



TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

100 Exhibitions

April 2010 through November 2016

An exhibition on world wide tour
promoting religious tolerance,
mutual understanding
and peaceful coexistence



TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE

OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

“It is good that this exhibition can highlight the vital importance of religious freedom in a world where such freedom is so often not respected.

“It is also good that the positive resources of the Ibadhi school of Islam and the tolerant traditions of the Sultanate of Oman in particular are given more prominence. I trust that the exhibition will provide a space in which mutual sharing and learning can take place.”

Excerpt from the message of the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. Rowan Williams, to the audience at St. Philip's Centre in Leicester, 16 July 2012.

“The exhibition comes at a very important time, as violence and extremism prevail throughout the world, confirming the need for tolerance, understanding and coexistence.”

HE Dr. George Vella, the Foreign Minister of Malta, on the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition in Valetta, 24 October 2014.

“It is crucial that we harness and learn from the best regional and national examples of inclusive outreach — I am sure that this exhibition will nurture our determinations to pursue a more peaceful and just world.”

Nadha Al-Nashif, UNESCO Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences on the occasion of the inauguration of the exhibition at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, 7 October 2015.

TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

100 Exhibitions
in 30 countries

April 2010 through November 2016

Status Report January 2017

by

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Background: Concept and Evolution

The Ministry of Religious Endowments (Awqaf) and Religious Affairs in Oman, in cooperation with Arabia Felix Synform GmbH in Munich, conceived the idea to produce an exhibition about the religious life in the Sultanate of Oman, entitled "Religious Tolerance: Islam in Oman," a project of the Ministry to promote interfaith dialogue, with special emphasis on religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

The original exhibition consisted of 20 information panels, replicas of historic documents and a 30-minute documentary film entitled "Religious Tolerance in Oman." The materials were supplied free of charge to the host institutions. The hosts provided the display space and security, took care of any costs for promotion and advertising, and were responsible for the opening ceremony.

A website (www.islam-in-oman.com) was created to make the contents of the exhibition available online so that potential hosts of the exhibition could view the displays and inform themselves on the details how to go about hosting the exhibition.

The first showings of the exhibition (Project Phase I: 10 Exhibitions in Germany and Austria, April 2010 through July 2011) took place at adult education establishments, the "Volkshochschulen," thus making it well-placed and highly visible, and thereby attracting media attention and widespread public acceptance. It was very well-received and attended, even generating interest to have the exhibition hosted by institutions located outside of Germany and the German-speaking regions.



Opening of the exhibition at Valetta, Malta

Therefore a decision was taken in 2011 to have the exhibition translated into seven more languages and made available elsewhere in Europe. Arabia Felix Synform GmbH in Munich was commissioned to prepare and arrange an additional 30 exhibitions (Project Phase II: 30 Exhibitions in Europe, July 2011 through March 2015).

As word of this timely message spread in academic and interfaith circles, the project was extended again in 2013 with the new title "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam." It was translated into numerous languages and offered worldwide to carefully chosen institutions involved in interfaith dialogue (Project Phase III: 40 Exhibitions worldwide, April 2013 through September 2016 and Project Phase IV: 15 Exhibitions worldwide, beginning May 2016), bringing the total number of exhibitions to 95.

The number of informative panels rose to 24, and in 2015 multimedia terminals were added. In parallel the content of the website www.islam-in-oman.com was extended and translated into 18 languages. The documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" has been translated into 25 languages.

Together with the exhibitions arranged under the aegis of the Ministry in Oman, by November 2016 the total number of exhibitions presented worldwide reached 100, with more slated for the future. Requests to host the exhibition continue to be received from new countries and different cities. The diversity of potential hosts presents Oman with the opportunity to spread its message of peace in ever-widening circles.

Each of the exhibitions portrayed in this report was held in cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and a local community. The directors of the educational establishments took it upon themselves to invite the mayor and/or high-ranking representatives of the community, as well as representatives of Oman, and at every exhibition opening such notables were present.

The exhibition has been hosted at a variety of institutions – adult education centres, universities, city halls, libraries, UNESCO branches, government ministries, museums of renown – and used as a focal point in meetings, conferences, and special events, all relating to interfaith dialogue and all promoting Oman's message of religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

The success of this Omani-German venture demonstrates that constructive cooperation between East and West is, contrary to widespread opinion, quite possible even today. This is due mainly to the objective presentation of the content, free of blatant commercial interests, which helps to diffuse misgivings about Islam in Europe and elsewhere in the world, and ultimately yields great prestige to the Sultanate of Oman.

Mohammed Said Al-Mamari

Georg Popp

January 2017

The Exhibition

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance - Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" consists of printed matter, 3D objects and digital media. The heart of the exhibition consists of 24 full-color information panels, size 70 x 100 cm. Facsimile prints of ancient manuscripts and artifacts, like camel shoulder blades emblazoned with Quranic writings, enrich the setting. Shadow art, calligraphy and film add an artistic level to the exhibition. Multimedia terminals allow visitors to read the panels in other languages and inform themselves on various topics in more detail than presented in the exhibition.

—> see Appendix III: The Exhibits (see page 207)

Panel design

The colors of the exhibition panels were selected from pigments produced personally by Georg Popp using Omani earth and minerals. The entire **color palette of the exhibition panels is therefore 100% authentic Omani**. It is also unique, because this color set was digitalized and produced exclusively for the first time for use in this exhibition, and reflects the real and naturally-occurring colors of Oman.

The border ornamentation was produced using the font "Sindbad" designed by Georg Popp, derived from **ornaments of Omani carved doors and door frames**. The font "Sindbad" received the International Type Design Award in 1999.



Color pigments obtained by grinding Omani minerals

Panel Contents and Texts

The concise, succinct stand-alone texts can be easily read in passing, and in any order. The corresponding pictures feature people in typical everyday religious and societal settings, which draw attention and serve to counteract stereotypes.

A special design was required for presenting these panels in semi-public buildings with lots of foot traffic: professional, aesthetically pleasing, transportable and stable, durable, and giving no impression of advertising, especially since they are displayed not in commercial spaces but in areas pertaining to higher learning, continuing education, advanced training, or intercultural dialogue.

Collateral materials

Additionally two **"pop-up" banners** in complimentary design are supplied with each exhibition, which contribute to the professional appearance at the exhibition entrance and/or in framing the speakers' platform.

Each exhibitor receives **posters** for advertising the exhibition, and pre-printed **invitation cards** for the opening ceremony, which are in the same colors and design as the exhibition.

In accompaniment to the exhibition there is a **catalogue** for distribution to the visitors, in which the texts and pictures from the panels are found, again in the same design and colors. This brochure can be taken home, read in peace and shared with family and friends.

Contracted 18 languages panels and documentary film:

- Arabic
- Bahasa Indonesian
- Bahasa Melayu
- Chinese
- Dutch
- English
- French
- German
- Hindi
- Italian
- Korean
- Lithuanian

- Portuguese
- Russian
- Spanish
- Swahili
- Turkish
- Urdu

Panels (additional 5 languages):

- Albanian
- Greek
- Japanese
- Macedonian
- Slovenian

Documentary Film (Additional 6 languages):

- Albanian
- Japanese
- Macedonian
- Nepali
- Romanian
- Uzbek

The Emblem of the Exhibition



The emblem of the “Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman’s message of Islam” was handpicked from among a range of artworks held in the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque. It represents a meeting point of diverse cultures, civilizations, and aspects of knowledge.

The Grand Mosque features design elements which have been combined from different traditions in art and architecture, such as Moroccan tiles and Mughal murals. The attractive corridors, domes, minarets, extensive gardens, and water fountains are inspired by architectural gems which are well-known in Europe and Asia. Various construction materials, including wood, marble, stained glass, ornamental stone, copper and tiles were used in making this modern masterpiece. The artworks in the courtyard of the Grand Mosque present a fantastic cultural and artistic matrix contributing to the overall impression of serenity, which duly reflects the aesthetic sensibilities of Oman.

This emblem was selected for its symbolic value as it is comprised of a variety of artistic features

and colors: meticulous floral and geometric designs derived from ancient mosaics, with modern calligraphy and abstract forms. The artwork integrates Islamic and classical elements: Kufic script mingles with Mughal and Safavid decorations reflecting historical and conventional techniques, and features a systematic combination of polished and rough surfaces, in which golden mosaics contrast with embossed porcelain pieces.

With this intermingling, the emblem of the ‘Message of Islam’ Exhibition is a beautiful mosaic masterpiece and a manifestation of the beauty created by symbolically combining disparate elements representing the diversity and plurality of the world’s cultures, religions and people.

The emblem in the form of a glass sculpture was presented to UNESCO in November 2015 at an event held in conjunction with the 38th General Conference. Symbolizing the diversity of the world’s religions and cultures, as it does, and exemplifying the Sultanate’s role in establishing policies of tolerance, acceptance, and peaceful coexistence among peoples, it is now part of the permanent art collection at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris.

The Documentary Films

“Religious Tolerance in Oman” and “Islamic Art in Oman”

Produced in conjunction with the exhibition and presenting daily life in Oman in a style accessible to the general public, the film **“Religious Tolerance in Oman”** was deliberately created not as an intellectual or historical documentary, but by interviewing average people spontaneously on the street, completely unscripted. Presented here are scenes unlikely to be seen by a foreign visitor; the film makes normal people palpable, reducing xenophobia and enabling viewers to discover similarities among the faiths. It shows rites of various religions — Catholics, Protestants, Copts, Hindus and Muslims — as they are normally conducted, in order to depict them realistically and not through clichés (such as denouncements of Western culture). Wolfgang Ettlch, an award-winning documentary filmmaker, works professionally, extemporaneously and with curiosity.

Produced now in **24 languages**, the film is very lively and has been very well received. It is shown at the exhibition openings and replayed during the exhibition. The film has proven to be popular even on its own, and is being presented in contexts other than the exhibition. **More than 100.000 copies of the film have been distributed worldwide. In the Internet to date more than 200.000 people have seen the film in various languages via YouTube and the VIMEO platform. It is also available in 18 languages on the website www.islam-in-oman.com.**

Together with another documentary film by Wolfgang Ettlch — “Islamic Art in Oman” — the film “Religious Tolerance in Oman” is also being **offered on Oman Air’s inflight entertainment system.**



Copyright: Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Sultanate of Oman 2010

Still from “Religious Tolerance in Oman”



Still from "Islamic Art in Oman"

The documentary film **"Islamic Art in Oman"** was produced in 3 languages: Arabic, English and German. It portrays Oman as a nation of seafarers, which has been involved in a lively exchange with other cultures for thousands of years. Through this exchange Omanis began naturally to integrate elements of other cultures into their own, without losing their own identity. Drawing on this experience, modern art is developing in Oman today its own way and in accordance with Islam.



Still from "Islamic Art in Oman"

OMAN AIR inflight entertainment guide

The Sand Art Film

by Shaimah Al-Mughairy



"Arabs Got Talent" finalist Shaimah Al-Mughairy contributed to the project with a sand art performance, depicting the historic and religious development of Omani society from the times of early Islam until today.

The production itself lasted about six hours and was filmed throughout. This material was the basis for a 10-minute short film.

Due to the fact that this film works on a visual level, it is self explanatory and needs no text. Therefore it is perfect for presentation at exhibitions in a loop on a big screen anywhere in world.

A live performance was given by Shaimah at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in November 2016 on the occasion of the 38th General Conference celebrating the 70th anniversary of UNESCO.



Still from the sand art film

Still from the sand art film

The Website

www.islam-in-oman.com

The website was initially launched as www.religioese-toleranz.de in January 2010 in order to give potential exhibitors a sneak preview of the exhibition, the contents of which were still subject to change. The information panels were displayed in their entirety in German. There are explanations in detail to the potential exhibitors about who the project partners are, what are their rights and obligations, the exhibition contract, and the dates of exhibitions which have taken place.

Completely unexpected, due to the deft programming, the website was quickly in third place in the search results of Google Germany using the search term "Ibadhiya." The search terms "religiöse toleranz," "oman ausstellung" (English: Oman Exhibition), or "oman islam" also delivered the website to the first page of results. It was not only potential exhibitors visiting the website, but the general public!

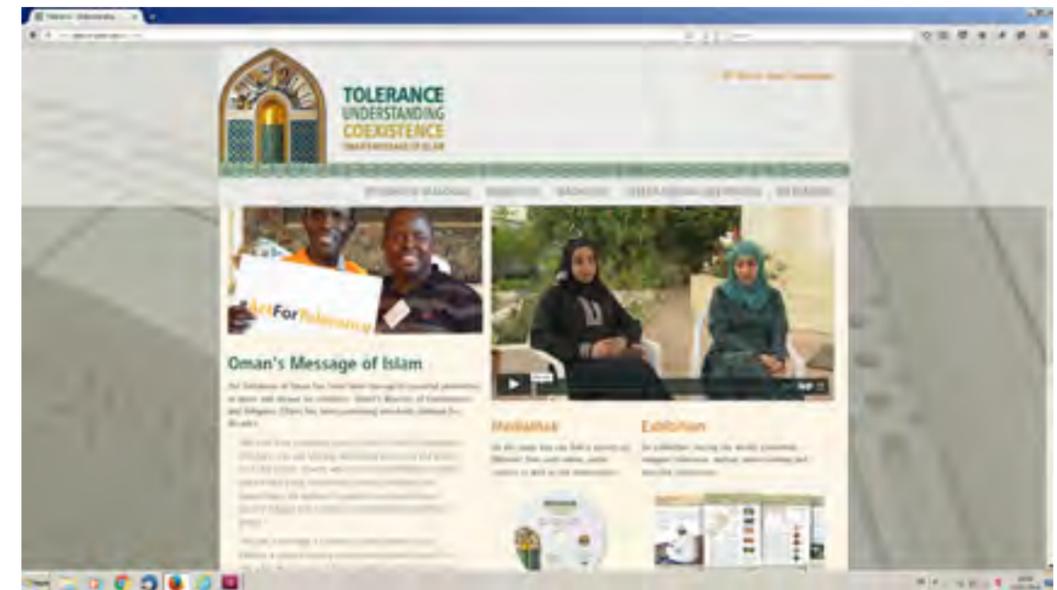
Expanding the exhibition in the project's Phase II, encompassing 8 languages, meant a complete restructuring of the website. Thanks to the architecture of this particular Content Management Systems (CMS) – Typo3 – it was possible to construct a multilingual, multi-domain website, adopting national top level domains as URLs leading to the localized pages. All of the alias names are linked to and lead to the parent name www.islam-in-oman.com.

Under this structure all of the content is centrally controlled in one CMS. In this way everyone who is interested can find the corresponding information in his or her mother tongue on a top-level domain (e.g. at www.tolerancia-religiosa.es for the Spanish exhibitors).

For project Phase III it became necessary to restructure the website to accommodate 18 languages, and to adapt the content, acknowledging that the website is no longer merely an information page for exhibitors, but has rather become a virtual showroom for the general public, with extended information dealing with Islam in Oman, and various topics related to interfaith dialogue. The extended website was launched in conjunction with the inauguration of the exhibition at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris at the beginning of October 2015.

With the cooperation and support of the *Monotype* company in Frankfurt, Germany, the latest web font technology is being used for presentation of the texts in languages which use different alphabets and writing systems, such as Arabic, Chinese, Hindi, Korean, Russian and Urdu. The website layout is therefore displayed in a consistent way regardless of the device used. Furthermore the website is automatically presented in the language pertaining to the IP address, or English by default.

The web statistics show that there is keen interest in the website by the global public. Since its inception the website has seen a steady increase in the number of monthly views and unique users. In May 2011 for the first time there were over 5000 people recorded as visiting the site. **By the middle of 2014 this number had increased to an average of 25.000 visitors per month. In November 2015 for the first time the number of visitors rose to more than 70.000.**



Welcome page of the new version of the website www.islam-in-oman.com

On average 250.000 pages are accessed monthly from more than 50 countries.

To optimize the findability of the website in the Internet for each of the languages, the available domain names pertaining to "religious tolerance" and "Islam in Oman" have been registered to the project "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's message of Islam." (This also protects the project from unwanted copycats and freeloaders, preventing them from choosing similar names to divert or "hijack" the search results.) Search results then point to the home page in the appropriate language.

The domain names currently registered and pertaining to this project are listed here:

religioesetoleranz.de	religieuzetolerantie.nl
religioese-toleranz.de	religieuze-tolerantie.nl
religioesetoleranz.com	religieuzetolerantie.com
religioese-toleranz.com	religieuze-tolerantie.com
religioesetoleranz.info	religieuzetolerantie.info
religioese-toleranz.info	religieuze-tolerantie.info
religioesetoleranz.at	tolleranzareligiosa.ch
religioese-toleranz.at	tolleranza-religiosa.ch
religioesetoleranz.ch	tolerancia-religiosa.es
religioese-toleranz.ch	toleranciareligiosa.es
tolerance-religieuse.ch	tolerancia-religiosa.com
tolerancereligieuse.ch	

100 Exhibition Locations April 2010 through November 2016 in 30 countries

**TOLERANCE
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- exhibition venues to follow
- host countries
- upcoming exhibitions

Locations of Oman's Touring Exhibition (November 2016)

ALBANIA

Tirana International Hotel
May 2015 **Tirana**

AUSTRALIA

Griffith University
July 2016 **Brisbane**

AUSTRIA

Volkshochschule
May 2011 **Vienna**

AUSTRIA

United Nations
July 2011 **Vienna**

BELGIUM

Free University of Brussels
September 2012 **Antwerp**

BRAZIL

Club Hóm
June 2014 **São Paulo**

Cultural Center
June 2014 **Foz do Iguaçu**

Omar ibn Al-Khattab Mosque
June 2014 **Foz do Iguaçu**

Sociedade Beneficente Islâmica
July 2014 **Foz de Iguaçu**

Sergio Cardoso Theater
July 2015 **São Paulo**

Oman Cultural Days
August 2015 **Rio de Janeiro**

BRUNEI

International Convention Centre (ICC)
November 2014,
Bandar Seri Begawan
Jerudong International School
November 2015
Bandar Seri Begawan

CANADA

Isma'ili Center
February 2016 **Toronto**

ESTONIA

University of Technology
September 2012 **Tallinn**

FRANCE

Association Coexister
October 2014 **Paris**

Association Coexister
November 2014 **Paris**

Nights of Ramadan
June/July 2015 **Lyon**

UNESCO Headquarters
October 2015 **Paris**

UNESCO Headquarters
November 2015 **Paris**

GERMANY

Volkshochschule
April 2010 **Ludwigshafen**

Gästevig Culture Center
September 2010 **Munich**

Vocational School No. 5
July 2011 **Augsburg**

Federal Office for
Migration & Refugees
September 2011 **Nuremberg**

Asia-Africa Institute, University
June 2013 **Hamburg**

Museum for Communication
March 2015 **Berlin**

and 13 other venues

GREECE

Majda Centre
November 2015 **Kyrala**

ITALY

UNESCO Chair of Religious Pluralism
University of Bologna
January 2013 **Bologna**

Palazzo Reale
February 2015 **Milan**

JAPAN

Tokyo University
November 2012 **Tokyo**

Dishisha University
June 2014 **Kyoto**

S. KOREA

Korea Foundation
November 2014 **Seoul**

Cultural Museum
March 2015 **Seoul**

Busan Citizens Park
June 2015 **Busan**

KUWAIT

The Grand Mosque
February 2013 **Kuwait City**

The Grand Mosque
March 2014 **Kuwait City**

LITHUANIA

City Hall
March 2013 **Vilnius**

MACEDONIA

Foundation Centre of Islamic Civilization
March 2015 **Skopje**

MALTA

St. James Cavalier Center for Creativity
October 2014 **La Valletta**

NEPAL

Patan Museum
November 2014 **Lalitpur**

NETHERLANDS

Sejbroek Library
November 2012 **The Hague**

N. ZEALAND

Waikato University
November 2015 **Hamilton**

OMAN

Barr Al Issah Convention Centre
March 2012 **Muscat**

Qurum Natural Park
July 2013 **Muscat**

Fountain Tower
October 2013 **Sur**

Entertainment Centre
November 2013 **Sohar**

PAKISTAN

International Islamic University
March 2014 **Islamabad**

SINGAPORE

National Library
December 2015 **Singapore**

National Museum
February 2016 **Singapore**

SLOVENIA

City Hall
December 2013 **Ljubljana**

SPAIN

UNESCO Chair for Dialogue
University Rovira Virgili
October 2011 **Tarragona**

Islamic Culture Center of Catalonia
November 2011 **Barcelona**

Complutense University
May 2012 **Madrid**

Biblioteca Viva Al-Andalus
July 2012 **Córdoba**

Biblioteca Viva Al-Andalus
September 2016 **Córdoba**

S. AFRICA

National Museum of Cultural History
February 2016 **Pretoria**

TAIWAN

Museum of World Religions
December 2015 **Taipei**

UK

St Philip's Centre
July 2012 **Leicester**

Cambridge University
August 2014 **Cambridge**

The Islamic Foundation
November 2014 **Markfield**

Suffolk County Council
November 2014 **Suffolk**

West Suffolk College
November 2014 **Suffolk**

USA

Salve Regina University
April 2013 **Newport, Rhode Island**

Kennesaw State University
October 2014 **Kennesaw, Georgia**

Grand Valley State University
October 2014 **Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Ohio State University
October 2014 **Athens, Ohio**

Grand Rapids Public Library
November 2014 **Grand Rapids, Michigan**

Willard Intercontinental Hotel
December 2014 **Washington D.C.**

Parliament of the World's Religions
October 2015 **Salt Lake City**

VAE

YAS Mall
November 2016 **Abu Dhabi**

Overview

1. UN and UNESCO Institutions

United Nations, Vienna, Austria

July 29, 2011 through August 12, 2011, estimated visitors: 2.000

UNESCO Chair University Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

October 03 through October 21, 2011, estimated visitors: 4.000

UNESCO Chair Bologna University, Bologna, Italy

January 09 through January 18, 2013, estimated visitors: 2.000

UNESCO Nepal, Patan Museum, Kathmandu, Nepal

November 12 through November 17, 2014, estimated visitors: 1.500

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

October 08 through October 14, 2015, estimated visitors: 1.000

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

November 09, 2015, estimated visitors: 200



Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences. UNESCO

2. Governmental, Municipal and Cultural Institutions

Gasteig Culture Center, Munich, Germany

September 25, 2010 through October 12, 2010 / estimated visitors: 70.000

Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (BAMF), Nuremberg, Germany

September 27, 2011 through October 21, 2011, estimated visitors: 1.500

Segbroek Library, The Hague, Netherlands

November 19, 2011 through January 08, 2012, estimated visitors: 7.000

Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich, Germany

March 27, 2012, estimated visitors: 100

Biblioteca Viva al-Andalus, Cordoba, Spain

June 07, 2012 until December 31, 2013, estimated visitors: 7.000

Werkstatt der Kulturen, Berlin, Germany

July 20 through August 19, 2012, estimated visitors: 4.000

City Hall, Vilnius, Lithuania

March 14 through March 28, 2013, estimated visitors: 2.000

Town Hall, Ljubljana, Slovenia

December 03, 2013 through January 06, 2014, estimated visitors: 6.000

Oman Business Forum, Frankfurt Chamber of Commerce, Germany

May 27, 2014 Frankfurt Chamber of Commerce, estimated visitors: 150

Club Homs, Sao Paulo, Brasil

June 27, 2014, estimated visitors: 1500

Culture Center, Foz do Iguazu, Brasil

June 30 through July 03, 2014, estimated visitors: 2000

St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, Valletta, Malta

October 24 through November 09, 2014, estimated visitors: 2.000

Grand Rapids Public Library, Michigan, USA

November 03 through November 16, 2014, estimated visitors: 2.000

International Convention Centre (ICC), Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

November 11 through November 15, 2014, estimated visitors: 2.500

Korea Foundation, Seoul, South Korea

November 05 through December 06, 2014, estimated visitors: 3.500

Oman Solidarity Symposium, Washington DC, USA
December 03, 2014

MOHA Center, Kavala, Greece
November 03 through November 30, 2015, estimated visitors: 2.000

National Library, Sao Paulo, Brazil
July 28 through August 02, 2015, estimated visitors: 2.000

Oman Cultural Days, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
August 05 through August 09, 2015, estimated visitors: 2.000

Busan Citizens Park, South Korea
June 02 through June 15, 2015, estimated visitors: 4.000

National Library, Singapore
December 08 through December 31, 2015, estimated visitors: 5.000

Biblioteca Viva al-Andalus, Cordoba, Spain
September 07 through September 28, 2016, estimated visitors: 1.000

YAS Mall, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates
November 18, 2016, estimated visitors: 5.000

