

Interactions ... Arabs and Europe

**Exhibition opening
Bibliotheca Alexandrina
January 2018**

Rome-Italy April 2018

We are pleased to announce that Bibliotheca Alexandrina in cooperation with ICOM Europe and ICOM Arab under the auspices of ICOM International are organizing an international exhibition entitled “Interactions ... Arabs and Europe”, that will take place in both Alexandria (Egypt) and Rome (Italy).

The first exhibition will be organized in Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Main Entrance, on Sunday, the 28th of January 2018 in Alexandria, Egypt. The second exhibition will be displayed next April in Rome, Italy, for extending the mutual cooperation between the Arabs and Europe, and to strengthen ICOM’s role as an international key player in the museum world.

Following ICOM strategic plan, this exhibition is enhancing the ICOM international profile through an improved program of public relations. Moreover, it is committed to develop further formal links with museum associations worldwide with a view to cooperation on shared aims.

The main idea of the exhibition is that Europe and the Islamic lands had multiple points of contact during the Middle Ages. The exhibition aims to identify the common factors between Arabs and Europe, which had begun since early times, throughout the ages. For example, Hellenistic arts had adopted the Tree of Life as their primary symbol and representation, and they strongly merged between the east and the west for the first time in history. The exhibition showcases a model of the Mesopotamian Tree of Life, which is deeply rooted in art. It is also noteworthy that the Greeks had been widely present in Egypt before Alexander the Great’s arrival, rendering the country a quite familiar place to him.

On one side, the Islamic and European arts had been cross-influenced and interrelated. Great collections of western art that reflect centuries of contact with the Muslim world and admiration for Islamic art. While the European objects were chosen for their aesthetic qualities and as exemplars of European culture, many reveal the broader international context of their time.

On the other side, European art was influenced by Islamic motifs and writing style. During the high medieval period, the Islamic world was at its cultural peak, supplying information and ideas to Europe, via al-Andalus, Sicily and the Crusades. These included Latin translations of the Greek Classics and of Arabic texts in astronomy, mathematics, science, and medicine. Islamic decorative arts were highly valued imports to Europe throughout the Middle Ages. Most surviving examples are those that were in the possession of the church. Islamic pottery of everyday quality was still preferred to European wares.

The exhibition will include number of banners of high resolution images that present selective pieces from various European and Arab Museums from which the whole story of the cross-influenced and interrelated Islamic and European arts will be presented.

Moreover, replicas bearing the same theme of the exhibition will be displayed in the exhibition, they will be provided from the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, Manuscripts Center as, The Papyrus of the Ancient Library of Alexandria, the Four Gospels, *De materia medica*, the Rosetta Stone, the *Commentary on the Structure of the Philosophical Sciences*, *Description de l’Egypte*. In addition, IT Applications will be applied to enhance the exhibition as well.

This exhibition, confirms that the very name of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina conjures up the image of a glorious past, a shared heritage, not just between Greece and Egypt, nor even the whole Mediterranean, but a shared heritage of all humanity. It was indeed, at the Ancient Library of Alexandria, that the greatest adventure of the human intellect was to unfold.