New galleries for the Department of Islamic Art
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction and aims of the project</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and design of the new galleries</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architectural note</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>By Rudy Ricciotti</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key dates and facts / Main project participants</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Louvre’s collection of Islamic art</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exceptional holdings</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work plan for the collections</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An ambitious project to engage audiences and communities</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publications</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Related films co-produced by the Louvre</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction and aims of the project

The creation of a new wing dedicated to Islamic art at the Louvre represents a decisive phase in the architectural history of the palace and in the development of the museum. The design and installation of these new galleries is the museum’s single largest expansion project since I. M. Pei created the now-famous Pyramid twenty years ago. The new department will soon be home to one of the most exceptional collections of Islamic art in the world, owing to its geographic diversity, the historical periods covered, and the wide variety of materials and techniques represented.

This unprecedented project grew out of one of the first observations made by Henri Loyrette upon his appointment as the Louvre’s president and director in 2001: the museum’s collection of Islamic art, due to its existence as a mere section of the Department of Near Eastern Antiquities, lacked sufficient space to reveal the full measure of its wondrous treasures to the public. From its inception, the resulting project received the unwavering support of Jacques Chirac, then president of France, who viewed it as a way for the Louvre to “solidify its mission as a universal cultural institution, while underlining for France and the rest of the world the essential contributions made by Islamic civilizations to our culture,” to encourage a dialogue of cultures and civilizations, and thus was instrumental in ensuring that the Louvre could reinstall the museum’s collection of Islamic art in a space where its indisputable richness and diversity could be more readily appreciated. On July 16, 2008, at the ground-breaking ceremony for the Louvre’s new galleries dedicated to Islamic art, current President Nicolas Sarkozy in turn emphasized the importance of this project as a way to promote understanding between peoples and cultures.

More than 2,500 works will be exhibited in the future galleries, including works from the Louvre’s own collection, supplemented by major permanent loans from the collection of the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs. The new department will cover the entire cultural reach of the Islamic world, from Spain to India, and will span its full chronological range, from the seventh to the nineteenth century. These works, many of which will be on public view for the first time, have also been the focus of a comprehensive and prodigious restoration plan.

Throughout the eight hundred years of its history, the Louvre palace has repeatedly attracted each period’s most talented and influential innovators in the field of architecture. Set against the backdrop of the restored Cour Visconti, one of the palace’s most ornate interior courtyards, the new Department of Islamic Art will offer a expansive window into the extraordinarily rich and diverse artistic heritage of the Islamic world. In the immediate context at the Louvre, visitors will be able to explore aspects of contrast and continuity between collections, as the new wing will adjoin the museum’s presentation of late antique art from the eastern Mediterranean, including works from Roman and Coptic Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine (in a redesigned exhibition space entitled “The Eastern Mediterranean Provinces of the Roman Empire”).

The creation and integration of this new wing raised considerable architectural challenges at a site of such immense historical importance. To meet these challenges, the architects Rudy Ricciotti and Mario Bellini have achieved a subtle and elegant balance between the seventeenth-century courtyard’s neoclassical facades and the need for a contemporary yet universal homage to Islamic art by way of an undulating glass roof enclosing the galleries, which discreetly allows diffused natural light to fill the exhibition spaces. The entire edifice, a symphony of glass and metal, extends beneath the Cour Visconti’s existing facades to create two sub-levels in addition to the courtyard level, one of which will be used to display objects that are highly sensitive to light, while the other will house technical facilities.

A feat at once architectural, cultural and artistic, this major project also takes on another dimension, which goes to the very heart of the Louvre’s mission as a universal museum, by breaking down barriers, crossing borders, and fostering a dialogue of cultures and civilizations. Today, the Louvre is a museum open to the world and, at the behest of numerous institutions worldwide, is present across all continents through exhibitions, archaeological excavations, as well as exhibition and museum planning and curatorial consulting. At a time when dialogue and exchanges between peoples and cultures are of fundamental importance, the new Department of Islamic Art will be a space and a venue paying tribute to and also furthering mutual understanding, building bridges between the East and the West where we can speak of our differences but also, and above all, our shared history and reciprocal influences over the centuries.
The very name given to this new wing Department of Islamic Art is in keeping with an approach that the Louvre intends to embrace to its full extent. The objective is to present the luminous aspects of a civilization, its impact on a richly varied humanity, by way of a broad and inclusive panorama presenting very different cultures (Andalusian, Mamluk, Ottoman, Persian, etc.). More than merely inviting visitors to view a succession of works, the aim is to take them on a genuine journey of the senses to the heart of Islamic civilization. To this end, the plan for the new galleries incorporates a substantial outreach component conveyed in particular through a set of tools and resources designed to help visitors contextualize the works on display, situate works historically and geographically, decipher motifs and figures, and even test their own conclusions against those of specialists.

The building of this new wing at the Louvre dedicated to Islamic art has been made possible through the generous support of the museum’s exceptional sponsors and donors. Our first and main sponsor, actively involved from the project’s very inception, is His Royal Highness Prince Alwaleed bin Talal bin Abdulaziz al-Saud, who was the guest of honor at the ground-breaking ceremony in July 2008. Several national governments subsequently signed on to lend their support to this major project: His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, His Highness Sheikh Sabah al-Ahmed al-Jaber al-Sabah, Emir of Kuwait, in the name of the State of Kuwait, His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said al-Said, Sultan of Oman, and the Omani people, and the Republic of Azerbaijan.

The construction phase of the project has received the support of two major French corporations: Total, through its Foundation, and Lafarge.