3. Museums

Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace) Museum, Milan, Italy
February 4 through February 22, 2015, estimated visitors: 7.000

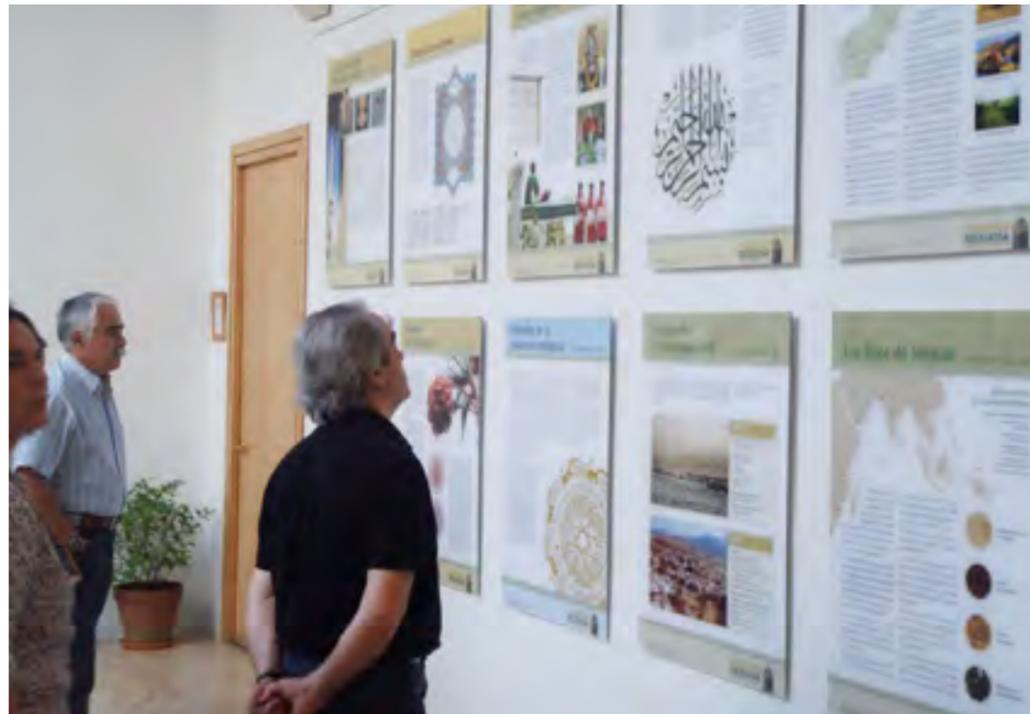
Museum for Communication, Berlin, Germany
March 05 through March 29, 2015, estimated visitors: 6.000

Multiculture Museum, Seoul, South Korea
March 16 through April 30, 2015, estimated visitors: 5.500

Museum of the World Religions, Taipeh, Taiwan
December 01 through December 31, 2015, estimated visitors: 5.000

Maritime Experiential Museum, Singapore
February 01 through February 29, 2016, estimated visitors: 7.000

National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, South Africa
February 01 through February 06, 2016, estimated visitors: 7.000



Visitors reading the panels at the Bibliotheca Viva al-Andalus, Cordoba, Spain



Banners at the entrance of the Palazzo Reale in Milan, Italy



The audience of the opening at the Vocational School V, Augsburg, Germany

4. Institutions for Adult Education

Volkshochschule (VHS) Ludwigshafen, Germany

April 16, 2010 through May 14, 2010 / estimated visitors: 4.000

Volkshochschule (VHS) Offenburg, Germany

June 11, 2010 through July 31, 2010 / estimated visitors: 2.000

Volkshochschule (VHS) Landkreis Hof, Germany

November 12, 2010 through November 30, 2010 / estimated visitors: 3.000

Volkshochschule (VHS) Grafschaft Bentheim/Nordhorn, Germany

January 21, 2011 through February 18, 2011 / estimated visitors: 3.000

Volkshochschule (VHS) Wilhelmshaven, Germany

March 03, 2011 through April 08, 2011 / estimated visitors: 3.000

Volkshochschule (VHS) Vienna, Austria

May 02, 2011 through May 31, 2011 / estimated visitors: 6.000

Volkshochschule (VHS), Aachen, Germany

November 07 through November 30, 2012, estimated visitors: 2.000

Vocational School 5 Augsburg, Germany

July 04, 2011 through July 20, 2011 / estimated visitors: 9.000

Haus Nordhelle, Meinerzhagen, Germany

January 10 through February 09, 2014, estimated visitors: 1.000



Interreligious panel at the opening at the Islamic Cultural Center of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain

5. Religious and Interreligious Institutions and Events

Reinoldinum, Dortmund, Germany

August 23, 2010 through September 16, 2010 / estimated visitors: 5.000

Islamic Cultural Center of Catalonia, Barcelona, Spain

November 18 through December 18, 2011, estimated visitors: 3.000

St. Philip's Centre, Leicester, UK

July 16 through July 20, 2012, estimated visitors: 1000

Kuwait City, Grand Mosque, Kuwait

February, 2013, estimated visitors: 500

Kuwait City, Grand Mosque, Kuwait

March 04, 2014, estimated visitors: 500

Omar bin Al-Khatib Masjid, Foz de Iguacu, Brasil

July 04, 2014, estimated visitors: 1000

Sociedade Beneficents Islamic, Foz de Iguacu, Brasil

July 05, 2014, estimated visitors: 1000

Summer School, Cambridge University, UK

August 04 through August 08, 2014, in attendance: 50

"Association Coexister," Paris, France

October 10 through October 12, 2014, in attendance: 100

Islamic Foundation Markfield, Leicestershire, UK
November 03 through November 10, 2014, estimated visitors: 800

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource, Suffolk County Council, Ipswich, UK
November 17 through November 21, 2014, estimated visitors: 500

International Day of Tolerance, Hormuz Grand Hotel, Muscat, Oman
November 16 through November 21, 2014, estimated visitors: 800

“InterFaith Dialogue and Common Action: Why and How”, Paris, France
November 15 through November 16, 2014, in attendance: 150

Islamic Civilisation Center, Skopje, Macedonia
March 09 through March 19, 2015, estimated visitors: 2000

Tirana International Hotel, Albania
April 29 through May 12, 2015, estimated visitors: 2000

Nights of Ramadan, Lyon, France
June 19 through July 15, 2015, estimated visitors: 20.000

Parliament of the World’s Religions, Salt Lake City, USA
October 15 through October 19, 2015, in attendance: 10.000



The audience at the opening ceremony at Complutense University, Madrid, Spain.



Muslim, Christian and Jewish participants of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, UK

6. Universities

Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg, Germany
June 06, 2011 through June 28, 2011 / estimated visitors: 500

Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain
May 04 through May 11, 2012, estimated visitors: 5.000

University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia
September 20 through October 04, 2012, estimated visitors: 3.000

Free University of Brussels, Antwerp, Belgium
September 13 through October 10, 2012, estimated visitors: 3.000

University Salve Regina, Newport, Rhode Island, USA,
April 8 through April 23, 2013, estimated visitors: 2.000

University of Education, Freiburg, Germany
June 12 through June 30, 2013, estimated visitors: 2.000

University Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany
June 27 through July 04, 2013, estimated visitors: 1.500

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan
March 2014, estimated visitors: 2.500

CISMOR, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan
April 06 through July 06, 2014, estimated visitors: 3.500

Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, USA
October 02 through October 31, 2014, estimated visitors: 4.000

Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan, USA
October 10 through October 31, 2014, estimated visitors: 3.500

Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA
October 27 through November 25, 2014, estimated visitors: 4.500

West Suffolk College, Bury St. Edmunds, UK
November 24 through November 28, 2014, estimated visitors: 1.000

ZEF, University Bonn, Germany
December 17, 2014 through January 15, 2015, estimated visitors: 2.500

Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand
November 02 through November 30, 2015, estimated visitors: 700

Ismaili Center, University of Toronto, Canada
February 20 through March 12, 2016, estimated visitors: 2.500

Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia
July 12 through July 22, 2016, estimated visitors: 1.000

Jerudong International School, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei
November 29 through November 30, 2016, estimated visitors: 2.500

7. Exhibitions in Oman

Barr Al Jissah Resort, Muscat, March 2012

Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to non native speakers, Manah, January 2013

Al Qurm Naturel Park, Muscat, July 2013

Tower Fountain, Sur, October 2013

Entertainment Centre, Sohar, November 2013

Sports Club, Mahoot, Muscat, January 2014

Sports Club, Ibra, January 2014

Sports Club, Nizwa, February 2014

Wedding Palace, Al Buraimi, March 2014

Al Nahda District, Ibri, April 2014

Khasab Fort, Khasab, May 2014

Hormuz Grand Hotel, Muscat, November 2014

Petrol Development Oman (PDO), Muscat, May 2015

Khareef Festival, Salalah, August 2013

University of Dhofar, Salalah, February 2015

Sultan Qaboos College for Teaching Arabic to non native speakers, Manah, June 2015

Ahmad bin Majid Private School, Muscat, November 2015

A'nnor Hall, Muscat, June 2016

Sultan Qaboos Center for Culture, Muscat, October 2016

Avenues Mall, Muscat, November 2016

Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque, Muscat, November 2016

Events and Artistic Contributions

Not all of the exhibitions have been simple matters of putting panels on display and having an opening ceremony attended by notables. We have also honored requests for the exhibition to be an integral part of an event, the focal point of a meeting, or the backdrop for a convocation of religious or business leaders.

The exhibition was the backdrop for **investment forums held in both Munich and Frankfurt**. Mr. Dieter Haller, Secretary of the **German Foreign Office**, Head of the Department of Economy and Sustainable Development, **emphasized in his speech the importance of religious freedom in Oman for the safety and sustainability of economic investment in Oman**, and invited the participants to take advantage of this opportunity to better inform themselves about the unique role of Islam in Oman.

On such extraordinary occasions it has fallen to the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs to ensure that the Sultanate is represented at an appropriate level, commensurate with the program planned and expenditures made by the host organization.

In collaboration with the Foreign Ministry, Oman's Ambassadors have also played a prominent role in presenting Oman in the best possible light at the highest levels, for instance at the Korea Foundation opening in Seoul.

At events with such stature, such as the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, or in the USA during the commemoration of Rhode Island's 350 years of religious freedom, decisions were taken to provide not only the information panels, but also original paintings, sculptures, artwork, calligraphy, historical and Quranic manuscripts, and traditional Omani artifacts.

Performing artists such as religious singer Anwar Al-Asmi and calligraphers/artists Samah bint Said Al-Numaniya, Anwaar bint Khalifa Al-Hassani, Azza bint Salim Al-Balushi, Ramla bint Salim Al-Balushi, Iman bint Suliman Al-Abri, Saleh Al-Shukairy, Shaimah bint Said Al-Mughairy and Madny Al-Bakry helped to enliven the proceedings at events with high levels of participation. Events which were enhanced by art and artistic performances:

- UNESCO Headquarters Paris, France
- Salve Regina University Rhode Island, USA
- "Nights of Ramadan" in Berlin, Germany
- National Library and National Museum Singapore
- St. Philip's Centre Leicester, UK
- Vocational School #5 Augsburg, Germany
- Tirana International Hotel, Albania
- Islamic Civilisation Center Skopje, Macedonia
- National Museum of Cultural History Pretoria, South Africa
- Jarudong International School, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei



Omani singer Anwar Al-Asmi impressing the audience with his religious songs.



Omani calligrapher Saleh Al-Shukairy writing names of the visitors.

#ActForTolerance "Get Involved"

#ACTFORTOLERANCE is a social media initiative undertaken by the organizers of the exhibition Oman's Message of Islam. It aims to direct attention to the project to artists worldwide. The organizers believe that there are talented people who can embody the message of tolerance by using distinctive photographs and impressive works of art.

#ACTFORTOLERANCE is intended to involve the global community in promoting tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

The winning artworks will be used in the global Hashtag #ACTFORTOLERANCE, all social networks, and billboards in different regions of the world, as well as selected newspapers and magazines. The one-minute video clips will be broadcast on TV and YouTube. Moreover, copies of the winning works will be provided at the exhibition Oman's Message of Islam as it moves around the globe.

Participants are required to take into account creativity, artistic effects associated with lighting configuration, and innovative viewing angles, which can contribute to providing impressive global messages. Photographers have absolute freedom to express their creativity. Participants are welcome to depict whatever they see fit within universally applicable criteria, conditions and rules.

Types of Art:

- Photography
- Original creations of all kinds
- One-minute video clips
- Sculpture

Wherever possible, a promotion stand for the initiative is located within the exhibition space and visitors get the option of being photographed with a #ACTFORTOLERANCE board.

Visitors also receive T-shirts with the imprint #ACTFORTOLERANCE and postcards with text messages encouraging mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence, such as:

- Safety lies in the middle course
- Speak kindly to mankind!
- Wish people what you wish for yourself!
- The best people are those who are most helpful to others.
- We have made you races and tribes that you may become mutually acquainted.
- Is there any reward for good other than god?
- Return the trust to those who entrusted you!
- Do not betray even the one who betrayed you!
- Cooperate in righteousness and piety!
- Treat people with good manners!



Educational Initiatives

Originally conceived for a target audience in the German adult education establishments, the exhibition clearly and succinctly presents the visitors with basic information pertaining to Oman and Islam. This in turn **has generated great interest in various other educational venues, such as universities, libraries, vocational and high schools.** In some cases the exhibition materials were even incorporated into the school's official curriculum. It is indicative that in the ensuing months **educational institutions comprised more than a third of the 100 exhibition venues.**

This great interest has resulted in enthusiasm for the exhibition and curiosity about Oman's culture. Requests have been received for more in-depth background information for use by teachers, outlining the similarities between Christianity and Islam, and providing general information about the social conditions and developments in Oman. Such materials help make discussions in the classroom free of prejudices and previously (erroneously) held notions.

Such a study guide, comparing Islam and Christianity, was devised by the teachers of the Berufsschule V (vocational school #5) in Augsburg, Germany. It was used as a teaching aid for classes attending the exhibition in Augsburg, and subsequently adopted by seven other vocational schools in Augsburg, **resulting in more than 10.000 vocational students between the ages of 17 and 23 learning of Oman's approach to peaceful coexistence, inter-religious dialogue, and the relationship of Islam and Christianity.**

Beyond academia, the **German Navy** Chaplain Christoph Sommer — who accompanies the marines on their tours of duty off the coast of Somalia, with the mission of containing piracy — requested and received copies of the exhibition brochure and the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" on DVD to **distribute to the soldiers on board, who have regular shore leave in Salalah for rest and recuperation.**

Several organizations interested in the topic of interfaith dialogue who were familiar with the exhibition took it upon themselves to go one step further and investigate the reality of inter-religious life in Oman by undertaking **study tours to Oman.** Each of these group tours explored the country, visited cultural and historical sites, and entered into free and open dialogue with religious leaders, regular Omani citizens, and expat locals. They include:

- "Reinoldinum" Education Center of the protestant church in Dortmund, Germany
- Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, Germany
- "Freunde Abrahams," an renowned interreligious association of Munich, Germany
- "Confronti," an Italian interfaith group from Rome, Italy
- Kennesaw State University, USA
- Augsburg University, Germany
- USAF Air War College, Regional Culture Studies program, USA
- Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

Public Reception

More than 300.000 people have personally visited the exhibition at the 80 locations outside the Sultanate of Oman. It goes beyond anecdotal evidence that people who have viewed the exhibition now view Oman as a modern, open country, with a culture of tolerance and openness. That people seek out the authors for continuing discussion, to create new dialogue, to spread the word, and are taking an interest in the history and development of the Sultanate is evidence of new perceptions.

The public relations aspect of this exhibition cannot be ignored. The caliber of this exhibition and the sites and context in which it has been presented have resulted in a most positive portrayal of the Sultanate of Oman. **The support offered by religious, educational and municipal institutions could not have been purchased, and was offered in a spirit of amity and mutual benefit.**

One of the most impressive compliments paid to this project was the decision of the mayor of the city of Foz de Iguazu in Brazil to name a public square after the Sultanate of Oman and to build there a center for religious tolerance.

The print media, radio and tv have promoted the exhibition with sensitively written editorial content, which is persuasive and highly regarded by the public, and publicized it in the calendars of upcoming events. **The exhibition has been well-received in each instance, and the perceptions of the public have been notably and demonstrably affected positively.**

We have managed to collect an impressive number of media publications related to the exhibition, but this number must be considered as partial and selective, by no means comprehensive and all-inclusive. **The total circulation of the newspapers and magazines from outside of Oman, which have printed articles pertaining to the exhibition, is estimated at 10 million. Additional to that are TV and radio reports that are estimated to add another 10 million.**

The project partners promoted the exhibition on their websites and set a link to the website *www.islam-in-oman.com*. Moreover **hundreds of reports in the Internet from all over the world document the various activities in the many countries in the long run and can still be seen years after the events took place.**

—> See Appendix II: Media Reach (see page 153)

Also it is evident that many of the media reports from all over the world portray the Sultanate as a country where you find religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. Examples given are BBC world, CNN, FORBES, Gulf News, Reuters, Bloomberg, Alhurra TV.

Growing a Network

The project is linking together more and more people supporting the idea of religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence. It currently involves representatives of the Catholic church, Anglican Church, Orthodox Coptic church, numerous protestant denominations, Muslim organizations, and various educational institutions, e.g. adult education centres, vocational schools, libraries and universities. A number of them have been or are actively involved in the exhibition, others have requested to be kept informed and are interested in an ongoing dialogue.

More than 1000 institutions throughout the world have been contacted so far from our side, informed about the project and invited to participate.

As a result, various renowned organizations have expressed their respect for the project and actively supported and promoted it within their networks. Most importantly, **UNESCO**, which hosted the exhibition at its headquarters in Paris in October 2015; the global interreligious organization **United Religions Initiative (URI)**; the **St. Philip's Centre** in Leicester (UK), an organization under the patronage of the archbishop of Canterbury; the **Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e. V. (DVV)**, the biggest communal adult education network in Europe, consisting of more than 1000 local Volkshochschulen in Germany alone; and the **Parliament of the World's Religions**, which brings together the world's religious and spiritual communities, their leaders and their followers to a gathering where peace, diversity and sustainability are discussed and explored in the context of interreligious understanding and cooperation.

Support and acknowledgement also was given by numerous experts in the academic and religious fields, such as:

- **Prof. Dr. Marcel Olivé Elias** (UNESCO Chair of Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean at Universitat Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain)
- **Prof. Dr. Alberto Melloni** (UNESCO Chair for Religious Pluralism and Peace, Bologna University, Italy)
- **Prof. Dr. Bernd Feininger** (Dean of the Institute for Evangelical and Catholic Theology of the Pedagogical College Freiburg, Germany)
- **Prof. Dr. Patrick Franke** (Chair for Islam Sciences, Otto-Friedrich University Bamberg, Germany)
- **Prof. Dr. Douglas Pratt** (Chair for Religious Studies, Waikato University, New Zealand)
- **Prof. Dr. Talabardon** (Managing Director of the Center for Interreligious Studies (ZIS), University of Bamberg, Germany)
- **Rev. Prof. Dr. Christiaan Vonck** (Rector of the Faculty for Comparative Study of Religions, Antwerp, Belgium)
- **Prof. Dr. Katashiro Kohara** (Director of the Centre for Monotheistic Studies at Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan)

- **Prof. Dr. David Ford** (Director of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme, Cambridge University, UK)
- **Mrs Amita Vohra** (Regional Programme Coordinator UNESCO - Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States, Beirut, Lebanon)
- **Mr. Christian Manhart** (UNESCO Representative to Nepal)
- **Rabbi Jorge Burdman** (head of the Department of Peace and Interreligious Dialogue of the Israelite Community of Barcelona, Spain)
- **Rev. Tony Robinson** (Bishop of Pontefract, UK)
- **Mr. Ildar Muhhamedsin** (Grand Mufti of Estonia)
- **Mr. Romas Jakubauskas** (Mufti of the Sunni Muslim Religious Centre in Lithuania)
- **Mr Nedzad Grabus** (Mufti of Slovenia)
- **Rev. Wes Granberg-Michaelson** (previous executive director of the Reformed Church in America)
- **Sister Jane Gerety** (president of the Catholic University Salve Regina, Newport, Rhode Island, USA)
- **Dr. Daniel Paracka** (Director of International Services and Programs, Kennesaw State University, USA)
- **Dr. Douglas Kindschi** (Director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute, Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan, USA)
- **Mr. Steve Steeds** (Director of Higher Education at West Suffolk College, UK)
- **Mr. David Capey** (Executive Officer of Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource)
- **Mrs. Winsome Chunnu-Brayda** (Associate Director of the Office for Diversity and Inclusion, Ohio University, Athens, USA)
- **Mr. Farooq Murad** (Director of the Islamic Foundation Markfield, Leicestershire, UK)
- **Dr. Hyun-Seok Yu** (President of the Korea Foundation, Seoul, Korea)
- **Mr. Mohammad Nirdosh Ali** (Chairperson, National Muslim Commission, Nepal)
- **Sheikh Benyamin Idris** (Head of the Islamic civilisation centre in the Republic of Macedonia)
- **Mr. Ilir Ho Julie** (Chairman of the religions committee of the presidency of the Albanian Government)
- **Mr. Riaz Ravat** (Deputy Director of St Philip's Centre, Leicester, UK)
- **Rev. Douglas Leonard** (Executive Director of the Al Amana Centre, Muscat, Oman)
- **Dr. Brian Adams** (Director of the Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, Griffith University, Australia)
- **Dr. Leonard Chiarelli** (Aziz Atiya Middle East Library, University of Utah, USA)
- **Mr. Bart ten Broek** (President of IBS, the Interreligieuze Beraad Segbroek, The Hague, Netherlands)
- **Mr. Ari van Buuren** (Chairman of the United Religions Initiative (URI) of the Netherlands)
- **Mr. Salim Benamara** (Director of Centre Cultural Islàmic Català, Barcelon, Spain)

Political Impact

For the past several years, western media has been promulgating more often than not negative images of Islam and Arabic countries. As a result stereotypes and prejudices begin to take hold. In Spring 2011 erroneous reports about the protests in Oman were circulated in the press, conflating them with the protests of the “Arab Spring,” and they were never corrected or put into perspective. It followed that in offering this exhibition we expected and indeed experienced that some exhibitors harbored reservations about presenting it.

However, after reviewing the exhibition texts and contents (which had been published in the Internet from the very beginning to give a clear picture of the exhibition), their fears were allayed, and the **political, communal and educational establishments not only showed great interest but also decided to take a stand and put the message in the public eye, thus clearly making a statement against Islamophobia** and promoting the ideas of religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.

Many members of the political, municipal, communal and educational establishments all over the world supported the placement of the exhibition in public spaces with high visibility, at no cost to us; they took an active role in the organizational phase, garnering support from the local community and media; and they participated personally, attending the exhibition opening and speaking publicly on its behalf. **Numerous inauguration events drew the attention of the diplomatic missions of Arab states and other countries, thus raising the visibility of Oman’s initiative within the local diplomatic landscape.**

With the recent influx of Middle Eastern refugees into Europe it is noteworthy that prior to that, in 2014, **Germany’s Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge - BAMF) approached us with the request to present the exhibition in a contemporary context for its senior staff. It was intended to counter any negative perspectives held by the staff, who are confronted daily with the problematic facets of Islam, and to prevent them from adopting prejudicial attitudes toward Muslims.** In this setting a lecture was given by HE Ahmed Al-Siyabi. Dr. Schmidt, President of the BAMF, said that the exhibition helps in widening civil and cultural communications, and pointed out that there are specialists at the Ministry whose duty it is to acquaint the German people with the authentic Islam. He thanked the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs for organizing such exhibitions.

