

Breathtaking Islamic Art on Display in London

LONDON (New Straits Times) – There have been many exhibitions of Asian and Islamic art around the world in the past few decades. Many of them have been in London, New York, Paris and, of course, the Persian Gulf. Some have even been about the creative interaction between East and West. Much rarer is a display of how cultures from outside Europe were in charge within a continent that is so keen to keep foreigners out.

The latest exhibition at London's Royal Academy actually features a lot of Islamic art, despite having a title that doesn't entirely indicate this. "Spain and the Hispanic World" delivers most of what it promises: from four thousand years ago up to the 20th century. It's a huge exhibition, which means plenty of space for the long period when much of Spain — and Portugal for a shorter time — was ruled by Muslim overlords.

As for the "Hispanic World" part of the title, which should really refer to Spanish and Portuguese colonies, there is no contribution from Asia, North Africa or other parts of the Islamic world. This element is highlighted when it comes to the Iberian Peninsula, but ignored for the vast swathes of land that later became Spanish and Portuguese.

By the time Spain and Portugal became colonizers, these two kingdoms were very Christian. Sadly, it seems that another low priority for the exhibition is the contact between the Hispanic colonies in the Americas and those in Asia. It would have been interesting to hear more about the substantial activity between the Americas and the Philippines, Goa, Macau and our very own Melaka.

The entire exhibition is from the collection of the Hispanic Society of America. When it comes to the name of this venerable institution, put any thoughts you might have of West Side Story to one side. The Hispanic Society is as far from the world of the Jets and the Sharks as it is possible to find on the island of Manhattan.

The massive collection of 18,000 works of art



The albarello pharmacy jar was one of the great gifts of Islamic Spain to Europe.

was mostly accumulated by one very rich and sophisticated man: Archer Huntington. Fortunately, the founder decided that relics of Al-Andalus were going to be part of his buying spree more than a century ago.

No phase of Hispanic culture has been overlooked. There is plenty of gallery space allocated to the more southerly part of Spain. Al-Andalus lasted for seven centuries and often combined Christian and Islamic cultures so seamlessly, they became the same thing in visual terms.

By the time the Christian Reconquest had really got going, the biggest transformation was the

quantity and strong identity of Catholic art that eventually came to characterize Spain. Before the Iberian kings went all out to eradicate the Muslim past, and often the Muslim and Jewish populations too, those alien cultures had literally become part of the local furniture. The designs of weavings from the Islamic period continued for centuries after, and they are still visible in tilework and other products of the peninsula.

The greatest legacy of those centuries of Muslim domination of Spain was the ceramics industry. From the delicate calligraphy and geometry of the Alhambra, to the shimmering luster wares that were unchallenged for centuries, a debt is owed to the emirates that ruled in Spain.

Some of these contributions may not seem significant, unless you happen to be an apothecary. The development of the albarello jar is one invaluable example that travelled from West Asia to Islamic Spain, and then on to the rest of Europe.

It proved useful to early medical practitioners everywhere. There are many examples from the Hispanic Society collection on display, and they are a lot more decorative than modern storage receptacles.

The albarello was part of a period of interaction that the Islamic world is still very proud of, even if many Spaniards would now prefer to forget it. Surprisingly, it wasn't always like this. In the 19th century, there was a revival of Spanish interest in the non-Christian past that led to some of the finest inlaid metalwork that Europe has ever seen.

It's not much in evidence at this exhibition. Instead, there is a painting from the same era that shows a different side of the story. It's a work by the Orientalist artist Mariano Fortuny (father of the famous fashion designer with the same name) showing an episode from the most relevant interaction of the time. Needless to say, the Spanish-Moroccan War of 1859-60 was hardly a time of mutual benefit and understanding.

Iranian Arabs Celebrate Qarqiyan



TEHRAN -- In the southwestern provinces of Iran, Arab communities have celebrated Garghiyan or Qarqiyan ritual for centuries with children, full of vigor and enthusiasm, leading the festivities with spirited zeal.

This ritual, also present in other countries like Bahrain, Kuwait, and Iraq, is in honor of the birthday of the second Shia Imam, Imam Hassan Mojtabi (AS). It is held in the holy month of Ramadan.