In addition, the project has received financial support from other individual donors, foundations and corporations: Bouygues Construction, Marazzi Group, the Orange Foundation, Frédéric Jousset, the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, and Olivier Chalier Conseils.

Through an exceptional financial effort, the French state and the Louvre are also helping to make this project a reality, contributing 30% of the overall budget for the Department of Islamic Art’s future home and the adjoining galleries dedicated to art of the eastern Mediterranean provinces of the Roman Empire.

Today, in order to cover the project’s total cost, a further €10 million is still needed.

The architectural components of this major project will be brought to completion in January 2012, with the installation of the new wing’s striking glass roof. In summer 2012, once all of the collections have been installed, the opening of the Department of Islamic Art’s new galleries will mark the culmination of a project lasting nearly four and a half years.
AN INNOVATIVE ARCHITECTURAL SOLUTION
The Cour Visconti, one of the few spaces at the Louvre still available for development but which had remained inaccessible to the public, was selected as the backdrop for the future home of the new department. The winning architectural design, by Mario Bellini and Rudy Ricciotti, meets the challenge of constructing an avant-garde building on the premises of a protected historical monument. Stunning yet conveying an understated elegance, it fully satisfies the aims of this public works project, through a play of contrasts. The design involves the creation of exhibition spaces over an area of 2,800 square meters (about 30,000 square feet) on two levels, above another level devoted to technical facilities. As the focal point of this innovative architectural project, the new spaces in the Cour Visconti will be covered with an extraordinary structure, adding an element of surpassing originality, but one that does not detract from the beauty of the courtyard’s historical facades.

Following the restoration, from January to December 2006, of the Cour Visconti’s facades and statuary, under the direction of Michel Goutal, the Louvre’s senior historical monument architect, the courtyard was excavated to a depth of 12 meters (about 40 feet). The resulting several thousand cubic meters of earth were moved through a single access point just 2.7 meters (about 9 feet) wide. The foundations of the facades were reinforced, consolidated and extended down to the bottom of the excavated area, by applying the jet grouting technique, which uses high-pressure jet fluids (400 bars) to erode the existing soil and then mixes the cuttings with cement slurry to form what is known as “soilcrete.” This technique made possible the extension of the pre-existing foundations down to the limestone layer, in order to proceed with earthwork.

The space thus created permitted the construction of two sub-levels:
- a level devoted to technical facilities with a floating foundation suitable for the installation of the equipment controlling electricity supply, air compression, temperature, humidity and ventilation for the exhibition areas.
- a parterre level with a foundation made of a single slab of reinforced concrete.

The floor of the courtyard level is made of a composite steel and concrete structure, thus limiting the need for inconvenient columns breaking up the design of the galleries.

On the ground floor of the new galleries, vertical partitions made of transparent glass allow visitors to look out on the courtyard’s facades. The use of glass without the addition of obtrusive metal structures ensures a clear vista. Each glass panel is about 2.40 meters (8 feet) wide, thus aligning perfectly with the pattern of the joins in the lead work. Panel heights vary from 0.5 to 6 meters (about 1.6 to 19.5 feet).

The brass-speckled black floor tiles echo the chromatic marriage between the golden tones of the glass roof and the black-colored self-compacting concrete of the walls. This muted atmosphere directs the visitor’s focus to the precious Islamic art objects displayed in these new galleries, in all their varying colors and motifs.

Visitors looking out from the surrounding galleries in the Louvre palace itself (Galerie Daru, the mosaic gallery on the museum’s upper ground floor, Salle des Etats on the first floor), will marvel at the undulations of the roof floating over this innovative edifice, giving the entire structure its poetic dimension.

THE GLASS ROOF
Together with the Cour Lefuel, the Cour Visconti is the most ornate of the Louvre palace’s interior courtyards. Architecturally complex because its buildings were built in several stages, it does not offer a uninterrupted cornice on which a glass roof might have been easily installed. In addition, such a structure would have been situated more than one hundred feet over the collections and thus would have visually overpowered them. The solution selected by the winning architectural design team therefore proposed the creation of a sail-like glass and metal canopy set back from the historic facades on all sides (at a distance of between 2.5 and 4 meters, thus between about 8 and 13 feet).
Truly an architectural feat, this roof floats over the galleries in the manner of a golden, iridescent cloud, fondly referred to as a “dragonfly wing” by Mario Bellini. The supporting structure is comprised of a free-form double lattice system of round steel tubes all having the same diameter but of thicknesses varying between 4 and 12 millimeters, depending on the weight supported by the tubes. The luminous veil is formed of three layers: a system of glass panels, making the structure impervious to water, and two metallic mesh sheets fitted above and below the system of glass panels, bathing the entire roof in a bright and translucent anodized gold color. The exterior mesh filters daylight and the interior mesh serves as the ceiling for the galleries. The interior mesh is also lined with a honeycomb panel that, without limiting the amount of natural light getting through, restricts side views while favoring direct views of the outside, thus creating the play of contrasts characterizing the structure.

The three-dimensional geometry of this glass and metal skin required extensive computer modeling efforts, in order to determine the respective positions and angles of inclination for each of the triangles in the structure. The thickness of the canopy varies, as required by the supporting structure: thicker where it is fitted to the load-bearing columns and thinner at the edges, thus underscoring the undulating effect. The surface of the metallic mesh is composed of some 2,350 triangles, which when projected on a horizontal plane form isosceles right-angled triangles whose two equal sides are about 1.20 meters (4 feet) in length. The panels may be opened for maintenance purposes.

In all, a weight of no less than 135 metric tons rests on eight circular inclined columns. Four of them reach all the way from the glass-and-metal canopy to the second sub-level below and are up to 9 meters (30 feet) high. Svelte in appearance, their diameter never exceeds 12 inches.