The broad reach of the exhibition into many nations around the world, with a universal message of fraternity and goodwill, endorsed at the highest levels, did not go unnoticed by the **US Department of State and the White House.** One of the most active members of the interfaith movement, based in Oman, is the Director of the Al Amana Centre in Muscat, Rev. Douglas Leonard, who was invited by the White House to be the keynote speaker at the **President’s Interfaith Breakfast on the significant date September 11, 2015, to deliver his message of the importance of interfaith dialogue to an assemblage of 500 leaders of academic institutions in the United States. His topic was “Preventing violent extremism: Inter-religious coexistence in Oman.”**

Dignitaries supporting Oman’s initiative:

- **H.E. Mr Mohamed Sameh Amr** (Chairman of the Executive Board of UNESCO)
- **Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif** (Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences, **UNESCO**)
- **Dr. George Vella** (Foreign Minister of **Malta**)
- **Mr. Sardar Mohammed Yusof** (Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, **Pakistan**)
- **Mr. Faustas Latenas** (Advisor to Prime Minister of **Lithuania**)
- **Dr. Manfred Schmidt** (President of the BAMF, the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, a department of **Germany’s** Federal Ministry of Interior)
- **Dr. Adel al Falah** (Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, **Kuwait**)
- **Dr Zoran Ilievski** (Political advisor to the President of the Republic of **Macedonia**)
- **Fernando Capez** (President of Sao Paulo State Parliament, **Brasil**)
- **Dr. Hilde Hawlicek** (former Minister for Education, Art and Culture, **Austria**)
- **Mr. Damaso Lopes** (Chancellor of Complutense University, Madrid, **Spain**)
- **Prof. Dr. Marija Ausrine Pavilioniene** (Director of the parliament’s committee for European Affairs, **Lithuania**)
- **Prof. Dr. Heidemann** (Director Asia-Africa Institute of the University of Hamburg, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Dieter Haller** (Secretary of the German Foreign Office, Head of the Department of Economy and Sustainable Development)
- **Dr. Thomas Haas** (President Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan, **USA**)
- **Dr. Steve Steeds** (Director of Higher Education at West Suffolk College, **UK**)
- **Councillor Christopher Hudson** (Chairman of Suffolk County Council, **UK**)
- **HE Lee Kyung Soo** (Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, **Korea**)
- **Mr. Purna Chandra Bhattarai** (Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development, **Nepal**)
- **Dr. Liselotte Kugler** (Director of the Museum for Communication, Berlin, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Bruno Kaiser** (President of the German-Omani Association, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Jose Roberto Sadiq** (Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of Sao Paulo, **Brasil**)
- **Dr. María Jesús Viguera** (Cultural Director *Foundation Fundación Paradigma Córdoba*, **Spain**)
- **Mr. Hep Monatzeder** (Mayor of the city of Munich, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Manfred Sauer** (Mayor of the city of Dortmund, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Hermann Weber** (Mayor of the city of Augsburg, **Germany**)
- **Mr. Patrick Janssens** (Mayor of the city of Antwerp, **Belgium**)
- **Mr. Zoran Jankovic** (Mayor of the city of Lubljana, **Slovenia**)
- **Mr. Reni Clovis de Souza Pereira** (Mayor of the city of Foz do Iguaçu, **Brasil**)
- **Mr. George Heartwell** (Mayor of Grand Rapids, **USA**)
- **Mr. Patrick Chung** (Deputy Mayor of the city of Bury St. Edmunds, **UK**)
- **Councillor Jeffrey Bannister** (Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, **UK**)
- **Mr. Giuliano Pisapia** (Mayor of Milan, **Italy**)

Conferences in Oman, 2014 and 2016

Conference 2014, Muscat, November 15.-19., 2014

In 2014 Oman's Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs hosted a mini-conference in Muscat to determine whether goals had been achieved, and the Ministry's international projects to date could be considered a success; to solicit feedback and suggest improvements to the projects; to make recommendations on the continuation of the projects; suggest a strategy for the future; and to determine the best allocation of resources.

The conference participants were all educators or important figures in the field of interfaith dialogue who were responsible for hosting the exhibition on religious tolerance in their respective countries. At a small ceremony following the conference, the following persons were acknowledged by the Minister, HE Sheikh Abdullah Al Salmi, for their participation and contributions:

- Rainer Basan, Director, Vocational School V, Augsburg, Germany
- Benjamin Idriz, Imam, Penzberg Germany; Founder, Munich Forum for Islam
- Alberto Melloni, UNESCO Chair for Religious Pluralism and Peace, Bologna, Italy
- Riaz Ravat, Deputy Director, St Philip's Centre, Leicester, UK
- Werner Sabisch, Managing Board, Deutscher Volkshochschulverband, Wilhelmshafen, Germany
- Amita Vohra, UNESCO
- Christiaan Vonck, Rector, Faculty for Comparative Study of Religions (FVG), Antwerp, Belgium



Conference participants visiting Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque

The consensus achieved at the conference was that the Ministry should:

- Lay the foundation for a global network promoting peace, dialogue and mutual understanding
- Establish a central organising body which co-ordinates activities
- Identify key partners who will deliver actions
- Determine ways to measure impact and demonstrate success
- Create a website with educational materials

Suggestions were also made to improve and extend the reach of the touring exhibition, such as to simplify the exhibition materials to make them more relevant to personal experience; reconsider terminology, e.g. replace "tolerance" with "acceptance" or use other terms; make available information for students, teachers and researchers; utilize modern technologies and social media; and continue to work closely with international institutions.

As a result, the title of the exhibition was changed from "Religious Tolerance in Oman" to "Religious Tolerance, Mutual Understanding, Peaceful Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam;" some info panels have been added and others revised; the website was reconfigured to include a great wealth of information; multimedia touch-screen terminals were acquired; and the first steps were taken to establish a social media presence.

As to continuing to work closely with international institutions, Oman's initiative was presented twice under the auspices of the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and at the Conference of the World Parliament of Religions in Salt Lake City, Utah before 10,000 people from 80 nations. Other international organizations which have collaborated are the global United Religions Initiative, the International Association for Religious Freedom, and the Aga Khan Development Network.



Prof. Alberto Melloni and HE Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salmi

Conference 2016, Musannah & Muscat, 13.-17. November 2016

In keeping with the recommendations made at the 2014 Conference, and decisions taken since then by the Ministry, it is appropriate and desirable at this time to extend Oman's influence and continue to promulgate Oman's message of peace and understanding.

The recommended network, connecting influential and effective leaders in the field of interfaith dialogue, education, intercultural understanding, must be institutionalized to enable its adherents to collaborate in a coordinated fashion.

The 2016 Conference was convened to refine the strategy for growing the network, to define its mission and goals, and to begin collecting and reviewing educational materials in support of these goals. In doing so, a complementary program will be created using modern media, social networking, and event planning to ensure maximum engagement and participation.

Attending the 2016 Conference, the following persons were commended by the Minister, HE Sheikh Abdullah Al Salmi, for their participation and contributions:

- Brian Adams, Director, Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue, Griffith Univ., Brisbane, Australia
- Paolo Branca, Islamic & Arabic Studies, Università Cattolica, Milan, Italy
- Zulfikar Hirji, Prof Anthropology, York University; Director, Ismaili Centre, Toronto, Canada
- Imam Benjamin Idriz, Director, Munich Forum for Islam, Munich, Germany
- Douglas Kindschi; Director, Kaufman Interfaith Institute; Grand Valley State Univ., Michigan, USA



Prof. Douglas Pratt, Waikato University, New Zealand

- Sushma Pant, President, Nepal Chapter, International Association for Religious Freedom, Kathmandu, Nepal
- Douglas Pratt, Religious Studies, Waikato University, New Zealand
- Riaz Ravat, Deputy Director, St Philip's Centre, Leicester, UK
- Karimah Stauch, European Coordinator, United Religions Initiative, Europe; Bonn, Germany
- Amita Vohra, UNESCO Regional Programme Coordinator, Education, Beirut, Lebanon

At the conference there was a brainstorming session, in which dozens of ideas were presented and discussed. It was quickly recognized that the suggestions must be prioritized and an infrastructure created to recommend and help achieve realistic long-term goals. The first steps to be taken are to develop a sustainable network of committed individuals who are willing to give of their time and expertise; to assist in the realization of projects approved and supported by Oman; and to continue to promote interfaith dialogue and promulgate Oman's message of peace.

This network is comprised of people from a multitude of countries, from numerous faith and belief systems, and various walks of life, who have determined four initial areas in which to take action: 1) Education, grass roots, and youth; 2) Media, and public relations; 3) Academia and interfaith; and 4) Technology, technical applications, Internet.

Following the brainstorming session, teams were created to conduct workshops in these four specific areas in order to devise action plans and project proposals pertaining to these themes, with recommendations to be adopted and supported by the Ministry. The detailed report, action plans, and executive summary are in preparation to be presented to the Ministry in January 2017.



Presentation at the conference.

Personnel Involved

One of the keypoints for the success of the project is the fruitful and harmonic cooperation of the international team, led by Mohammed Al-Mamari (MARA) and Georg Popp (ARABIA FELIX), who together developed the idea and the content of the exhibition. The concept unites western and Omani perspectives, thus making the exhibition interesting for an international audience with the most varied cultural background.



Mohammed Said Al-Mamari, Scientific Advisor to The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, is director of this project.



Georg Popp, Managing Director of ARABIA FELIX Synform GmbH in Munich, Germany, has more than 20 years' intensive involvement with the Sultanate.

Organization Team Oman:



Omair Al-Mamari,
Project Manager



Hilal Al-Harthy,
Technical Project
Manager



Mohammed
Al-Rahbi,
Team PR Manager



Mohammed
Al-Malki
Team PR Manager



Ahmad Al-Harthy
Team Media
Manager



Youssuf Al-Hooti
Team Media
Manager



Sami Al-Jahdhami
Project Assistant



Mahmood Al-Qarni
Project Assistant

Organization Team Europe:



Michael Dickinson,
project coordination
& communications,
Munich, Germany



Alexander Moll,
cargo management,
Solingen, Germany



Juma Al-Maskari,
consulting,
Munich, Germany



Stefanie Schiefer,
cargo management,
Solingen, Germany



Sebastian Schöberl,
web programming,
Seville, Spain



Violeta Gallego
graphic design, web
Seville, Spain

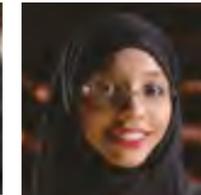
Thanks for the artistic contributions of:



Anwaar bint
Khalifa Al-Hassani,
Calligrapher



Iman bint
Suliman Al-Abri
Calligrapher



Shaimah
Al-Mughairy,
Sand Art



Samah bint
Said Al-Numaniya,
Artist, sculptor



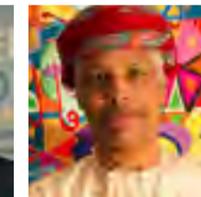
Ramla bint
Salim Al-Balushi
Calligrapher



Saleh Al-Shukhairi,
Calligrapher



Anwar Al-Asmi,
Singer, Composer



Madny Al-Bakry,
Calligrapher



Azza bint
Salim Al-Balushi
Calligrapher

Diplomatic support

The personal appearances of Oman's ambassadors at exhibition openings around the world have had very positive effects, bestowing great prestige on the event, generating a higher degree of interest by the media, and garnering a higher level of participation in the local community. They include:

- Ambassador Hunaina Sultan Al Mughairy in Washington DC and Newport RI, USA
- Ambassador Dr. Zainab Al-Qasimiyah in Augsburg and Munich, Germany
- Ambassador Khalid Ba'Omar in Hamburg, Germany
- Ambassador to the UN Dr. Badr Al-Hinai in Vienna and Ljubljana, Slovenia
- Ambassador to UNESCO Dr. Samira Bint Mohammed Moosa in Paris, France
- Ambassador Hilal Al-Maamary in Tarragona, Barcelona and Madrid, Spain
- Ambassador Mohammed Harub Al-Said in The Hague, Netherlands
- Ambassador Mohamed Al-Harthy in Seoul and Busan, South Korea
- Ambassador Dr. Khalid bin Said Al-Jaradi in Sao Paulo, Foz de Iguazu, Rio de Janeiro, Brasil
- Ambassador Riad Ben Youssef in Islamabad, Pakistan
- Ambassador Mubarak Bin Salim Al Zakawani in Pretoria, South Africa
- Ambassador Sheikh Ahmed Al-Maskery in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei
- Dr. Ahmed Al Saeedi, Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy Washington, in Toronto, Canada
- Sheikh Zakaria bin Hamad Al-Saadi, Consul General of Oman to the Republic of Singapore

Their presence lent great significance to the meaning of interreligious and intercultural dialogue. Many thanks in this respect to HE Sheikh Ahmed Al-Siyabi, Secretary-General at the Sultanate's Grand Mufti Office of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, who actively took part at the opening ceremonies in Nuremberg, Tarragona, Barcelona, The Hague and Valetta.

Also thanks to HE Ismail Saleh AL-Aghbari, member of the Council of Oman, for opening the exhibition at Pathan Museum in Kathmandu, Nepal, and Dr. Abdullah Said Al-Mamari, Assistant Professor at the College of Sharia Sciences for support for the exhibitions at St. Philips Centre, Leicester; Suffolk Couty Council; West Suffolk College; and Islamic Foundation Markfield in the United Kingdom.

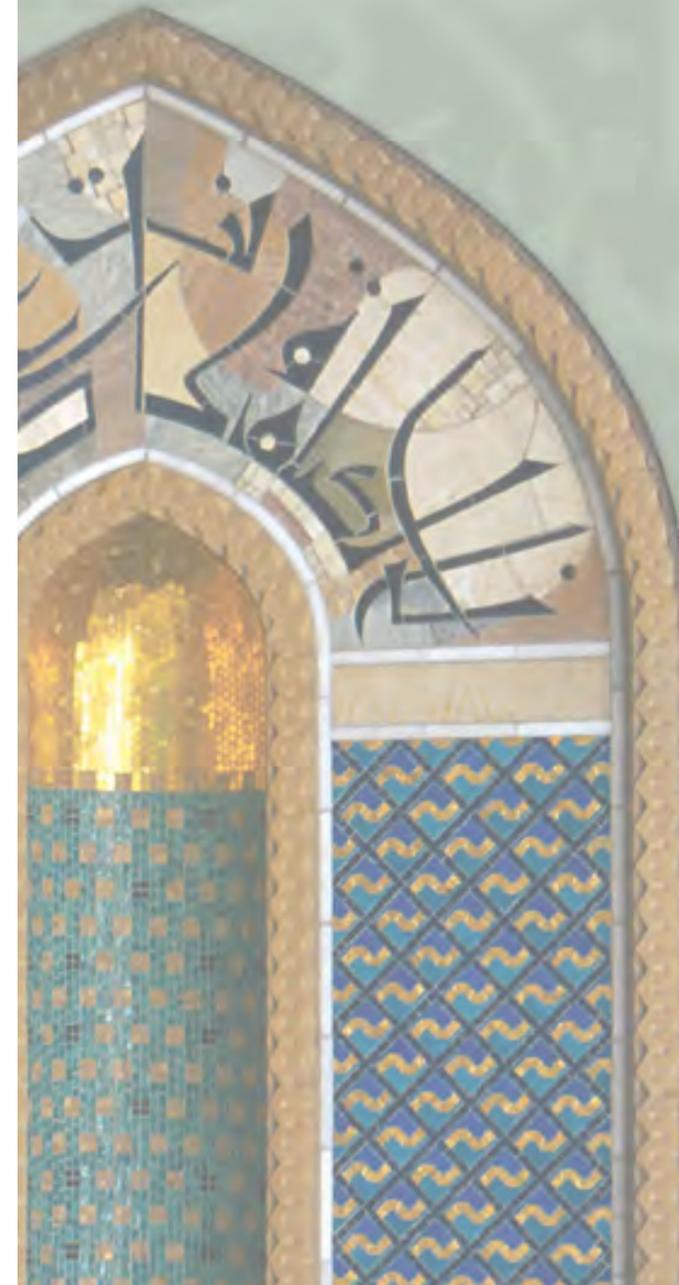
Thanks also for professional support provided by:

- Bildmanufaktur München Scans.de GmbH, Munich, Germany
- MONOTYPE GmbH Bad Homburg, Germany
- J. Dahmen & Co. Internationale Spedition, Solingen, Germany
- friendlyway Products & Services GmbH, Munich, Germany

Appendix I:

Descriptions of each exhibition

presented chronologically



TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

Volkshochschule (VHS) Ludwigshafen

April 16, 2010 through May 14, 2010

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" and the accompanying documentary film by award-winning filmmaker Wolfgang Ettllich premiered at the Volkshochschule (adult education center) in Ludwigshafen, Germany.

Ludwigshafen is the hometown of former German Chancellor Helmut Kohl. He started his political career in the same room where the opening ceremony was held.

The exhibition opened on April 16, 2010, in the presence of Mr Said bin Yahmadi, Counselor of the Embassy of Oman in Germany; Mohamed Said Al-Mamari, of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs; and Mr Wolfgang van Vliet, Head of Department of Social Welfare and Integration of the city of Ludwigshafen.

There were approximately 200 guests in attendance, among them nearly 50 Omani students who are holders of scholarships for study at various universities in Germany. The German-Omani Association served as benefactor, covering the costs of the students' transportation and accommodations. Other notables among the guests were representatives of each of the Islamic unions and communities of the city of Ludwigshafen, who without exception praised the exhibition and the film, and lauded the initiative to undertake such an exhibition.

The exhibition was prominently displayed at the entrance area and along the main corridors of the VHS, which are heavily trafficked, making it highly visible. The exhibition in Ludwigshafen was seen by approximately 4000 people.



Audience of the opening ceremony

Excerpt from the speech of Mr van Vliet* at the opening of the exhibition:

"... the '40 Years Renaissance' is being celebrated this year in the Sultanate of Oman. This renaissance is closely tied to the name of Sultan Qaboos. Under his leadership the Sultanate has achieved impressive development, successfully combining modernity with tradition to meet the challenges of today and tomorrow, while at the same time preserving and protecting local cultural roots.

"Oman is a modern but at the same time tradition-conscious, Islamic-oriented land of the Arabian peninsula. This exhibition gives evidence of the coexistence of diverse religious communities, the practice of Islam in daily life, and the role of women in society.

"Situated on the shores of the Indian Ocean, Oman is closely tied to the history of trade and seafaring. These traditions have left their mark: Oman is an open land, where a foreigner encounters hospitality and respect, and where tolerance is shown to other cultures and religions.

"The exhibition, which has not been seen in this format in Germany before, is the result of an initiative by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. It depicts the many facets of a modern Arabic society and Islam in Oman, which is tolerant towards other Islamic interpretations as well as other religions. ..."



* Head of the Department for the Development of Social welfare and Integration, City of Ludwigshafen

Volkshochschule (VHS) Offenburg

June 11, 2010 through July 31, 2010

The exhibition at the VHS Offenburg was opened by Mrs Woerner, Director of the VHS; Mohamed Said Al-Mamari, Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and Mr Georg Popp, Managing Director of Arabia Felix GmbH. Prof. Dr. Feininger of the Pedagogical College Freiburg and Dean of the Institute for Evangelical and Catholic Theology, Religious Education, gave a lecture on the theme of interreligious dialogue.

He expounded the following points:

- The necessity of interreligious dialogue based on the coexistence of peoples with diverse backgrounds and lifestyles;
- The greater context of interculturality in which the vitality of culture is evolving;
- Life needs diversity and room for development;
- The one and only God is reflected in that He approves of, promotes and values diversity;
- In contrast to some fundamentalist religious theories, which are restrictive and exclusive, God does not abhor diversity.

The exhibition was also visited by classes from 3 schools in Offenburg, with the intention of expanding the students knowledge of Islam. Each of the classes was treated to a private showing of the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman."



Students of an Offenburg school watching the film.

Reinoldinum Dortmund

August 23, 2010 through September 16, 2010

With 580,000 inhabitants Dortmund is one of Germany's largest cities. The Reinoldinum is a modern conference and educational facility which is located in the city center and is frequented by many visitors. The institution has a close relationship with Islamic organizations in and around Dortmund, which often make use of the facilities for their own events.

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in Oman" was opened in Dortmund in the presence of Mayor Manfred Sauer; Mr Michael Westerhoff, Director of the Evangelical Education Center; and Mr Alex Moll, Director for Culture of the German-Omani Association.

At the exhibition opening Mohammed Al-Mamari, who is Advisor to the Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs, and who serves as the director of the Religious Tolerance project, explained the goals of the Omani government: "Whether Jew, Muslim, Hindu, atheist or other: we strive to maintain an active dialogue with every religious orientation."

As a result of this exhibition the Evangelical Adult Education Programm of Dortmund is now organizing a 12-day study tour to Oman in November 2011, also with the theme of religious tolerance.



Mohamed Said Al-Mamari and Manfred Sauer, Mayor of Dortmund

Cultural Center Gasteig Munich

September 25, 2010 through October 12, 2010

With more than 1700 events per year, and nearly 6000 visitors daily, the Gasteig in Munich is one of the biggest cultural and educational centres in Europe. It is the home of Munich's Philharmonic Orchestra, the Academy of Music and Theatre, Munich's Adult Education Centre as well as the Munich Municipal Library. The exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" was displayed there in the center of the main entrance foyer, which placed it in front of practically all of the visitors.

The exhibition was opened on September 24, 2010 by Oman's Ambassador to Germany, Dr Zainab Al-Qasmiyah; the Undersecretary Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi; Munich's Mayor Hep Monatzeder; the Managing Director of the Gasteig München GmbH, Mrs. von Welser; and the General Secretary of the German-Omani Association, Mr Georg Popp, who is also the exhibition's Project Coordinator in Europe. At the opening event two documentary films were also presented to the general public, "Religious Tolerance in Oman" and "Islamic Art in Oman."

Among the more than 100 invited guests were representatives of the Bavarian government and numerous other notables who are active in the promotion of intercultural and interreligious dialogue, such as Regional Bishop Susanne Breit-Kessler; Imam Benjamin Idriz, leader of the Islam Center for Europe, in Munich; Bavaria's former Vice President, Mrs Stewens; the Islamic liaison of the regional Evangelical Church, Dr. Oechslen; and the Deputy Chairman of the Foreigners Advisory Council of the city of Munich, Mr Asgar Can.



HE Ahmad Al-Siyabi in conversation with Regional Bishop Ms Breit-Kessler and Imam Benjamin Idriz

Excerpt from the speech of Mr Monatzeder, Mayor of Munich:

"... Not many of us know it, but in Oman the religions other than the state religion, Islam, are not just tolerated but are actually supported. For example, in Muscat there is a religious center where Christians, Hindus and others can practice their beliefs in their own churches and temples.

"Munich is also building bridges. Since four years there is a new Jewish center here, with a synagogue, museum, community hall, and kindergarten.

"We also know that there are approximately 100,000 Muslims living in Munich, and that Munich is a very attractive destination for tourists of the Islamic faith. There are now nonstop flights between Muscat and Munich, which means increasing numbers of Omani guests. For all these reasons the capital of Bavaria is planning a pioneering project with the name ZIE-M, which stands for the Centre for Islam in Europe, in Munich. Besides providing an equitable participation in the social, religious and cultural life of Munich, it will be an essential purpose of the ZIE-M to ensure that Islam with a European character may be recognized as a valid part of our national identity.

"This basic connection is a foundation for people of Islamic faith to find their own identity in today's Germany - indeed, throughout Europe. Additionally, we should also enable visitors of Islamic faith to be able to practice their religion in a befittingly prestigious house of worship. As you can see, there are certain parallels of religious tolerance between Munich and Oman, especially in Muscat with its houses of worship for diverse religions. It's time that we build a representative mosque here. ... "



Volkshochschule (VHS) Landkreis Hof

November 12, 2010 through November 30, 2010

Ever since the dramatic events in New York, September 2001, the Volkshochschule (VHS) of the Hof district celebrates with a festival of cultures, to promote mutual understanding among peoples from different cultural backgrounds.

The multi-day festival of 2010 with its seminars and presentations opened with the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" and the showing of the documentary film produced by Wolfgang Ettlich, who was himself present. The opening ceremony, attended by approximately 150 guests, was attended by Dr. Fichter, Mayor of the city of Hof; Mrs Roeher, Regional Coordinator of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees; Mrs. Hoellering, Deputy Director of the VHS; with the organizer of the exhibition; Mr Georg Popp, representing the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Muscat.

Mrs Roeher of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees had this to say about the exhibition: "I consider the exhibition and film to be very educational, and I liked them both very much. I was very pleased to see a positive side of Islam presented.... One of my colleagues was in Oman many times and found it to be just as it is presented here. I wish you great success."



Visitors reading the panels of the exhibition

Volkshochschule (VHS) Bentheim/Nordhorn

January 21, 2011 through February 18, 2011

"Giving diversity a face" was the motto of the Volkshochschule (VHS) Bentheim/Nordhorn for the first half of 2011. The exhibition "Religious Tolerance" did fit ideally into this theme.

Fortunately, in spite of the inclement weather, more than 80 guests attended the opening ceremony on the evening of January 21, 2011. Following the welcome of Mr Koop, Director of the VHS Grafschaft Bentheim-Nordhorn, Mr Georg Popp, Secretary-General of the German-Omani Association, gave a lecture on the development of Omani society in the last 40 years. Subsequently the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was shown.

A few days prior to the exhibition's closing, Mr Koop summed up the exhibition thusly:

"Every morning when I go to my office I am greeted by this wonderful exhibition. I'm very sad that it comes to a close this weekend. Tomorrow I have two more tours through the exhibition with classes from the high school (gymnasium). All in all the exhibition has met with great interest, especially that of the religion teachers and their classes, but also with the visitors who made of point of coming here in the course of the day. ... It was your exhibition but it was a huge win also for me."



