



Exhibition
 March 30, 2006 -
 June 26, 2006

Musée du Louvre
 Richelieu Wing

Exhibition curators:
 Sabiha al-Khemir, chief curator of the
 Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar
 Francis Richard, head of the Department
 of Islamic Art, Musée du Louvre

**This exhibition is sponsored
 by the government of Qatar**

Exhibition design:
 Jean-Michel Wilmotte

Catalogue
*From Córdoba to Samarkand: Masterpieces from
 the New Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar*
 Edited by Sabiha al-Khemir, with the
 collaboration of Jean-Michel Wilmotte, Ieoh
 Ming Pei, and Philip Jodidio. Photographs by
 Hugues Dubois. Co-published by Musée du
 Louvre Editions and 5 Continents Editions, 176 p.
 About €30, trilingual (French, English, and
 Arabic). The publication of this work was
 sponsored by ArjoWiggins.

Hours
 Open every day except Tuesdays, from 9 a.m. to
 6 p.m.
 Evening hours on Wednesdays and Fridays until
 10 p.m.

**Access to the exhibition is included in the
 purchase of an admission to the Museum's
 permanent collections**
 €3.50; €6 after 6 p.m. on Wednesdays and
 Fridays; free admission for all visitors the first
 Sunday of each month and for youths under 26
 after 6 p.m. on Fridays; free admission at all
 times for youths under 18, holders of the "Louvre
 Jeunes", "Amis du Louvre", or "Louvre
 Professionnels" cards, and recipients of certain
 social benefits (the unemployed, disabled visitors
 and their attendants, among others).

Further information
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From Córdoba to Samarkand Masterpieces from the New Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar

As a foretaste of the marvels to be exhibited at the new
 Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, the Louvre presents forty-
 two masterpieces of Islamic art from the national collection
 of Qatar, which comprises several thousand treasures from
 the Islamic world, originating in cultural centers extending
 from Córdoba to Samarkand.

The extraordinary works selected by the curators of the
 Louvre exhibition are among the most representative pieces
 in this collection. They bear witness to a rich and varied
 cultural history, spanning three continents and thirteen
 centuries, from the 7th to the end of the 19th century.

The museum destined to house this entire collection, the
 realization of a resolutely innovative architectural and
 museological project, as revealed by two models presented in
 the Espace Richelieu, was designed by Ieoh Ming Pei and
 Jean-Michel Wilmotte and is currently nearing completion.



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In the Auditorium du Louvre “Musée-Musées” Symposium

Wednesday, March 29 from 12:30 p.m.
to 6 p.m.

Exhibiting Islamic Art: The Doha
Museum Project

Concerts: Music from the Islamic World

Thursday, March 30 at 8 p.m.
Iran: Classical music and Sufi
songs from Khorasan

Saturday, April 1 at 8 p.m.
Turkey: Sufi songs and Ottoman
instrumental music

Monday, April 3 at 8 p.m.
Music of the Abbasid period

Forty-two masterpieces of Islamic art

The works exhibited at the Louvre, most of which have never before been presented to the public, reveal the extraordinary imagination of the artists of the Islamic world, whose creativity found expression in the arts of the book as well as in a wide variety of materials: ceramics, metals, glass, ivory, textiles, and precious stones.

Rather than privileging a strictly chronological or geographical presentation, the organization of the exhibition is guided by an aesthetic appreciation of these objects, a reflection on their decoration, on matter and form. The very beautiful bronze doe probably originates from one of the fountains of Madinat al-Zahra near Córdoba, evoking the splendor of Spanish art of the 10th century. Among the examples of the Islamic arts of the book presented in the exhibition are an Ottoman imperial decree from the 16th century bearing the emblem of the sultan Suleiman the Magnificent and several other exceptional manuscripts. A selection of remarkable metal objects illustrates the importance of metal in the Islamic arts, including one of the most astonishing surviving astrolabe specimens of the Islamic world (dating from the 10th century), an encrusted chest, and an Iranian kashkul (Dervish alms bowl) from around 1550, inscribed with a Shiite prayer.

A 9th century bowl from Basra, a model of restraint, bears the inscription, in ornamental Kufic calligraphy, “what what done was worth the trouble”. Other ceramic pieces, such as the Iznik plate decorated with a leopard dating from 1600–1610, suggest the breadth of creativity and accomplishment of Islamic artists. Exceptional glass objects such as a Mamluk mosque lamp and the famed Cavour Vase, show the interest of Qatar’s collection in this area.

The textile depicting two birds facing each other, probably from India, resurrects in the 13th or 14th century a tradition prevalent under the Sassanids in Persia. The other textile objects include a 17th century silk velvet piece depicting very graceful feminine forms. Objects made of precious stones in the exhibition include an Indian emerald amulet dating from 1695 and an Indian nephrite and jade hookah decorated with lapis lazuli dating from around 1700.

The new Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar

Exhibition visitors viewing the objects assembled at the Louvre are certain to gain an appreciation of the exceptional interest of the full collection at the museum in Doha, due to open to the public soon, in an innovative presentation privileging a unique approach to the museum-going experience. This museum is only one of an entire group of cultural projects, including a national library as well as other museums and galleries, entrusted to world renowned architects, which will make Qatar a premier cultural and architectural destination.

The future Department of Islamic Art at the Louvre

The creation of the Department of Islamic Art at the Louvre (by government decree dated August 1, 2003) was accompanied by a major rearrangement project for the Museum’s collections, calling for the construction of new exhibition spaces in the Cour Visconti, but also by an ambitious program of cultural events. This exhibition providing a glimpse into the rich and varied collections of the new Museum of Islamic Art in Doha is therefore perfectly in keeping with the Louvre’s mission.



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Captions for the illustrations:
Photographs: Hugues Dubois

1 Doe fountain head
Spain, middle of the 10th
century
Bronze, cast and engraved
Height 48.1 cm, width 41.1 cm
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha

2 Bowl
Iraq (probably Basra) 9th century
Ceramic, painted in cobalt blue
Diameter 20.5 cm
Museum of Islamic Art, Doha