with live performances, installations, digital projections and moving soundscapes. He has created truly immersive experiences for audiences throughout the world, often collaborating with critically acclaimed musicians and poets to produce unique experiences. Ali's work serves as a bridge, bringing together communities divided by culture, faith and ethnicity. Ali's complex exploration of challenging social issues through art provides transformative and radical tools to counteract challenges facing society. In 2008, Ali established Soul City Arts, a global arts movement bringing together artists, activists and communities. It was driven by a shared commitment to transform society. Ali describes his approach as 'shifting mindsets'. His formula is to combine creative expressions with strategic visioning, and has been awarded commissions with international NGO's, corporations, and charities.

# WORDS THAT MATTER: EXHIBITING THE QUR'AN IN THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART, BERLIN

**Nicoletta Fazio,**  
Former Curatorial  
Trainee, Museum  
of Islamic Art, Berlin  
and PhD Candidate,  
University of  
Heidelberg, Germany.

Until recently exhibitions on the Qur'an tended to focus mainly on the artistic values and the codicological history of the Qur'anic manuscripts on display, stressing elements such as illuminations and calligraphy. The complex status of the Qur'an as both a religious scripture and an artwork with its own peculiarities poses several challenges to museum curators, who need to address this complexity through visual means accompanied by minimal texts.

In the spring of 2016 the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin opened *Words to Read, Words to Feel*, its first exhibition entirely dedicated to the Qur'an. Inserted into the fabric of the permanent display, the exhibition represented a stimulating task in terms of curatorial strategies and selection of exhibits, and in its conception it took a step further from classical exhibition approaches by following recent scholarly developments in Qur'anic studies. In fact, it aimed to introduce the visitors to the multifaceted nature of the Qur'an by presenting it as the ideal site for a variety of spiritual and sensorial aesthetic experiences, above and beyond strictly religious practices. The diverse materiality of the exhibits played in this respect a central role in conveying such a vision.

In this paper I shall illustrate the strategies and structures that have been developed to make the exhibition both an occasion to behold beautiful, often unique, exhibits from the Berlin collections and an engaging experience for the visitors, also in consideration of the controversial responses that the Qur'an often elicits in Western media.



## NICOLETTA FAZIO

Nicoletta Fazio is a PhD candidate at the Graduate Programme for Transcultural Studies and an affiliated member of the Cluster of Excellence *Asia and Europe in a Global Context*, University of Heidelberg. An art historian by training, she studied Art History, Medieval Studies, and Islamic Art and Archaeology at the University of Genoa (Italy) and graduated with a thesis on the paintings attributed to Ustadh Muhammad Siyah Qalam. In London she received her Master's degree in Intellectual and Cultural History from the Warburg Institute. Her MA thesis on the comparative history of lovesickness in Islamic and Medieval visual arts and in classical Persian and vernacular romance literatures later expanded into the topic of her PhD dissertation. During her study she worked as an intern for the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and the British Museum (Department of the Middle East). Before joining the team of the Museum of Islamic Art as the curatorial trainee (Volontariat), she was research assistant in the project *Kosmos/Ornatus*, based at the Free University of Berlin. Her research interests lie in the field of comparative manuscript studies, Islamic Central Asia and transcultural exchanges, and in museum studies.

# ISLAMIC ART OR ASIAN ART?

**Chiara Formichi,**  
Assistant Professor in  
Southeast Asian Studies,  
Cornell University,  
New York, USA.

In 2011 the Metropolitan Museum opened its renovated Islamic Art wing. In 2012 the Louvre opened its own new galleries on Islamic Art. Yet, neither New York nor Paris give any space to Asia beyond Mughal India. The Met's Southeast Asia collection focuses on the Hindu-Buddhist 'classical' period, while the Louvre simply does not have any objects from Asia, as these are exhibited at the Guimet Museum. Currently, the British Museum is setting up a Gallery of the Islamic World with support from a Malaysian foundation, yet the search for a curator has focused on the Perso-Arab tradition. This, despite the fact that 60% of the world's Muslims live in Asia, and almost a quarter of the total find their home in Southeast Asia.

In this presentation I draw on debates on what constitutes 'Islamic art' as well as the presence/absence of Southeast Asia in the study and portrayal of Islam, to investigate the binary relationship between art collection practices and the construction of two disciplinary fields of study, Islamic Studies and Asian Studies (with a focus on Southeast Asia).

Offering a visual exemplification of their missed encounter through an analysis of selected European and American museums of international repute, and engaging with the academic study of Southeast Asia, the Muslim lands, and their artistic forms,

I argue that these academic and curatorial approaches have fostered a mis/understanding of Southeast Asia as 'foreign' to Islam, and of Islam as foreign to Southeast Asia.

## CHIARA FORMICHI



Chiara Formichi is Assistant Professor in Southeast Asian Studies, with a focus on Islam, in the Department of Asian Studies, Cornell University. She received her PhD in History from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS, London), merging expertise in Southeast Asian Studies (MA, SOAS) with a background in Islamic Studies (BA Hons, Rome). Chiara teaches courses on Islam in (Southeast) Asia in the US and Asia, and has held fellowships in Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Netherlands.

Chiara's research addresses different aspects of the history of Islam in Southeast Asia, with a strong focus on the disciplinary relationship between Islamic Studies and Asian Studies and inter-Asian connections (mostly Turkey, Iran and Indonesia). More specifically, her publications have addressed ideas of the Islamic State and socio-political modernity, sectarianism, and the shaping of religious minorities. Her publications include the monograph *Islam and the making of the nation: Kartosuwiryo and political Islam in 20th century Indonesia* (2012); the edited volumes *Religious Pluralism, State and Society in Asia* (2013) and *Shi'ism in Southeast Asia: 'Alid Piety and Sectarian Constructions* (2015); journal articles in *Indonesia Journal* (Cornell), the *Journal of Southeast Asian Studies*, *Die Welt des Islams* and *The Muslim World*; and book chapters printed by Oxford University Press and Columbia University Press.

# ISLAMIC ART AND ETHNOGRAPHIC COLLECTIONS

**Mirjam Shatanawi,**  
Curator, Tropenmuseum,  
Amsterdam and Museum  
of Ethnology, Leiden,  
The Netherlands.

In the past years there has been much debate on whether Islamic art should be labelled 'Islamic'. The second leg of the term –the labelling of these objects as 'art'- has received less attention. Yet the separation of collections from the Muslim world in 'art' and 'ethnography', which has its origins in 19th century European museum practice, is questionable. It has resulted in the division of the material culture of the Muslim world among different types of museums, drawing sharp lines between social classes, geographical zones and historical periods. Furthermore, from this division two modes of museum representation developed, each with its own take on how the Islamic world fits within the wider narrative of global art and cultural history. Currently, a number of museums, including the British Museum, are experimenting with a more integrated approach to the material culture of the Muslim world.

In this paper I'll discuss what these embedded structures imply for current museum representations of the Islamic world and I will make a plea for the reintegration of both fields. Using examples from different museum collections and exhibitions, I will explore how ethnographic collections can enrich the field of Islamic art and vice versa. I will argue that undoing the colonial paradigms that underpin the division of the field is necessary to make museums more relevant, given the complex representational challenges they face today.

