

Science Museum to host Muslim Heritage exhibition

The Science Museum today announced that it will host a new exhibition, *1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World*, which 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. The exhibition is a British based project, produced in association with the Jameel Foundation.

Featuring a diverse range of exhibits, interactive displays and dramatisation, the exhibition shows how many modern inventions, spanning fields such as engineering, medicine and design, can trace their roots back to Muslim civilisation.

Prof. 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 China, India, Persia, Africa and the Arab world. This is the period in history that gave us huge advances in engineering, the development of robotics and the foundations of modern mathematics, chemistry and physics. With over 15,000 objects in our collection spanning many different cultures, the Science Museum provides the perfect context for this exhibition, as a place which encourages innovation and learning amongst visitors of all ages."

One of the focal points of the exhibition is a six-metre high replica of the 'Elephant Clock'- a visually striking early 13th century clock whose design fuses together elements from many 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 exhibits featured in this interactive exhibition include:

- Model of an energy efficient and environmentally-friendly Baghdad 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 revolutionise our understanding of optics.

Visitors can also learn about parallel stories of invention from other cultures and civilisations, illustrated through a display of rare and beautiful objects from the Science Museum's collections, many of which have never been on public display before. These include devices used for weighing and measuring, surgical instruments, astronomical devices, intricately crafted ceramic pots and textiles.

1001 Inventions was created by the Manchester-based Foundation for Science, Technology and Civilisation (FSTC). The exhibition will run from 21st January until 25th April 2010 (with a short closure between 25th Feb and 12th March 2010 inclusive). Further information about the exhibition is available at sciencemuseum.org.uk and 1001inventions.com.

Ends

Notes to editors

For further press information please contact:

Science Museum: Laura Singleton, Press Office on: 0207 942 4364 / laura.singleton@sciencemuseum.org.uk

1001 Inventions: Junaid Bhatti on 07980 586 243 / junaid@1001inventions.com

Official Pictures are available here: www.1001inventions.com/media

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. Aiming to be the best place in the world for people to enjoy science, the Science Museum makes sense of the science that shapes our lives, sparking curiosity, releasing creativity and changing the future by engaging people of all generations and backgrounds in science engineering, medicine, technology, design and enterprise. In 2008/09 the Science Museum was proud to have been awarded the Gold Award for Visitor Attraction of the Year by Visit London and a Silver Award for Large Visitor Attraction of the Year by Enjoy England.

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 Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation

The Abdul Latif Jameel Foundation is a British charity (registration no. 1130939), established in February 2009 to support the arts, education, economic development and to tackle social/financial exclusion 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.

Interviews are available upon request.