

SPECIAL REPORT

fann ... the fire inside

ART FROM THE ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION

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The Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah (DAI) opened the "Al-Fann: Art from the Islamic Civilization" exhibition at the Amricani Cultural Center as part of its 25th cultural season.

The exhibition comes back home after a successful international tour to provide visitors in Kuwait a glimpse into the rich heritage of Islamic artistic expression with over 200 objects from the al-Sabah Collection on view.

'Al-Fann' has been previously shown in Austria, Bahrain, Italy and Korea, and is presented in two primary sections, first historic and the second, thematic.

The first section presents objects in chronological order, from the 7th century CE "Origins of Islamic Art" through the 16th century CE "Apogee of the Great Empires", including the Ottomans, the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals in the Indian subcontinent. The second section shifts the focus to the four dominant motifs in art from the Islamic world: Calligraphy, Arabesque, Figurative and Repeating Geometric Patterns. Also included is a special section dedicated to coinage.

Exhibition Curator Giovanni Curatola informed that the exhibition was created with a view of introducing the public to the great and multi-faceted nature of Islamic culture through one of its finest manifestations, "The ultimate goal of presenting a panorama of the variety and wide-ranging forms of Islamic art, the guiding principles of my selections were fairly straight-forward: to strike a balance between an array of geographic areas and to display art from historic periods from the eighth to the eighteenth centuries.

"Fann, an Arabic word, is art undescribed and unrestricted. It is the effort and the object; the intent and the outcome. The exhibition Al-Fann celebrates the artist who creates at least twice in an effort to share his/her passion with an audience. The first and greatest creation is the idea or the message; the second is in the selection of a process. The final stage – crafting of the work of art – is almost mechanics, as the artist delivers the physical embodiment of his/her art," noted DAI Director General Sheikha Husna Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah in her foreword in the exhibition's catalog. "The exhibition celebrates the artisan who creates in an effort to share his/her passion with an audience. Only when the work is shared and appreciated does it become art."

The "Al-Fann: Art from the Islamic Civilization" exhibition opened at the Amricani Cultural Centre on Nov 5. The opening ceremony was held under the auspices of the Minister of Information, Mohammad Nasir Abdullah Al-Jabri and in the presence of the Secretary General of the National Council for Culture, Arts and Letters, Kamel Sulaiman Al-Abduljalil, friends of the DAI and members of the Diplomatic Corps in Kuwait.

دار الآثار الإسلامية

Dar al-Athar al-Islamiyyah The al-Sabah Collection, Kuwait



Photos courtesy of DAI
Main photo: Glass Perfume sprinkler bottle with applied prints around the neck for the attachment of a lid in the same fashion. East Iranian world, 9th-10th Century. Top right: Composite-bodied ceramic crenellation element, perhaps from a cenotaph enclosure. Iran, 12th Century CE.

editor's choice