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*"IN THE PAST YEARS THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DEBATE ON WHETHER ISLAMIC ART SHOULD BE LABELLED 'ISLAMIC'. THE SECOND LEG OF THE TERM –THE LABELLING OF THESE OBJECTS AS 'ART'- HAS RECEIVED LESS ATTENTION."*



## MIRJAM SHATANAWI

Mirjam Shatanawi works as a curator for the Tropenmuseum (Amsterdam) and the Museum of Ethnology (Leiden). At both museums she is responsible for the Middle Eastern and North African collections. She has curated many exhibitions on topics as wide-ranging as contemporary art from Iran, the history of the Palestinian *nakba* and the artistic encounter of the Dutch artist M.C. Escher with Islamic art. Currently she is researching a group of objects from Indonesia that were collected during the colonial period, as a case study to understand the historical conditions leading to the Western disregard of Indonesian Islamic art and to investigate alternative approaches to the concept of 'Islamic art' in an Indonesian context.



# OCCULTISM AND THE MUSEUM: THE CASE OF *POWER AND PROTECTION: ISLAMIC ART AND THE SUPERNATURAL*

**Francesca Leoni,**  
Yousef Jameel Curator of  
Islamic Art, Ashmolean  
Museum of Art and  
Archaeology, University  
of Oxford, UK.

On October 20, 2016 the Ashmolean Museum opened the exhibition *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural*. One of the outcomes of a 2-year research project grant on pre-modern Islamic divination and art funded by the Leverhulme Trust, this exhibition posed exceptional challenges from its very inception.

In addition to the sensitivities associated with the subject, curators and museum staff had to confront ongoing changes in public perceptions of Islam as well. In particular, preoccupations about the real and assumed susceptibility of Muslim audiences in relation to some artistic forms (i.e. figurative art) and material evidence (i.e. devotional art and talismanic objects) on the one hand, and the rise of Islamophobia following the dramatic rise of Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe on the other, impacted the exhibition's ideas and tone.

This presentation will use the conceptual, rhetorical and curatorial approaches developed for this installation in order to comment more broadly about the trials encountered today by museum professionals when trying to represent Islamic art and culture beyond established canons and themes.



## FRANCESCA LEONI

Francesca Leoni has been the Yousef Jameel Curator of Islamic Art at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, University of Oxford, since 2011. Her primary area of studies is Islamic illustrated and illuminated manuscripts. In addition to the forthcoming exhibition catalogue *Power and Protection: Islamic Art and the Supernatural* (Oxford, 2016), her recent books include *Eros and Sexuality in Islamic Art* (edited with Mika Natif, 2013) and *Light of the Sufis: The Mystical Arts of Islam* (co-authored with Ladan Akbarnia, 2010).

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"IN ADDITION TO THE  
SENSITIVITIES ASSOCIATED  
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PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS OF  
ISLAM AS WELL."

# INTERPRETING SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS FROM THE ISLAMIC WORLD IN THE MUSEUM

**Silke Ackermann**, Director and **Christopher Parkin**, Lead Education Officer, Museum of the History of Science, University of Oxford, UK.

The Museum of the History of Science of the University of Oxford is renowned for housing the finest collection of astronomical instruments from an Islamic context worldwide. But to most of our visitors this means virtually nothing - either they remain oblivious of the importance of these objects in a wider cultural and social context, or the objects themselves are a complete enigma. Most visitors to museums would claim to have at least an idea what the function of a ewer or a mosque lamp might be. But what does an astrolabe do? Who would have made it for whom? Why might an astrolabe quadrant from the Ottoman Empire be based on the latest astronomical values recently established by the Jesuits and display a Julian calendar in French? And why does this matter for us today?

This means that we have an added layer of complexity in our plans to redisplay and reinterpret our collections: we do not only grapple with the question of what makes an object 'Islamic' or how we explain religion in a secular context, but also with the almost complete lack of understanding of the objects themselves.

The authors will discuss these issues, highlight plans for the future, and touch on current initiatives to involve local communities in these questions and to establish the Museum as a neutral platform in increasingly heated debates. This will include a brief account of work in progress with a recently established Youth Forum group which has been meeting on a regular basis to devise new interpretative strategies for the Islamic world collection.



## SILKE ACKERMANN

Silke Ackermann studied history and languages and cultures of the Islamic World and subsequently took up history of science for her PhD. She joined the Museum of the History of Science in 2014 after working for fifteen years at the British Museum in a variety of curatorial and managerial roles. She is particularly interested in the transfer of knowledge between cultures and communities and in finding new ways of displaying these stories in a museum context.



## CHRISTOPHER PARKIN

Christopher Parkin has a background in science education with masters' degrees in Curriculum Studies, Science Communication, and Renaissance Studies. After 15 years of teaching in secondary schools, he took up the post of education officer at the Museum of the History of Science in 2004 where he has led the development of the Museum's education programme in coordination with the Oxford University Museums Partnership.

# REPRESENTATION OF FAITH IN ISLAMIC GALLERIES: WHERE DO WE GO WRONG?

**Heba Nayel Barakat,**  
Head Curator, Curatorial  
Affairs Department,  
Islamic Arts Museum,  
Malaysia.

The recurrent question 'What is Islamic about Islamic art?' has been occupying much space in recent scholarship on the field, to the degree that a new trend in curating Islamic art collections tries to rid itself of the word 'Islamic'. Reading Islamic art from a multi-faceted perspective would better document, clarify misconceptions and help to reconcile the religious component of such art. In a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-religious society, the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia (IAMM) faces many challenges when attempting to incorporate 'faith' as a component in curating collections. Addressing diverse target groups and applying the analytical scientific approach of Islamic art historians by analysing, categorizing, and tracing the development and continuation of artistic trends stops short of comprehending or admitting 'faith' as a component of such art. This paper will discuss why, when, where and how 'faith' offers an important dimension and an added value in curating exhibitions. Besides the permanent galleries, exhibitions such as *The Glorious Swords: The Prophets and His Companions* (2002), *The History of Pilgrimage in Southeast Asia* (2014) and *Ann Dunham's Legacy: A Collection of Indonesian Batiks* (2012) will be analysed to shed light on challenges.



## HEBA NAYEL BARAKAT

Heba Nayel Barakat is head of the Curatorial Affairs Department at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia, where she supervises the refurbishment of the museum's permanent galleries, researches artefacts in the collection, and supervises exhibitions in the museum's special galleries. A graduate of the American University in Cairo with a BA in Islamic Art and Architecture, Barakat has an MA from the Department of the History of Architecture, Middle East Technical University, Ankara-Turkey and a PhD from the Oriental Institute, Moscow. She worked at the Centre for Documentation of Cultural and Natural Heritage, Cairo as a Project Manager, researching and documenting Cairo's 19th- and early 20th-century presidential palaces. She has also documented the early Islamic papyrus collection and the Persian illuminated and illustrated collections at the Egyptian National Library (Dar al-Kutub) and worked on the pigment analysis of early miniatures there.

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"THIS PAPER WILL DISCUSS WHY, WHEN, WHERE AND HOW 'FAITH' OFFERS AN IMPORTANT DIMENSION AND AN ADDED VALUE IN CURATING EXHIBITIONS."

# DISPLAY OF THE SACRED RELICS GALLERY IN THE MUSEUM OF TURKISH AND ISLAMIC ART, ISTANBUL

**Beyza Uzun,**  
Independent Researcher,  
Istanbul, Turkey.

This paper examines the display of the newly-formed Sacred Relics Gallery (Mukaddes Emanetler) in the Museum of Turkish and Islamic Art (TİEM) in Istanbul by looking at both physical and conceptual elements of the gallery. For the first time, the sacred relics of the Prophet Muhammad were installed as an individual and permanent exhibition gallery after the renovation of the museum on its 100th anniversary in 2014. More than forty objects are exhibited in the Sacred Relics Gallery and almost all of them belong to the Ottoman period. The beard (lihye-i saâdet) and the footprint (kadem-i saâdet) of the Prophet Muhammad constitute the core of the exhibition. Besides, various objects related to Islam, the Prophet Muhammad, and the Ka'ba—such as the calligraphic panels, the Qur'an and hadith manuscripts, the kiblenuma, the cover and the lock of the Ka'ba—are displayed in the gallery.