Visitors discussing the content of the panels of the exhibition

Volkshochschule (VHS) Wilhelmshaven

March 03, 2011 through April 08, 2011

Wilhelmshaven is the only port in Germany with access to the open sea. It was and is the main base for the German navy. The semester's theme of the Volkshochschule (VHS) Wilhelmshaven was "Building Bridges". The opening in Wilhelmshaven on March 3rd of the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" was certainly in the shadow of the violent events occurring in Sohar at the end of February, which were documented in the German media and which gave the general public the impression that mass revolts would also break out in Oman.

After opening remarks by Lord Mayor Eberhard Menzel, Imam Mustafa Kaplan and Werner Sabisch, the Director of the VHS, an introductory lecture was given by Mr Georg Popp, Secretary-General of the German-Omani Association. The theme, "Oman: Sultanate between the poles of tradition and modernity" was followed by a 2-hour discussion about the (then) current situation in Oman, at the end of which everyone present went home with the realization that the circumstances in Oman are considerably different than in the rest of the Arab world.

Among the guests present were the military chaplain Christoph Sommer of the German Navy, who accompanies the marines on their tours of duty off the coast of Somalia, with the mission of containing piracy. He obtained numerous copies of the exhibition brochure and of the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" on DVD for the soldiers on board, who have regular shore leave in Salalah for rest and recuperation.



Georg Popp in discussion with military chaplain Christoph Sommer

Volkshochschule (VHS) Vienna

May 02, 2010 through May 31, 2011

On May 10, 2011 the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in Oman" was officially opened at the Volkshochschule (VHS) Meidling in Vienna, Austria, with more than 500 visitors in attendance. Opening speeches were given by Dr. Gerhard Bisovsky, Director of the VHS Meidling, together with His Excellence Dr. Badr Al-Hinai, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Austria who also serves as Oman's envoy to the United Nations in Vienna.

In his speech the ambassador highlighted the fact that Islam was peacefully accepted in Oman during Prophet Mohammed's lifetime, and that ever since Oman has an unbroken tradition of peaceful coexistence among the religions in the country.

Subsequently a short welcoming speech was given by Dr Hilde Hawlicek, the former federal Minister for Education, Art and Culture, in the name of the Austro-Omani Association, and by Mohamed Al-Mamari on behalf of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Muscat.

Mr Al-Mamari and Mr Georg Popp, co-directors of the project "Religious Tolerance in Oman" provided background information as to how this initiative began and what are the intentions behind it.

The evening concluded with a showing of the short documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" by Wolfgang Ettllich, who was honored by the guests with a long round of applause.



About 500 visitors joined the opening event.

**Excerpt from the speech of HE Dr. Badr Al-Hinai,
Ambassador of Oman to UN and Austria:**

"... Oman is a country which offers a welcoming home for a number of religious institutions. Diverse religious groups thrive in the Sultanate with their distinct religious beliefs and practices.

"Also Oman is among the first countries in the Gulf region with Hindus and Buddhists temples, and the capital Muscat hosts many different Christian groups, fellowships, and assemblies, thus, becoming a melting pot of different cultures and traditions from many places across the globe.

"With such historical background in mind, and while Oman is proud of its deep rooted Arabic and Islamic heritage it plays an advocacy role in promoting ideas of moderation and tolerance. In this respect, the Sultanate is much aware of its responsibility as an active member of the international community, and therefore, has taken many practical steps and activities such as organizing many regional and international conferences for interfaith dialogue and understandings, and establishing several Sultan Qaboos Chairs, which are endowed at prestigious universities around the world with objectives to encourage the idea of a global community living in peace, harmony, mutual understanding, and freedom of religion. ..."



Otto-Friedrich-University Bamberg

June 06, 2010 through June 28, 2011

The city of Bamberg is a unique place in Germany. It is about 1000 years old and since its beginning seat of a Catholic bishop. The cathedral hosts the grave of the Pope Clemens II (pope 1046 - 1047), who was actually from Bamberg. Bamberg is an outstanding example of a central European town that has grown and evolved around a Middle Age core. Since 1993 the center of Bamberg is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, including more than 2400 historical buildings. The city hosts the Otto-Friedrich-Universität, which was founded in 1647 and is therefore one of the oldest in Bavaria.

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was presented in Bamberg in the foyer of the faculty of Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften on the invitation by the "Center for Interreligious Studies" of University Bamberg. About 4000 students of the faculty, including students of theological paedagogic, saw the exhibition.

The opening was celebrated by Prof. Dr. van Eickels, Dean of the faculty of Geistes- und Kulturwissenschaften together with Prof. Dr. Talabardon, Managing Director of the "Center for Interreligious Studies." Following this, Prof. Dr. Franke, holding the chair for Islam Sciences, gave a detailed lecture about Ibadhiyah in Oman. The evening concluded with a report about an excursion to Oman by students of the University, done in March this year.



Visitors of the exhibition in Bamberg.

Vocational School No. 5 in Augsburg

July 04, 2011 through July 20, 2011

Augsburg is one of the oldest cities in Germany, founded in Roman times more than 2000 years ago. The city is known for the **"Peace of Augsburg"** which settled grievances between religious factions in the 16th century and established religious tolerance in Europe by law for the very first time.

Vocational School No. 5 in Augsburg, Germany, took advantage of the opportunity offered by the roaming exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" and incorporated it into the curriculum of its nondenominational religion classes. The information was divided into three educational units to provide the religion instructors a teaching aid for finding the similarities between Christianity and Islam.

Seven other vocational schools in Augsburg adopted this idea and had their classes visit the exhibition, resulting in more than 10.000 vocational students of the age between 17 and 23 being given the opportunity to learn about Islam and the relationship with Christianity.

At the exhibition opening, Mayor Hermann Weber started his speech with an Arabic saying: "Pitch your tents far apart, but keep your heart nearby," meaning that it is important to get to know and appreciate each other, with dignity and respect. For Augsburg, the "City of Peace," this is a special — and historic — obligation.

Oman's Ambassador to Germany, Dr. Zainab Al-Qasimiyah emphasized in her speech the importance of religious tolerance for relations between countries and for the Sultanate of Oman. Additional opening remarks were offered by Mr Martin Neumeyer, the Commissioner for Integration of the state of Bavaria, and by Dr Nikolaus Hueck and Meinrad Hoerwick, the representatives of the Evangelical and Catholic churches.

Mohammed Al-Mamari, representing the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Oman, described the aims of the Ministry, and Mr Georg Popp of the German-Omani Association, who organized this exhibition, explained how this project came to be.

Further contributions to the success of the event were made by the Omani religious singer Anwar Al-Asmi, who delighted the audience with his melodious songs, which dealt with the love of home, country, and the Prophet Mohammed. Visitors were also fascinated by the skill of the Omani calligrapher Saleh Al-Shukairi, who wrote the names of the guests in Arabic calligraphy.

Excerpt from the speech of Mr. Hermann Weber, Mayor of Augsburg:

"... I am convinced that peace can be sustained only when we know and appreciate each other, and can treat each other with dignity and respect. To pave the way toward peace and tolerance is needed everywhere on earth. But especially here in Augsburg we feel obliged, we see it as an important and historic duty!

"Since the Peace of Augsburg in 1555, religious peace and parity have been central themes of the city's history, continuing today, promoting dialogue through various projects and measures, and taking a stand for the equal co-existence of diverse religions and diverse groups of society.

"It is in this context that the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" is taking place, offering an overview of current Islamic practices in a modern Arabic society. For this I am most grateful to the organizers and to our guests from the Sultanate of Oman."



Mr Hermann Weber, Mayor of Augsburg, the "City of Peace."



HE Dr. Zainab Al-Qasmiah with Mr. Hermann Weber, Mayor of Augsburg



The audience at the opening event.

**Excerpt from the speech of Dipl.Theol. Meinrad Hörwick,
Catholic Church School Board, Augsburg Diocese:**

"...Regarding themes relevant to today's society and attitudes, I ask the students what sort of society do we want in the future, what sort of society do you see yourself living in in 10 years? What should the rules be, which attitudes should prevail, under which circumstances? Do we want to live in mutual understanding with a peaceable disposition, or in a society void of respect, without tolerance for one another?"

"Email or text messages can be used to exchange information, but to understand someone requires personal contact, personal encounters, conversations eye to eye. Some of you have come a long way to be here, specifically for the personal dialogue, for the mutual exchange. Achieving mutual understanding might be enabled through an argument with someone, resulting in agreement.

"This exhibition opens a dialogue, enables inquiries, creates a meeting point which encourages direct communication. It stimulates discussions which are worth having, and it opens new perspectives for us on the religion of Islam and our life together, whether global or local. It is an important stone on the path to the future, which begins here today. "



Dipl.Theol. Meinrad Hörwick,
Catholic Church School Board, Augsburg Diocese

The pedagogical concept provided by the religion teachers in Augsburg

The topic religious tolerance was treated in 3 academic hours in classes of religion of all confessions in following steps:

- 1) The country of Oman: general information with an "excursion" to the foreign country by way of the film "Religious Tolerance in Oman."
- 2) What does "religious tolerance" mean to us? Discussions and personal experiences of the Christian and Muslim pupils.
- 3) Intensive discussions based on personal points of view.

A search for areas of common agreement (e.g. possibilities of mutual understanding, getting acquainted with one another, accessibility for the outsider)

5) A search for commonalities in the differences (review and comparison of the basic knowledge of religion): Muslim and Christian students determined that they actually do not know very much about their own beliefs, and were therefore not in a position to conduct a realistic and factual conversation about beliefs. Fill the knowledge gaps to the extent possible.

6) Review stereotypes and prejudices, e.g. headscarf, concepts of "jihad," the Crusades, etc.

7) Visit of the exhibition, followed with discussion, explanations, and Q & A.

Benefits of the exhibition

- 1) a better understanding of one another
- 2) many critical, intercultural, interreligious discussions; also among colleagues. (e.g. human rights in Oman?)
- 3) expanding horizons beyond ingrained thinking
- 4) increasing the likelihood that Oman will be visited, due to its liberal stance and geographical beauty.

United Nations (UN) Vienna, Austria

July 29 through August 12, 2011

The exhibition "Sultanate of Oman: In the Modern Age with Tradition" was first presented at the United Nations (UN) in Vienna, focusing on "Religious Tolerance in Oman." It was the first exhibition by an Arab country in the Rotunda, a central hub of the United Nations.

At the opening on July 29, 2011 over 70 representatives were present from prominent nations and international organizations, as well as from the Austro-Omani Association, the German-Omani Association and The Omani Society for Fine Arts' Photography Club.



The Omani Ambassador to Austria and Permanent Representative to the UN, Dr. Badr Al-Hinai, emphasized in his speech: "Our exhibition provides an introduction to cultural and historical aspects of Oman and its experience in political and social development. It also shows you Oman as an example of how people with the most varied cultural and religious backgrounds can live together in peace and harmony."

Accompanying the exhibition the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was shown, which was presented at the opening and continuously during the exhibition period. This film was available on DVD in 8 different languages, which was gladly received by the UN staff from around the world.

Federal Office for Migration and Refugees, Nuremberg, Germany

September 27 through October 21, 2011

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was opened on September 27, 2011 in Nuremberg at the BAMF (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees), a department of Germany's Federal Ministry of Interior, by Dr. Manfred Schmidt, President of the BAMF and His Excellence Sheikh Ahmed Al-Siyabi, Secretary-General at the Sultanate's Grand Mufti Office of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. The BAMF hosts the German Islamic Conference - the first institutionalized dialogue between Muslims and state representatives in Germany.



Dr. Manfred Schmidt, President of the BAMF

Dr. Schmidt said that the exhibition helps in widening civil and cultural communications, pointing out that there are specialists at the Ministry whose duty it is to acquaint the German people with the authentic Islam based on their research. At the end of his speech, he thanked the chief guest and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs for organizing such exhibitions.

HE Sheikh Al-Siyabi said that Islam and tolerance are very closely related, since the Quran calls for tolerance in many of its verses and commands Muslims to cooperate with non-Muslims in the interest of peace and happiness for humanity.



HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi

He emphasized that the organization of this exhibition reflects the Sultanate's approach, which is to present Islam and the extent of tolerance in this religion, which also corresponds to the directives of the country's monarch His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said.

Georg Popp, Secretary-General of the Omani-German Friendship Association (Deutsch-Omanische Gesellschaft) said that the Sultanate of Oman enjoys a distinguished position because of its religious tolerance, which is noticeable to all visitors to Oman. "It is a tolerant country that welcomes other people. Oman has been practicing globalization for over 5000 years and a person's color, religion or race poses no obstacle for the development being witnessed by the Sultanate as all live in peace and security," he added.



The audience while the film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was screened.

University Rovira i Virgili, Tarragona, Spain

October 03 through October 21, 2011

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" was displayed for the first time in Spain at the University Rovira i Virgili at Tarragona. The exhibition was presented in cooperation with Prof Enric Olivé Serret, UNESCO Chair of Intercultural Dialogue in the Mediterranean in the center of the main entrance foyer of the library, which placed it in front of practically all of the visitors.

The opening ceremony was attended by His Excellence Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi, undersecretary of the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, HE Hilal Al-Maamary, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Spain, Vice Rector Sra. Anna Ardévol, Prof Enric Olivé Serret, and faculty, staff and students of the university.

HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi elaborated in his speech that this exhibition on religious tolerance in Oman is to remind people and that the world's major religions do not tolerate violence, extremism and terrorism, and specifically forbid it; and that they are rather religions of tolerance, co-existence, understanding and dialogue. He added that the aim of this exhibition is to showcase the Sultanate's experience in religious tolerance, which is a pioneering experience that has been largely welcomed by a number of countries of the world, especially as the world is witnessing growing conflicts due to incidents which were attributed to Muslims and non-Muslims.



HE Hilal Al-Maamary, Vice Rector Sra. Anna Ardévol, HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi and Prof Enric Olivé Serret



HE Sheikh Ahmad Al-Siyabi giving his speech.

Vice Rector Sra. Anna Ardévol mentioned in her opening remarks: "This exhibition, which begins its way through our land here at the URV, provides fundamental values in the international field to help improve understanding among peoples and thereby contribute to promoting the multiculturalism of the members of our institution and region."

The supervisor of the exhibition, Director of the UNESCO Department for Dialogue Among Civilizations in the Mediterranean, Prof Enric Olivé Serret delivered a speech in which he pointed out the role played by the UNESCO department in promoting dialogue and extending bridges of tolerance, understanding and peaceful co-existence.

He praised the role played by the Sultanate of Oman in the Gulf Region in the field of dialogue and establishing religious tolerance amongst peoples.

He concluded his speech by thanking the Sultanate for providing this opportunity for students in Spain to acquaint themselves with the true and peaceful Islam. He affirmed that dialogue is the only way to understanding other cultures and civilizations.

Islamic Cultural Center of Catalonia Barcelona, Spain

November 18 through December 18, 2011

The "Centre Cultural Islàmic Català" (CCIC) inaugurated this new community center with the presentation of the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman." Hosted by CCIC Director Salim Benamara, the speakers panel consisted of HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud Al-Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Ifta Office, Rabbi Jorge Burdman, head of the Department of Peace and Interreligious Dialogue of the Israelite Community of Barcelona, Padre Jaume Flaquer on behalf of Christianity and Justice organization, and the Center's Imam Mahmoud Jaafar.

Speeches on the occasion focused on the need to promote shared values among people with different religions. They encouraged cooperation and peaceful coexistence and they stressed the importance of curbing clashes and violence.

The speakers said over the years, the image of Islam was tarnished by some sections of the media which tried to manipulate public opinion and it is time to portray the true values of Islam.



Padre Jaume Flaquer, HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud Al-Siyabi, Rabbi Jorge Burdman, CCIC Director Salim Benamara.

The inauguration was also attended by HE Hilal Al-Maamary, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to Spain, representatives of Qatar and Pakistan, as well as distinguished guests from Barcelona and members of the local community.

Religious singers presented Quranic verses and songs before and after the speeches. Following the remarks, there was informal mingling, tea and sweets were served, a calligrapher made name cards for the visitors, and ladies could have their hands painted with henna in traditional designs. In addition to the Omani manuscripts and religious artifacts, handicrafts from Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia were also on display.

The vision of the CCIC is "to play an effective role within Catalan society, as well as to promote Islamic culture and civilization as a heritage of all mankind, through dialogue and promoting mutual understanding." Among its principles are to promote the principles of Islam based on mutual respect and dialogue, with a commitment to communication and cooperation with other cultural institutions.

Its stated objectives include promoting intercultural dialogue in order to promote the welfare of the people, and to collaborate with various organizations and institutions which share its values.



Rabbi Jorge Burdman, head of the Department of Peace and Interreligious Dialogue of the Israelite Community.

Segbroek Library at The Hague, Holland

November 19, 2011 through January 08, 2012

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" is being presented in a Dutch city for the first time. The exhibition was part and parcel of a day dedicated to inter-religious encounters in the Segbroek district of The Hague, organized by the United Religions Initiative (URI) of the Netherlands and the Interreligieuze Beraad Segbroek (IBS).

Some 60 visitors attended the opening in the modern library Bibliothek Segbroek, representing a majority of the religions of the world, and obviously coming from very different family backgrounds. In this milieu the show was very well received, depicting as it does that also in the Sultanate of Oman different religions peacefully coexist.

The exhibition was opened by the President of IBS, Bart ten Broek, who presented the program for the day. Also present was one of the council members of the city of The Hague, Rabin Baldeswingh, who is Dutch of course, but whose origins go back to the Indian minority in Surinam. He vividly described his relationship to three different countries, peoples, and religions - all of which he still clings to. It may safely be assumed that there will be ever more people around the world who are of mixed origins. The fundamental belief in European countries -- that no one should be discriminated against because of his origin, religion, sex or other attributes -- is of the utmost importance, especially for these people. The Hague, which is supporting this exhibition, is symbolic of this stand.

Ari van Buuren, Chairman of the United Religions Initiative (URI) of the Netherlands explained the intentional ambiguity of the abbreviation "URI" when spoken as "YOU ARE I." And I am you. We are all the same. And it is URI's responsibility to establish contacts among the religions and to promote togetherness.

HE Sheik Ahmed Al-Siyabi, representing the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, opened the show with greetings from the Sultanate of Oman. Subsequently the film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was shown -- in Dutch -- and proved very popular.



Ari van Buuren, Bart ten Broek, HE Sheik Ahmed Al-Siyabi and HE Mohammed Harub Al-Said

Hanns Seidel Foundation, Munich, Germany

27th March 2012

On March 27, 2012 the German-Arabic Friendship Association (Deutsch-Arabische Freundschaftsgesellschaft e.V., or DAFG) sponsored a conference in cooperation with the Bavarian Economic Union. His Excellence Dr Salem Bin Nasser Al-Ismaily, Chairman of the Omani Investments and Export Authority, promoted investment in Oman to the more than 100 chiefs of German industry.

Opening remarks were presented by Dr. Otto Wiesheu, former Economics Minister of Bavaria and current president of the DAFG. He made the point that the tolerant, open and very pragmatic economic policy of the Sultanate is clearly the reasons for its flourishing. Dr. Al-Ismaily supplemented those remarks by explaining that during the last 40 years the government of Oman has placed special importance on education, and taking care that the same professional and career opportunities are provided to women as to men. Also related is the fact that Oman has a very level-headed policy of peace with all of its neighbors: no country can benefit economically from war. Therefore Oman is bound in friendship with all and is at enmity with no one.

Georg Popp, the Secretary-General of the German-Omani Association (Deutsch-Omanische Gesellschaft e.V.) concluded the remarks by noting the special role of Ibadhism in the development of a modern Islamic society in Oman, and invited the guests to examine the exhibition which was presented in the foyer of the conference room.

The participants each received a copy of the brochure "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" and a DVD with the documentary film on the same subject.



Dr. Al-Ismaily giving his speech, and a visitor at the event

Universidad Complutense, Madrid, Spain

May 04 through May 11, 2012

Oman's traveling exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" was brought to the distinguished Complutense University in Madrid by Sheikh Hilal bin Salim Al-Ma'amari, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Spain, and was hosted in the Faculty of the Arts, under the aegis of the Director of the Arabic and Islamic Studies Department, Dr. Juan Martos.

The opening ceremony was attended by Ambassador Hilal Al-Ma'amari, ambassadors from the Gulf region and other countries, the Director-General for International Cooperation and Relations of the Spanish Ministry of Justice, invited guests, and more than 100 university faculty, staff, and students.

Opening remarks by Damaso Lopes, Chancellor of Complutense University, hailed the religious tolerance in the Sultanate and its respect for religion. Chancellor Lopes said the Sultanate has played and is still playing an important role in disseminating Islam through religious tolerance and respect for other peoples' cultures and religions. He added that the university, since its establishment, has had a department for languages including Arabic, in a bid to promote understanding of Arabic culture and religion.



The audience at the opening ceremony.

Biblioteca Viva al-Andalus, Cordoba, Spain

June 07, 2012 through December 2013, April and June 2016

The Biblioteca Viva de al-Andalus (BVA - "Living Library of Andalusia") was created in 2002 by the Fundación Paradigma Córdoba, whose essential purpose is to remember the key role of Cordoba in the 9th to 13th centuries, the cross-fertilization of cultures of the East (China, Indian, Arabic and Persian) and West (Greco -Roman and Judeo-Christian) and the symbiosis, in Al-Andalus, of the three Abrahamic religions: Jewish, Christian and Muslim.

The exhibition was officially opened by Dr. Balbino Povedano Ortega, Vice President of the Fundación Paradigma Córdoba, who welcomed the distinguished speakers, guests and visitors. Dr. Povedano is responsible for the promotion of intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, and this exhibition on religious tolerance at the Bailío Palace is the first event in the cycle entitled "Más Culturas," meaning "diverse cultures."

Dr Maria Jesus Viguera, Cultural Director of the Foundation, explained the purpose of the Foundation and the Living Library of Andalusia and introduced each of the members of the speakers' panel, with a resumé of their publications and achievements and short biography.



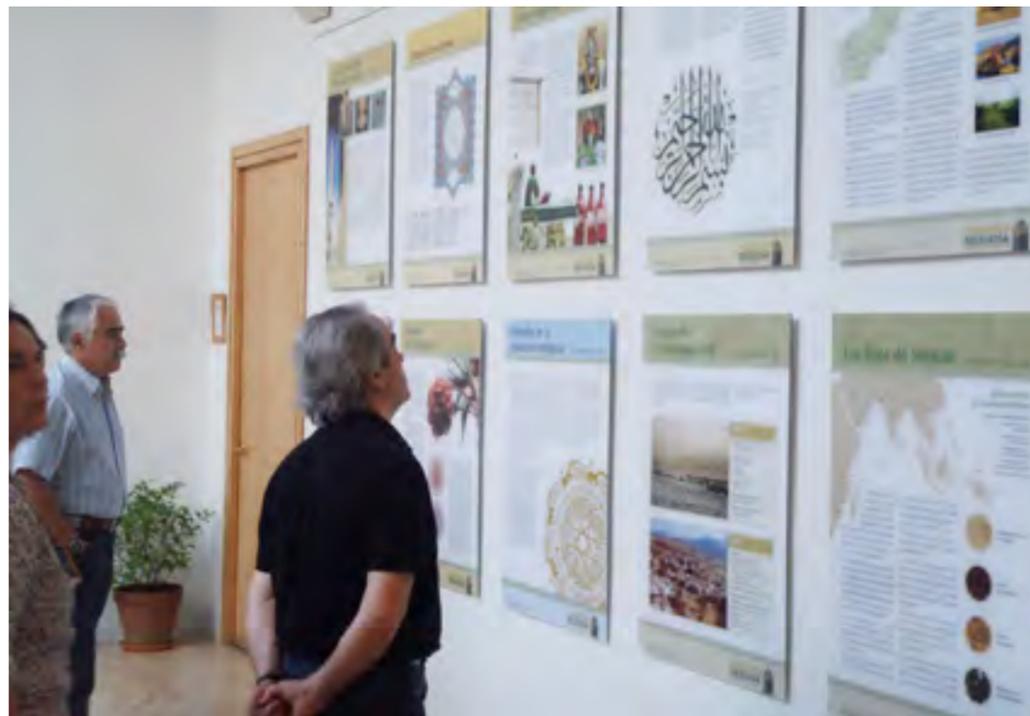
Mohammed Al-Mamari talking to a visitor

Dr Viguera's said that she can see from the books which the Ministry of Awqaf has presented to the Bibliotheca Viva that Oman has as much spiritual beauty as it does physical beauty, and that Oman combines its own ancient history with the history of Islam. Nowadays Oman is a modern nation state with an economy fueled by oil and gas production, which has allowed the development of a modern infrastructure as per the vision of HM Sultan Qaboos, and is being done responsibly and with respect to tradition.

