PROPHET MUHAMMAD AND THE BIRTH OF ISLAM

The prophet Muhammad was born in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in 570 CE. According to Islamic texts and tradition, an angel named Gabriel visited Muhammad in 610 CE while he was meditating in a cave and ordered Muhammad to recite the words of Allah. In 622, Muhammad traveled from Mecca to Medina with his supporters, which marks the beginning of the Islamic calendar.

7th century, Mecca & Medina

Folio from a Qur'an

The first formal calligraphic style is the Kufic style. Kufic is not a single type of handwriting, but a family of 17 styles based on common principles, including relatively uniformly thick strokes, short straight vertical and long horizontal lines, and a straight, horizontal baseline. Each page of vellum in this Qur'an contains

only nine lines of calligraphy, suggesting

the dignity of the sacred text and the

wealth of its patron. Iraq





PATRONAGE OF ISLAMIC EMPIRES

As Islamic Empires grew and spread their influence, artistic patronage became an important symbol of wealth and power. Secular works from different regions showcase the various styles and importance of various mediums. A few of these important dynasties include the Umayyad, Seljuks, Ilkhanids, Mughal and Ottomans.

7th century-19th century, Arab world from North Africa to India

Bowl with Arabic Inscription

The calligraphic decoration on this bowl reads "Planning before work protects you from regret; prosperity and peace." The artful arrangement of its letters, in which vertical flourishes punctuate the horizontal flow of the words at rhythmic intervals stands out.

Nishapur, Iran



Folio from the Shah Jahan Album

This richly illuminated folio of calligraphy features the work of the preeminent Timurid calligrapher, Sultan 'Ali Mashhadi. Patronized by the Timurid court, Mashhadi was a poet and a recognized master of the nasta'liq script.



First Muslim-printed book using movable type

In the Ottoman empire in 1728, Ibrahim started working on Arabic printing. Ottoman documents state that Ibrahim designed and cut his type himself-and it is certainly different from European Arabic typefaces. It is closer to naskhi, the standard book hand of the Muslim world, very similar to typefaces used in the Middle East today, and a remarkable achievement.

Ottoman Empire



Mihrab (Prayer Niche)

This prayer niche, or mihrab, was originally an architectural element in a theological school (madrasa) in the city of Isfahan. The outer frame bears a Qur'anic inscription in white muhaqqaq script while an inscription in kufic script containing sayings of the Prophet frames

Isfahan, Iran

the arch of the niche.



WESTERN USE OF ARABIC TYPE

Starting in the 16th century, European interest in printing in Arabic began to rise, and in 1514 Gregorio de Gregorii, a Venetian, published a Book of Hours. The type is crude: squarish, ill-formed letters that are unpleasant and virtually unreadable. This marks the subsequent difficulties of translating the delicacy of Arabic calligraphy, and points to a downturn in quality of the forms of Arabic letters.

16th century, Italy & Western world



Tughra (Insignia) of Sultan

Süleiman the Magnificent A calligraphic device specific to each sultan, known as the tughra, a combination of royal seal and royal signature, served as the visual public

representation of the ruler. This piece's illumination employs the classical repertoire of featherlike, curved saz leaves and vegetal arabesques. The inscription reads "Sultan Süleyman Khan, the son of Sultan Selim Khan, may his reign endure forever."

Istanbul, Turkey

Nawal Al Saadi

► The Naked Face of the

Book cover designed by Helmi Eltuni and published by Al Arabi Publishing &

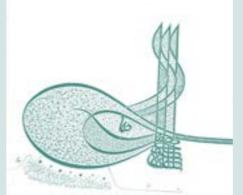
Distribution. This cover design is part

of Design Repository's effort to archive

Egyptian Woman by

book covers in Arabic.

Cairo, Egypt



Daud Hossaini

As cultural advisor to the last Afghan King Muhammad Zahir Khan, calligrapher Daud Hossaini belonged to the political and intellectual elite in Afghanistan. He oversaw the national printing industry.

Afghanistan



السعداوي الدكتورة نوال

ADVENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF

DIGITAL FONTS

With the advent of desktop publishing, type design and manufacturing entered a new era. The "analog" letterforms of metal and photo type were converted to a variety of digital formats, resulting in "bitmap" fonts. The current generation of digital fonts provides for "scalable" outline fonts. They are smaller in memory size and faster to process. Analog drawings of letters are plotted with a mouse or stylus to create an outline representation.

1980s, United States

Unified Arabic

Unified Arabic (UA) is a set of 30 letterforms, one for each letter of the Arabic alphabet, plus hamza and lam alef, eliminating the variant forms that make reading and writing Arabic difficult for beginners. It was designed by Nasri Khattar, a Lebanese architect to simplify Arabic typing.

Beirut, Lebanon

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ظعغفقك لمنمولا يكةه

Khatt Foundation

The Khatt Foundation, Center for Arabic Typography is a cultural foundation and design research center dedicated to advancing design and typography in the Middle East, North Africa and their diaspora, and to building cross-cultural creative networks. Huda Smitshuijzen AbiFarès is the founding director of the Khatt Foundation.