Before the formation of this gallery some of these objects were exhibited in various sections of the museum. By taking into consideration of the TİEM's approach to exhibiting these objects starting from its opening in 1914, this study looks at the motivations behind the creation of the Sacred Relics Gallery, and its formation process based on the semi-structured interviews carried out with the museum's curators. In addition, this study aims to understand what the Sacred Relics Gallery means for its visitors in a museum context.

## BEYZA UZUN



Beyza Uzun completed her BA in Business Administration at Bahçeşehir University, Istanbul. Uzun was accepted into the MA programme in Archaeology and History of Art at Koç University, Istanbul, where she wrote a thesis entitled *Ottoman Olfactory Traditions in a Palatial Space: Incense Burners in the Topkapı Palace*. She presented a conference paper entitled *Scenting an Imperial Residence: Objects from the Topkapı Palace Collections*, based on her thesis in collaboration with her advisor Nina Ergin at the workshop *Empires of the Eye: Ottoman Material Culture and its Place in Birmingham* (2014), which will be published in the first issue of *Journal of Islamic Material Culture* in 2016. Uzun studied her second MA programme History and Philosophy of Art with a term in Rome at the University of Kent, Canterbury. She received the Most Outstanding Dissertation in the University of Kent School of Arts Rome Program Award in 2015 for her thesis entitled *Three Italian Portraits of the Ottoman Sultan*. Previously, she worked at the Topkapı Palace Museum as assistant to Haluk Dursun, the museum director. Currently, she is working at the Library of Presidency office in Istanbul, while she is working on her research proposal for a PhD in Art History.



# NOT MELAKA BUT MAREGE: ISLAMIC ART IN AUSTRALIA (OR, 'WHAT HAVE THE UMAYYADS EVER DONE FOR US?')

**James Bennett**, Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia, and **Sam Bowker**, Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Charles Sturt University, Wagga Wagga, Australia.

Beyond Melaka is a continent which Indonesian Muslims knew for centuries as Marege. Today it is called Australia. Before the British invasion in 1788, northern Australian indigenous peoples had a long history of maritime contact and cultural exchange with South Sulawesi people. This history of early contact with Islam is preserved in ancient Aboriginal rock paintings and ancestral ceremonies evoking the name of Allah. During the nineteenth century, Afghan and Middle Eastern Muslim cameleers contributed an all-important role in the opening up of Australia's vast 'outback' interior. One of the oldest mosques outside the Old World was built in Adelaide in 1888 and continues to be a place of worship for modern immigrant communities.

Curating art and material culture exhibitions in multicultural Australia, where these diverse interest groups contest established historical narratives, presents exciting opportunities for public engagement. Both Islamic and indigenous art share the impact of European Orientalism, social marginalisation and recent politicization, and thus seek an earnest focus for cultural critique and contemporary reconciliation.

The paper looks at the differing ways that two major institutions explore revised representations of, and relations between, South-East Asian Islamic and Indigenous Australian visual cultures to create a distinctive Australian vision of Islamic art. This is a vision that rejects the centrality of the expanded Middle East and showcases the formation of vibrant pluralist identities. The institutions are the Art Gallery of South Australia - whose Islamic art collection, commenced in 1916, forms the only permanent display in a public institution in Australia - and Charles Sturt University, which teaches a unique Islamic art subject developed through the experiences of regional Australian students.

## JAMES BENNETT



James Bennett is the Curator of Asian Art at the Art Gallery of South Australia, Adelaide. His major exhibitions and catalogue publications include *Crescent Moon: Islamic Art and Civilisation of Southeast Asia* (2005), *Golden Journey: Japanese Art from Australian Collections* (2009), *Beneath the Winds: Masterpieces of Southeast Asian Art* (2011), *Realms of Wonder: Jain, Hindu and Islamic Art of India* (2013) and *Treasure Ships: Art in the Age of Spices* (2014). He is currently undertaking doctoral research at the University of Adelaide into the role of Indian trade textiles as a vehicle for the transmission of Islamic art motifs to Indonesia.

## SAM BOWKER



Sam Bowker is Lecturer in Art History and Visual Culture at Charles Sturt University, based in Wagga Wagga, Australia. He is the curator of exhibitions on the theme of Khayamiya (Egyptian Tentmaker Applique) for the Islamic Art Museum Malaysia and regional Australian galleries. He developed 'ART240: Introduction to Islamic Art and Design' as Australia's first online undergraduate subject in Islamic art from contemporary perspectives. He previously lectured in Art and Design Theory for the Australian National University (where he completed his PhD), and worked in Education for the National Portrait Gallery, National Library and National Museum of Australia.

# REPRESENTING THE BANGSAMORO IN AN EXHIBITION OF ETHNOGRAPHY AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE PHILIPPINES

**Ana P. Labrador,** Deputy Director and Chief Curator and **Cyril A. Santos,** Museum Researcher, National Museum of the Philippines.

Installing an exhibition on Muslim Filipinos in the Philippines has been a challenge at best and sometimes construed as provocative whenever labelled *Bangsamoro*. This is a collective term used by the Muslim groups in Mindanao, Southern Philippines to identify their distinct identity, history and Islamic religious affinity from the rest of the Philippines. This ascription also implies the *Moro* peoples' complex, multi-faceted and continuing struggles and as such is still a sensitive and contested subject among scholars and local experts in the fields of Islamic studies, history and governance.

From a museological perspective, however, the *Bangsamoro* offers an opportunity to display parts of the National Museum collection, involving complex negotiations regarding representation of the cultural complexity of *Bangsamoro*, as well as the conceptual understanding of collections prepared for the exhibition.

Featuring 251 objects from 10 Islamized ethnic groups in the Southern Philippines, the National Museum of the Philippines opened the exhibition *Faith, Tradition and Place: Bangsamoro Art from the National Ethnographic Collection* in October 2014, part of the 'Eid al-Adha celebration.

In this paper, we will discuss continuing developments in the organisation and display of museum collections of Islamic art and material culture in 2013, amid passing of the *Bangsamoro* Basic Law as a new political entity. It will be comprised of two parts that will document the conceptualization and collections management of the curated Islamic art and material culture. It will also provide a critical self-assessment of the processes undertaken in consideration of the current *Bangsamoro* status in the Philippine context.

## ANA P. LABRADOR



Ana P. Labrador is Assistant Director at the National Museum of the Philippines, responsible for research development, museology and technical assistance. She is its chief curator and head of collections management. Dr Labrador was a Fellow of the ICCROM in Rome, Italy, in 2007, examining conservation from the perspective of traditional knowledge in Southeast Asia. In February 2008, she took up a 4-month Visiting Scholarship at the University of Melbourne's Centre of Cultural Materials Conservation (CCMC) in Australia where she is also an honorary academic fellow. She has written and edited a number of books and international journals on anthropology, art and museology.

## CYRIL A. SANTOS



Cyril A. Santos is Museum Researcher II in the Ethnology Division, National Museum of the Philippines. She has been involved in curating, managing and documenting ethnographic collections since 2009. She is also currently completing her MA in Archaeology at the University of the Philippines, Diliman.