Dr Amelia Sanchis Vidal, a professor of ecclesiastic law at the University of Cordoba, commended the Paradigm Foundation of Cordoba for its good work, and was especially grateful to the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs for this eye-opening exhibition. She said "it was especially nice to get to know something about the Sultanate of Oman and nice to have some surprises, to learn things you did not know and did not expect."

She then took the opportunity to introduce the FORO DE CÓRDOBA promoting intercultural dialogue. The inaugural conference (2013) will be a forum on multiculturalism, pluriculturalism and religions, with emphasis on the legal status of religions in society; the relationship of individuals, states and religious beliefs; and the role of feminism in religions and society.

Due to the great interest of the visiting public, the Bibliotheca Viva al-Andalus decided to keep the exhibition on display until end of 2013 and to present it again in September 2016.



Visitors reading the panels

"Werkstatt der Kulturen," Berlin, Germany

July 20 through August 19, 2012

The Sultanate of Oman was one of the focal points of the "Nights of Ramadan 2012" at Berlin's Workshop of Cultures (Werkstatt der Kulturen). For this reason, during the Muslim fasting period, several exhibitions pertaining to Oman are being presented in cooperation with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Berlin, the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs as well as the Diwan of Royal Court.

The exhibitions were entitled: "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman," "Sultanate of Oman: Modern Living with Tradition" and the photo exhibition "Oman: People & Moments" produced by the photographer Anja Menzel.

The Secretary-General of the German-Omani Association, Georg Popp, noted in his welcoming speech the very positive response throughout Europe to the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in Oman." Mohamed Al-Mamari, Scientific Advisor to the Minister for Religious Affairs, emphasized in his speech the importance of interreligious dialogue for a peaceful future. Personal experiences, encounters and friendships across the denominations are crucial.

Following the concert by Anwar Al-Asmi, the Omani Embassy and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs invited the guests to an Iftar dinner in the café of the Werkstatt der Kulturen.



Mohammed Al-Mamari giving his opening speech

St. Philip's Centre, Leicester, UK

July 16 through July 20, 2012

St Philip's Centre is a charity set up in 2006 under the umbrella of the archbishop of Canterbury and is rooted in the multi-faith environment of Leicester, the UK's most ethnically diverse city. It has a superb track record of promoting positive community relations through dialogue groups, leadership programmes for young people, charitable activities and organisation of community events. St Philip's Centre specialises in providing religion and belief training to public sector organisations and has received several awards in recognition its work to build bridges across communities. In this respect, the Omani initiative to promote religious tolerance through an exhibition and related events was very much welcomed.

On Monday, July 16, 2012, Sheikh Dr. Abdullah Al-Mamari, lecturer in the Institute of Islamic Sciences, Muscat, gave a lecture on Ibadhism at St. Philip's Church. Ibadhism is the most widely practiced form of Islam in Oman. The official launch of the exhibition took place on July 17 in the presence of many honorables of Leicester; the Revd. Canon Dr. John Hall; the Director of St. Philip's Centre, Richard Brooks and the High Sheriff of Leicestershire.



The audience of the opening ceremony

Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract presented the following message from the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Revd. Rowan Williams:

"I am happy to convey my greetings as Patron of the St Philip's Centre to all who are gathered for the opening of the Sultanate of Oman's first exhibition in the UK on 'Religious Tolerance'. I would like particularly to convey my greetings to the Grand Mufti of Oman, staff from the Omani Embassy in the UK and other leaders from the religious communities and civil society.

"It is good that this exhibition can highlight the vital importance of religious freedom in a world where such freedom is so often not respected.

"It is also good that the positive resources of the Ibadhi school of Islam and the tolerant traditions of the Sultanate of Oman in particular are given more prominence. I trust that the exhibition will provide a space in which mutual sharing and learning can take place.

"St Philip's is one of the foremost institutions involved in interfaith relations in Europe and a place in which all the rich religious and cultural diversity of Leicester is celebrated. May your gathering and the exhibition as a whole be a sign of hope and encouragement."



Rev. Tony Robinson, Bishop of Pontefract

University of Technology, Tallinn, Estonia

September 20 through October 04, 2012

The exhibition on Omani Religious Tolerance at the University of Technology in the Estonian capital was opened amid wide participation of academics and religious personalities.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr Ildar Muhhamedsin, the Grand Mufti of Estonia, hailed the success of the exhibition in many European countries: "Today we are lucky to have the exhibition here."

He expressed his hope that the exhibition fosters friendly relations between Oman and Estonia and provides a better understanding of Islamic civilisation.

Mohammed bin Said Al-Mamari, Scientific Adviser at the Office of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, delivered a speech stating that nothing is better than spreading the message of love among the people. The same message which has been nurtured in Oman for ages, confirming that the Omani people are reaching out to all civilisations. "We have embarked on this exhibition and will continue as we are well aware of its importance," he said.



Visitors examining replicas of Islamic handwritings from Oman

Free University of Brussels, Antwerp, Belgium

September 13 through October 10, 2012

More than 60 visitors attended the opening in Antwerp of the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman."

The exhibition was presented in Dutch, the preferred language in the city of Antwerp. It was hosted by the Antwerp faculty of the Department of Comparative Religion, of the Free University of Brussels. The faculty maintains a worldwide network for religious dialogue and religious studies.

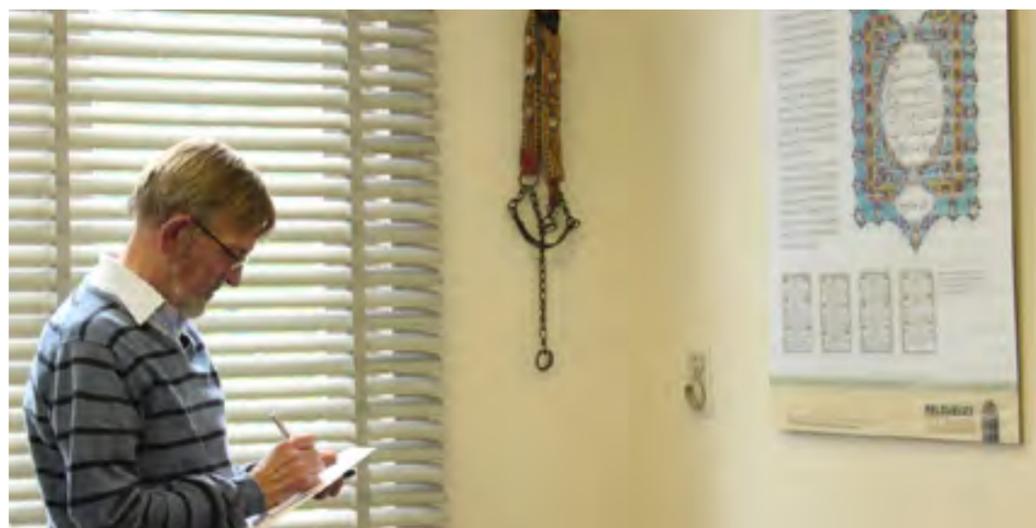
Opening the exhibition was one of the mayors of the city of Antwerp, who reported that the city of Antwerp's economic success is only because it has been open to the world since ancient times. The population is multilingual, accepting of different religions and accustomed to dealing with people from many cultures. Mohammed Al-Mamari, Advisor to the Minister of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman, described the parallels between Belgium and Oman, for example that for many centuries the religiously persecuted of other countries were accepted and assimilated. This is a principle of and basis for religious tolerance.



The audience during the opening session

Religious tolerance and diversity of religions is a major issue both in Antwerp and throughout Belgium. Accordingly, representatives of more than ten religious communities in Antwerp attended the opening including the Catholic Church, which represents the majority of the population in Belgium; Coptic Christians; Jewish rabbis; and representatives of Islamic communities in Antwerp. Representatives of the Catholic Church and of the Ministry of State also spoke at the opening, and the exhibition was even acknowledged by the European Commission, and reviewed by its representatives.

The exhibition in Antwerp was a welcome addition to the development of an interfaith network for religious tolerance, in which the Sultanate of Oman is contributing as one of the Islamic countries.



Exhibition visitors

Volkshochschule (VHS), Aachen, Germany

November 07 through November 30, 2012

The adult education centre (Volkshochschule) in the German city of Aachen hosted the exhibition of Religious Tolerance in the Sultanate of Oman from November 7 to 30.

On the occasion of the opening ceremony Mohammad bin Said Al-Mamari, Scientific Adviser at the Minister's Office said that the exhibition of religious tolerance in Oman is a continuing opportunity, a renewed effort and on-going quest for religions, cultures and peoples who love goodness, happiness and security.

Mohammed Al-Mamari said the goal of the exhibition since the beginning has been to find a common ground among peoples and civilisations, and that this ground gets support and presence of various institutions. He added the exhibition has enjoyed since its inception in April 2010, a new gush of positive interaction, started simple and modest, but now has grown and expanded to a wide range of workshops for a better mobility in the relations between religions and cultures in countries visited by the exhibition so far in Germany, Spain, Netherlands, Britain, Belgium and Estonia.



Mohammed Al-Mamari and the director of the Volkshochschule Aachen.

UNESCO Chair Bologna University, Italy

January 09 through January 18, 2013

The exhibition opened on January 8, 2013 on the premises of **The John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies**, a research library with an extensive collection of nearly 1,000,000 works, making it one of the largest and most important centers for religious studies in Europe. It publishes, educates, serves, organizes, hosts and communicates research in the field of religious studies.

The director is Dr. Alberto Melloni, who is also the **UNESCO Chairholder in Religious Pluralism and Peace**, which was established in 2008 at the University of Bologna. The Chair seeks to deepen the multidisciplinary understanding of religious issues, emphasizing among other things the relevant role of history as a tool to understand diversity and to be able to accept pluralism as a key to human culture.

Also in attendance were representatives of city of Bologna and the region of Emilia Romagna; Dr. Massimo Baldini, Political Science Editor of *Il Mulino*, approx. 75 distinguished guests, and Dr. Saif Al-Busaidi and Salem Al-Haddad from Oman.

In opening the exhibition, Dr Melloni praised this initiative of the Sultanate of Oman, and expressed his appreciation to the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs. The need for interfaith dialogue and mutual understanding is today greater than ever, and the projects conducted in the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies contribute to this effort.

Mohammed Al-Mamari, International Programs Director of Oman's MARA succinctly described Oman's historical traditions leading to today's tolerant society, which is open and supportive of other religions. On behalf of the MARA, tokens of appreciation were bestowed upon Dr. Melloni, Mrs. Angelina Alberigo, widow of the Foundation's founder, Dr. Giuseppe Alberigo; and Dr. Annelaura Trombetti, Director of the CISDI (Interdepartmental Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Bologna).

The University of Bologna is generally considered the first university in the western world. Its history is one of great thinkers in science and the humanities, making it an indispensable point of reference in the panorama of European culture. The University began to take shape in Bologna at the end of the eleventh century, when masters of Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic began to devote themselves to the law. In the nineteenth century a committee of historians, led by Giosuè Carducci, attributed the birth of the University to the year 1088. The term "university" was coined at its creation. Today it is considered a leader in the European university system.



Dr. Alberto Melloni, the UNESCO Chairholder in Religious Pluralism and Peace



Exhibition visitors

City Hall, Vilnius, Lithuania

March 14 through March 28, 2013

Oman's touring exhibition with the message of "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" opened on March 14, 2013 in the rooms adjoining the mayor's office in the city hall of Vilnius, the capital of the Baltic Republic of Lithuania.

The auditorium stage was festooned with the flags of Oman, Lithuania and the city of Vilnius, with windows overlooking the snow-covered central square of the Old Town, an UNESCO World Heritage site.

The opening ceremony was well-attended, with members of the Lithuania parliament and representatives of various ethnic communities, and the general public filling the auditorium. In his opening remarks, Mohammed Al Mamari, on behalf of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, told the crowd "It is my honor to be here in Lithuania to deliver Oman's message of religious tolerance and acceptance. Vilnius, with its various ethnic groups, historic traditions and various religions represented here, is very much a centre of spiritual life and science. ... It is our strong belief that peace and stability only can be realised today in any society through dialogue and mutual understanding. Vilnius is and always has been multi-faceted and multi-lingual, and as a result, is a city of dialogue."

The patron of the exhibition, Romas Jakubauskas, Mufti of the Sunni Muslim Religious Centre in Lithuania, thanked the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs (MARA), and he compared Lithuania to Oman as a country with different religions living peacefully side by side. The difference is that



The audience at the opening ceremony

Muslims are in the majority in Oman, with the religious minorities protected and supported by the state. In Lithuania it is the reverse, with Muslims in the minority. "This exhibition presents a good opportunity for the people of Lithuania to learn about Islam," he said.

Prof Dr Marija Ausrine Pavilioniene, the Director of the Lithuanian parliament's committee for European Affairs addressed the gathering, stating that she is very happy to see this exhibit here, and that this exhibition is very important:

"We need more exhibitions like this to bring us closer together." She was also very pleased to learn about the role of women in Omani society, and she expressed her appreciation "to the men of Oman for being supportive of the women who play an active role in society."

The Advisor to the Prime Minister, Mr Faustas Latenas, speaking on behalf of the Prime Minister, thanked the MARA for providing this exhibiton and giving the people of Lithuania an insight to Oman. He emphasized that "the very concept of 'tolerance' already indicates an awareness of differences, a necessity for making it possible to live in peaceful coexistence."

On behalf of the Union of the Communities of Lithuanian Tatars, Prof Adas Jakubauskas, Chairman, expressed his gratitude to the MARA and to HM the Sultan of Oman for sending this exhibition here. "It shows a clarity of thought and progressive thinking, and in presenting Islam to the people of Lithuania it corrects some misperceptions. Muslims having been living in Lithuania for more than 600 years, but a majority of people here are unaware of the tenets of Islam."

Mr Julius Sabatauskas, member of parliament and chairman of the Committee on Legal Affairs commented that the title of exhibition, with its emphasis on "tolerance" is excellent because different people have different ideas of what tolerance means. "This exhibition opens a dialogue between peoples to define and promote tolerance. And it not only promotes good relations between religions but also between different countries, and promotes peace in the world."



Romas Jakubauskas, Mufti of the Sunni Muslim Religious Centre in Lithuania

University Salve Regina, Newport, Rhode Island, USA

April 8 through April 23, 2013

Oman's touring exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" opened on April 8, 2013 for the first time in the USA at the Salve Regina University in Newport, Rhode Island, which this year is commemorating the 350th anniversary since its founding by royal charter of the British crown.

The opening ceremony was attended by Oman's ambassador to the United States, Her Excellence Hunaina Sultan Al-Mughairy, representatives of the Ministry and the University, many distinguished guests, and students and faculty of the university.

The president of the University, Sister Jane Gerety welcomed the Omani delegation and praised the initiative of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs promoting inter-religious dialogue and mutual understanding. "We are a Catholic university but we welcome people of all faiths. As the students become involved in the greater world their appreciation of the world's diversity should be in depth. Our Christian perspective leaves place for the beliefs of others."

HE Ambassador Hunaina Sultan Al-Mughairy stated how pleased she is to see this exhibition here. Oman and the United States have enjoyed good relations for 200 years, and share common interests and objectives in the Arabian Gulf region. "The relationship between Oman and the United States stands as a model of how free people, determined to maintain their territorial integrity and political independence, can and do cooperate for their mutual interests."



Left: HE Ambassador Hunaina Sultan Al Mughairy, Right: Sister Jane Gerety



The nearly 200 years of the mutually beneficial and fruitful relationship between the two nations started with a treaty of amity and commerce — one of the first agreements of its kind with an Arab state — which was concluded between the United States and Muscat in 1833. The first Arab diplomatic mission to visit the United States was an Omani delegation arriving in New York aboard The Sultana in 1840.

She explained further that there are many religious groups which practice their faith freely in Oman, and that the sultanate, under the wise leadership of HM Sultan Qaboos, has taken many initiatives, inside and outside the country, to promote the core Islamic values of peace, cultural dialogue, and coexistence. "Oman has consistently called against bigotry, fanaticism, extremism ... which can only cause division and anxiety between cultures..."

Ambassador Al-Mughairy added further that several Sultan Qaboos Chairs have been endowed at prestigious universities around the world, including four in the United States, with the objective of encouraging a global community living in peace, harmony and mutual understanding.

In his opening remarks, Mohammed Al-Mamari, Advisor to and speaking on behalf of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, said that "Rhode Island holds a unique place in the evolution of human rights in the modern world. When King Charles II approved the Charter in July 1663, it marked the first time in modern history that individuals within a society were free to practice the religion of their choice without any interference from the government. This freedom was extremely radical in an age marked by wars of religion and persecution of people for religious beliefs."

Following the opening remarks, excerpts from the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" were presented, with a question and answer session involving Mr Al-Mamari, Rev. Douglas Leonard, Director of the Al Amana Centre and members of the audience. The Al Amana Centre is an interfaith institution in Muscat. Rev. Leonard is an American living and working in Oman since 2010.

Artists contributing to the opening ceremony were Anwar Al-Asmi, religious singer, and Madny Al-Bakri, whose colorful artworks are inspired by Quranic verses and Islamic calligraphy.

University of Education, Freiburg, Germany

June 12 through June 30, 2013

On June 12, 2013 Rector Prof. Druwe opened the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" in the foyer of the University of Education, Freiburg. In attendance from Oman were senior representatives of the Ministry of Religious Affairs: Ahmed Al-Farsi, the Director General of the Ministry; and Mohammad Al-Mamari, exhibition project manager; and from the Omani Embassy in Berlin, Counselor Nasser Al-Manwari. The German-Omani Association was represented by Georg Popp, secretary general.

Prof. Feininger from the Institute of Theology gave the opening speech. He has served as religious education consultant in participation with this exhibition, and in 2011 was invited to Oman to lecture on inter-religious understanding from a Christian perspective.

On behalf of the city of Freiburg, the exhibition was welcomed by Mr. Ibrahim Sarialtin, the first Turkish-Muslim member of the city council. The German federal Office for Migration and Integration was represented, as well as the Society for Jewish-Christian Cooperation, and the Freiburg-



Prof. Feininger from the Institute of Theology



Isfahan Friendship Circle. From the Oriental Studies Department (Islamic Studies) of the University of Freiburg came Prof. Dr. Roswita Badry and Dr. Mariella Ourghi. Particularly heartening was the presence of numerous Freiburg Muslims.

The exhibition was accompanied by lectures on "The Art of Arabic Calligraphy" (Dr. Nabhani, Department of Oriental Studies, University of Freiburg), "The idea of tolerance" (Dr. Abbas Poya, University Erlangen) and "The Ibadhis - A Third Path in Islam" (Dr. Ourghi, University of Freiburg).



The audience of the opening ceremony

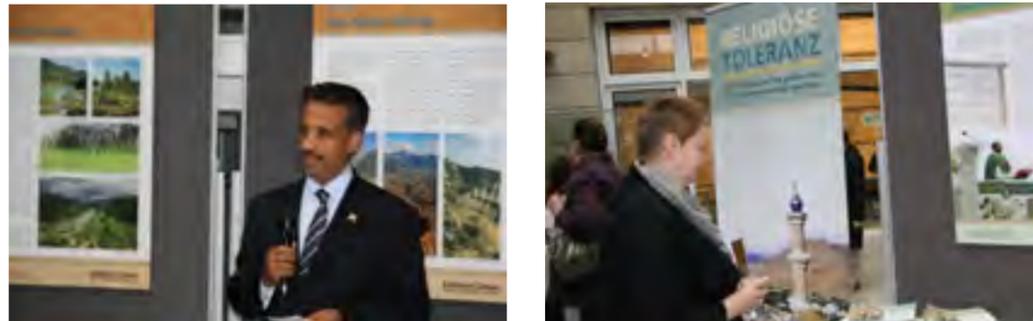
University of Hamburg, Hamburg, Germany

June 27 through July 4, 2013

Between June 26th and 28th the Omani sail training ship “Shabab Oman” visited the port of Hamburg in Germany. On the occasion of this event the double exhibition “Sultanate of Oman: Modern Living with Tradition” and “Religious Tolerance in Oman” were shown at the Asia-Africa Institute of the University of Hamburg, thanks to an initiative of Dr. Mohammed Khalifa, with the support of the German-Omani Association, and the Omani Embassy in Berlin.

The exhibition was opened on June 27 at 6:30 PM by HE Khalid Ba’Omar, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman; Prof. Dr. Heidemann, Director of the Institute; and Mr. Bruno Kaiser, president of the German-Omani Association.

The Shabab Oman’s crew was also present, enriching the evening with a performance of traditional dances.



HE Khalid Ba’Omar, Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman



The Shabab Oman’s crew performing traditional dances.

Town Hall, Ljubljana, Slovenia

December 03, 2013 through January 06, 2014

The exhibition “Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman” opened on December 3, 2013 at the Ljubljana Town Hall sponsored by Islamic Culture Center. Ljubljana is the capital and largest city of Slovenia, a member of the European Union, located between Austria, Italy and Croatia.

The exhibition was opened by Ljubljana’s mayor Zoran Jankovic, Mufti Nedžad Grabus, and representing Oman’s Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs, Sheikh Ahmed Saud Al-Siyabi, Secretary General of the Iftaa office.

The Sultanate of Oman was also represented by HE Dr Badr Mohamed Al-Hinai, Oman’s Ambassador accredited to Slovenia and Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Vienna. Distinguished guests included Danilo Türk, the former president of Slovenia; Dr Marjan Cencen of the Foreign Ministry, and the ambassadors of Egypt and Jordan attended the opening ceremony, along with more than 200 guests and visitors.

Mayor Jankovic welcomed the distinguished guests by name, and welcomed the close ties to the Sultanate of Oman, which has demonstrated over time its commitment to openness and tolerance. He also expressed his appreciation to the Islamic community, and said he did not know who was more looking forward to the opening of Ljubljana’s only mosque, the Mufti or himself!



Ljubljana’s mayor Zoran Jankovic



Mohammed Al-Mamari explaining the exhibition to guests

Following the Mufti's opening remarks, Sheikh Al-Siyabi reiterated Oman's historic legacy of coexistence both at home and abroad, stating that "Just as inside Oman, it has been the same abroad, wherever the Omanis lived and traded, such as in East Africa and Southeast Asia. Omanis have coexisted with everyone, even with the pagans and atheists. It is the human side which has power over relationships and life. The Omanis understand this through the words of the prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him, when he stood up at the funeral of a Jew out of respect for his humanity, and asked "Does not every man have a soul?"

Ambassador Dr. Badr Al-Hinai stated that he hopes this exhibition "will spread further in Europe and cross many more borders, within the framework of Oman's National Plan for the Alliance of Civilizations, devised in 2009 to promote tolerance and coexistence between civilizations and religions. Oman has been adamant about fostering religious tolerance."



Mufti Nedzad Grabus

Haus Nordhelle, Meinerzhagen, Germany

January 10 through February 09, 2014

Haus Nordhelle is the Protestant conference site of the 100 municipalities in the four church districts of southern Westphalia: Iserlohn, Lüdenscheid Plettenberg, Siegen and Wittgenstein.

Under its broad roof meetings take place to discuss contemporary issues of life and faith. In this context, the exhibition "Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman" was held.

Opening remarks were offered by Mr. Alex Moll, Advisor for Culture of the German-Omani Association, and Mr. Christian Graf, director of pedagogy at Haus Nordhelle. In his speech, Mr. Moll -- who has visited Oman on numerous occasions -- highlighted how the different religions in the country manage to coexist peacefully.



Mr. Alex Moll, Advisor for Culture of the German-Omani Association, and Mr. Christian Graf, director of pedagogy.

Kuwait City, Grand Mosque, Kuwait

February 2013 and March 04, 2014

“The Message of Islam from Oman” exhibition displaying the experience of the Sultanate and its role in the dissemination of a culture of understanding and moderation to nations and peoples opened in the Grand Mosque of Kuwait City on March 04.

The Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs (MARA) participated in the exhibition with a selection of books and publications including Omani Mushaf, Mushaf of Oman Tafahum (Understanding) and Tasamuh (Tolerance) magazines and the latest releases by MARA, as part of MARA’s mission in disseminating constructive concepts and ideas as messages of building, peace and life of man and the country.

On the sidelines of the exhibition, Dr. Adel Al-Falah, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs in Kuwait, met with Mohammad bin Said Al-Mamari, the Scientific Advisor at the Office of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, and the supervisor of the exhibition of “Message of Islam from Oman.” The two sides discussed work development through the exchange of experiences and further cooperation between them.



