

Islamic Silver Art
The Saad Al-Jadir Collection



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Dr Saad Al-Jadir started this Collection in 1958 when he acquired his first piece in Baghdad, a silver portrait brooch. He continued to collect while working as an architect-planner, and soon realised that this specialised form of Islamic metalwork had been ignored by the field of art history and by museums, to the extent that great quantities of Islamic silver artefacts were simply being melted down and converted into plain ingots. The main objective in building this Collection, therefore, has been to preserve for future generations a beautiful cultural record of human expression, so that we might become better informed about the true nature of the people who made and used these silver artefacts. It is hoped that the Collection will help to preserve, encourage and revive this highly developed tradition of art, craftsmanship, expression and aesthetic values.

With the publication of his first book, 'Arab and Islamic Silver' (London 1981), Dr Al-Jadir introduced the subject of Islamic silver art for the first time. This world-renowned Collection has enjoyed six international exhibitions – in Lisbon, Khartoum, Riyadh, Stockholm, Kuala Lumpur and London. Dr Al-Jadir is the owner, collector, and curator of this Collection and the author of several specialist books and articles on Islamic silver art.

Omani dish, D 26cm





Malay beetle leaves holder, H 13.3cm



Malay water jug, H 34cm



Indian box, L 8.6cm



Turcoman collar clasp, D 17cm



Moroccan dagger, H 6.7cm



Egyptian bowl, D 21.2cm



Iraqi niello work, box L 14cm

The Saad Al-Jadir Collection is unrivalled in its range and quality. It is the first and largest, as well as being the only comprehensive collection of works created by Muslim and other silversmiths.

The main value of this Collection is that it is so comprehensive:

- It contains over 11,000 artefacts made of silver, silver combined with gold, precious and semi-precious stones, enamel and niello. There are some 7,000 pieces of jewellery; 2,000 utensils (incense burners, inkwells, rosewater sprinklers, candlesticks, boxes, vases, pots, bowls, plates, vessels etc.); 1,700 coins (from pre-Islamic Arab culture, early Islamic periods and various ruling dynasties); 150 swords, daggers and knives; and 300 seals and decorations.
- It covers all Islamic regions and countries, from the Philippines, the Malay World, the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Persia, Iraq, the Levant, Palestine, the Arab Peninsula, Egypt, the Al-Maghreb countries, and countries to the east, centre and west of Africa.



Persian vase, H 36.5cm



Indonesian dish, D 28cm



Arabian necklace, L 40cm



Tadjik crown, L25cm



Indian beaker, H 13.2cm



Kirgizian head ornament, L 47cm



Malay serving set, L 24.5cm



Indonesian box, L 15cm



Indian jewellery and box, box D 6.1cm



Ottoman and Indian rosewater sprinklers, H 32.5cm

- It spans a period of over 1,400 years. Although much of it covers the last three centuries, some pieces are hallmarked from earlier dates. Because Islamic silver is rarely hallmarked, many of the artefacts may date from earlier periods and deserve a more in-depth study to confirm this. The Collection provides a unique view of the art of smithing in Islamic countries from the early Islamic period until the beginning of the 20th century. It also represents an important part of the wider history of Islamic metalwork.
- It reflects basic characteristics of Islamic art and the many historical and regional developments that grew out of this style, including the Islamic decorative lexicon – calligraphic, geometric, floral, human, animal and abstract forms.
- It shows the variety of smithing techniques executed by thousands of mostly unknown artists/smiths.
- It embodies vital material evidence of academic, artistic and aesthetic values, while also reflecting various socioeconomic functions.



Pakistani enamels, buckle L 6.5cm



Pakistani body ornament, L 74cm



Ottoman jewellery, pendant L 13cm

One very important aspect of this Collection is that the art is reflected on silver, a precious material with a high value in itself, which promises to further increase in price in world markets, unlike other art mediums such as wood, paper, clay, or glass etc.



Persian box, L 12.5cm



Afghani cap, L 95cm



Malay tray, D 69cm



Persian amulet, H 10cm



Uzbeki miniature, D 5.5cm



Afghani bowl, L 30cm

The vast size and comprehensive nature of the Saad Al-Jadir Collection of Islamic silver art makes it a unique world collection and an invaluable reference for Islamic artistic heritage.

With a growing worldwide desire to learn more about Islamic culture, the artefacts in this Collection represent an unequalled insight into Islamic culture and its regional understanding and interpretation as expressed through the smithing arts.

This Collection is potentially of interest to a broad worldwide audience at a time when the cultural diversity of the world is faced with the growing pressures of globalisation.



Persian box, L 12.5cm



Algerian box, L 17.5cm



Ottoman coffee pot, H 22cm



Persian miniature, L 5,4cm

Turcoman bracelets, H 12.5cm



Malay water jug, D 19cm



Ottoman cup holders, H 7cm



Uzbeki bracelet and pendant, pendant L 19.5cm



Zanzibar box, L 14.3cm



Persian stag, H 19cm



Persian dish, D 18.5cm



Persian basket, L 13.6cm



Azerbaijani box, L 7.7cm



Iraqi necklace, L 28cm



Palestinian brooches, D 5cm



Egyptian bracelets, D 8.5cm



Egyptian spoons and belt, buckle L 11cm



Afghani head ornament, L 10.1cm



Ottoman tray, D 29.4cm



Syrian tray, D. 30.5cm

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