# BORDER CROSSINGS AT THE MUSEUM:

## INTERPRETATION, INTEGRATION AND EMPATHIC CURATORIAL STRATEGIES IN AN ERA OF TRAUMA AND DISPLACEMENT

**Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi**, Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History, 2016-2017, Department of Visual Arts, Wells College, New York, USA.

The recent global surge of public and museum-initiated interest in Islamic art has been interpreted broadly as having a direct correlation with diplomatic imperatives. From the permanent installations of the 'Galleries for the Art of the Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia' at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, to those of the 'Arts de l'Islam' at the Louvre, exhibits focusing on Islamic arts are targeted to cater not only to tourists, but also to the many Muslim minorities local to these cosmopolitan cities.

Since the onslaught of the so-called 'migrant crisis', German institutions in particular have sought to socially engage refugees with the existing collections of Islamic arts and artefacts in Germany. The sphere of the museum has acquired a new cultural resonance as a kind of bridge to the traumatic experience of border crossing. With progressive programmes such as Multaqa at the Museum for Islamic Art in Berlin, it becomes apparent that the larger onus on curators is palpably real in the terms of the wide-reaching societal implications of their exhibitions.

Multaqa carries great promise as a programme to be modelled upon and replicated throughout Europe.



But how can museums and other institutions showcase and contextualize the arts of Islamic lands across time and space, in a way that is attentive to the traumatic experiences of displacement, migration and forced exile?

One of the many challenges faced by curators is the question of relevance and its attendant presentist concerns—but, in an era of exacerbating xenophobia, what are the broader ramifications of such exhibitions for not only for these migrant communities but for the larger populace, vis-à-vis their potential to facilitate empathic understanding? In what ways can or should curators attend to the complex diasporic/exilic sensibilities and sensitivities of its newest viewership? In assessing various European integrationist and assimilationist discourses, this paper seeks to examine the gravity and consequences of museums' pivotal role in providing an empathic and dignified space in society, where it is otherwise absent.

## NANCY DEMERDASH-FATEMI

Nancy Demerdash-Fatemi, a Visiting Assistant Professor of Art History in the Department of Visual Arts at Wells College, specializes in modern and contemporary art and architectural history of the Middle East and North Africa. In the fall of 2015, she obtained her doctorate from the Department of Art and Archaeology at Princeton University. Her dissertation, *Tunisia, 1940-1970: The Spatial Politics of Reconstruction, Decolonization, and Development*, examines modernist architectural practices in Tunisia as they emerged against the backdrop of postwar reconstruction, decolonization and a nascent national consciousness. She earned a Master of Science in Architecture Studies (S.M.Arch.S.) from the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and holds an Honors B.A. in Art History and a certificate in Religious Studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison (2006). Before coming to Wells College, she taught as a lecturer in the Department of the History of Art and Architecture at DePaul University, as well as at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Princeton-Mellon Initiative for Architecture, Urbanism, and the Humanities. In addition to her commitment to teaching, Nancy serves as an editorial assistant for the *International Journal of Islamic Architecture*, and has published in *New Middle Eastern Studies*, the *Journal of North African Studies*, and the *Journal of Arabian Studies* (forthcoming).

# LABELLING ISLAM: ON THE LACK OF A STRUCTURING IDEA IN EUROPEAN EXHIBITIONS OF ISLAM

**Klas Grinell**, Curator of Contemporary Global Issues, Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, and Associate Professor in the History of Ideas at Gothenburg University, Sweden.

This paper analyzes contemporary European exhibitions of Islam using framing theory paired with the perspective of Beverly Serrell's *Exhibit Label*. The thesis is that exhibitions lacking one big idea most often become vague, cluttered and confusing to visitors. The main empirical material consists of exhibitions in England, Germany and Denmark.

On a policy level exhibitions on Islam in Europe seem to have a big and shared idea. Exhibitions of Islamic artefacts have since September 11, 2001 been surrounded by a growing rhetoric of cultural tolerance. This, and a more vocal Islamophobic discourse, has produced a new context for exhibitions of Islam. All over the world there have been investments in new galleries for Islamic artefacts, often with support from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia.

Most of the exhibitions of Islamic artefacts in Europe studied are arranged chronologically and geographically. Often each section is introduced via a dynasty. The material is further subdivided according to material, technique, location and time. These different logics of categorization are intertwined in a way that makes the exhibition narratives very complex. The big framing idea tends to get lost in details.

Dynasties might be a practical device to place objects in time and place. But dynastic labelling is more of a scaffold for historical work, than an actual historical narrative. According to this paper's perspective, categories that name the time and place of objects must be chosen in relation to the big idea they are intended to convey. Via close readings, this paper explores if there is a big idea behind the curating of Islamic collections in Europe.



## KLAS GRINELL

Klas Grinell is Curator of Contemporary Global Issues, Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg, and Associate Professor in the History of Ideas at Gothenburg University. He is also Coordinator and researcher in the Swedish research council funded project *Museological framings of Islam in Europe* and a board member of Cultural Heritage without Borders.

His recent publications include 'The Frames of Islamicate Art' in Tomas Nilsson ed. *Uses of Heritage* (Halmstad University Press, forthcoming); 'Ilm al-Hududiyya: Un-inheriting Eurocentricity', in ed. Mats Andrén et al., *Cultural borders of Europe* (Berghan Books, forthcoming); 'Muslim Cultural Heritage in Sweden and Europe' Eurozine.com 2016, 'Challenging Normality: Museums in/as Public Space' in Annette Fromm et al., *Museums and Truth*, Cambridge Scholars Press, 2014; 'Der Islam – Ein aspekt zeitgenössiger Weltkultur' in Susan Kamel & Christine Gerbich (eds.), *Experimentierfeld Museums*, Transcript Verlag, 2014.

Klas is currently curating the exhibition segments 'Meccan Crossroads', 'Varieties of Democracy' and 'Silk Roads', due to open in April 2017 at the Museum of World Culture, Gothenburg.

# THE ROLE OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND 'CONTEXT' IN THE DISPLAY OF ISLAMIC MATERIAL CULTURE

**Benedict Leigh,**  
Curator, Middle East  
Department, British  
Museum, UK.

Archaeology has always been, and continues to be, an important component in the display of Islamic material culture. The majority of Islamic artworks in historical collections are from archaeological contexts, and the expanding field of Islamic archaeology is rapidly altering our understanding of Islamic material culture. This paper will provide a critical appraisal of the use of archaeology in displays of Islamic art, and look at the potential for archaeological objects and concepts to enhance Islamic displays in the future.

In 2015, through a generous grant from the Peter Kirk Memorial Fund, I was able to travel across Europe and assess the use of archaeological objects and concepts in a number of diverse museum collections. This research provided important case studies in the successful display of Islamic archaeology, and the benefits of including selective archaeological concepts in the broader display of Islamic material culture. This paper will outline the results of this study and look at the proposed redisplay of Islamic archaeology in the Albukhary Foundation galleries of the Islamic World at the British Museum. The British Museum has extensive collections of Islamic archaeology from the sites of Samarra and Siraf, providing a unique opportunity to look at the challenges and benefits of displaying Islamic archaeology within a national museum context.