To aid in the assembly of this gigantic nesting toy, each of the more than 8,800 pieces of tubing was identified with a reference number immediately after being produced by an automated machine in Slovenia, so as to ensure that each piece would take its precise position in the structure. Forty-five pre-assembled elements were transported to the construction site.

In the Krakow workshop where the framework was manufactured, then in Paris, during the final phase, the perfection of the assembly was verified using highly precise measurement methods. To address the specific challenges of this innovative and unique project, certification was obtained under an ATEx (Appréciation Technique d’Expérimentation) procedure, with the aim of testing snow load resistance, heating and dilation between glass panels and joints to guarantee their water tightness, as well as the resilience over time of the entire edifice. It was also critical to make sure that there were no points at which rainwater might stagnate, although some of the inclines are smaller than 10 degrees.

Mario Bellini and Rudy Ricciotti, the project architects, joined forces with the engineering design consultancy BERIM and with the structural design consultancy HDA (Hugh Dutton Associés) for the technical analysis of the glass roof and the façades, with 8’18” for the lighting design, and with Peutz for the acoustic design.

VISITING THE NEW GALLERIES
From the Pyramid, visitors will access the Denon wing and then arrive on the lower ground floor, on the level of the Cour Visconti. Rather than immediately taking the stairs leading to the upper ground floor, they will be enticed by the vision of the bronzed, curving shape enveloping the courtyard.

The visit to the new galleries is designed as a perfect loop, encouraging visitors to move in a single direction while optimizing circulation patterns. Works dating from the seventh to the eleventh century are presented on the courtyard level, while the sub-level (or parterre level) extending under the Galerie Daru is devoted to works from the eleventh to the late eighteenth century, and in particular the museum’s celebrated collection of rugs and carpets.

The Louvre’s collections of Islamic art are thus located in a space directly adjoining the collections of late antique art from the eastern Mediterranean, of art from pre-classical Greece, Coptic or Roman Egypt, Syria, Phoenicia and Palestine, displayed in the galleries surrounding the Cour Visconti and thus brought into dialogue with the collection of Islamic art.

Rather than partitioning the space, the design of the exhibition areas favors the continuity of the visit. The absence of interruptions in the trajectory of the visit reinforces the notion of a discourse uniquely in rhythm with the moment of meditation and contemplation consciously intended by the project.

The concept for the exhibition spaces is the work of Mario Bellini and Renaud Piérard.
The idea of covering the Cour Visconti with a glass roof would hark back to a nineteenth-century concept (much in evidence in France and elsewhere) for a space that, until today, has freely lifted its gaze to the sky. A rueful architectural obstruction of this type would cast an unforgiving shadow on this courtyard’s facades, already not exactly bathed in light. Apportioning the Louvre’s Islamic art treasures over a space with too many levels would be to create a presentation robbing the museological discourse of its narrative force and identity. Creating mezzanines in the courtyard would be a clumsy solution emulating the consumerist culture and spatial organization of department stores.

Giving a new home to these marvels from the East in a closed courtyard bearing imposing witness to epic French stylistic movements without finding a way to open up the space would be to coerce an awkward twinned vision within four walls, recalling for the works contained, through a dire conceit, the ubiquitous conceptual presence of their container, from which the East would have no escape. Certainly, the Louvre does not subscribe to the view that the West is always best.

Let’s dream instead of a different approach, one which would create a home for Islamic art treasures inspired by a less grave and more tender attitude, calling to mind Montesquieu’s perspective on two Persian visitors to Paris.

The Cour Visconti will not be covered and will remain visible. Since we needed to make the most of underground space as the last areas available for expansion at the museum, and with the knowledge that the Louvre already has a tradition of doing just that, the idea will be, once again, not to miss this opportunity. Furthermore, owing to their large windows, the two facades of the Galerie Daru encourage contact with the world outside and offer visitors a natural vantage point. Enjoying an ample view of the rain, the sky, the sun, the beautiful light of Paris, especially in winter when it snows, all this is a rare privilege afforded by the Louvre. Building a structure in this courtyard irreversibly creates an imbalance with the space famed as the home of the Winged Victory, introducing a semantic closeness between Greco-Roman art and Islamic art that tends to displace the former from its pedestal. This project wrests with a challenge that would have seemed to jeopardize the entire adventure, embracing the Louvre’s architectural heritage and Islamic art in a single vision, leaving aside doubt as a knee-jerk reaction.

The project aims to organize the Louvre’s masterpieces of Islamic art on two cohesive levels, a ground floor and a parterre beneath. Visitors to the Louvre’s surrounding galleries on the ground floor will be able to appreciate the magical presence, the serene integration, and the positivist singularity of this new wing fully worthy of a great French museum.

The ground floor galleries will be covered with a glass roof enclosed within a metal mesh, discreetly filtering natural light and floating delicately over the collections. The parterre beneath will be visually linked to the ground floor by several well-conceived and limited openings. From anywhere on the ground floor, and from certain areas of the parterre as well, visitors will be able to admire the courtyard’s facades, not to mention the roof’s undulating iridescence. As can be seen in cross-section, the exhibition space at the museum devoted to three classical cultures is directly linked to the new Islamic art galleries.

