

## Showcasing History and Craft Islamic Art and Material Culture

Preparations for two exhibitions at the Centre's Gallery have been underway. The first is *The Ultimate Journey* exhibition from Dar Layan Culture, which showcases 36 contemporary artworks by a wide range of international artists, depicting the Three Holy Mosques: the Grand Mosque in Makkah, the Prophet's Mosque in Madinah, and the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The exhibition will be open to the public from 6 February until 30 April daily, from 2:00pm until 3:00pm. The subsequent exhibition will take place later this year, and will focus on manuscripts and objects related to the Timurids.

The Centre recently received a copper and bronze sculpture crafted by Amin Gulgee, presented by the High Commissioner of Pakistan, HE Dr Mohammed Faisal. The sculpture is a rendering in three-dimensional *naskh* script of the fifth verse of Surah al-'Alaq (Q. 96:5): 'He taught humanity what they knew not', making it a particularly poignant gift to an institution of learning.

The Centre's activities relating to Islamic art are enhanced by the recent appointment of Dr Veronika Poier as



*Amin Gulgee's sculpture at the Centre*

the new Fellow in the History of Islamic Art and Material Culture. She holds a PhD in the History of Art and Architecture from Harvard University and has previously taught at Sciences Po and Vienna University. Her interdisciplinary research focuses on knowledge exchange among artistic and scientific communities, particularly those who preserve and spread such knowledge in times of warfare.

## Building on Research Strengths Islamic Finance and Capital Markets



*Participants of the 16th SC-OCIS Roundtable in Kuala Lumpur*

The Centre's collaboration with the Securities Commission in Malaysia is ongoing, with the 16th SC-OCIS Roundtable having taken place in Kuala Lumpur. The focus of the Roundtable was 'Climate Action Through the Lens of Maqasid Al-Shariah.' This continuing cooperation

is an important part of the Centre's current research in the field of Islamic Finance. This includes work in microfinance by Professor Muhammad Meki, and Professor Adeel Malik's work in the field of development macroeconomics.

The Centre's contributions to scholarship and practice of Islamic Finance will benefit from the recent appointment of Dr Abdulkader Thomas as the Sultan Nazrin Shah Fellow for Islamic Markets at the Centre. His research addresses Islamic finance from the perspectives of fiqh, law, and public policy. Dr Thomas has led research-based projects to support regulatory developments in the US, UK, West Africa, and the Gulf. Among his recent publications is *Islamic Finance & Sustainable Development* (Routledge 2025).

## Michaelmas Term Seminars

The following lectures and seminars were held at the Centre.

Professor Nandini Chatterjee (University of Oxford)  
*Rediscovering Mughal Archives: Documents from Temples in Northern India.*

Mr Raed Charafeddine (Former First Vice Governor of the Central Bank of Lebanon)  
*Reviving Arab Governance through Structural Policy Reform.*

Professor Robert Hillenbrand (University of Edinburgh)  
*What Makes Qumm Special in the Architecture of 14th-Century Iran?*

Professor Claire Gallien (University of Tübingen)  
*Early Modern Orientalism and the Recreation of the Islamic Canon: From Collections to Catalogues.*

Dr Fanny Bessard (University of Oxford)  
*Revolts as Rituals of Political Communication in 'Abbāsīd Baghdad (908-991).*

Professor Ian Talbot (University of Southampton)  
*Engaging Muslim Societies: Insight from British Public Diplomacy in Pakistan.*

Professor Faisal Devji (University of Oxford)  
*Waning Crescent: The Rise and Fall of Global Islam.*

Mr Nic Robertson (CNN International)  
*The Role of Media in a Changing World.*

Dr Abdallah Al Dardari (Director on UNDP's Regional Bureau for Arab States) *The Future of Arab Development.*

## International Contacts

### Malaysia



HM Raja Zarith Sofiah

Her Majesty Queen Raja Zarith Sofiah visited the Centre, and was joined by an esteemed delegation of figures from Malaysian government and foreign service. Her Majesty met with many members of the Centre's academic community, including Fellows, scholars, and exhibitioners, as well as staff. HM Raja Zarith engaged in conversation about the Centre's ongoing projects and activities, as well as future plans.