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*"ARCHAEOLOGY HAS ALWAYS BEEN, AND CONTINUES TO BE, AN IMPORTANT COMPONENT IN THE DISPLAY OF ISLAMIC MATERIAL CULTURE."*



## BENEDICT LEIGH

Benedict Leigh is an Islamic archaeologist and curator who has excavated across the Middle East, and currently works at the British Museum. Following an undergraduate degree in Archaeology at Durham, Benedict completed his Masters in Arab and Islamic Archaeology at University College London - Qatar. His fieldwork has taken him across the Middle East, with a specific focus on Islamic period archaeology of Arabian Gulf. Benedict has worked with various collections of Islamic art including the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, and currently works at the British Museum. In April 2015, Benedict was awarded a Peter Kirk Memorial Fund Grant to travel across Europe and conduct a systematic assessment of its diverse collections of Islamic Art.



# BRINGING ACADEMIC RESEARCH INTO THE MUSEUM: THE EXHIBITION TRAIL *OBJECTS IN TRANSFER* IN THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC ART IN BERLIN

**Sophia Vassilopoulou**, Free University of Berlin and Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin, Germany.

How did the façade of a desert castle end up on the first floor of the Pergamonmuseum? Why does a fresco show the Pope standing on an Arab carpet? How was the secret of lustre production transferred between Iraq and Italy? The transcultural exhibition trail through the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin developed by the project *Objects in Transfer: Concepts for Communicating Transfer Processes between the Near East and Europe in the Museum Context* (2012–2016)\* traces paths by which objects migrated across continents, and the ways in which motifs, shapes, and production techniques reveal a network of relationships between widely differing cultures. Thus the trail questions modern assumptions about cultural boundaries and epochs, and with them, the whole notion of 'Islamic art' as a separate category.

The study of transfer processes within a more and more globally-conceived art history is a growing field in current academic research.



The aim of the project was to transpose this new art historical approach to objects into museum practice, by developing appropriate interpretation formats in order to transfer contemporary academic research into modern museum communication.

The paper will focus on the format of the specific exhibition trail as a means for introducing transcultural perspectives into a culturally-bounded 'Islamic' permanent exhibition. It will also address the project's aims, constraints and results regarding the development of special interpretation displays, such as hands-on displays, digital media and 'peepholes'.

\* Funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and carried out as a cooperative venture between the Collaborative Research Centre *Episteme in Motion* (Free University of Berlin) and the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin.

## SOPHIA VASSILOPOULOU

Sophia Vassilopoulou studied art history in Berlin after finishing her law studies in Athens. She has completed a two-year curator trainee programme in the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin and now works as a research associate in a joint research project of the Free University and the Museum of Islamic Art in Berlin. The project *Objects in Transfer: Concepts for Communicating Transfer Processes between the Near East and Europe in the Museum Context* (2012–2016) has developed an exhibition trail within the museum's permanent collection that reveals the traces of transcultural relationships. When not working on transcultural entanglements of objects and displaying methods in museums, she focuses on her dissertation project about transregional references in medieval Anatolian architecture.

# FROM MOSQUE TO MUSEUM - THE MUSEUM OF ISLAMIC AND NEAR EASTERN CULTURES IN BE'ER SHEVA, ISRAEL

**Sharon Laor-Sirak,**  
Curator, Museum  
of Islamic and Near  
Eastern Cultures,  
Be'er Sheva, Israel.

The Museum of Islamic and Near Eastern Cultures is a major part of the conservation and development project of Be'er Sheva's Old City. The museum is housed in a mosque, dating from the late Ottoman period (1905-6). In 2012, the museum was re-opened after a long restoration process. As the curator, my role has been to establish the museum's permanent and temporary exhibitions as well as to modify the courtyard and main hall for these displays. This has been especially challenging since most of the museum's visitors are non-Muslim Israelis who may have misconceptions about Islam.

Therefore, my main goal has been to offer the visitors a positive, engaging and enlightening experience that will expose them to the richness and beauty of Islamic art and culture. This experience begins in the courtyard, with its centrepiece fountain and vegetation typical of Islamic courtyards and gardens. In the main hall, emphasis has been placed on the architectural elements that were preserved from the original mosque.



The temporary exhibitions display themes that are also familiar to non-Muslims, such as carpets, ceramics and calligraphy, and present the traditional Islamic works alongside contemporary artwork and European artwork, thereby highlighting the influence of Islamic art and culture throughout the ages.

Despite the objective difficulties in establishing a museum that focuses on Islamic art and culture, the museum succeeds in its goals to offer a positive, engaging and enlightening experience, and the growing number of visitors over the past two years speaks for itself.

## SHARON LAOR-SIRAK

Sharon Laor-Sirak has been curator of the Museum of Islamic and Near Eastern Culture in Be'er Sheva since 2012. During her tenure, she established the museum's permanent display as well as modifying the main hall for temporary exhibitions. Since the museum opened, Laor-Sirak has curated three exhibitions, published an exhibition catalogue and pamphlets and created an educational programme.

In 2012 she served as curator of the Joe Alon Center-The Museum of Bedouin Culture. In that same year, Laor-Sirak also curated the exhibition *Ahmad Canaan and Islamic Art* in the Wilfrid Israel Museum. Between 1998 and 2008, Laor-Sirak lectured and served as a teaching assistant at Beit Berl College's Hamidrasha School of the Arts, as well as at Tel Aviv University, the University of Haifa and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 2008, after receiving her PhD, Laor-Sirak joined the faculty at Austin Peay State University in Tennessee in the United States. During that period Laor-Sirak continued to pursue her research on cultural encounters in the Eastern Mediterranean and their reflection in art, took part in nine conferences in her field and published three articles. Since 2016, Laor-Sirak has lectured on Islamic art at the Open University in Israel.

# ISLAMIC ART IN SAUDI ARABIA: RECONNECTING COMMUNITIES WITH COLLECTIONS

**Idries Trevathan,** Islamic Arts Curator, and **Laila al-Faddagh,** International Exhibitions Curator, King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture, Saudi Arabia.

The inauguration of the Islamic Civilization gallery at the King Abdulaziz Center for world culture represents a unique undertaking, since it is the first time a Saudi cultural institution has devoted a permanent space and resources to the study, preservation and exhibition of Islamic visual culture in the broadest sense. This gallery not only offers a unique opportunity to reconnect Islamic objects with the people, regions and communities in which they originated, but more broadly, attempts to connect Saudi audiences to the wider Muslim world, including often peripheral, and overlooked, regions and cultures in Sub-Saharan Africa and South and Southeast Asia. This undertaking presents both challenges and opportunities for museum professionals at the Center. Establishing an Islamic Civilization Gallery in Saudi Arabia also raises questions regarding the appropriateness of employing conventional approaches in the research, methodology, and presentation of Islamic art as used in other museums abroad.

In order to address such questions, the Center has conducted several audience research studies to better understand the public's reception, knowledge and preconceptions of Islamic visual culture especially of non-Arab regions and cultures. This short paper attempts to outline some findings from this research and how it proved crucial in the formulation of aims and objectives for the gallery – including its definition of 'Islamic art'.



## IDRIES TREVATHAN

Idries Trevathan is the Islamic Arts Curator at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. Prior to working at the Center, Trevathan worked at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia and Montanaro Circle, a successful initiative to promote and teach Islamic art short courses to schools and private groups in the UK and Italy. Trevathan is also in the process of completing his PhD at the Princes School of Traditional Arts in London which focuses on the study of colour in Islamic art and culture. Some of his publications include 'The Ottoman Room at the Islamic Arts Museum Malaysia. A technical study into its methods and materials', *Conservation and the Eastern Mediterranean: Contributions to the 2010 IIC Congress* (Istanbul, 2010); 'Bringing it Back Home: Redefining Islamic Art in Saudi Arabia', in *Representing the Nation. The Use of Museums and Heritage to Create National Narratives and Identity in the Arabian Peninsula* (Routledge Research in Museum Studies, 2016) and 'From Texts to Tiles: Sufi colour conceptualization in Safavid Persia', in *Colour and Light in Ancient and Medieval Art* (Ashgate, forthcoming).