In addition, this view of the project confirms the multiples exchanges of shared gazes between the Louvre’s Islamic art treasures and the facades of the Cour Visconti. The roof’s creases and folds create a silken veil offering a play of lustrous and jocular reflections. Between the windows of the Cour Visconti and the luminescent glow emanating from the new Department of Islamic Art, the Louvre’s evening visitors will most certainly be encouraged to share in that inquisitive curiosity for the cultures of the East celebrated by Montesquieu.
TOTAL FLOOR SPACE
Exhibition areas, technical and administrative facilities: 4,600 square meters (about 50,000 square feet)

KEY DATES
October 14, 2002 Speech by French President Jacques Chirac proposing the creation of a new department at the Louvre dedicated to Islamic art
2003 Development of the scientific and cultural program for the new department
August 1, 2003 Implementing decree establishing an eighth department at the Louvre dedicated to Islamic Art
2004 Launch of the international competition to select architectural and engineering proposals for the creation of exhibition spaces and technical facilities
November 2, 2004 First meeting by jury to review proposals
July 26, 2005 President Chirac announces the competition winners at the Elysée Palace
October 2005 Launch of design studies
January–Dec. 2006 Restoration of facades in the Cour Visconti
December 2006 Approval of preliminary designs
October 2007 Call for tenders launched
Nov. 2007–July 2008 Preliminary works and site preparation
July 16, 2008 Ground-breaking ceremony attended by French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Prince Alwaleed bin Talal, Total Chairman Thierry Desmarest, and Lafarge Chairman & CEO Bruno Laffont
Early 2009 Major construction work begins, relaying of foundations
Mid-09 to mid-10 Diversion of existing technical facilities / Relaying of foundations and earthworks
Second half of 2010 Construction of basement walls
First half of 2011 Roof laying and technical installations
Second half of 2011 Finishes and fittings, building services and equipment, mechanical and electrical systems
December 2011 Completion of architectural surface
Early 2012 Building delivery
First half of 2012 Installation of collections
Summer 2012 New galleries open to the public

MAIN CONTRACTORS
Altempo: Work Package 0 (WP0) - site preparation excluding project management (Department of Islamic Art) - automatic fire detection
Laine Delau and Soletanche Bachy: WP1 - major construction works, relaying of foundations, drainage systems
Waagner-Biro: WP2 - framework, glazing and cladding, facades
Forclum and Spie: WP3 - power and data wiring
Cegelec: WP4 - HVAC, fire protection and plumbing
Otis: WP5 - electric elevator installation
Chapelec: WP6 - waterproofing
Desmoiaux: WP7 - locks and metal works
Bredy: WP9 - joinery work
Flipo: WP11 - painting
DBS: WP12 - suspended ceilings, partition walls, dry lining
Monotile: WP13 - raised floors, floor covering
Goppion: WP14 - display cases, stands and pedestals
Goppion: WP15 - gallery furniture and furnishings
Axians: WP16 - gallery equipment

CONSULTANTS
Egis: Site scheduling and planning, construction management and coordination
BECS: Health and safety coordination
Socotec: Risk management
Jean-Paul Lamoureux: Site acoustics, noise and vibration monitoring
Nerco: Engineering and design
Arcadis: Geotechnical engineering
The Louvre’s collection of Islamic art

A tale of two museums

BACKGROUND
From the founding of the Museum Central des Arts, the name given to the Louvre by the French revolutionary government at its opening in 1793, several Islamic objects originating in royal collections have formed the nucleus of the collection managed today by the museum’s Department of Islamic Art. But it was not until the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries that the pace of acquisitions increased considerably, at the urging of both knowledgeable art lovers and historians. In 1893, a “Muslim art section” was established within the Louvre’s Department of Decorative Arts, at a period when Paris was the nerve center for the art trade and the capital of academic research on the cultures of the Near East. Following the first exhibitions devoted to Islamic art in Paris, in 1893 and 1903, the collection at the museum grew substantially, with Paris affirming its superiority as a magnet for lovers of Islamic art in the Western world.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the Louvre thus acquired works of great historical interest, many of them commissioned by Islamic rulers and bearing their names. At the same time, the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs was amassing quite a different group of pieces notable for their brilliant aesthetics, the fruit of innovative technique and graphic style, which would often be looked upon as models during a period that would see the efflorescence of “industrial art.” Hence, these two collections complemented each other perfectly: that of the Louvre focused in particular on medieval Islamic treasures, while the art of Islam’s great modern empires, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries, took pride of place at the Union Centrale des Arts Décoratifs. In particular, the latter institution was home to a large number of very beautiful textile works (fabric, rugs and carpets), key elements of Islamic culture. Although highly valued by art lovers and experts, this collection remained out of sight for many years and was entirely neglected in the plans for the redesigned and renovated Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which opened to the public in 2006.

At the Louvre, a disparate collection of Islamic works lay claim to the Pavillon de l’Horloge from 1905, dominated by “Arab bronzes,” including the celebrated basin known as the Baptistery of Saint Louis (Syria or Egypt, 1320–40), but also enameled glass, ceramic and carved wooden objects. Soon thereafter, the Salon du Dôme was to become home to an immense Persian carpet spanning the entire height of the space, known as the Mantes carpet since it once covered the floor of the collegiate church of Mantes-la-Jolie not far from Paris, acquired by the museum in 1912 and hung on the wall in the manner of a monumental painting. Until 1914, this gallery would take on an even more distinctive character with the addition of new pieces, most of which resulted from gifts or bequests to the Louvre. Just before the outbreak of World War I, the museum’s collections of “Muslim art” were to be expanded considerably thanks to a major bequest from Baron Alphonse Delort de Gléon. The Baron’s will had stipulated that a new space be created at the museum to present these collections, but this renovation and redesign project understandably had to be postponed until the end of the conflict. Thus it was only in 1922 that a new, enlarged space opened to the public in the Pavillon de l’Horloge.