Garghiyan is a lively and colorful celebration that children in the community normally attend. They put on traditional cloth-

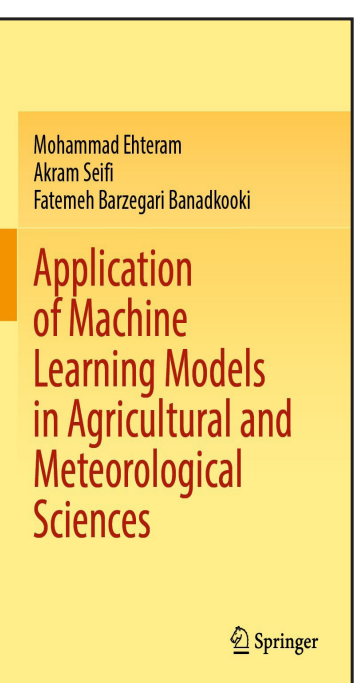
ing as they parade through the streets after Maghrib and Isha prayers, reciting some poems and collecting treats from locals.

Once they receive the sweets, they wish good health and prosperity to the owner of the house.

The ceremony is part of the Arab community's culture in Iran, where locals look forward to this annual event.

For the children, it is a time of festivity and delight as they celebrate Imam Hassan's birthday with joy and traditional rituals passed down from generation to generation.

Springer Publisher Publishes Book by Iranian Experts



can use the new optimization algorithms and evolutionary machine learning to better plan and manage agriculture fields. Water companies and universities can use this book to develop agricultural and meteorological sciences. The details of the modeling process are explained in this book for modelers.

Also the book introduces new and advanced models for predicting hydrological variables. Predicting hydrological variables help water resource planning and management. These models can monitor droughts to avoid water shortage. And these contents can be related to SDG6, clean water and sanitation.

The book explains how modelers use evolutionary algorithms to develop machine learning models. The book presents the uncertainty concept in the modeling process. New methods are presented for comparing machine learning models in this book. Models presented in this book can be applied in different fields.

Effective strategies are presented for agricultural and water management. The models presented in the book can be applied worldwide and used in any region of the world. The models of the current books are new and advanced. Also, the new optimization algorithms of the current book can be used for solving different and complex problems. The book can be used as a comprehensive handbook in the agricultural and meteorological sciences. This book explains the different levels of the modeling process for scholars.

TEHRAN -- Atmospheric science book 'Application of Machine Learning Models in Agricultural and Meteorological Sciences' (2023) by three Iranian experts Muhammad Ehteram, Akram Seifi and Fatemeh Barzegari Banadkooki has been released by Springer International Publisher.

The book is a comprehensive guide for agricultural and meteorological predictions. It presents advanced models for predicting target variables. The different details and conceptions in the modeling process are explained in this book. The models of the current book help better agriculture and irrigation management. The models of the current book are valuable for meteorological organizations.

Meteorological and agricultural variables can be accurately estimated with this book's advanced models. Modelers, researchers, farmers, students, and scholars

UAE is Largest Customer of Iranian Rugs

TEHRAN -- The United Arab Emirates is the world's largest buyer of Iranian hand-woven carpets.

Japan, Germany, the UK, China, Australia, India, and the United States are other major buyers.

Iran's National Carpet Center (INCC) recently announced that the country's hand-woven carpet production and exports rose about 10 percent in the last Iranian calendar year which ended



on March 20.

Iran is well known for its hand-made carpets, which are considered to be some of the finest in the world. Persian carpets are typically made of wool or silk, and are often very intricately designed with patterns and motifs that reflect the region's cultural heritage.

These carpets are highly valued for their beauty and quality and are a popular export item for Iran.

Kioumars Pourahmad Passes Away

TEHRAN -- Prominent Iranian movie director, producer and screenwriter Kioumars Pourahmad has died at the age of 74.

His family confirmed news of Pourahmad's death on Wednesday, without providing details.

Born in 1949 in Najafabad, Isfahan Province, Pourahmad started his professional career in 1973 writing film reviews. Three years later, he started writing and making films and TV series.

Children and young adults with their problems are the central characters in most of his films.

Picture of the Day



Hormuz Island in the Persian Gulf is located 8 km off the Iranian coast. It is a paradise for geologists and has many surprises in its heart. Photo by ISNA