## LAILA AL-FADDAGH

Laila Al-Faddagh is the International Exhibitions Curator at the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture in Saudi Arabia. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Art and a Master's of Science in International Studies with a concentration in International Human Development, Society, and Education. Her experience includes work placement with the Los Angeles County Museum of Art in the Art of the Middle East Department, exhibition development in partnership with the British Museum, and most recently Laila has been involved in the strategic partnership with The National Museum in Riyadh with regards to the Roads of Arabia Asia tour. She is also an active participant of the American Alliance of Museums and Art Dubai.

# CURATING ISLAMIC ART IN THE CENTRAL UNITED STATES: NEW APPROACHES TO COLLECTIONS, INSTALLATIONS, AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

**Kimberly Masteller,** Jeanne McCray Beals Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, USA.

In the early twentieth century, museums across the central United States built collections showcasing world art, including impressive holdings of art from the historical Islamic lands. Now a century later, we view these objects through a different lens. Even though the objects and their aesthetic achievements have not changed, their interpretation has, due to new cultural and political contexts, large and diverse museum audiences, and the changing role of museums in contemporary society.

This paper examines how four museums in the American Midwest are negotiating these changes through recent exhibitions and reinstallations of their Islamic collections.



The paper centres upon the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art and explores how the museum developed the 2013-14 exhibition *Echoes: Islamic Art and Contemporary Artists*, in conversation and partnership with the local Kansas City community. This exhibition showcased a permanent collection that had been off view for decades, recasting it in a new installation that was intended to inspire aesthetic, cultural and community dialogues.

The paper next explores recent re-installations of historical Islamic Art at the St. Louis Museum of Art, the Detroit Institute of Art, and the Art Institute of Chicago, comparing approaches to installation, interpretation, programming and community participation. The paper analyzes how each of these Midwestern museums has tailored its presentation of Islamic Art, negotiating, and in some cases challenging institutional models in order to frame Islamic Art for its twenty-first century audiences.

## KIMBERLY MASTELLER

Kimberly Masteller is the Jeanne McCray Beals Curator of South and Southeast Asian Art at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City. From 2002-2008, Masteller held the position of Assistant Curator of Islamic and Later Indian Art at the Harvard Art Museums. Masteller has curated many exhibitions, including *Echoes: Islamic Art and Contemporary Artists*, and the traveling exhibitions *Roads of Arabia: Archaeology and History of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* and *From the Land of the Taj Mahal: Paintings for India's Mughal Emperors from the Chester Beatty Library* at the Nelson-Atkins. She is the author of several publications on Asian and Islamic Art, including *Masterworks from India and Southeast Asia: The Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* (2016). Masteller has taught courses at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, the University of Kansas, the Art Institute of Boston, Ohio University, The Ohio State University and Denison University. Masteller is completing her PhD at The Ohio State University and is a recipient of grants from the Fulbright Fellowship programme and the Social Science Research Council.

# FROM MALI TO MALACCA: REDISPLAYING ISLAMIC MATERIAL CULTURE AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

**Venetia Porter,**  
Curator, Islamic and  
Contemporary Middle  
Eastern Art, Department  
of the Middle East,  
British Museum, UK.

The British Museum's John Addis Islamic Gallery opened to the public in 1989, reflecting the art historical trends of the time. The gallery was organised along dynastic and geographical lines and is still perceived as one of the world's great displays of Islamic art. A quarter of a century on, and thanks to the generous support of the Albukhary Foundation, the British Museum is embarking on a major redisplay of its holdings pertaining to the cultures of the Islamic world.

In two new galleries situated in the heart of the Museum, collections ranging from West Africa to Southeast Asia and China will present a series of narratives about the people and cultures of the Islamic world from the seventh century to the present day. A multi-disciplinary team from across the museum is currently engaged with a number of issues. How best to integrate archaeological finds, material culture of the recent past and contemporary art with objects traditionally categorised as 'Islamic art'? How to relate objects from disparate times and places to human practices, beliefs and narratives? How best to communicate the narratives to a wide range of audiences? How to work with audiences to establish visitors' prior knowledge, experience and expectations?



What role does a gallery in a national institution play in creating a better understanding of the complexity and diversity of the broader Islamic world?

In this talk, we will share our ideas and aspirations for the new galleries, which will open to the public in October 2018, and discuss the challenges and processes involved in the creation of these galleries.

## VENETIA PORTER

Venetia Porter (lead curator for the Albukhary Foundation Galleries of the Islamic World project) is a curator of the collections of Islamic art, in particular relating to the Arab World and Turkey, and Contemporary Middle Eastern art. Previously curator of Islamic coins in the Department of Coins and Medals, she gained a degree in Arabic and Persian at the University of Oxford, followed by an M.Phil in Islamic Art, obtaining her PhD on the history and monuments of the Tahirid Dynasty of the Yemen (1454-1517) from the University of Durham. In 2006, she curated *Word into Art: Artists of the Modern Middle East* and in 2012, *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*, versions of which have been displayed in Leiden, Paris and Doha.

The other members of the curatorial team for the Albukhary Foundation galleries are Ladan Akbarnia, Fahmida Suleman, Zeina Klinke-Hoppe, William Greenwood and Project Curator Amandine Merat.



# EXPLORING WORLD FAITHS IN MUSEUM COLLECTIONS

**Jennifer Siung,**  
Head of Education,  
Chester Beatty  
Library, Ireland.

The Chester Beatty Library is a unique art museum and library situated in the centre of Dublin, Ireland. Its uniqueness derives from the collection of Sir Alfred Chester Beatty (1875-1968), which in an Irish context is one-of-a-kind. The Library's rich collection comes from across Asia, the Middle East, North Africa and Europe. Through its exhibitions and learning programmes Irish people and new multi-ethnic communities can share and discover diverse cultures as represented in the collections. Intercultural dialogue and learning plays a key role in the Library's mission and encourages visitors to compare, contrast and explore the historical, cultural, scientific and religious aspects of its collections.

As part of the Library's commitment to intercultural dialogue and learning, it teamed up with members of the Irish Anna Lindh Network (ALF) and the Inclusion and Diversity Services, Northern Ireland. A number of seminars and projects were developed; these included Understanding Islam in Irish Education seminar; Ways of Seeing I & II learning resources for teachers exploring language and world faiths through the collections of the Chester Beatty Library and Ulster Museum; and Interbelief Dialogue in Contemporary Ireland seminar.



As a result of these activities, the Library discovered very little learning resources, training and support exists for trainee teachers and teachers in the Irish education system. The profile of the Irish population has changed since immigration during the Celtic Tiger (a period of rapid economic growth 1995-2007). The profile of children in Irish schools has become more culturally diverse.

This paper proposes to look at how museums can address cultural diversity through its collections; partner with learning institutions and organisations in the development of key learning resources with particular focus on world faiths, and how to integrate pupils and teachers.

## JENNIFER SIUNG

Jennifer Siung is Head of Education in the Chester Beatty Library, Dublin, Ireland. She commenced her post in 2000 and has developed the first multi- and intercultural learning programme in an Irish museum. Her work involves engaging with the Islamic, Asian, North African, East Asian and European collections of the Library, devising numerous programmes including intercultural projects for schools, cultural festivals, and creating links with local multi-ethnic communities.