However, in the interwar years, followed by the Second World War and the ensuing decolonization period, Islamic culture and the Arabic language increasingly faded from public interest. The collections were therefore relegated to the Chapel, a much smaller space allowing for the display of a far more limited selection of works. By 1987, the full extent of the museum’s holdings could hardly be appreciated by visitors to the galleries of its Department of Near Eastern Antiquities. As part of the Grand Louvre project, new galleries covering 800 square meters (about 8,500 square feet) were opened to the public in 1993. This new space allowed for an initial, more extensive presentation of the works held by the museum, following a chronological approach, but still did not do justice to the richness of the Louvre’s collections. In 2001, Henri Loyrette, the Louvre’s president and director, launched an ambitious project motivated by the strong belief that the museum’s collections of Islamic art merited a space befitting their prominence, in a presentation that would also include the neighboring and neglected collection of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Two years later, in response to a decision announced by French President Jacques Chirac, an eighth department dedicated to Islamic art was created at the Louvre.
This department now oversees the museum’s own collections, consisting of some 15,000 pieces, as well as the 3,400 works on permanent loan from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs. Both of these holdings are exceptional, including undisputed masterpieces brilliantly exemplifying the entire cultural reach of the Islamic world in all its geographical breadth, from Spain to India, and in its full chronological dimensions, spanning the seventh to the nineteenth centuries.

Today, the collections of the Department of Islamic Arts continue to be enriched through important purchases, gifts and bequests. The Louvre is home to one of the richest and most celebrated collections of Islamic art in the world.
With a total of more than 18,000 pieces, the Louvre may now be considered as home to one of finest and most comprehensive collections of Islamic art in the world. The museum’s exceptional holdings broadly cover the spectrum of techniques in which the artists of the Islamic world have showcased their creative talent: architecture, the arts of the book, ceramics, carpets and rugs, metalwork, ivories, etc.

The first empires (7th–10th century)
Under the Umayyad caliphate, the first Islamic dynasty, Damascus was the center of power. Later, the Abbasids built their capital in Baghdad (shifting the seat of power to Samarra in 836 before moving back to Baghdad again in 892). The early Islamic period is represented at the Louvre by works in glass, metal and ceramic excavated at Susa (southwestern Iran), among other sites. The Abbasid period saw the invention of faience, illustrated at the museum by pieces from Iraq but also from Susa. Metallic lusterware, a costly and complex technique, was another innovation of this period, a fine example of which is the Dish with standard-bearer at the Louvre.

The Fatimids (909–1171)
Upon their arrival in Egypt in 969, the Fatimids founded al-Qahira (Cairo) north of Fustat as the capital of their caliphate. Carved wooden, ivory and rock crystal pieces at the museum evoke the lives of the rulers and wealthy merchants of Fatimid Egypt. Works in ivory from this period are particularly notable for their beauty and elegance. Although less well represented than other periods, the museum’s collections include lovely sculpted panels in ivory or wood, recreating the atmosphere of a hunt or capturing an animal’s reaction to a human encounter in the wild, providing valuable insight into Fatimid material culture and giving an idea of the interior decoration of its palaces.

Islam in the West (10th–15th century)
In the eighth century, Islam entered the history of Spain. The Umayyad emirate (and later caliphate) founded in Córdoba gave rise to a civilization that was the epitome of refinement and elegance. Commissions from the royal court for luxury items were handled by burgeoning workshops where artisans worked in ivory, metal or textiles. The Louvre possesses several prominent examples of this production, in particular the celebrated Pyxis of al-Mughira dating from 968 and made for the son of the caliph Abd al-Rahman III.
**The Iranian world (10th–13th century)**

The tenth century saw an Iranian renaissance and political revival with populations from Anatolia to India adopting Persian as the preferred literary and cultural language. The museum’s collections reflect the great extent to which Persian culture was enriched by local influences as well as the persistence of a number of earlier traditions. Various techniques from the Persian world are represented.

**Egypt, the Near East and Anatolia (12th–13th century)**

A series of military and political confrontations from the late eleventh to the mid-thirteenth century promoted trade and fruitful cultural exchanges, giving rise to flourishing artistic activity. Many of the museum’s masterpieces of Islamic art originate in this rich and complex period, such as glass objects with gilt and enamel decoration and bronze pieces inlaid with silver or copper revealing motifs of incredible virtuosity.

**Safavid Iran (1501–1736)**

The museum’s collection of pieces from the Safavid period reflects the wide range of materials and techniques employed as well as the heights of creativity reached in this golden age of Iranian art. Influences from the Far East adopted and adapted during the Timurid dynasty were perpetuated, and further transformed, under the Safavids. Ceramic works from this period evince undeniable technical prowess but are also imbued with the poetic imagery so typical of the Persian soul. Many Safavid pieces in ceramic or glass are from the holdings of the Musée des Arts Décoratifs.
Mughal India (1526–1858)
Although the architectural feats of the Mughals are more widely known, the art of the miniature is another area where the dynasty left its mark. The Louvre is home to numerous pages decorated in this very particular style, combining Persian and Indian traditions. The Mughals liked to use rock crystal and jade, often adding gold filigree and precious stones.

Jali (window screen) with floral design
India, first half of 17th century
Sculpted red sandstone
H. 123 cm, W. 101.5 cm
Acquired in 2005, inv. MAO 2045
© 2007 Musée du Louvre / Raphaël Chipault

The Ottomans (14th–20th century)
The Ottoman sultans ruled over a vast empire stretching from the Balkans and Anatolia, around the Mediterranean basin, and as far as Morocco. The Louvre possesses remarkable Oushak medallion carpets produced for the imperial court, nobles and, in some cases, trade with Europe. Furthermore, the museum’s prestigious collection of Iznik ceramics includes works in all the styles favored by this highly exceptional production, of which the Dish with a peacock is one of the most outstanding examples.