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Homa Delvaray

From miniature painting and lithography to metal work and carpet designs, Delvaray designs and paints with vibrant colors associated with Iranian arts and crafts.

Tehran, Iran

My faint face I blush with the blood of my heart

Delvaray designed this poster for an event about Iranian and Arabic visual culture in Berlin, its title taken from a poem by Hafez (Persian poet, 14th century A.D.). The design idea revolves around patchwork fabrics; the word in the poster is covered by colourful motifs at a first glance, with damage and stains

of blood in the background representing conflict and controversy.





Berlin, Germany

■ La illaha illah Hu' by Sana Naveed

This piece, and most of Naveed's work, is self-described as "Muhammadan art." meaning that her work is connected to Allah and the divine; most of her work is greatly inspired by old calligraphic masters. 11x14 in, acrylic ink, soot ink, on marbled/ tea dyed paper.

Texas



Hassan Massoudy

and performs in public.

Paris, France

Hassan Massoudy was born in Najaf,

Iraq, 1944. He started as an apprentice

calligrapher then moved to Paris in 1969.

He creates covers for Arabic magazines

Wael Morcos

Wael Morcos is a graphic designer and type designer from Beirut, Lebanon. He has developed Arabic-Latin bilingual typefaces and worked in print and exhibition design.

New York City, New York

M Arabic Lettering Workshops poster series no. 5

Arabic Lettering Workshops is a project by Khajag Apelian, Kristyan Sarkis and Wael Morcos. Each episode takes on a different theme. The posters use Fedra Arabic Display; to support the Latin alphabet, Fedra Sans Display 2 is incorporated within Fedra Arabic Display.

Beirut, Lebanon



DecoType DecoType specializes in Arabic typography, and is generally recognized as the finest technological solution to the Arabic's calligraphic nature. The organization was founded in 1985 by Thomas Milo, Mirjam Somers and Peter Somers. The most comprehensive implementation is WinSoft's Tasmeem, a plug-in that turns InDesign in a veritable

Arabic typesetting system. Amsterdam, the Netherlands

EMBRACING HISTORY OF THE ARAB WORLD & STEPPING BACK FROM WESTERN DESIGN

Though Western art & design has influenced art practice globally, there is a pushback against this notion. Artists and designers from across the world are reclaiming their own history and embracing it in their contemporary work. This has encouraged museums to curate more Islamic art as well.

Active, Global movement & Arab world

God is Alive, He Shall Not Die (blue) by

Nasser Al Salem focuses on the words and their meaning, medium, and aesthetic. Here, he employs neon to amplify the word "Allah," which, through the use of mirrors, creates an optical illusion that provides visual substantiation to the believer of God's infinite nature.

Nasser Al Salem

LACMA, Los Angeles, CA

Iman Raad is from Iran; he lives and works

in New York City in a variety of media,

including painting, drawing, embroidery,

graphic work and performance lectures,

drawing upon Persian painting, Mughal

internet image culture.

New York City, New York

painting, South-Asian Truck painting and



Islamic art have expanded to include

with roots in the Middle East. These artists use techniques and incorporate

Islamic Art Now marks the first major

LACMA, Los Angeles, CA

contemporary works by artists from or

imagery and ideas from earlier periods.

installation of LACMA's collection of

contemporary art of the Middle East,

Local/Not Local

Locally-based Middle Eastern designers and artists reveal through their design practice that Arabic and Iranian typography has a place in California through community-based projects, collaborations, and client work from abroad done locally.

Levantine Center, Los Angeles, CA



Islamic Art Now exhibition ► Poster for "The Birth of Typography Out of the In recent years, the parameters of Spirit of Calligraphy"

Lecture This poster by Iman Raad was designed for a lecture about the "thorough examination of the journey from contemporary calligraphy into typography." Its bold use of black and featuring 25 works by artists from Iran white help to bring forward the shapes

Beirut, Lebanon



and elements of the Arabic calligraphy It is modern, but alludes to this history.

GLOBALIZATION Globalization is the process by which organizations develop international influence or start operating on an international scale. It has brought into the art world practices from various regions, with diverse cultural heritage, political and social contexts. Hybrid cultures exist because there is a 'third space of enunciation', an 'in-between space', whose components and meanings can be appropriated and read anew.

Active, Global

Lara Captan

Iman Raad

Lara Captan is a Lebanese type designer & typographer. Since 2005, she has been analyzing the structures, aesthetics and historical transformations of the Arabic script with the aim of mechanizing the script from its essence.

Amsterdam, the Netherlands

Kanat Typeface

and the Arab world.

This wooden typeface (donated to the GWA) was designed by Lara Captan. It is part of her ongoing research and development of Arabic typefaces, and she is currently in the process of creating

a digital version of Kanat. Amsterdam, the Netherlands