Jennifer has been invited to sit on a number advisory boards; Dublin City Council Chinese New Year Festival, ASEMUS Museum Education Exchange Programme, Cultural Diversity Policy of the Arts Council and the European Open Method of Coordination on Intercultural Dialogue (2010-2015).

She has studied art history, arts administration, adult and community education, an M Litt exploring Japanese influence on 20th century Irish art, has an intermediate level in Mandarin and participated in the Getty NextGen for museum leaders in 2012 and Learning in Museums, ICOM China in 2014. She is one of the coordinators of The Creative Museum project; creative-museum.net.

# LOOKING OUT AND LOOKING IN: ISLAMIC ART AT THE MFA, BOSTON IN THE 21ST CENTURY

**Laura Weinstein,**  
Ananda Coomaraswamy  
Curator of South Asian  
and Islamic Art, Museum  
of Fine Arts, Boston, USA.

Should a gallery of Islamic art remain outside of current public discourses about Islamic culture or should it engage with and seek to complicate them? How can a museum explore the unique qualities of Islamic art without 'othering' it? These and other questions have been raised at the MFA, Boston since a 2013 exhibition entitled *Sacred Pages: Conversations about the Qur'an*. Labels were written for the exhibition by 25 Muslim individuals from the Boston area, each of whom had chosen a Qur'an page from the collection to write about. Seeing the 8th- to 20th-century pages alongside personal responses and photos of Muslims living in Boston at that time brought to light the ways in which these objects are part of a varied, rich and evolving cultural and religious tradition.

Since that time, the MFA has continued its dialogue with the public about how to make the Islamic gallery a resource for local communities while at the same time reflecting the breath and majesty of Islamic artistic traditions. In 2016 a series of discussion sessions brought together community stakeholders, including both Muslims and non-Muslims, to envision a future Islamic gallery. In this period, the curator also engaged in an extensive study of the past incarnations of the Islamic gallery and of the people and institutions behind the formation of the collection.

This paper will use the MFA's recent efforts to explore the challenge of creating installations of Islamic art that are rooted in local communities and current discourses without becoming mired in the political or losing focus on the art.



## LAURA WEINSTEIN

Laura Weinstein is Ananda Coomaraswamy Curator of South Asian and Islamic art at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. She completed her PhD in 2011 at Columbia University, where she studied intersections between South Asian and Islamic art. Her scholarly work and publications have focused on Deccani manuscripts of Persian and Urdu texts and the dynamics of cultural exchange in Indo-Persianate societies.

Since arriving at the MFA in 2009, Laura has curated exhibitions of paintings and sculptures drawing on the museum's Islamic and South Asian collections, as well as a major exhibition of contemporary art from South and East Asia, the MFA's most ambitious contemporary art project to date. She re-installed the South and Southeast Asian collection in 2011 and is now working on a plan for the future of the Islamic gallery, which was last updated in 1982. Her museum publications include two exhibition catalogues, including the first ever book on the MFA's Islamic collection, and several articles exploring Indian and Islamic collecting histories.

# PRESENTING ISLAMIC ART AND THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY: THE HAJJ EXHIBITION AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

**Qaisra M. Khan,**  
Independent Curator,  
Nasser D. Khalili Collection  
of Islamic Art, UK.

In 2012 the British Museum exhibited *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam*, a ground breaking exhibition which explored a topic of deep religious faith. This exhibition took place within a secular institution and was targeted at a mixed community of non-Muslim and Muslim visitors. The outreach programme was tailored to bring in audiences who might not otherwise frequent museums, and the feedback we received gave an interesting view into what worked and what may not have worked so well. I will endeavour to demonstrate the processes we used to engage Muslim communities and how well this was received in light of the topic being presented.



## QAISRA M. KHAN

Qaisra began her studies with a degree in Law and an MPhil in Oriental Studies, both from Cambridge University, after which she moved into a career of financial consulting. Five years later she pursued her passion for Islamic art by embarking on roles at Christie's Auctioneers and the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar.

Her most important role came with the seminal *Hajj: Journey to the Heart of Islam* exhibition at the British Museum from 2010-2012 where, as Project Curator, she worked in the development and delivery of the exhibition as well as extensively on the community outreach programme. After this Qaisra worked as Project Curator for the Zayed National Museum Project at the British Museum, developing a narrative for the permanent galleries of the forthcoming Zayed National Museum.

Currently she is at the Nasser D. Khalili Collection of Islamic Art, working on a multi-volume publication entitled *Hajj and The Arts of Pilgrimage* which will focus on the Arts of Pilgrimage Collection, one of the largest and most important of its kind.

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"HAJJ: JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF ISLAM, A GROUND BREAKING EXHIBITION WHICH EXPLORED A TOPIC OF DEEP RELIGIOUS FAITH."

# REINTERPRETING ISLAMIC ART EXHIBITION AND THE MASS MEDIA

**Melissa Forstrom Al kadhi,** Doctoral Candidate at the University of Westminster, London, UK and Adjunct Professor at Manhattanville College, New York, USA.

Since the terrorist attacks of 9/11, Islam and Muslim peoples have been politicized and represented as closely associated (if not inextricable) with religious fundamentalism and Islamic terrorism in many Western mass media representations. Contemporaneously, there has been an increase in Islamic art exhibition, both temporary exhibitions and reinstallations of permanent collections in the USA and Europe. Islamic art exhibition is often discussed as telling 'another story' of Islam, 'bridging cultural divides' and 'combating' negative media narratives.

This illustrated presentation investigates the relationships between contemporary mass media representations and the written interpretation in the following Islamic art exhibitions: *the New Galleries for the Art of Arab Lands, Turkey, Iran, Central Asia and Later South Asia*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; *Arts of Islam*, Louvre, Paris and *Pearls on String: Artists, Poets, and Patrons at the Great Islamic Courts*, Walters Art Museum, Baltimore. This paper explores oversimplified binaries between the media and museums and exposes the dialogical and sometimes reflective relationship between media representations of Islam and the exhibitions of Islamic art.

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"SINCE THE TERRORIST ATTACKS OF 9/11, ISLAM AND MUSLIM PEOPLES HAVE BEEN POLITICIZED AND REPRESENTED AS CLOSELY ASSOCIATED (IF NOT INEXTRICABLE) WITH RELIGIOUS FUNDAMENTALISM"



## MELISSA FORSTROM AL KADHI

Melissa is a doctoral candidate at the University of Westminster (London) and an Adjunct Professor in Communications and Media at Manhattanville College and Suny Purchase (New York). Melissa has been invited to speak at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, the New York Public Library, the King Abdulaziz Center for World Culture at the American Alliance of Museums National Conference, and P21 Gallery- London. She has guest lectured at Johns Hopkins, the University of Leicester, the University of Westminster, and the University of Swansea. Her doctoral thesis (anticipated 2017) is titled: *Interpretations and Visitors in Two Islamic Art Exhibitions*.

# IN PURSUIT OF ISLAMIC ART IN MOSCOW

**Galina Lasikova,**  
Curator, Mardjani  
Foundation for Support  
and Development  
of Research and  
Cultural Programmes,  
Moscow, Russia.

The paper treats the representation of Islamic Art in Russia by national museums during recent decades, and the experience of the Mardjani Foundation for Support and Development of Research and Cultural Programs in changing the attitude towards Islamic Art in Russia. In spite of the fact that Islam is one of the traditional religions of the country and the Muslim population is very substantial, thus far Islamic art has never been in the focus of any national museum institution in Russia.