Dish with a peacock
Iznik, Turkey, around 1540–55
Stonepaste, underglaze painting over a slip coating
Diam. 37.4 cm
Bequest of Mr. and Mrs. Raymond Koechlin, 1932, inv. K 3449
© 2006 Musée du Louvre / Claire Tabbagh /

Arts of the book
The Louvre’s collections reflect the various currents in manuscript illustration, calligraphy and bookbinding that criss-crossed the Arab, Iranian, Indian and Turkish worlds. Iranian painters were drawn to epics and works of poetry. Leather bindings with a variety of decorative motifs, several examples of which are on display, lend a final touch to an art of extreme refinement.

Binding plate with hunt scene
Iran, second half of 16th century
Leather and cardboard, pigment and gold decoration under varnish
H. 32 cm, W. 20 cm
Bequest of Gaston Migeon, 1930, inv. AD 27659 b
© RMN / Jean-Gilles Berizzi
Work plan for the collections

From the announcement in July 2005 of the selected architects for the Louvre’s new galleries dedicated to Islamic art, a massive project began to take shape focusing on these collections, including scientific documentation, research and restoration efforts. The main objective of this project was to ensure that the Louvre’s Islamic art collections, unmatched by those of any other museum in the world, would be given the most coherent organization possible and safeguarded for future generations. Officially launched in 2006, the project also aimed to meet the department’s pressing challenges at the time: integrating the remarkable collection of pieces from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, which until then had not been studied in detail, and the need to adapt the software used by the department in order to improve traceability and condition monitoring for the works.

COMPLETE INVENTORY AND DOCUMENTATION
All of the works in the new department’s collections were inventoried and the inventory records were systematically numbered. Whether originally held at the Louvre or on permanent loan from the Musée des Arts Décoratifs, each work was photographed, measured, weighed and analyzed from a conservation standpoint. All of this information was loaded into a newly created database specifically designed for this purpose. Due to its scale and its comprehensive coverage, this reference system will serve as an indispensable tool in the future for planning restoration campaigns or taking additional photographs, X-ray or scanner images.

This preliminary work plan for the collections necessitated numerous technical interventions: moving objects in order to analyze them, examination of their structural characteristics and condition, minimal cleaning, special measures for fragile works, photographs, packaging for transport - for external loans or movements within the museum - and returning the works carefully to storage.

This sweeping work plan for the Louvre, unprecedented in its scale, involved verifying and completing documentation for some 18,000 works (including about 17,000 photographs) and thus entailed the assistance of numerous consultants and other professionals from outside the Louvre, such as restorers, researchers and photographers, working alongside the curatorial staff of the museum’s Department of Islamic Art.

NEW METHODS FOR MAJOR RESTORATION PROJECTS
As an outgrowth of this preliminary work plan, the department launched a restoration campaign focusing on the works most urgently in need of attention. Restoration work began in late 2007 and treated the full range of materials, including ceramics, metal, wood, rugs, carpets and textiles, stone, glass, stucco and works on paper. More than 3,500 pieces have been restored so far. Today, this restoration campaign is nearing completion.

Over the course of this campaign, although traditional conservation and restoration treatment methods were able to be used for many pieces, new restoration processes had to be invented for others, due to the presence of outdated supports creating stresses potentially damaging to the works of art. It is for this reason that all of the nearly 2,000 Ottoman ceramic tiles were removed from their existing supports, before being fully restored. Similarly, as a prelude to restoration, in-depth technical and scientific examinations were performed on all of the department’s Egyptian stained-glass panels, which were in extremely fragile condition.

The reconstitution of a stone porch from the Mamluk period posed an even greater challenge. It required a preliminary study lasting two years, conducted by a researcher from the United States, followed by a second technical study entrusted to a group of experts specializing in the restoration of historical monuments. Furthermore, the restoration of this Mamluk porch and its installation raise very specific logistical concerns, due to the dimensions of the work, its weight, and its fit within its future exhibition space.

The restoration campaign did not overlook the museum’s most recent acquisitions, which include a magnificent sixteenth-century Iranian prayer rug. All of these pieces were examined closely, followed, where necessary by treatments enabling their successful integration in the new galleries.

As part of the overall project for the creation of the new galleries, the work plan focusing on the collections, including the restoration campaign, is completed in 2011 and is followed, early 2012, by the installation of works, the last phase of this vast program to inventory, analyze and safeguard these collections and devise the means to display pieces to their best advantage. During this phase, the works to be displayed will take their places in the new galleries of the Department of Islamic Art, a space created by the architects Rudy Ricciotti and Mario Bellini in accordance with concept for the exhibition areas imagined by Renaud Piérard.
An ambitious project to engage audiences and communities

The Louvre has embraced particularly ambitious outreach goals in welcoming visitors to the new galleries of the Department of Islamic Art, by taking an especially wide-ranging, stimulating and interactive approach to presenting its collections.

A JOURNEY TO THE HEART OF ISLAMIC ART AND CIVILIZATION

More than merely inviting visitors to view a succession of works, the aim is to take them on a genuine journey of the senses to the heart of Islamic civilization.

Information to encourage the full appreciation of the works on display will be provided at the start and at the end of the visit in the form of a set of keys to understanding conceived as an introduction to the great principles that define Islamic art and culture, through themes such as figuration, the urban phenomenon, and the multitude of languages spoken in the regions that culturally belong to the Islamic world.