Visitors to the exhibition

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

March 04, 2014

Islamabad was the 43rd location for the touring exhibition “Oman’s message of Islam” which was commissioned by the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs (MARA) for presentation in various countries around the world. The intent of the exhibition is to share Oman’s experience of religious tolerance between the different religions in the country. The exhibition was held in the central library of the international Islamic University in Islamabad.

The teaching staff and senior government officials were invited to the exhibition to learn more about Oman. The exhibition as currently presented contains 24 panels, 4 panels more than previously. The visitors learn of the cultural importance of religious tolerance. The documentary film “Religious Tolerance in Oman,” produced specifically for the exhibition, was also shown.

Mr. Sardar Mohammed Yusof, Pakistan’s Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, opened the exhibition. In his speech he said that the exhibition “will improve the culture of tolerance between people; such activities are very important to reduce the gap between the religions and to correct the misunderstanding of Islam’s message created by small groups of Muslims. Islam stands for mercy and mutual coexistence.”

Mohammed bin Said Al-Mamari, Scientific Advisor to the Minister of MARA and supervisor of foreign exhibitions, thanked the university for embrace the show and pointed to the efforts of the Sultanate of Oman in spreading the values of understanding. He also expressed his thanks to the President of the Senate of Pakistan, esteemed officials and distinguished guests for the honor they conveyed by visiting the exhibition. HE Ambassador Riad Ben Youssef, the Sultanate’s ambassador to Pakistan, also bestowed his gratitude on behalf of the government.



Visitors to the exhibition

CISMOR, Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan

April 06 through July 06, 2014

For the first time in the far east, a Japanese university at the city of Kyoto has hosted an Omani exhibition of the message of Islam, introducing Japanese people to an approach of coexistence and tolerance as embedded in the exhibition's message.

"The Japanese public is open to learn new things. The Japanese are interested in learning about Islam," Professor Katashiro Kohara, the director of the Centre for Monotheistic Studies at Doshisha University, said in a speech about the Exhibition cited by the Oman Observer.

"The Exhibition gives the Japanese another chance to learn about the basic principles of Islam and the great contributions of Oman in spreading the message of tolerance," he added.



Visitors to the exhibition

Oman Business Forum, Frankfurt Chamber of Commerce, Germany

May 27, 2014

The Chamber of Commerce of Frankfurt am Main, in cooperation with the Delegates of German Industry in Muscat conducted a day-long Oman Business Forum on May 27, 2014.

Business practices in Oman were explained through technical papers from Oman experts, practical examples of successful local entrepreneurs, and panel discussions, together with personal encounters and networking. The forum provided an exceptional opportunity to acquire comprehensive information and first-hand knowledge about the possibility of business engagement in Oman. The event was chaired by the ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman, HE Khaled Ba'Omar and the new Honorary Consul General of Oman in Frankfurt, Prof. Dr. Müller. The high-level delegation from Oman was led by Mr. Faris Al-Farsi, GM of Public Authority for Investment Promotion and Export Development (PAIPED), Mr. Yahya Al-Zidjali, Vice Chairman, Special Economic Zone Authority at Duqm, and Mr. Hilal Al-Hasani, CEO, Public Establishment for Industrial Estates (PEIE).

As part of the program the exhibitions "Modern Oman" and "Religious Tolerance in Oman" were on display, giving the more than 150 senior representatives of the German economy a deeper insight into the Sultanate of Oman. Each participant also received a DVD of the film "Religious Tolerance in Oman."

Mr. Dieter Haller, Secretary of the Foreign Office, Head of the Department of Economy and Sustainable Development, emphasized in his speech the importance of religious tolerance in Oman for the safety and sustainability of economic investment in Oman and invited the participants to take advantage of this opportunity to better inform themselves about the unique role of Islam in Oman.



The audience of the business forum in Frankfurt.

São Paulo, Club Homs, Brasil

June 27, 2014

The traveling exhibition on Islamic life in Oman was held in the city of São Paulo, Brazil, after traveling to 46 cities around the world.

The exhibition, 'Tolerance, Understanding and Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam' was held at Club Homs in São Paulo.

The event was organised by Oman's Embassy in Brazil and supported by the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce.

"It is an international exhibition. It is very important to see the role of religion in life. If you look at the wars in the Arab world today, they are not related to religion," said HE Khalid Salim Al-Jaradi, Oman's Ambassador to Brazil.

The exhibition had a total of 44 panels and was divided into two parts. The first one showed religious tolerance in Oman while the second depicts aspects of modern life in the country.



Foz do Iguazu, Brasil

Culture Center

June 30 through July 03, 2014

The 48th stop of 'Islam Mission from the Sultanate of Oman's Exhibition organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs was launched at Foz do Iguazu in Brazil under the auspices of Reni Clovis de Souza Pereira, Mayor of Foz do Iguazu, in the presence of Dr. Khalid bin Said Al-Jaradi, Sultanate's accredited Ambassador to Brazil, members of the Brazilian parliament, representatives of Arab and Islamic communities, a number of businessmen, media men and university students.

At the beginning of the launching ceremony, the Sultanate's accredited Ambassador to Brazil delivered a speech where he said that this mission stresses the importance of joining all hands to ensure work peace and constructive living so that everyone can enjoy the fruits of fair comprehensive development.

Reni Clovis de Souza Pereira, Mayor of Foz do Iguazu, in his speech delivered on this occasion, said that such stops help in enhancing cultural integration among peoples and will enhance the knowledge of Brazilians about Islam and Islamic culture.

Mayor Pereira of Foz do Iguazu stressed in his speech that such stops help increasing the cultural and civilisation integration between peoples, and he called upon the Secretariat of Communications and Public Relations in Foz do Iguazu to invite the largest number of students from all nationalities to visit this cultural stop. He emphasized that this cultural event will increase the knowledge of Brazilians to the culture of Islam.

Mohammed bin Said Al-Mamari, the Scientific Adviser at the office of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and General Supervisor of the Foreign Exhibitions, delivered the Ministry's speech and hailed the support provided by the Brazilian officials to ensure the success of the exhibition.

He pointed out that the exhibition displays the Sultanate's experience in religious tolerance and peaceful coexistence with other races; a unique experience the world can benefit from and build upon.



Visitors to the exhibition

Omar Ibn Al-Khatab Masjid

July 04, 2014

On invitation by the Shia community of Foz do Iguacu, the exhibition also was presented at the Omar Ibn Al-Khatab Mosque. Many visitors used this opportunity to get familiar with the Omani approach towards Islam and for talks with the Omani guests. There also was a fruitful meeting with the catholic head of the City.

Sociedade Beneficents Islamic

July 05, 2014

The Sunni community requested to present the exhibition in their space on July 05. Also here many people came to improve their knowledge about Islam in Oman and life in the Sultanate today.



Cambridge University, Cambridge, UK

August 04 through August 08, 2014

The exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" was hosted in Summer 2014 at Madingley Hall at Cambridge University.

The presentation of the exhibition coincided with the annual Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. The seven-day programme is organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate.

The idea of the Cambridge Interfaith Programme is to bring together future religious leaders from the Abrahamic religions for an intensive period of immersion in inter-faith and cross-cultural encounter, to resource practical peacemaking and conflict-transformation efforts.

Professor David Ford delivered a speech during which he thanked the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate for its efforts to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence.



Muslim, Christian and Jewish participants of the Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme

Kennesaw State University, Kennesaw, Georgia, USA

October 02 through October 31, 2014

Oman's exhibition promoting tolerance, understanding and peaceful coexistence opened for the second time in the United States on October 2, 2014 at Kennesaw State University, located approximately 20 miles from Atlanta, Georgia. The university's modern campus in a rural setting is conducive to academic learning for the 25,000 students enrolled here.

The American Association of State Colleges and Universities has awarded Kennesaw State University an award for excellence and innovation in international education, one of only two such awards presented among the organization's 400 member institutions nationwide.

Among the initiatives cited for the AACU honor is Kennesaw State's 30-year-old "Year of" annual country study program that dedicates each academic year to a particular country or region. The program features more than 30 lectures, performances, exhibits and other cultural events and an international conference throughout the year. During the 2014-2015 academic year, the University is celebrating "Year of the Arabian Peninsula."



Dr. Daniel Paracka, director of academic initiatives for the University's Global Affairs Division

"The country study program has introduced thousands of Kennesaw State students to the rich diversity of world cultures that make up the human family," said Daniel Paracka, director of academic initiatives for the University's Global Affairs Division. "Annually, it results in the creation of new courses and curriculum, research projects, education abroad programs, and global partnerships. Its success is based upon campus-wide collaboration and input, and is based upon and builds upon the expertise of our faculty, staff and students."

On behalf of the President Daniel Papp, Dr. Daniel Paracka welcomed the approx. 100 students, staff, faculty and guests in attendance at the exhibition opening, and introduced the other speakers.

"This award validates the extremely high value Kennesaw State places on international education," said Lance Askildson, the University's vice provost for global affairs and chief international officer. "The institution is profoundly committed to educating globally competent students who can understand and navigate cultural differences as both successful professionals and engaged citizens."

Representing the Sultanate of Oman from Oman's embassy in Washington, D.C., counselor Salim Al-Kindi, and information attaché Hanan Al-Kindi, expressed their gratitude to the university for hosting the exhibition in such beautiful surroundings.

A member of the exhibition's organizing team, Michael Dickinson, offered a few words on the background and evolution of the exhibition, and distributed samples of genuine Omani frankincense, and DVDs with the documentary film "Religious Tolerance in Oman," produced specifically to accompany the exhibition.



Exhibition visitors

Grand Valley State University, Allendale, Michigan, USA

October 10 through October 31, 2014

The Kaufman Interfaith Institute was the host of Oman's third exhibition opening in the USA, held in the Pew Idema Library of the Grand Valley State University, adjacent to the city of Grand Rapids, Michigan, the US state with the second largest Arab population, after California. Attending the opening reception were Dr. Thomas Haas, President of Grand Valley State University; Dr. Douglas Kindschi, Director of the Kaufman Interfaith Institute; Dr. Lee Van Orsdel, Dean of University Libraries; Mohammed Said Al-Mamari, from Oman's Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs, and representatives from the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Washington, D.C.

Under the leadership of President Haas, the Grand Valley State University has developed state-of-the-art facilities, a first-rate faculty, and now has more than 25,000 students. The GVSU is devoted to contributing to cultural understanding. The Kaufman Interfaith Institute, affiliated with the GVSU, is committed to facilitate mutual respect and greater interfaith understanding. Its director, Dr. Douglas Kindschi has come to know Oman personally through visits to the Sultanate, and has also collaborated with Professor David Ford, of the Cambridge Interfaith Institute (UK), in promoting inter-religious dialogue.

The Pew Idema Library, co-host of the exhibition, won the 2012 Award of Excellence in Academic Libraries. Chief Librarian Dr. Lee Van Orsdel, stated that "This exhibition is exactly what we designed this space for: a place where students can step out of their routine, can consider some of the important questions of the world, and — at the heart of the most important questions in the world — how to understand each other's deepest beliefs and practices. I believe this exhibition will lead us into more deeply understanding the country of Oman and its membership in the world community and how we can learn from the approaches they take."



In conjunction with the exhibition "Oman's Message of Islam," the Grand Valley State University in Allendale, Michigan, commissioned a series of events to explore the world of Islam, highlighting religion, politics and culture in the modern Arab society of Oman. Following the opening reception and film screening on October 13, 2014, the exhibition hall was used in the days following as a backdrop for a lecture on modern-day Oman by Prof. Sebastian Maisel; a presentation entitled "Interfaith in the Middle East: Rays of Light in Darkness;" an open panel discussion; video conversations with overseas alumni; and other events.

"Association Coexister," Paris, France

October 10 through October 12, 2014 and
November 15 through November 16, 2014

Starting in July 2013 five French students, between 19 and 28 years old, all members of the French national youth interfaith movement "Coexister" – Muslim, atheist, Christian, Jewish and agnostic – traveled around the world, visiting more than fifty countries. Their goal was to meet people who are involved in interfaith dialogue and who promote coexistence, showing that "it is possible to live together;" and to identify initiatives worldwide which promote interfaith dialogue. The group visited Oman by invitation of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

From October 10 to 12, 2014 representatives of 20 groups of Coexister in France and Belgium met in Paris for their 6th annual general meeting.

The members of the InterFaith Tour took this opportunity to share their impressions and experiences about Oman last year and to show the video they made documenting their time in Oman, with the exhibition "Oman's Message of Islam" forming the backdrop for the event.

More than 100 people from all over Europe and the Paris area gathered in Paris on invitation of Association Coexister to celebrate together the United Nations Day of Tolerance on November 16. All of them represented organizations working in the field of interreligious dialogue. The goal of the meeting named "InterFaith Dialogue and Common Action: Why and How" was to offer a space to share good practices. A panel debate was followed by various workshops to exchange ideas and experiences.



Exhibition visitors

St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity, Valletta, Malta

October 24 through November 09, 2014

The exhibition "Oman's Message of Islam" was inaugurated at the St. James Centre for Creativity in Valletta, the Maltese capital, by His Excellency Dr. George Vella, Foreign Minister of Malta; and HE Sheikh Ahmed bin Saud Al Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Office of the Grand Mufti of the Sultanate.

Among the guests were HE Joseph Mangion, Ambassador of Malta to the Sultanate, a number of ambassadors accredited to the Republic of Malta and other government officials from both Oman and Malta.

HE Dr. George Vella, the Foreign Minister of Malta, mentioned that this exhibition occurs in conjunction with the celebration of forty years' relations between Malta and Oman, which began on the fourth of November 1974. He emphasized the importance of strong common relations between the two sides, not only at the official level, but also between the peoples of Malta and Oman.



The audience of the opening ceremony



HE Dr. George Vella, the Foreign Minister of Malta:

"The exhibition comes at a very important time, as violence and extremism prevail throughout the world, confirming the need for tolerance, understanding and coexistence.

"Malta is proud to host this exhibition, which is ground for further bilateral cooperation between Malta and the Sultanate of Oman and which will lead to further activities being undertaken between both sides in the future."

At the conclusion of his speech, the Maltese Foreign Minister thanked the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs for its cooperation which resulted in the placement of this exhibition in Malta, and encouraging all to take advantage of this opportunity and review its contents.

Ohio University, Athens, Ohio, USA

October 27 through November 25, 2014

The Ohio University Multicultural Center hosted the exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" at the Multicultural Center Art Gallery, with the opening ceremony held on November 1, 2014.

At the opening reception the Omani Student Association invited Dr. Bashar Kayali to speak. He spoke about the importance of tolerance in a globalized world. The speech was well received. The Omani Student Association handed out bags containing information about Oman. They also provided artifacts for a display case that is in the gallery.

The exhibition was held as part of Ohio University's International Education Week (Nov. 12-16), and in conjunction with the UN's declared "International Day of Tolerance" at which time the university hosted a Tolerance Walk on the actual Day of Tolerance (November 16, 2014). The walk ended at the gallery where a panel discussion about tolerance was held.

Winsome Chunnu-Brayda, Associate Director of the university's Office for Diversity and Inclusion, noted that: "If we were to look in Western media to see what they have to say about the Middle East, we would depict it with oppression of women and violence. This (exhibition) is a counter-narrative to that story."



OU is the first school in the USA to simultaneously have this exhibit with an Omani Students Association at the school. Saif Al Wahaibi, president of the OSA said "I tell people I'm from Oman and people ask me where that is. You never hear anything about us, but Oman is very politically active. We mediate between countries on issues of petroleum business and territory. People will generalize in their perceptions, but we live in one of the calmest, safest countries in the world."

The Omani Students Association at OU has about 65 members from Oman. Many of the members are women, which reflects how well Oman represents tolerance in its own society.

"Women have a lot of opportunities. They hold high positions in the government, and other key positions. The ambassador of Oman in the U.S. is a woman," Al-Wahaibi said. "In terms of scholarships to the West, they are equal when competing for scholarships. At OU last year, most of the people from Oman were girls."

Rashid Al-Saadi, vice president of the Omani Students Association, said the freedoms in Oman and America are synonymous.

Grand Rapids Public Library, Michigan, USA

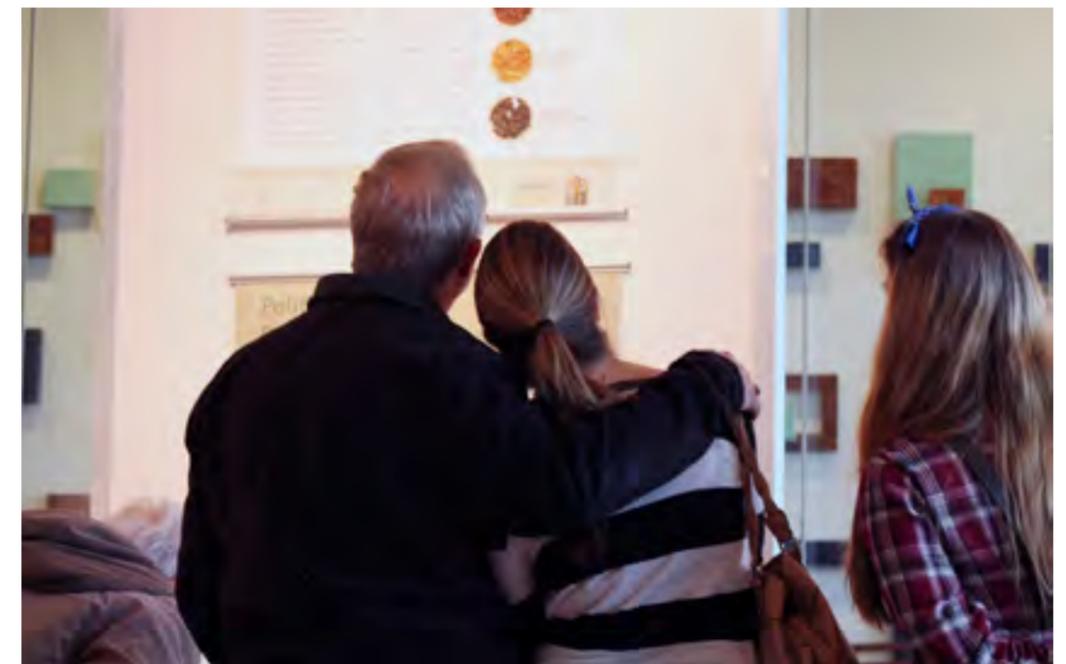
November 03 through November 16, 2014

The exhibition at Grand Rapids Public Library was opened with speeches by Mayor George Heartwell and Rev. Wes Granberg-Michaelson, who was the previous executive director of the Reformed Church in America. Grand Rapids is the second-largest city in Michigan (after Detroit). Michigan has been known to hold the largest Muslim population in the United States.

In recognition of the upcoming International Day of Tolerance, Mayor Heartwell spoke of his hope for the exhibit to contribute to Grand Rapids becoming more and more a place of religious tolerance and understanding.

Rev. Granberg-Michaelson spoke of the unsurpassed hospitality of the Omani people and His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said. He traveled to Oman a few years ago for a special event and spent over 2 hours conversing with the Sultan regarding religious tolerance and the historic relations between his church and Oman.

Rev. Justin Meyers, who hails from Michigan and is working in Oman as Educational Programs Director at the Al Amana Centre in Muscat, gave a very positive presentation on the work of the Al Amana Centre in promoting Muslim-Christian interfaith dialogue, and his experiences there, stating that "I am grateful that this exhibition will contribute to the people of Grand Rapids' perceptions of Oman and the wider world of Islam."



Exhibition visitors

ICC , Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

November 11 through November 15, 2014

The Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sports and the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs collaborated with the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman in Brunei Darussalam to organise Omani Cultural Days in November 2014 to mark 30 years of diplomatic ties between the two nations.

Leading the 39 members of the Omani delegation was Dr Abdullah bin Nasser Al-Harasi, Chairman of Oman's Public Authority of Radio and Television. The delegation also included Hamad Hilal Al-Mamari, Undersecretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture; Abdallah Zahar Al-Adawi, Director of the Office of the Public Chairman of the Public Authority for Radio and Television; Darwish Said Al-Hamadani, Director of Finance Department, Ministry of Heritage and Culture; Yousof Ibrahim Al-Bulushi, General Director of Organizations and Cultural Relations; Dr Hussain Hamood Al-Abri, as well as administrators and representatives of the media and artists and exhibitors.

During the event, exhibitions were held to showcase the Omani culture and heritage including "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's message of Islam," photography, Arabic calligraphy and print materials.



The audience of the opening ceremony.



Pehin Orang Kaya Pekerma Laila Diraja Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Hazair bin Haji Abdullah, Minister of Culture, Youth and Sports, reviewing the exhibits.



Islamic Foundation Markfield, Leicestershire, UK

November 03 through November 10, 2014

The Mayor of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Councillor Jeffrey Bannister, opened the exhibition at The Islamic Foundation in Markfield on Tuesday, November 4th, 2014. Entitled "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam," the exhibition was held in recognition of the UN International Day of Tolerance and showcased the diverse range of religious beliefs held in the Muslim-majority Oman.

Farooq Murad, Director of the Islamic Foundation said that the theme of the exhibition fits in perfectly with the work of the Islamic Foundation over the last 40 years. Batool Al-Toma of the New Muslims Project highlighted humanity's need to create a community and how the very essence of this community can be seen in Oman through the freedom of spiritual expression.

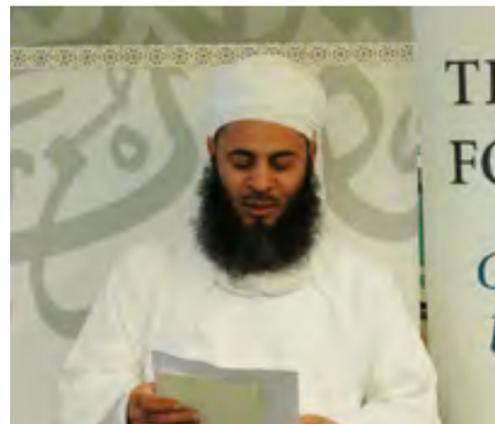
It was the first visit for the Mayor and his consort, Mayoress Mrs. Tricia Bannister to the Foundation, and the Mayor commented that it is "an asset not just to the Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth, not just to England or the United Kingdom, but it is a fantastic asset for the rest of the world."

Dr. Abdullah Al-Mamari from the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in Oman travelled to the UK to be at the opening of the exhibition. He shared a brief history of Islam in Oman and the importance of religious coexistence within the country, and thanked the Islamic Foundation for hosting the exhibition. Dr. Abdullah said in his address: "There is nothing better than to spread messages of peace and goodwill to all people. It is our strong belief that peace and stability only can be realised today in any society through dialogue and understanding."

The Islamic Foundation, established in 1973, is a unique and pioneering institution specializing in the fields of research, education and publication. Since its inception the Islamic Foundation has striven towards building bridges between the Muslim community and the rest of society by creating a better understanding between communities through greater awareness about each other.



Councillor Jeffrey Bannister and Dr. Abdullah Al-Mamari



Korea Foundation Cultural Center, Seoul, South Korea

November 04 through December 06, 2014

The exhibition at Korea Foundation Cultural Center was sponsored by the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to Korea, and hosted by the Korea Foundation.

With the sponsorship of the Embassy of Omani, the exhibition was greatly enhanced to include original artworks, photography, paintings, manuscripts and facsimile prints, shadow art, model dhow boats, the Omani dagger (khanjar) and coffee service, symbolic of Arab hospitality, and panels borrowed from the touring exhibition "Modern Oman." Videos on "Religious Tolerance in Oman" and the history of Oman, depicted visually through sand art, were also presented.

At the opening ceremony on November 4th there were more than 150 distinguished guests and visitors in attendance, including government representatives from China, Colombia, Georgia, Germany, Turkey and Ukraine, important figures from academia and the media, and religious leaders of various denominations.

On behalf of the Korea Foundation, the President, Dr. Hyun-Seok Yu; the Executive Vice President, Zeon Nam Jin, and the Director of the KF Cultural Center, Choi Hyun-soo offered opening remarks, along with HE Lee Kyung Soo, the Deputy Minister for Political Affairs, from Korea's Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Sultanate of Oman was represented by HE Ambassador Mohamed Al-Harthy, and the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs by Mohammed Said Al-Mamari.



Exhibition visitors

UNESCO at Patan Museum, Kathmandu, Nepal

November 12 through November 17, 2014

On the occasion of the International Day of Tolerance, the UNESCO Office in Kathmandu, in close cooperation with the National Muslim Commission and the Nepal Chapter – South Asia Coordinating Council of the International Association for Religious Freedom, hosted the educational exhibition “Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman’s Message of Islam.” The exhibition was launched on November 12, 2014 at 4.30 pm at the Patan Museum in Lalitpur.

