Cover image:
VASEEM MOHAMMED, Knowledge, 85x50 cm, 2006
WHILE I WORK, I FEEL FREE, AS A CHILD WHO JUST RESEARCHES
Museum of Islamic Art in Doha (Qatar)

A NEW AWAKING OF THE ARABIC SPIRIT

The Museum of Islamic Art against the Doha skyline

Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art

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Opening of the museum of the Islamic art in Qatar represents one of the most important cultural events in the Arab world in the last few decades.

The importance of establishing such institutions is manifold. Although Arabs through its history gifted a grandiose arts, in the last hundred years cultural institutions did not exist, which would treat the artistic heritage of the Islamic arts significantly and systematically. However, this art was presented in national museums sporadically and inadequately. In simple words, in a large part of the Arab world, particularly in the countries of the Gulf, museums of Islamic arts did not exist, so its good presentation was overdue. The only phenomenon of the museum of Islamic arts or specific collections, firstly appeared in the Western countries, and that interest began in the 19th century, by establishing of the oriental studies and general interest in arts of the Orient, and which had the influence on the very art of the West, first, with its modernistic tendencies.
The grand staircase at the Museum of Islamic Art, as seen from the main entrance. 
Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art
Angular structural supports of the Museum of Islamic Art complement the faceted dome above.

The Museum of Islamic Art features a 5-storey window that offers views of the Gulf and the West Bay of Doha.

Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art.
The collection of museum of Islamic arts contains the collections of manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, white bone, textile, wood works, and jewellery.

The Western museums competed over larger collection of the artistic objects from the east, and the colonial government, which made it easy transfer of the artistic heritage from the Islamic countries to the western museums, supported them. Many exhibits that we see today in a large museum collections of European and American cities, were illegally transferred, while some of them came through buying off and gifts. However, although that process of ‘filling’ of the Western museums with the objects of Islamic arts, due to ignorance and absence of value for the own artistic heritage by the Muslims, can view as negative, in that way, even paradoxically, few master pieces of Islamic arts were saved from destruction.

Today, museums like Louvers, British Museum, Metropolitan, Museum of Islamic arts in Berlin, David Museum in Copenhagen or Chester collection in Ireland, houses the true treasury of Islamic arts. As for the Islamic countries, the awareness about the importance of the Islamic arts increased with the loss of the colonial influence and due to the effort of some individuals that through museum collections present that kind of arts. Because of that the Museum of

Vase (‘The Cavour Vase’)
Probably Syria, late 13th century. Glass, vitreous enamel, gilding. Height: 29 cm, diameter: 19.7 cm. Photo credit: Lois Lammerhuber
of Islamic Art in Doha presents a decisive effort to move things from the dead point and that this project initiates similar museums in other Arab countries. This way Islamic art would be presented in the best way, and in be in contact with the wider audience, which is of paramount importance for the dissemination of the idea of Islamic art.

During the economic expansion of many Arab countries artistic institutions operate both ways, humanizing society and with dynamic artistic activities stimulate production and development of the art market which, of course, can be stimulating for those who want to invest in the cultural sector. Museum of Islamic Art in Doha stirred hope that the Arab countries of the world summon the strength to update many bright traditions of the past, before all Islamic art.

The mission of the museum of Islamic arts is directed towards presentation and promotion of diversity of the artistic world of Islam. We talk about very important institution that collects, keeps, studies and exhibits masterpieces from three continents and within a period from 13th century. Museum has the goal to attract a largest audience and promote the civilization dialogue and cultural exchange. In this way, Sheikh Al Mayassa, transforms the state of Qatar into the cultural centre of the Near East. The Qatar Museums authority stands behind this project, and it was founded in October 2005. Its task is developing of museum institutions of Qatar.

The collection of museum of Islamic arts contains the collections of manuscripts, ceramics, metal, glass, white bone, textile, wood works, and jewellery. Exceptionally good works date from the period from 7th until 19th century.
The well-known architect I. M. Pei designed the object and he, himself was inspired by the Eastern ziggurat architecture. The result of this is exceptional, so the object of the Museum of Islamic Arts in Qatar is one of most beautiful architectural projects in the Arab world.
Museum of Islamic Art’s permanent collection Courtesy of the Museum of Islamic Art
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Imperial Decree,
Ferman of Sultan Sulayman The Magnificent
Turkey (Istanbul), 966 AH (1559-1560 AD)
Ink, colours and gold on paper
Length: 2.95 cm, width: 59.5 cm
Photo credit: Hughes Dubois
Spatially, the collection is exhibited on two floors and on galleries that surround the atrium of this museum. Apart from the rooms for permanent exhibits, there is the gallery for occasional exhibitions, the lecture hall with 197 seats, laboratory for restoration and treatment of artistic objects, library and a souvenir shop, offices, rooms for study researches, mesjids. The entire space of this museum amount to 35,500 square meters. The well-known architect I. M Pei designed the object and he, himself was inspired by the Eastern ziggurat architecture. The result of this is exceptional, so the object of the Museum of the Islamic arts in Qatar is one of most beautiful architectural projects in the Arab world.

*Mosque Lamp*

_Syria (Damascus), c.1277_

*Brass, traces of silver and black compound inlay*  
*Height: 29 cm, diameter: 29.3 cm*  
*Photo credit: Nicolas Ferrando*
Illuminated Qur'an Section

Calligraphy and Illumination by Ahmad ibn Ali ibn Abi Ibrahim
Morocco, dated 1063 AH (1653-1654 AD)
Ink, pigment and gold on paper. Width 20 cm, height 26 cm
Photo credit: Nicolas Ferrando
Calligraphic Jade Pendant (Haldili)
India, dated 1401 AH (1631-1632 AD)
Jade (nephrite).
Height: 3.3 cm, length: 5.1 cm
Photo credit: Lois Lammerhuber
Tray Stand
Northern Syria or Northern Iraq, mid-13th century
Brass with silver and niello inlay
Height: 25.1 cm, diameter: 25.7 cm
Photo credit: Nicolas Ferrando

Pen Box
Western Iran, 1262-1284
Brass, gold and silver inlay
Length: 19.8 cm
Photo credit: Nicolas Ferrando
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