### Bosnia



HE President Željko Komšić

HE President Željko Komšić delivered a lecture entitled 'Beyond Dayton: Bosnia and Herzegovina at the Crossroads of Peace, Identity, and Human Rights'. The event was organized by the 'Remembering Srebrenica' charity with support from the Foreign Office, and hosted at the Centre. The lecture was attended by former and current judges and diplomats, and many members of the diaspora.

### Uzbekistan



Ms Gayane Umerova with the Director

Ms Gayane Umerova visited the Centre to learn more about its work and discuss plans for future collaborations. Ms Umerova is Head of the Department of Creative Economy and Tourism of the Administration of the President of Uzbekistan, and the Chairperson of the Uzbekistan Art and Culture Development Foundation. Plans for a collaborative exhibition at the Centre's gallery are underway.

### Turkey



HE Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu

HE Professor Ahmet Davutoğlu, former Prime Minister of Turkey, gave a lecture on 'The Muslim World Today'. The wide-ranging lecture examined the unique nature of Islamic civilization in a global historical context, from its early beginnings to the present day. Professor Davutoğlu emphasized the importance of strong moral and intellectual leadership as a means of overcoming fragmentation.

## British Academy Funded Conference Climate, Health and Faith



Participants of the Climate, Health and Faith conference at the Centre

The Centre hosted a conference on 'Climate, Health and Faith – Understanding Science, Building Trust'. The two-day event was

organized by Centre Fellows: Professor Shahid Jameel, Professor Adil Najam and Professor Sir David Clary, and was supported by a competitive grant from The British Academy. The event brought together 18 speakers from across the world, and an audience of over 70 attendees. The conference addressed climate change and human health as related to global challenges, and the role of faith and value systems for addressing these challenges. Presenters examined how attitudes determine adoption patterns and measure the success of technological innovations.

## Keith Griffin Lecture

# AI and the Trust Revolution

This year's Keith Griffin Lecture was given by Dr Gillian Tett, Provost of King's College, Cambridge. Dr Tett's lecture drew on her background in anthropology and experience as a journalist and economist to illuminate how AI is profoundly challenging what it means to be human.

Dr Tett offered an overview of different frameworks of trust and considered how AI is leading to a trust 'migration'. The lecture presented a range of case studies showing how younger generations are investing more

trust into advice and instruction offered by AI bots rather than by human beings. Dr Tett offered a wide-ranging consideration of how different

cultures approach technology and non-human agency, and the role that AI is increasingly coming to play in societies.



*Dr Gillian Tett*

## Anniversary Lecture

# Medieval Iranian Architecture



*Professor Robert Hillenbrand*

Professor Robert Hillenbrand is one of the Centre's 40th Anniversary Fellows, and recipient of the King Faisal Prize for Islamic Studies (2023). Professor

Hillenbrand's lecture at the Centre addressed the importance of Qumm in the history and development of Iranian architecture.

The lecture demonstrated that in the

fourteenth century an unusually high number of mausoleums were built in and around the city of Qumm, which was a significant Shi'i place of pilgrimage.

Using a wide range of documentary examples, Professor Hillenbrand explicated the architectural features of the mausoleums, noting their complex designs and decoration.

The speaker emphasized the extraordinary extent of the presence of mausoleums in this area, which was quite unlike any other in the Shi'ite world.