Speakers at the opening ceremony were Mr. Christian Manhart, UNESCO Representative to Nepal; Mr. Purna Chandra Bhattarai, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development; Mr. Sushil Kumar Pandey, Deputy Secretary General, Nepal national Commission for UNESCO; Mr. Satya Mohan Joshi, Eminent Cultural Expert and Chief Guest of the Event; and Mr. Mohammad Nirdosh Ali, Chairperson, National Muslim Commission.



Exhibition visitors

In his speech Mr. Christian Manhart, UNESCO Representative to Nepal, emphasized:

“The exhibition aims at promoting interfaith dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful co-existence. It promotes dialogue as a tool for reconciliation of cultural, social and ethnic differences by making aware of similarities instead of marking and looking into distinction and differences.”

Mr. Mohammad Nirdosh Ali, Chairperson, National Muslim Commission said:

“The exhibition is an initiative to spread the message of Oman; an Omani initiative, sharing the development process of Oman, including the situation of women in Oman, is commendable.

“This exhibition conveys the message of peace. The exhibition is the medium to give information on Islam, what Islam is doing for peace and development, and how other countries can learn from Islam.

“It is very interesting to learn about the culture, civilization and overall development process of Oman. As Oman is organizing the exhibition in various parts of the world, it has helped to spread the message of peace and development around the world.”



HE Ismail Saleh Al-Aghbari at the opening ceremony

Suffolk County Council, Ipswich, UK

November 17 through November 21, 2014

Suffolk Inter-Faith Resource (SIFRE) was pleased to be able to arrange for a visit of the exhibition to Suffolk as part of its activity for National Inter-Faith Week 2014 in the Atrium at Suffolk County Council's headquarters in Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich.

It was opened on Monday November 17th at 12:00, with gratitude expressed by Dr. Abdullah Said Al-Mamari representing Oman's Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. Attending the opening ceremony were Councillor Christopher Hudson, Chairman of Suffolk County Council; Councillor Rebecca Hopfensperger, Cabinet Member responsible for Equalities and Inclusion; and Professor Nabil Sultan, of the University Campus Suffolk. Representatives of Ipswich Borough Council and of the Suffolk Faith Communities were also present.

At the opening David Capey, SIFRE Executive Officer said, "We at SIFRE are delighted to be able to facilitate this exhibition in Suffolk. The openhearted ethos of Oman towards all religions and to the followers of those religions resonates with our aspirations for the society we live in. At a time when 'Islamists' are viewed as harsh, cruel and inflexible, it is good to be reminded that Islam is a Way of Tolerance, Coexistence and Understanding."

Councillor Hopfensperger said: "Suffolk County Council is delighted to be working with SIFRE to bring this international exhibition to Endeavour House, Ipswich. Visitors to the exhibition will have an opportunity to learn more about the principles of religious tolerance in Oman. Inter-Faith Week provides an opportunity for people with different beliefs to come together to build greater understanding. I hope that people will take the opportunity to visit the exhibition while it is in Suffolk."

During the week it was on display in Ipswich, the exhibition was seen by many County Council staff and by parties of Ipswich schoolchildren who visited the exhibition. SIFRE created a quiz based around the exhibition to enhance the experience of the children.



Exhibition visitors

West Suffolk College, Bury St. Edmunds, UK

November 24 through November 28, 2014

Suffolk Inter Faith Resource (SIFRE) had been given the opportunity to display the exhibition in Suffolk due to their background in inter-faith dialogue. The exhibition was on display in the Atrium in Endeavour House, Russell Road, Ipswich during Inter-Faith Week, 17th to 21st November, before moving to The Gateway at West Suffolk College in Bury St. Edmunds where it was displayed from 24th to 28th November.

It was opened on Monday by Councillor Patrick Chung, Deputy Mayor of Bury St. Edmunds; and Steve Steeds, Director of Higher Education at West Suffolk College. It was attended by Suffolk County councillors, Bury St. Edmunds Borough councillors and by members of the West Suffolk College Senior Management Team.

While in Bury the exhibition was seen by staff, members of the college and by visiting parties of Bury St. Edmunds school children throughout the week. Doctors from the local hospital visited as well as members of the general public. Some visitors who had lived in Oman or been there on holiday spoke enthusiastically about their own experiences of the country.



Exhibition visitors

Oman Solidarity Symposium, Washington DC, USA

December 03, 2014

'Oman Solidarity Symposium: Oman in the 21st Century' was held in Washington DC in the presence of Dr. Abdulmunem bin Mansour Al-Hassani, Minister of Information.

The first panel session covered topics on History and Heritage and the speakers were Dr. Valerie Hoffman, Dr. Mark Kenoyer and Professor William Zimmerle. The second session on Geopolitics included panelists Dr. Linda Funch, Dr. Abdullah Baabood and Dr. Kenneth Katzman while the third session on economic development included Dr. Suliaman Wasty, Dr. Al Mukhtar Al-Abri and Dr. Allen Fromherz.

Parallel to the symposium the exhibitions "Tolerance, Understanding and Coexistence" and "Modern Oman" were presented to the dignitaries to get a deeper view into Omani culture and society.



Distributing materials of #ActForTolerance

ZEF, University Bonn, Germany

December 17, 2014 through January 15, 2015

The Center for Development Research (ZEF) is an international and trans-disciplinary scientific research institute at the University of Bonn, Germany. The University of Bonn (founded in 1818) is a public research university with a total of 525 professors and 31,000 students, and is today one of the leading universities in Germany.

The ZEF has three research departments: Political and Cultural Change; Economic and Technological Change; Ecology and Natural Resources Management. With its international doctoral program, ZEF aims to educate a new generation of academics as well as decision-makers for national and international policy and research organizations. Its international and interdisciplinary set-up as well as its size make this program unique in Germany and Europe.

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was on display at ZEF from December 17, 2014 through January 15, 2015. The opening took place at the "Alternative Wednesdays" event with the screening of the film titled "Religious Tolerance in Oman" on December 17, 2014. The event was attended by the head of the Omani diplomatic mission in Berlin, Mr. Hamood Al Rumhi, approximately 50 academics and scholars from ZEF, as well as members of the general public with an interest in Oman.

The event was well received by the viewers who, following the film screening, enjoyed Omani coffee and halwa and engaged in a lively discussion.



Exhibition visitors

Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace) Museum, Milan, Italy

February 4 through February 22, 2015

The exhibition "Religious Tolerance, Mutual Understanding, Peaceful Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" opened on Wednesday, February 4, 2015 in the world-famous Palazzo Reale (Royal Palace) Museum, in Milan, Italy.

The opening ceremony was attended by more than 200 members of the general public from all walks of life, government officials, diplomats and the press corps.

In response to Mayor Giuliano Pisapia's invitation, Oman's Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs provided the information panels, photographs, manuscripts, calligraphy and other art works, which were on display and open to the general public in the nine rooms of the "Prince's Apartment" until February 22, 2015.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, Deputy Mayor Ada Lucia de Cesaris welcomed the exhibition and offered the hospitality of the city to the Omani delegation.

The director of the museum, Dr. Dominico Piraina, informed the guests that for the past 70 years the Palazzo Reale has been promoting knowledge of cultures, even beyond Europe. "Because its doors are open to the world, the Palazzo Reale has dedicated its resources also to Arab art and culture."



Visitors of the opening event.



In his prepared remarks, the Councillor for Culture, Filippo Del Corno, stated that Milan welcomes this exhibition, especially this year when Milan is hosting the world Expo and "promoting peaceful coexistence between peoples for a better future for our planet."

On behalf of the MARA, Mohammed Al Mamari, Scientific Advisor to the Minister made reference to the 1700-year old Edict of Milan, issued by the Roman emperor Constantine, giving the same rights to all religions throughout the Roman Empire. The Edict of Milan marked the birth of the concept of religious tolerance in the western world, granting freedom of expression to all faiths and religions.

Also in attendance from the city council were Mr. Francesco Cappelli, Councillor for Education, and Pier Francesco Majorino, Councillor for Social Politics. About 7000 people from all over the world visited the exhibition during the three weeks it was presented in the museum.



The first presentation of a multimedia terminal

Museum for Communication, Berlin, Germany

March 05 through March 29, 2015

An extraordinary Oman exhibition took place in the Berlin Museum for Communication under the title "Greetings from Oman." The event was arranged and organized by the German-Omani Association in cooperation with the Omani Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and the Omani Embassy at Berlin.

The exhibition showcased Omani culture, religion, history, society and for the first time ever rare pieces of Oman philately. The exhibits included also valuable silver jewelry, Omani khanjars, cloth, ancient trading goods and a model of a dhow, a typical Omani sailing ship.

The opening ceremony on March 5th was attended by more than 400 representatives of politics, society and tourism, and HE Ahmed Al-Mahrizi, Omans Minister of Tourism. The German Post issued a special postage stamp for the exhibition distributed at the location itself.

Words of welcome were spoken to the audience by Mrs Liselotte Kugler, director of the museum, Mr. Bruno Kaiser, president of the German-Omani Association and Mrs Hind Al-Barwani on behalf of the Embassy of Oman.

The exhibition, held in the oldest museum for communication worldwide, was visited by about 8000 people.



Exhibition visitors

Islamic Civilization Center, Skopje, Macedonia

March 09 through March 19, 2015

The exhibition opened in the Macedonian National Museum in the Macedonian capital Skopje, under the auspices of Dr Zoran Ilievski, political advisor to the President of the Republic of Macedonia.

Sheikh Benyamin Idris, head of the Islamic Civilization Center in the Republic of Macedonia, expressed his thanks to the Sultanate for conducting this exhibition in collaboration with the Islamic Civilisation Center in Macedonia, emphasizing the role of these activities in reminding the humanity of the importance of coexistence, understanding and tolerance.

Among the main activities of the exhibition, Professor Fred Mouhic presented a paper on the Philosophical Vision on the East and West.

The exhibition included 48 panels that were on display in Macedonian and Albanian and 20 pictures by Omani photographers about life in Oman, paintings and calligraphies, in addition to showcasing some of the Omani artifacts and features of life in the Sultanate in the past and present.

An Omani Book Corner was set up on the sidelines of the exhibition. The books focus on civilizational communication, deepening of common understanding of human values, including *al Tafahum* (Understanding) magazine issued by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.



Sheikh Benyamin Idris, head of the Islamic civilisation Center

Multiculture Museum, Seoul, South Korea

March 16 through April 30, 2015

The exhibition on "Oman's Message of Islam" at the Multiculture Museum was hosted by the Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Korea.

The opening ceremony was attended by Mr. Woo-Young Kim, Chief of Eunpyeong-gu Office, Mr Chang-ik Jang, Chairman of Eunpyeong-gu Council, Mr Yuntae Kim, Director of the Multiculture Museum, Mr Seung-oh Choi, Korea Arab Secretary General and HE Mohamed Al-Harthy, Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman to Korea. The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs was represented by Sheikh Salim Al-Rawas.

Among the guests were representatives from diplomatic missions, government, universities, cultural associations and religious associations, including the Islamic Center of Korea.

About 5,500 people visited the exhibition at the museum, mostly students and civic society.



Tirana International Hotel, Albania

April 29 through May 12, 2015

The exhibition "Oman's Message of Islam" has reached the Republic of Albania in collaboration with The Almasar Albanian Institution and in coordination with the religious affairs committee of the presidency of the republic. The opening ceremony was held in Albania's capital city, Tirana, at the Tirana International Hotel in the presence of a number of diplomats from Arab and foreign countries; the heads of universities and colleges; representatives of various religions and religious and cultural centers; journalists; and a large number of interested people.

The opening ceremony began with welcome words from Ilir Ho Julie, the chairman of the religions committee of the presidency of the Albanian Government. He said: "This exhibition is highlighting the heavenly message in all societies and we here in Albania have various religions living in peace, and tolerance." He added: "We hope for more cooperation between the two sides in the future."

Sheikh Mehdi Gora, the president of the Association also gave a speech, stating: "We thank the government and people for the opportunity to organize this exhibition, which highlights religious and cultural life in Oman." He hoped that the exhibition succeeds in strengthening the bilateral relations between Albania and Oman.

In the exhibition, Mr. Salah bin Juma Al-Shukairi gave a presentation on the beauty of calligraphy, and showed the audience his expertise and skill in calligraphy. The artist Ramlah bint Salim Albulushi also offered a presentation about calligraphy. The audience also had the opportunity to have their names written in Arabic. They were the first Omani artists to give presentations in Albania.



The youth of Tirana joining the #ActForTolerance initiative

Citizens Park, Busan, Korea

June 02 through June 15, 2015

The exhibition "Oman's Message of Islam" was opened by the Head of International Affairs of the Busan Municipality in the presence of Mohammed bin Salim Al-Harthy, the Sultanate's Ambassador to Korea.

During the opening ceremony, the Sultanate's ambassador delivered a speech during which he stressed the Sultanate's interest in disseminating the culture of security and peace among various world nations.

In turn, the Head of the Arabic Language Department at Busan University gave a speech in which he stressed the importance of the exhibition in familiarizing the Korean people with the Sultanate's efforts in disseminating culture of tolerance, understanding and coexistence.

Meanwhile, the Sultanate's delegation visited Busan University of Foreign Studies, during which they met with President of the university. The Sultanate's delegation distributed a number of Omani books in the library of the university as a reference for the students and researchers.



Ambassador Mohammed Al-Harthy explaining the exhibits to the guests.

Nights of Ramadan, Lyon, France

June 19 through July 15, 2015

For the second time the Muslim community of Lyon arranged "Nights of Ramadan" at the fairgrounds of the city. The program consisted of concerts, exhibitions, panel discussions and lectures. The activities were open to all citizens of Lyon regardless of their faith, to meet and to learn about Islamic culture and traditions.

To broaden the knowledge about the diversity of Islam, the organizers requested to show Oman's exhibition about Islam and life in Oman. The "Nights of Ramadan" were officially opened by Mohammed Said Al-Mamari with a speech about tolerance and the peaceful coexistence of faiths.

More than 20,000 people participated in the activities during the "Nights of Ramadan."



Exhibition visitors

Omani Cultural Days, Sao Paulo, Brazil

July 28 through August 09, 2015

The official opening ceremony of the Omani Cultural Days in Brazil was held at Sergio Cardoso Theater in Sao Paulo under the auspices of Fernando Capez, President of Sao Paulo State Parliament, in the presence of HH Sayyid Fatik bin Fahr Al-Said, Secretary-General of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

Dr Khalid bin Said Al-Jaradi, Sultanate's Ambassador to the Federal Republic of Brazil delivered a speech at the beginning of the ceremony in which he said that there is a direct relation between the Brazilian diverse culture and the Omani, Arab and Islamic culture. He explained activities of the Omani Cultural Days in Brazil will promote cooperation, mutual understanding and the development of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Sheikh Hamad bin Hilal Al-Maamari, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Heritage and Culture for Cultural Affairs said that based on the importance attached by the Government of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos to enhance communication with all countries of the world, the Ministry is keen to extend bridges of cultural cooperation to support all components of the cultural and intellectual capabilities.

Fernando Capez, President of Sao Paulo State Parliament delivered a speech in which he thanked the Sultanate, represented by the Omani delegation to organise the Omani Cultural Days in Brazil, specifically in Sao Paulo city, which has large Arab communities. He stressed the importance of such cultural events to introduce the various principles and foundations, which undoubtedly contribute in promoting a culture of communication and achievement of world peace, harmony and dialogue.

Jose Roberto Sadiq, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Culture of Sao Paulo said that the Omani Cultural Days in Sao Paulo, one of Brazil's largest cities, will contribute in introducing the Omani cultural and civilizational heritage and strengthening the bilateral relations between the two countries. He pointed to the importance of cultural communication between the peoples of the world.

Omani Al Majd Glory Group presented a variety of performances, titled "Oman: Heart of Peace" that were highly appreciated by the audience. The performances were interspersed by Omani fashion shows that reflect the different fashion in the Sultanate of Oman.

The Omani Cultural Days in Brazil were organised by the Ministry of Heritage and Culture in collaboration with the Ministry of Information, the Ministry of Awqaf, the Ministry of Tourism, the Foreign Ministry, the Public Authority for Radio and Television (PART), the Public Authority for Craft Industries (PACI), the National Records and Archives Authority (NRAA), Sultan Qaboos University (SQU), Omani Society for Fine Arts (OSFA), Omani Photographic Society and Oman Establishment for Press Publication and Advertising.

UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

October 07 through October 14, 2015

The exhibition at the headquarters of UNESCO was organized by the Ministry of Religious Endowments and Religious Affairs in cooperation with the permanent delegation of Oman to UNESCO and the Sultanate's embassy in Paris.

The opening ceremony was held in the presence of a number of prominent personages of UNESCO. Among them was H.E. Mr Mohamed Sameh Amr, Chairman of the Executive Board of UNESCO and Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Arab Republic of Egypt to UNESCO; Her Excellency Dr. Samira Bint Mohammed Moosa, the Sultanate's Ambassador to the UNESCO; and Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences on behalf of and as representative of Irina Bokova, the UNESCO General Director. Also in attendance were a number of ambassadors, heads of religious centres and Arab communities, academicians, and a large number of guests from French society.

Her Excellency Dr. Samira Bint Mohammed Moosa welcomed those attending this event, referring to the Sultanate's efforts and responsibility regarding spreading tolerance and avoiding violence. She asserted that: "In 1995 UNESCO member states including Oman collectively pledged their responsibility to promote tolerance and non-violence worldwide." Tolerance is one of the principles of humanity that plays a major role in achieving unity, solidarity, and cohesion among nations, thus



Her Excellency Dr. Samira Bint Mohammed Moosa, the Sultanate's Ambassador to the UNESCO

reducing conflicts between individuals and groups. "Tolerance also means respecting the culture and ideology of others, which is a fundamental pillar of human rights, justice and freedom." She said further: "Encouraging peaceful dialogue and celebrating differences are indispensable in dignifying the human being. Our diversity and pluralism represent an unestimated wealth that ought to be cultivated, through the deepening of our knowledge of one another, the broadening of our visions and mindsets, and the nurturing of our exchanges and interactions. These values complete and feed into each other and they are the ideals by which the Sultanate of Oman stands, representing the path towards peace: by putting tolerance and respect as core values of our societies, and by focusing not only on what unites us, but also on what makes us unique." She emphasized that "Through its protective laws and inclusive socio-cultural practices, Oman actively pursues tolerance and non-violence." The Basic Law in Oman prohibits discrimination against individuals on the basis of religion or religious identity and provides for the freedom to practice religious rites so long as doing so does not disrupt public order."

H. E. Mr Mohamed Sameh Amr, Chairperson of the Executive Board of UNESCO and Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of the Arab Republic of Egypt to UNESCO, made a speech in which he expressed the welcome and pride of the UNESCO executive board for sponsoring this important event. He said: "Exhibits like this one help to shed light on the diversity of the world's peoples. It helps to learn just a little bit more about the cultures of The Other, thus progressively moving all towards a rapprochement of cultures." He added: "The inter-connected themes of 'tolerance,' 'understanding,' and 'coexistence' are the building blocks of a true culture of peace, based on a commitment to the universal principles of human dignity and mutual solidarity. This exhibit is an international project that is being shown for the first time here at UNESCO headquarters, and we are



Exhibition visitors

Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO, emphasized:

"The theme and focus of this exhibition reflect the long-standing Omani traditions of pluralism and the commitment to an enriching coexistence between peoples and cultures. It is a timely reminder of the need to embrace cultural diversity, which also encompasses religious diversity.

"These are very challenging times. We witness the use of cultural and religious diversity as an instrument of division. We see systematic persecution of people on ethnic and religious grounds. We see intentional destruction of irreplaceable landmarks and a systematic and methodical vandalism of ancient sites. This 'cultural cleansing' — as the Director-General of UNESCO, Ms Irina Bokova refers to it — also destroys what is fundamental to peoples' lives and constitutes their identity. In this sense, these violent acts are attacks against our common humanity and the values that bind us together as a single human family.

"This calls on us — with urgency — to find innovative, more impactful and more significant ways to build peace. More than ever, it is time to protect and preserve the progress achieved during the last decades and build new and stronger bridges for dialogue and togetherness. By using the arts and new technologies, this exhibition recognizes diversity as a source of strength, creativity and innovation for all societies.

"This resonates strongly with our mandate to lead the International Decade for the Rapprochement of Cultures (2013-2022), and UNESCO's mission to achieve peaceful coexistence through dialogue and the acquisition of intercultural competences and enhanced 'cultural literacy.' It is crucial that we harness and learn from the best regional and national examples of inclusive outreach. I am sure that this exhibition will nurture our determination to pursue a more peaceful and just world."



truly honored to host such a fine event.’ He continued: “Considering the context of the world we live in today where culture is targeted for aggression by extremists, this exhibition is most timely... It shows Oman’s strong commitment to the protection and preservation not only of the world’s physical heritage, but also of its historical and spiritual heritage as well.”

Mohammed bin Said Al-Mamari, the Scientific Adviser in the Office of the Minister of Awqaf and Religious Affairs and supervisor for the exhibition (Oman’s Message of Islam), spoke on behalf of the Ministry, expressing his thanks for UNESCO in hosting the exhibition. He also gave thanks to the staff of the Sultanate in Paris for their fruitful and effective cooperation. In his speech, Al-Mamari announced: “It is my honor to be here in UNESCO to deliver Oman’s message of religious tolerance, mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence.” He added: “This exhibition has appeared in more than 70 cities in more than 26 countries. Now we have the honour here in UNESCO to deliver Oman’s message of *salam* (Peace).” Al-Mamari said “There is nothing better than to spread messages of goodwill to all people. It is our strong belief that peace and stability only can be realized today in any society through dialogue and understanding. And we sincerely believe that by working together, we can achieve the goals of religious acceptance and peaceful coexistence.”

Mrs. Nada Al-Nashif, Assistant Director-General for Social and Human Sciences at UNESCO expressed her thanks to the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman for sharing this exhibition on ‘tolerance, understanding and coexistence’ with UNESCO and its member states. She added “a special thank you to the Permanent Delegation of Oman for associating the UNESCO Secretariat with this event.”

Omani artists also contributed to the success of the exhibition. The calligraphers and graphic artists Saleh bin Jumaa Al-Shukairi, Anwar bint Khalifa Al-Husainia, and Samah Bint Said Bin Saif Al-Numaniya appreciated this opportunity to showcase their talents and artistic innovations in support of this initiative of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs.

Parliament of the World’s Religions, Salt Lake City, Utah, USA

October 15 through October 19, 2015

The touring exhibition “Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman’s Message of Islam,” sponsored by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, was also on display at the conference of the Parliament of the World’s Religions, held in Salt Lake City, Utah in the USA.

The Parliament of the World’s Religions is a convocation of people of spirit and faith from around the world; at this conference more than 10,000 people from over 80 countries and 50 different religious and spiritual traditions came together to share, learn, network, and celebrate. It was first held in 1893, re-established in 1993 in Chicago. Since then it has been held in Capetown, South Africa 1999; Barcelona, Spain in 2004; and Melbourne, Australia in 2009.

Parliament Board Chair, Imam Abdul Malik Mujahid reminded that “Faith brings out the best in us, and interfaith brings out the best of our faiths.”

Oman’s exhibition was on display in the Cultural Hall, visited by thousands of people daily, who learned about the modern-day Sultanate and about Oman’s millennia of experience in trade and cultural exchange, widespread acceptance of religious diversity, and rich seafaring history.

On Monday, October 19, 2015, a paper entitled “Preventing Violent Extremism: Inter-Religious Coexistence in Oman” was presented by Rev. Douglas Leonard, Director of the Al Amana Centre, a centre for interfaith engagement in Muscat.



Exhibition visitors

Waikato University, Hamilton, New Zealand

November 02 through November 30, 2015

The touring exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam," sponsored by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, opened today at the Waikato University in Hamilton, New Zealand.

The Religious Studies Department of the Waikato University is hosting a series of events in conjunction with the UN's International Day of Tolerance on November 16, including a conference on Muslim-Christian relations intended "to seek a better understanding of one another."

Dr Douglas Pratt, Professor of Religious Studies, welcomed the students and faculty and commended the government of Oman for supporting this initiative. The Reverend Andrew McKean said he was happy to host this exhibition in his chapel which is an ecumenical centre "across the whole household of Abrahamic religions."

Iranian PhD candidate Mortaza Shams, speaking in Arabic, welcomed the guests and commended the good relations between peoples. Omani student Jabir Al-Balushi, speaking on behalf of the other Omani students enrolled at Waikato University, gave insights into life in Oman, and is proud that people in Oman can live and share together.

The film "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was shown, followed by a question-and-answer session.

The organizer of the events, Dr Douglas Pratt PhD, DTheol, is Professor of Religious Studies; Adjunct Professor, Theology & Interreligious Relations, University of Bern, Switzerland; Academic Advisor, Waikato Islamic Studies Group New Zealand Associate, and holds the UNESCO Chair in Interreligious and Intercultural Relations – Asia Pacific.