Throughout the chronological presentation, a variety of attractive tools, featuring newly conceived content designed to appeal to today’s museum audiences combined with multimedia installations, will help them to better understand this singular artistic and cultural universe. Visitors will thus be able to contextualize the works on display, situating them geographically and historically. In addition, they will be able to listen to texts read in Arabic, Persian or Turkish, decipher motifs and figures, explore places of origin, listen to comments by specialists, to name just a few of the other ways these tools will enhance their experience. Rigorous educational guidelines will be followed in the preparation of all of these materials, to best promote the appreciation of a civilization that is both complex and too often poorly understood.

SERVICES DEDICATED TO ALL MUSEUM PUBLICS

In a spirit of sharing and equal access for all to knowledge and to the collections, the new galleries of the Department of Islamic Art will welcome the Louvre’s visitors in all their diversity. The museum will be focusing considerable efforts on ways to best serve all of its publics.

**Individual visitors and tourists** will have access to a comprehensive set of materials: in-depth written commentaries on each work, multimedia tools permitting the exploration of a technique or style exemplified by works and explaining the context of their creation. Content will be carefully calibrated and presented in such a way as to satisfy visitors eager to glean the essential points during a shorter stay in the galleries as well as others able to devote more time to the exploration of works.

A significant portion of the tools will be accessible in English and in Spanish. A freshly conceived multimedia guide will offer commentary in seven languages.

**School groups**, and more generally, all those interested in educational opportunities to develop critical understandings of art and culture, will be able to choose from activities led by outreach staff, special encounters and events as well as online resources. Through these programs, the Department of Islamic Art will embrace its status as a venue for education and exchange.

Lastly, **blind or visually impaired visitors** will not be neglected, since the exhibition spaces will be equipped with a system tailored precisely to their needs, consisting of ten kiosks exploring essential decorative aspects of Islamic art, permitting these visitors to experience through touch. This tactile investigation system will also be accessible to all visitors, thus reflecting the spirit of diversity promoted in all aspects of the project.

A regularly changing program of guided tours will be offered for children and families, but also for adults, shedding light on the collections from different angles, for example, from the perspective of folk tales or the mastery of techniques. Special events held in the galleries (concerts, evening programs, readings) will offer yet another way to experience both the space and the works displayed.
LARGE FORMAT

Les arts de l’Islam au musée du Louvre (Islamic Art at the Louvre, tentative title)
Edited by Sophie Makariou
Co-published by Musée du Louvre Editions and Editions Hazan

This beautifully presented volume brings together a selection of more than 400 works installed in the new galleries of the Louvre’s Department of Islamic Art following a chronological approach and exploring a number of key themes in each chapter: ornamentation, technical mastery, cities, objects and architecture, courtly commissions, to name a few… with an entire chapter devoted to the arts of the book. The volume also contains extensive and useful notes and other reference material, including a full set of maps (geographically situating and illustrating the history of the regions covered by the department), a glossary, an index, a bibliography...

The contributors affiliated with the department, under the editorial leadership of head curator Sophie Makariou, have composed their texts with the aim of sharing knowledge with a broad audience, while the magnificent photographs illustrating the volume make it not only a valuable reference but a pleasure to behold as well.

Authors
Editor and chief contributor: Sophie Makariou

Details
480 pages, 400 illustrations, hardcover, 245 x 285 cm
Retail price: €39
French and English versions available

This publication is made possible by the Cercle International du Louvre and the Elahe Mir-Djalali Omidyar Fund, in association with the American Friends of the Louvre.

ALBUM
64 pages, 50 illustrations
Retail price: about €10
Co-published by Musée du Louvre Editions and Editions Hazan

CHILDREN’S BOOK
Les Arts de l’Islam pour les enfants (Islamic Art for children, tentative title)
Rosène Declementi
56 pages, 100 illustrations, 220 x 280 cm
Retail price: €35
Co-published by Musée du Louvre Editions and Actes Sud Jeunesse

“SOLO” COLLECTION
La pyxide d’al-Mughira by Sophie Makariou
Le baptistère de Saint Louis by Sophie Makariou
Les relevés de la mosquée de Damas by Loreline Simonis
Porche d’époque mamelouke by Annie-Christine Daskalakis Mathews
Retail price: €9.70
56 pages, 40 illustrations, 14 x 21 cm
Co-published by Musée du Louvre Editions and Somogy
THE LOUVRE MUSEUM IN ARABIC

Guide to the Louvre's masterpieces in Arabic
108 pages, 164 illustrations, hardcover, 22 x 28.5 cm
Retail price: €8
Already available

300 masterpieces in Arabic
160 pages, 320 illustrations, hardcover, 25 x 31 cm
Retail price: €12
Forthcoming
Eclats d’Islam (Kernels of Islam)
A series by Valéry Gaillard
Artistic direction: Eve Ramboz

A jagged-edged rug? An incomprehensible alphabet? Letters standing in for images? At each turn, a work, a riddle, a snapshot of a civilization. The idea behind this series of films originated in a very simple observation: more than any other collection at the Louvre, Islamic works of art reveal a vast, rich and profound civilization, but also one that is very little known. And Islamic art, to a greater extent than those of any other peoples, consists in large part of everyday objects, works at the boundary between the sacred and the profane, between the history of art and that of civilizations, between cultures and their mindsets.

Each episode in this series will embark upon the discovery of a specific object. A theme will emerge from a work as the focus of the episode, with reference to other works in the museum.

