

Thousands flock to “Blockbuster” Muslim Heritage Exhibition

More than 15,000 people have rushed to visit a recently opened exhibition at London’s Science Museum. Launched on the 21st January, the landmark exhibition highlights the scientific heritage the world has inherited from Muslim civilisation. The venue has been inundated with visitors and the Museum’s Director has described their latest attraction as a “blockbuster”.

1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World, which is sponsored by the Jameel Foundation, traces the forgotten story of a thousand years of science from the Muslim world, from the 7th century onwards.

The free exhibition, which runs from the 21 January to 25 April 2010, will look at the social, scientific and technical achievements that are credited to the Muslim world, whilst celebrating the shared scientific heritage of other cultures. It features a diverse range of exhibits, interactive displays and dramatisation, all of which acknowledge the Muslim world’s contribution to many modern inventions, spanning fields such as engineering, medicine and architecture, and can trace their roots back to Muslim civilisation.

The launch of the exhibition marks the beginning of a global tour that will visit the world's most respected museums and centres of learning over the next four years.

Professor Chris Rapley, Director of the Science Museum, commented: “The thousand year period from the 7th century onwards was a time of exceptional scientific and technological advancement in the Muslim World, spanning China, India, Persia, Africa and Arabia. This is the period in history that gave us huge advances in engineering, mathematics, chemistry and physics. With over 15,000 objects in our collection spanning many different cultures, the Science Museum provides the perfect platform for this exhibition, as a place which encourages innovation and learning amongst visitors of all ages.”

One of the iconic focal features of this exhibition is a five-metre high replica of the ‘Elephant Clock’ - a visually striking early 13th century water clock, the body of which contains symbols referring different cultures and is featured alongside a short feature film starring Oscar-winning actor Sir Ben Kingsley as Al-Jazari, inventor of the fabled clock.

Professor Salim T S Al-Hassani, Chairman of 1001 Inventions, explained: “The Elephant Clock is an early 13th century machine which gives physical form to the concept of multi-culturalism. This engineering marvel featured an Indian Elephant, Chinese Dragons, a Greek water mechanism, an Egyptian Phoenix, and wooden robots in traditional Arabian attire. It embodies cultural and scientific convergence of civilisations and is an appropriate centre-piece for an exhibition about the roots of science and technology.”

Other striking exhibits featured in this interactive exhibition include:

- Model of an energy efficient and environmentally-friendly Baghdad courtyard house.
- A large 3 metre reproduction Al-Idrisi’s 12th-century world map.
- Model of Zheng He’s Chinese junk ship – originally a 15th century wooden super structure over 100 metres long.
- Medical instruments from a thousand year ago, many of which are still used today.
- Model of a 9th-century dark room, later called Camera Obscura, which Ibn al-Haytham used to change our understanding of vision and optics.

Fady Jameel, speaking on behalf of the Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation, said: "One of the most important aims of our foundation is to promote global education projects and this 1001 Inventions exhibition at one of Europe's most prestigious museums will help achieve just that through increasing understanding about a fascinating period of history and discovering how it impacts us in today's modern world".

The exhibition will run from 21st January until 25th April 2010 (with a short closure between 25th February and 12th March 2010 inclusive). Further information about the exhibition is available at www.1001inventions.com.

Notes to editors

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Official Pictures are available at www.1001inventions.com/media

About Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation

The Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation is a British charity (registration no. 1130939), established in February 2009 to support sustainable poverty relief, education, economic development, the arts and social/financial mobility through numerous projects. The Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation has sponsored the 1001 Inventions exhibition and through this relationship it aims to improve mainstream understanding of Muslim contribution to arts, science and the development of modern civilisation.

About 1001 Inventions

1001 Inventions is a global educational initiative that promotes awareness of a thousand years of scientific and cultural achievements from Muslim civilisation from the 7th century onwards, and how those contributions helped build the foundations of our modern world.

The 1001 Inventions global touring exhibition and the educational products that accompany the exhibition all highlight the scientific and technological achievements made by men and women, of different faiths and cultures that lived in Muslim civilisation.

Launched in the United Kingdom in March 2006, 1001 Inventions was created by the Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation (FSTC), a British based non-profit, non-religious and academic organization. Working with leading academics from around the world, FSTC engages with the public through educational media in order to highlight the shared cultural and technological inheritance of humanity, in order to improve social cohesion.

About the Science Museum

From June 2009 the Science Museum is celebrating its hundredth birthday and a century of science with a year-long centenary programme to take the renowned institution into the future.

For 100 years the Science Museum has been world-renowned for its historic collection, remarkable galleries and inspirational exhibitions. With around 15,000 objects on public display, the Science Museum's collections form an enduring record of scientific, technological and medical change from the past few centuries.