## King Faisal Lecture

# The Medieval Republic of Letters

The Centre hosted the King Faisal Lecture, delivered by Professor Muhsin Jassim al-Musawi (Columbia University), recipient of the King Faisal Prize (2022) for his contributions to Arabic Literature. The event was presided by Professor Tahera Qutbuddin, the Abdulaziz Saud al-Babtain Laudian Professor of Arabic at the University of Oxford. The lecture offered a broad overview of how literary, intellectual, and scholarly networks functioned across the medieval Islamic world. The speaker argued that in early modernity Arabic was a

dynamic medium for producing, circulating, and preserving knowledge across vast geographical, political, and cultural spaces. The speaker proposed that

scholars, historians, and writers formed interconnected communities that resembled an expansive 'republic of letters'.



*Professor Muhsin Jassim-Musawi*

## Visiting Fellows

The Centre welcomed the following Visiting Fellows in Michaelmas Term 2025:

Ms Alaa Alshurafa, *Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Ms Nouhad Ghazi Awwad, *Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Professor Jülide Karakoç Bakiş, *Abdullah Gül Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Dr Raida Chbib, DPhil *Visiting Fellow*

Dr Elmoubashar Farag, *STEMS Visiting Fellow*

Mr Cheong Say Lim, *Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Dr Tijjani Mohammed Mukaddas, *Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Dr Nazrul Hazizi Noordin, SC-OCIS *Visiting Fellow in Islamic Finance*

Dr Aaron Ponce, *Visiting Fellow*

Mr Dilmurod Rajaboev, *Chevening Visiting Fellow*

Dr Husamettin Simsir, *Abdul Aziz al-Mutawa Visiting Fellow*

Dr Noha Hussein, *Imam Bukhari Visiting Research Fellow*

Dr Mohammad Mozahidul Islam *Imam Tirmizi Visiting Research Fellow*

Dr Jari Portaankorva, *Visiting Research Fellow*

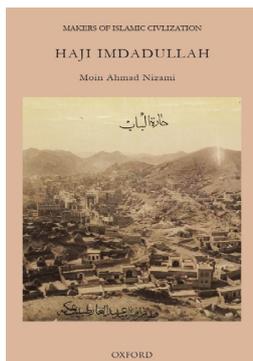
## Atlas Project

Dr Aftab A. Mallick has joined the project as Atlas Visiting Fellow.

## Disseminating Knowledge

# The Centre's Publications

The Centre's long-standing 'Makers of Islamic Civilization' book series, which is published by Oxford University Press (India), has recently brought out a new title: Dr Moin Nizami's biography of Haji Imdadullah, a shaykh of the Chishti order. The next title in the 'Makers of Islamic Civilization' series is Professor Mustansir Mir's biography of Abu A'la Mawdudi, which



Dr Moin Nizami's recently-published book

is currently in production. The Centre's flagship *Journal of Islamic Studies* has been published by Oxford University Press since 1990. This Q1 ranked arts and humanities journal attracts hundreds of submissions per year, and publishes top research in Islamic Studies. Its board of Consultant Editors is made up of esteemed international

academics. The journal has recently adopted an online submission system, and in keeping with Oxford University Press journals policy will be published online-only from January 2027.

Following the appointment of Dr Maria Shmygol as a new Publications Officer in Michaelmas Term 2024, the Centre's publication programmes continue to develop, with a variety of new projects under consideration. Dr Shmygol specializes in textual editing of early modern English drama and joined the Centre after a variety of international research fellowships and postdoctoral positions in the UK, Switzerland, and Ireland. She is the Joint Chair of the British Shakespeare Association and a general editor for the Malone Society.



Dr Maria Shmygol, the Centre's Publications Officer

If you wish to unsubscribe from this Newsletter, please email: [ocisnews@oxcis.ac.uk](mailto:ocisnews@oxcis.ac.uk)

OXFORD CENTRE FOR ISLAMIC STUDIES

Marstson Road, Oxford, OX3 0EE, UK

Tel: +44 1865 278730 Fax: +44 1865 248942 Email: [islamic.studies@oxcis.ac.uk](mailto:islamic.studies@oxcis.ac.uk)

[www.oxcis.ac.uk](http://www.oxcis.ac.uk)