The Mardjani Foundation is a private institution established in 2006. Inspired by the idea of creating a museum of Islamic Art in Moscow, the Foundation focussed its activity on art collecting and exhibitions, research and publications, conferences and programmes for kids. Today, the Mardjani collection comprises thousands of objects embracing classical medieval art from Islamic countries, works of contemporary authors, and Muslim folk art of the 19th to the early-20th centuries. It partners with many national museums and galleries as well as with Muslim organizations across Russia to bring together the experience of museum professionals with the aspirations of Muslim societies and general public.

After a decade of the Foundation's existence, the state of appreciation of Islamic culture in the Russian capital has been substantially changed and Islamic art has become a part of everyday Moscow art life. Now, the idea of creation of the national museum of Islamic art has moved to a new level and is being discussed within the state cultural institutions.



## GALINA LASIKOVA

Galina Lasikova is an Islamic art historian based in Moscow, and is the author of a number of publications on Safavid textiles and other aspects of Islamic Art. She started her museum career in 1998 in the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts and then in the State Museum of Oriental Art as a researcher and later as a carpet curator in the Department of the Near and Middle East. She continued to work there until 2011. After the establishment of the Mardjani Foundation in 2006 she worked on the formation of its Islamic art collection as an invited specialist. In 2011 she moved to Qatar, where she served as the curator for the textile collection of the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha. Since autumn 2013 she has been back in Moscow curating the Mardjani Foundation collection. At present she is developing several projects of the Foundation, one of which is the concept of the Museum of Islam for the Moscow Cathedral Mosque.

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*"IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT ISLAM IS ONE OF THE TRADITIONAL RELIGIONS OF THE COUNTRY AND THE MUSLIM POPULATION IS VERY SUBSTANTIAL, THUS FAR ISLAMIC ART HAS NEVER BEEN IN THE FOCUS OF ANY NATIONAL MUSEUM INSTITUTION"*



# OUTSIDE THE SHOWCASE: CULTURAL MEDIATION PROJECTS OF THE ISLAMIC DEPARTMENT OF THE MUSEUM OF ORIENTAL ART IN TURIN

**Generoso Urciuoli**,  
Islamic Department  
Manager and Projects and  
Temporary Exhibitions  
Manager, Museum of  
Oriental Art, Turin, Italy.

*Outside the Showcase* is a presentation about two recent projects designed by the Islamic Department of the Museum of Oriental Art. Can artworks contained in a museum, virtually get out of the showcase and play an active role in the cultural and knowledge field?

The Museum of Oriental Art, since its opening in December 2008, has always played a role of cultural mediation with different communities of foreigners and immigrants in the territory. The Islamic Department is particularly dynamic in this field, thinking of the artworks as a medium to develop projects of integration and enhancement by the active involvement of Islamic communities and directed to the general public. Furthermore, the role of the museum curator is changed and one of his goals, in addition to the research and the conservation of objects, is to become a cultural intermediary.

This paper will discuss two projects presented by the Islamic Department. *Mille e Una Storia. Un'Opera si Racconta* is a series of dissemination events designed to provide audiences with scientific presentations



and insights about objects of Islamic art from the collections of the Museum of Oriental Art and from other institutions, both in our city and elsewhere. The permanent gallery of Islamic art is the venue for these monthly insights. The object is first of all described using an archaeological filter, and then the presentation continues with historical, anthropological and religious information, all focused on recontextualising the object within the cultural setting in which it was produced.

Secondly, *Dal Nilo al Po' e Ritorno* is produced in collaboration with the Egyptian Museum of Turin, and is aimed at the Egyptian community present in the Turin area.

## GENEROSO URCIUOLI

Generoso Urciuoli works at the Museum of Oriental Art, Turin, as Manager of the Islamic Department; his role includes managing, studying and displaying the artworks kept in the permanent collection. Furthermore he also carries out projects focused on the Muslim world, through cooperation with Turin's Islamic community and with other institutional associations and museums in Italy.

At the Museum of Oriental Art he is also Projects and Temporary Exhibitions manager. He plans and implements projects for temporary exhibitions, under the supervision of the director and in collaboration with other departmental curators. He creates and develops large scale events such as festivals and conferences focused on other matters pertaining to the Islamic world.

Generoso received different post graduate diplomas (Islamic art and archaeology, Underwater archaeology, Archaeological culture) and a Master's degree in Archaeological Research Methodology. His primary research interests include Early Islamic Egypt and Palestine, Byzantium and the early Islamic conquests. He is a member of the *ArcheoRicette* project, acting as the scientific supervisor and senior archaeologist for Centro Studi Petrie.

He regularly holds conferences and public talks dedicated to these topics and has published a number of texts for different kind of audiences; he also presents a radio programme dedicated to Archaeology.

# FROM THE LOUVRE MUSEUM AS A UNIVERSAL MUSEUM TO COMMUNITIES

**Yannick Lintz**, Director, **Carine Juvin**, Curator for Medieval Near and Middle East, Islamic Art Department, Louvre Museum, Paris, France.

Islamic art has had a longstanding presence within the Louvre Museum, where parts of its Islamic collections have been more or less continuously on display for more than a century. With the creation of an independent Department of Islamic Art in 2003, the challenge was then to adapt a narrative about Islamic Art to this 'universal history' museum, in the political and social context of the time, and in resonance with the past traditions of the Louvre.

This narrative had to be further rewritten for the opening of Louvre Lens in the North of France in 2012. The development of the Louvre Abu Dhabi, to be opened in 2017, also leads to other questions. This paper will first present these three narratives in three contexts. Then it will address how the social and political concerns, in particular toward some communities, were handled at the Louvre Museum mainly from the educational points of view. Which programmes were developed and for which public? How have they evolved recently? What has been the attitude towards communities, in a particular French context where secularism and citizenship are put forward versus communitarianism? What are the options to follow up for the future?



## YANNICK LINTZ

Yannick Lintz holds a PhD in Achaemenid History and has been director of the Islamic Art Department of the Louvre Museum since 2013. As Invited Professor at the Sorbonne University (Paris, France) and in Senghor University (Alexandria, Egypt), she created courses on Museum Management and Museum Education. As member of the Scientific Committee of the Louvre Abu Dhabi Museum project, she studies the idea of a Global History Museum from the point of view of the Islamic world. In recent years, she has become known as an art historian of the Middle East, with a focus on the transition between the Late Antiquity and the beginning of Islam, through the city of Antinoe (Egypt). She has also developed an international expertise on Islamic Art Museums, their policies, their narratives, and their architectures, and in the art market of Classical Islamic art. Recently, she has created the PAPS program focused on the destructions and illicit traffic in Syria and Iraqi during the war. She has also organised the Islamic Art French Network.



## CARINE JUVIN

After a first position in the Exhibitions and Museum Department of the Institut du Monde Arabe (1998-2002), Carine Juvin has worked in the Louvre's Islamic Art Department since 2005. She is presently in charge of the Medieval Middle East Collections and is a correspondent for educational matters; she also took part in the creation of the new Islamic galleries and contributes to the Louvre's international cooperation and Syrian and Iraqi heritage projects. She teaches Islamic art at the Ecole du Louvre and at Paris VII-University.

In 2010, she curated the exhibition *Roads of Arabia* at the Louvre. Among her publications are several contributions to exhibition catalogues, including *Islamic Art at the Musée du Louvre*, and academic articles mainly on Islamic epigraphy. She is now completing a PhD on calligraphy and epigraphy in the late Mamluk sultanate.

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