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Wondrous Worlds Exhibition Showcases the Long History and Rich Diversity of Islamic Art

Bringing together both historic and contemporary objects from Asia, Africa, the United States, and Europe, Asia Society Texas Center's upcoming exhibition, *Wondrous Worlds: Art & Islam Through Time & Place*, showcases the global history and breadth of Islamic art. The exhibition opens September 9, 2017 and runs through February 25, 2018.

Organized by New Jersey's Newark Museum, the exhibition at Asia Society will feature more than 100 works that reflect aspects of faith, culture, and everyday life of Muslims across the world and throughout the ages.

"Islamic art exhibitions usually focus on works from the Middle East, North Africa or South Asia, but *Wondrous Worlds* expands the map by featuring works from Southeast Asia, the Americas, and East and West Africa as well," explains **Bridget Bray**, the Texas Center's Nancy C. Allen Curator and Director of Exhibitions. "By including these often overlooked regions, the exhibition highlights the vast geographic reach and material diversity of Islamic art."

Wondrous Worlds introduces visitors to the Five Pillars of Islam—Declaration of Faith, Daily Prayers, Charity, Fasting for Ramadan, and the *Haj* Pilgrimage—to provide context and a distinctive view into the function, artistry, and cultural histories of the objects.

On view will be works in nearly all media, including carpets, costumes, jewelry, ceramics, glassware, metalwork, prints, paintings, and photographs. Contemporary works from artists such as **Lalla Essaydi** and **Victor Ekpuk**, and calligraphy by **Hassan Massoudy**, will be shown with pieces dating back to the 9th century. Highlights range from dazzling wares from Iran, Spain, and China to delicate prayer rugs from Turkey and India.

A FREE reception will be held at Asia Society on Thursday, September 7 from 6 to 8 pm for guests to enjoy light bites and preview the art. A conversation between Dr. **Katherine Anne Paul**, the exhibition's guest curator, and Ms. Bray will highlight the evening. Local calligraphic artists will be demonstrating their art

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form during the reception as well.

General admission to the exhibition is FREE for Asia Society members and children ages 12 and under, \$5 for nonmembers. Asia Society Texas Center, located at 1370 Southmore Blvd, Houston, Texas, is open Tuesday – Friday, 11 am – 6 pm, and Saturday – Sunday, 10 am – 6 pm.

Nationally, the exhibition is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Exhibitions at Asia Society Texas Center are presented by Wells Fargo. Major support comes from Chinhui Juhn and Eddie Allen, Nancy C. Allen, Leslie and Brad Bucher, and the City of Houston through Houston Arts Alliance. Generous funding also provided by The Clayton Fund, Kathy and Glen Gondo, Ann Wales, and through contributions from the Friends of Exhibitions, a premier group of individuals and organizations committed to bringing exceptional visual art to Asia Society Texas Center.

About Asia Society Texas Center

With 12 locations throughout the world, Asia Society is the leading educational organization promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among the peoples, leaders, and institutions of Asia and the United States. Asia Society Texas Center executes the global mission with a local focus, enriching and engaging the vast diversity of Houston through innovative, relevant programs in arts and culture, business and policy, education, and community outreach.

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