Episode 1
“The Krakow carpet, or how Christians and Muslims parceled out Paradise”
Co-produced by Arte, Les Films d’Ici and the Musée du Louvre

Islam, le bâtiment (Islam, the Edifice)
A documentary film by Richard Copans

The history of the Louvre palace has the nature of a dream without end. Not only in terms of plans for expansion over the years, but in the very function and divisions of the space. The castle became a palace, the palace then became half a museum and half a ministry, then a museum, and the museum continues to invade its courtyards to create galleries.

It is only in the context of this illustrious history that the project for the transformation of the Cour Visconti takes its rightful place.

Co-produced by Les Films d’Ici, the Musée du Louvre and Arte

Les lumières de l’Islam (Islam as a Beacon)
A documentary film by Valéry Gaillard

“Revealing the luminous essence of Islam”: it is with this phrase that French President Jacques Chirac defined the crux of the Louvre’s latest major project, the creation of an eighth department dedicated to Islamic art. It was thus clear from the outset that, apart from the indisputable aesthetic aspects of this ambitious project motivated by a contemporary approach to museum design, the joining of two major collections and the reinstallation of works in new exhibition spaces was perceived, above all, by its stakeholders as a political initiative.
Most major museums around the world have felt the need to reexamine their collections of Islamic art from fresh perspectives, to expand or imagine new visitor experiences. What do these collections reveal? They show us an audacious, largely profane civilization, directed above all towards aesthetic pleasures. We see illuminated manuscripts depicting the prophet Muhammad in the sixteenth century. We see tremendous respect for science and for matters of the mind. We come to understand, perhaps more than anything else, the ceaseless circulation of peoples and ideas around the world.

Hence this film will draw upon this museum-based adventure to explore a great and terribly misunderstood civilization. A civilization of depth and refinement, valuing tolerance, curiosity and scholarly learning - in a word, luminous.

Co-produced by Les Films d’Ici and the Musée du Louvre
Co-produced by France Télévision (France 5)

Une minute au musée : les arts de l’Islam
(A minute at the museum: Islamic art)
Animated series in 40 episodes by Franck Guillou
Third season of this series launched by the Louvre.

We meet up once again with our three favorite cartoon characters, all with an unmistakable gift of the gab: Nabi, a little boy with a penchant for mischief, Mona, a sprightly girl with keen observation skills, and Raphael, a young man with a thirst for knowledge, who explore and comment on 40 works in the Louvre’s new Department of Islamic Art.

Co-produced by France 3, Les Films de l’Arlequin, Ma Planète, and the Musée du Louvre

List of episodes:
- Confrontation of two armies, Qazvin or Ispahan (Iran), late 16th century
- Ewer with rooster head, Iran, first quarter of 13th century
- Basin known as the “Baptistery of Saint Louis”, Syria or Egypt, second quarter of 16th century
- Powder horn, India, 17th century
- Dagger with horse head, India, 17th century
- Falcon-shaped incense burner, Khurasan (Iran), 11th–12th century
- Lion with articulated tail, Spain, 12th–13th century
- Zoomorphic oil lamp, Khurasan (Iran), 11th century
- Dish with falconer on horseback, Iran, 13th century
- Dish with epigraphic decoration, Khurasan (Iran) or Transoxiana (Central Asia), 11th or 12th century
- Wall tiles depicting cosmographic marvels, Iran, second half of 19th century
- Panel with wall tiles, Iznik (Turkey), second quarter of 16th century
- Firdausi’s *Shāh Nāmeh* (Book of Kings): Ardashir, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty, recognizes his son Shapur among children playing with a ball, Chiraz (Iran), third quarter of 16th century
- Ewer signed by Ibrahim ibn Mawaliya, Jezireh (Mosul, Iraq), late 12th–early 13th century
- Page from *Shāh Nāmeh* (Book of Kings): princely reception, Iran, second half of 16th century
- Celestial sphere, Iran, first half of 14th century
- *Falnāmeh* (Book of Prophecies): Imam Reza attacks a demon, Tabriz or Qazvin (Iran), mid-16th century
- Shield, India, late 18th or early 19th century
- Mashrabiya panel (turned wood lattice screen), Egypt, 16th or 17th century
- Round ceramic wall tile depicting animals in combat, Iran, late 16th–early 17th century
- Candlestick with ducks, western Iran or Khurasan, 12th or 13th century
- Mirror with handle, India, 18th century
- Dish decorated with tulips and carnations, Iznik (Turkey), third or fourth quarter of 16th century
- Portrait of the Qajar ruler Nasir al-Din Shah, Iran, third quarter of 19th century
- Archer’s ring, Turkey, second half of 16th century
- Bracelet, Khurasan (Iran) or Sultanat (India)
- Pyxis of al-Mughira, Madinat al-Zahra, Córdoba (Spain), third quarter of 10th century
- Saddle axe, India, 18th century
- Albarello with palm-leaf motif, Egypt or Syria, 14th or 15th century
- Man milking a water buffalo, Raqqa (Syria), late 12th–early 13th century
- Tympanum with vegetal and epigraphic decoration, Anatolia, 13th century
- Saber with sheath, northern India, 17th–18th century
- Shroud of Saint Josse, Iran, second half of 9th century
- Turkmen prisoner, Iran, second half of 16th century
- Wood marquetry door panel from the al-Maridani Mosque, Egypt, 14th century
- Goblet with sphinxes and musicians, Iran, late 12th–early 13th century
- Two bookbinding plates, Iran, 16th century
- Platter with astrological decoration, Khurasan (Iran), late 12th–early 13th century
- Tankard, Turkey, late 15th century
- Peacock-shaped aquamanile, Spain, 12th century

DVD co-published by Doriane Films and the Musée du Louvre
Available from the opening of the Department of Islamic Art’s new galleries