Exhibition visitors

MOHA Center, Kavala, Greece

November 03 through November 30, 2015

Mohammed Ali Research Center (MOHA) under the auspices of the Greek Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs and the Hellenic National Commission for UNESCO, hosted the exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" in the "Imaret," an unique monument of significant Islamic architectural character in Kavala.

The opening ceremony on 7th November was joined by Mohammed Al-Mamari, representative of the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Oman, representatives of the local authorities as well as of the Greek Orthodox Church. Among the guests were representatives of the Greek academic community, scholars and students.

The exhibition in the Imaret was presented until the end of November and it was supported by a series of interactive educational programs based on the intercultural stories of the Omani "Sinbad the Sailor."

MOHA Center was founded in 2006 in Kavala, the birthplace of Mohammed Ali Pasha of Egypt, and at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East. The Mohammed Ali Research Center is a Greek, private, non-profit, non-governmental research center supervised by the General Secretariat for Research and Technology (GSRT) of the Greek Ministry of Culture, Education and Religious Affairs.

Housed in the only surviving integral *imaret* existing in the world and the only historic Islamic monument in Europe that belongs to an Arab country, MOHA aims at exploring and researching the achievements of Muslim culture and civilization before the dawn of modernity and its impact on today's world.



UNESCO Headquarters, Paris, France

November 09, 2015

During the 38th General Conference of UNESCO in Paris, the Permanent Delegation of the Sultanate to UNESCO held a reception on the occasion of Oman's 45th National Day under the auspices of Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed Al Shaybaniyah, Minister of Education, in the presence of Irina Bokova, UNESCO Director-General, and HE Dr Samira bint Mohamed al Moosa, Sultanate's Permanent Delegate to UNESCO.

Director-General Bokova praised the efforts of the Sultanate for its policies promoting education, science and culture, along with its continuous support of the international organization contributing to its ability to play its required role.

Dr. Al Moosa stated that the Sultanate has always held the culture of peace and sustainable development among its most important goals. She also extolled the efforts of HM Sultan Qaboos to establish peace and harmony at home, making Oman an example of stability and progress. She explained further that Oman's policies, based on mutual and peaceful respect within cultures while preserving Omani traditions, enable it to play a role facilitating dialogue and seeking diplomatic solutions to problems among the various areas of the world where there is conflict.

The emblem of the exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's message of Islam" was presented to UNESCO in the form of a glass sculpture. It symbolizes the diversity of religions and cultures in the world, and is symbolic of the Sultanate's project promoting tolerance, mutual understanding, and peace among peoples.



HE Dr Madeeha bint Ahmed al Shaibaniyah handing over the emblem sculpture to Irina Bukova



Calligrapher Saleh Al-Shukhairy presenting calligraphy to the delegates of the General Conference of UNESCO



Sand artist Shaimah Al-Mughairy performing her art for the delegates of the General Conference of UNESCO

Museum of World Religions, Taipeh, Taiwan

December 01 through December 31, 2015

The Museum of World Religions is the first museum solely dedicated to promoting knowledge and understanding of the world's major religions. Combining the beauty of art and culture, as well as the insights of academic religious studies, the Museum has been the subject of considerable international acclaim.

Since its opening, the Museum has continued to host interfaith dialogues and exchanges in order to increase mutual understanding and friendly interaction amongst various religions. Its collections, exhibitions, programs, research, and publications have developed into an invaluable resource for educational institutes at all levels. The museum resized all panels of the exhibiton to big scale for display on full wall and arranged visits to the exhibition conjoined with workshops for various student groups.

The exhibition was visited by by an Omani delegation led by HH Mohamed bin Salim Al-Said. He was joined by James Wei, director of the Taipeh Economic and Cultural Office in Muscat and Mohammed Al-Mamari, director of the project.



Mohammed Al-Mamari receiving a gift



Lisa Shih, supervisor and CEO office, Panning Division presenting the exhibition to the Omani delegation.



Lisa Shih, supervisor and CEO office, Panning Division of the Museum of World Religions

National Library, Singapore

December 07 through December 31, 2015

The exhibition at the Singapore National Library was organised by the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, in cooperation with the Consulate General of Oman to the Republic of Singapore.

Dr Yaacob bin Ibrahim, Minister of Communications and Information of Singapore, patronised the opening ceremony of the exhibition.

He expressed his pleasure for the opening of the exhibition, saying: "I visited the Sultanate of Oman several times, and this exhibition highlights the aspects of life in Oman and appreciation of its people to the values of diversity and tolerance that they have both locally and globally."

Sheikh Zakaria bin Hamad al Saadi, Consul General of Oman to the Republic of Singapore, said that the exhibition carries the important message of the Sultanate, explaining that the world needs today to promote values of tolerance and coexistence among nations and religions. He added that the exhibition holds a rich importance that has particular impression in the Republic of Singapore where all religions and religious communities coexist in harmony.



Mohammed Al-Mamari giving the opening speech

National Cultural History Museum, Pretoria, South Africa

February 01 through February 06, 2016

The Message of Islam exhibition opened in Pretoria, the political capital of South Africa, under the auspices of Semane Molotlegi, Queen Mother of the Royal Bafokeng.

Semane said, this exhibition comes at the right time. Oman is a country of tolerance and is constantly pushing for dialogue to resolve problems between the countries. HE Mubarak Bin Salim Al Zakawani, Sultanate's Ambassador to South Africa, praised the relations. He said this exhibition carries important implications about the culture of tolerance and dialogue.

The National Cultural History Museum explores South Africa's cultural diversity in various permanent and temporary exhibitions. Exhibitions include rock paintings and engravings of the San people; thousand year old Iron Age figurines from Schroda in the Limpopo Province (described as "the best known artifacts indicating ritual behaviour in the Early Iron Age"); the Art Gallery presents an overview of South African culture through time, using cultural objects, crafts, sculpture and paintings and an exhibition on Marabastad is a true example of a cosmopolitan and fully integrated rainbow nation before apartheid.



Mohammed Al-Mamari with Semane Molotlegi, Queen Mother of the Royal Bafokeng and other dignities

Maritime Experiential Museum, Singapore

February 01 through February 29, 2016

The Maritime Experiential Museum and Aquarium is Singapore's first maritime museum and what makes it distinctive from other museums is that it boasts a themed environment along with a variety of complementary exhibits. It brings to life the Maritime Silk Road via life-sized replicas of historic ships, shipwreck artefacts, interactive exhibits and educational programs for everyone.

One of the main attractions in the Experiential Maritime Museum is the "Jewel of Muscat," a replica of an Omani dhow from the 9th century AD that was found in 1998 off the coast of the Indonesian island of Belitung.

It was reconstructed in Muscat using old templates and techniques. The 18-meter long hull was assembled without a single nail, as was usual at that time. The planks were sewn together with coconut fibers, as per ancient traditions, and joined precisely together. The hull was sealed with a mixture of goat fat and glue. Once finished, it set sail to Singapore. The journey from Muscat to Singapore was successfully undertaken from February to July 2010 under the Omani captain Saleh Said Al Jabri. He sailed the ship using navigational techniques of the 9th century.

Presented in this context, the exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" opened a view on Omani society to the visitors of the museum.



Exhibits on display



The Jewel of Muscat on display in the museum.



The Jewel of Muscat on display in the museum.

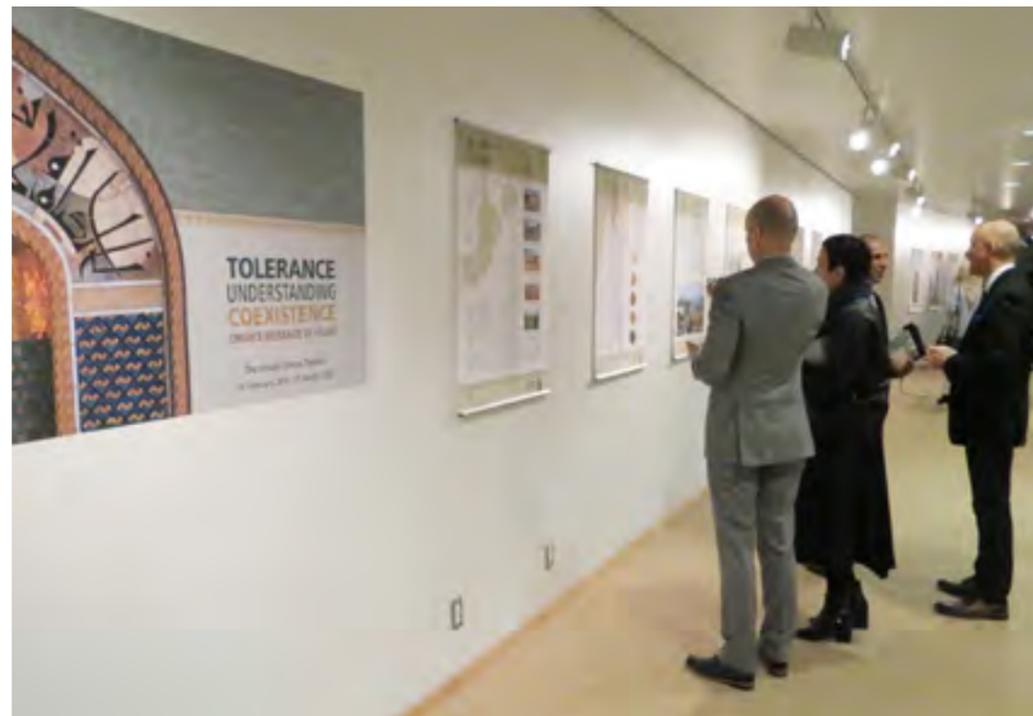
Ismaili Center of Toronto, Canada

February 20 through March 31, 2016

The Ismaili Center of Toronto is hosted by the Institute of Islamic Studies of the University of Toronto and the Aga Khan Council for Canada. Through programs ranging from lectures, seminars and exhibitions, to cultural and social events, the Ismaili Centres of the Aga Khan Development Network are bridges of friendship and understanding, and serve to enhance relationships among faith communities, government and civil society. In these days of religious extremism and international strife, a reminder is needed that Islam is not a monolith, that peace and prosperity can still be found in the Middle East, and that mutual understanding helps promote peaceful coexistence.

The 4-hour evening program was comprised of a viewing of the exhibition, followed by opening remarks, short presentations by Islamic and Ibadhi scholars, and a question-and-answer session. The event was attended by more than 260 people, among them Members of Parliament and other high-ranking Canadian government officials, religious leaders, university officials and students, members of the Ismaili community, Omani citizens living in Canada, and representatives from the diplomatic corps of Qatar, the UAE, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Karima Karmali, Vice President of the Aga Khan Council for Canada: "By seeing everyday life in Oman in this way, we see that there is no dichotomy between Islam and modernity, nor any



Visitors of the exhibition.



About 260 dignitaries of Canadian society joined the opening reception at Toronto.

conflict between Islamic values and the ethical and moral underpinnings of other religions. In Oman we find ... numerous examples ... where tolerance and respect of, and for, others is a way of life; where inclusiveness and representation of those of different backgrounds ... are considered cornerstones of good governance; and where intellectuals pursuits are supported instead of suppressed. But these aren't the stories we hear or the pictures we see in the news today... In today's increasingly fragmented world, where gaps in understanding between people seem to be widening, and where campaigns of fear and intolerance – particularly in respect to Muslims – seem to be more commonplace, providing these windows into contemporary Islamic communities is essential."

... "The diversity and plurality within Islam which is highlighted by this exhibition is important, in that it helps contribute to a better and more informed understanding of Islam and Muslims. Too often, we find that Muslims are depicted as a monolithic or homogeneous group who share a singular interpretation of the faith. ... Therefore we applaud the work of the Omani government for making this excellent exhibition available to institutions around the world, and serving as a messenger of Islam, at a time when examples of tolerance, understanding and coexistence are needed more than ever before."

Dr. Ahmed Al Saeedi – Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of the Sultanate of Oman, Washington DC: "I am honored and privileged to stand before you tonight. ... I would like to express our appreciation for the support shown to this initiative ... and that we now have the honor here in Canada to deliver Oman's message of peace."

Sheherazade Hirji – President, Aga Khan Council for Canada: "... This project sends a profound and encouraging message about the human capacity for cooperative connection. ... "

Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia

July 12 through July 22, 2016

The first exhibition to be hosted in Australia opened on July 12, 2016, in Brisbane on the campus of Griffith University, at the Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue. Visitors were greeted by the aroma of Omani frankincense wafting from terra cotta burners placed at the entrance. In attendance were approx 80-100 visitors, including students, faculty & staff of the university; several police commissioners; representatives of various faith communities; members of the Queensland Omani Society; plus representatives of the Department of Social Services; Middle East Connect; Access; Eid festival; Queensland African Community Council; the Consul of India; and others.

Presiding over the opening ceremony was the director of the Multifaith Centre, Dr Brian Adams, who welcomed the Omani delegation, local dignitaries, students, faculty and staff, and visitors. Speaking on behalf of Griffith University, Pro Vice Chancellor and Head of Campus (Logan) Professor Lesley Chenoweth said that "Griffith has always had a strong commitment to and relationship with Asia, so bringing Oman here is a new and special honor. Griffith has always been committed to making a difference ..."

Representing the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs, Mohammed Al Mamari expressed his gratitude to the university, and to the Omani Society of Queensland, whose members provided



Dr Brian Adams, director of the Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue.



informational materials, brochures, pamphlets, flags, banners, books, etc. Approx 10 students dressed in dishdashas mingled and interacted with the crowd.

In his speech Al Mamari stated "now we have the honor to deliver Oman's message of tolerance; acceptance and peaceful coexistence here, at Griffith, just as we have done in Europe, North & South America, Asia and Africa."

From the website of the Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue:

"Respect through understanding"

The work of the Centre for Interfaith & Cultural Dialogue (ICD) is to foster respect for one another through deepening our understanding of one another. The more we understand one another's religious, cultural and philosophical perspectives, values and traditions, the better our ability to work together to strengthen our communities and overcome the challenges facing the world.



Biblioteca Viva al-Andalus, Cordoba, Spain

September 07, 2016 through September 28, 2016

The Biblioteca Viva de al-Andalus (BVA, "Living Library of Andalusia") was created in 2002 by the Fundación Paradigma Córdoba, whose essential purpose is to remember the key role of Cordoba in the 9th to 13th centuries; the cross-fertilization of cultures of the East (Chinese, Indian, Arab and Persian) and West (Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian); and the symbiosis, in Al-Andalus, of the three Abrahamic religions: Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

Due to the big success of the presentation of this exhibition in 2014, the exhibition was shown here again at this venue on request of Dr Maria Jesus Viguera, Cultural Director of the Foundation. This time the exhibition was presented in the context of a conference on historic cultural relations between Oman and Spain (ENCUENTRO CULTURAL OMÁN-ESPAÑA).

The opening session was led by Prof. Dr. Enrique Quesada Moraga, Vice President for Innovation, Transfer and Campus of Excellence of the University of Cordoba, who welcomed the distinguished speakers, guests and visitors. Among the audience were several patrons of the Paradigma Córdoba Foundation, journalists, academics and dignitaries, including the director of the Royal Academy of Sciences and Arts of Cordoba, and the director of the Municipal Museums of Cordoba.

Prof. Dr. Quesada Moraga remarked that it is the responsibility of the University to demonstrate the importance of culture, of the values of religious tolerance, and of collaboration on proposals for dialogue which foster actions leading to peace.

Dr. Viguera described the contents of the 24 panels of the exhibition, and emphasized that these materials convey several messages by demonstrating how various religions coexistence peacefully in the Sultanate of Oman, and that freedom of conscience in the practice of religion is guaranteed by the Basic Law of the State. She also stressed the importance of the exhibition in these times dominated by voices of conflict and confrontation.

Dr. Viguera explained the purpose of the Foundation and the Living Library of Andalusia and introduced each of the members of the speakers' panel with a resumé of their publications and achievements and a short biography. The following lectures were given:

- Hydraulic engineering in al- Andalus and Oman, by Dr. Jose Roldan Cañas , Professor at the University of Cordoba.
- Stories of Omani and Spanish authors, presented by writers of the Literary Association LONG TALE: Raul Avila, Antonio Olmedo and Juan Pérez Cubillo; presentation of Omani authors by Jose Ramirez del Rio, University of Córdoba.
- The Life of Omani Merchant, Scholar, and Author, Ibn Al-Thahabi, from Sohar, who settled in Spain and died in Valencia in 1064, by Dr. Humaid Al-Nofli, member of the National Commission for Education, Culture and Science, Muscat, Oman.



Jerudong International School, Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei

November 29, 2016 through November 30, 2016

The opening ceremony started with the Sultanate's speech delivered by Sheikh Ahmed bin Hashil Al-Maskari, Sultanate's Ambassador to Brunei Darussalam during which he said that the exhibition coincides with the Embassy's celebration of the 46th National Day, and the 32nd anniversary of diplomatic relations between the Sultanate and Brunei Darussalam.

He added that this exhibition, which was organized in more than 100 cities in 30 countries, came at the right time where acts of violence and extremism in certain parts of the world spread, so the need for tolerance, understanding and coexistence have become very urgent.

Dato Seri Setia Awang Haji Abdul Aziz bin Orang Kaya Maharaja Lela Haji Yussof, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Religious Affairs as Co-Chairman of the Executive Committee for the Tolerance, Understanding, and Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam Exhibition in Brunei Darussalam gave a Welcoming Address.

His Honorable Pehin Udana Khatib Dato Paduka Seri Setia Ustaz Haji Awang Badaruddin bin Pen-

garah Dato Paduka Haji Awang Othman, Minister of Religious Affairs in Brunei Darussalam, patronized over the opening ceremony of the exhibition amid official and popular presence that reflects the strong relations between the Sultanate and Brunei Darussalam.

He delivered a speech affirming that Brunei Darussalam is proud to host the exhibition; a platform to spread peace and more bilateral cooperation between the two countries. Thus, the public in Brunei would know about the efforts made by the Sultanate of Oman in spreading the culture of tolerance, understanding and coexistence among peoples across the world.

It also sheds light on the similarities between the Sultanate and Brunei Darussalam in terms of religious culture, and preservation of cultural and traditional values.

Other guests of honour had been His Excellency Dato Paduka Haji Abd. Mokti bin Haji Daud, Deputy Minister of Religious Affairs, and Haji Harun bin Haji Junid, Deputy Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Religious Affairs.

The exhibition was joined by various activities of Omani artists: a Sand Art Show was performed by Shayma Al-Mughairy; religious singer Anwar Al-Asmi did a Nasheed Performance and Saleh Al Shukhayri demonstrated the art of Arab calligraphy to the audience.

Additional to that a lecture presentation was done by Dr. Abdullah Said Khalfan Al-Mamari, Assistant Professor at the College of Sharia Sciences in Muscat and the Brunei Mosque's Youth performed Dikir Sharafil Anam.



YAS Mall, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

November 18, 2016

The Sultanate's Embassy in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) organised an open day at Yas Mall in Abu Dhabi to mark the 46th National Day under the auspices of Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak al Nahyan, Minister of Culture and Knowledge Development.

Yas Mall, the leading destination for shopping, dining and entertainment of Abu Dhabi, paid tribute to Omani heritage in the celebration of the National Day through a series of cultural activities on the 18th of November to delight and engage local communities and tourists from across the region. The event was entitled: Omani Open Day: "Oman and Emirates, the Soul of Friendship and Trustworthiness." Hundreds of Emiratis joined Omanis in celebrating Oman's 46th national day.

Traditional Omani dancers marched into the square beating drums and chanting songs of joy as they commemorated the traditions and bonds shared between the two neighbouring countries. Omani orators paid tribute to the leadership of HM Sultan Qaboos, who 46 years ago set the country on a new trajectory by laying down solid foundations for Oman's prosperous future. Archive photos showing historical meetings between the UAE's rulers and Sultan Qaboos over the decades also served as a visual testament of the long-standing alliance between the two Gulf nations.

The exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's Message of Islam" showcased the tradition of religious coexistence in the Sultanate of Oman and every day life and traditions.

"They are showing the people that Oman and the Emirates are the same – we're all together," said Yasser Al Junaibi, 36, an Emirati who attended the festivities with his Omani friend, Mohammed Al Mukha. "I brought my kids to show them our cultures. We want to be close."

The unity and friendship shared between the two countries was emphasised by the leaders of the UAE. The President, Sheikh Khalifa, sent a cable to Sultan Qaboos congratulating him on the country's anniversary.

Sheikh Nahyan bin Mubarak, Minister of Youth, Culture and Knowledge Development also attended the festivities, touring the various kiosks set up to display and sell Omani sweets, lotions, handicrafts and jewellery.

Emiratis taking part in the celebrations echoed the leadership's devotion to their neighbour.

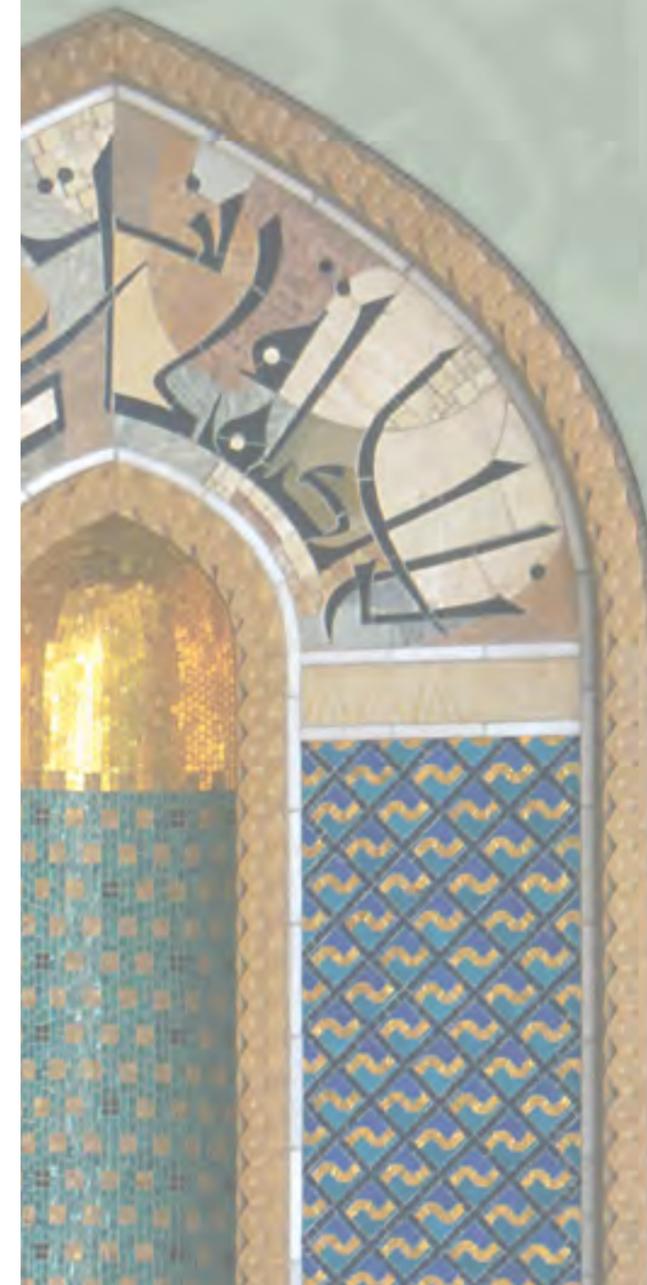
"We're all in the same area in the Gulf, also our culture is similar to their culture and traditions and I feel like they are as our relatives," said Tasneem Al Hashmi, an Emirati volunteer at the Yas Mall celebration that paid tribute to Omani heritage. "This makes our relationship stronger."

Omani musician Fatma Al Blushi said she was honoured to celebrate Oman's national day in the UAE.

Appendix II:

Media Reach

Print Media
Radio and Television
Internet



TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

Media Reach

It is of course impossible to accurately determine the number of people who read or hear about the exhibition via public channels of communication, such as print media, radio, television and Internet.

Based on the circulation statistics of the German media during the first phase of the project, there was a potential audience of nearly three million viewers for the media reports in the two years that the first ten exhibitions were presented.

Extrapolating from this, we can be confident that in the subsequent years, the worldwide media has reported on the exhibition to millions of people.

Media	Date	Circulation/Viewers
Dis.Kurs	Feb 2010	1.500
Abendzeitung München	05.03.10	130.000
HR 2 Kultur Radio	16.04.10	133.000
Rheinpfalz	19.04.10	249.000
Mannheimer Morgen	22.04.10	84.000
City Magazin Ludwigshafen	01.04.10	170.000
Badisches Tagblatt	12.07.10	35.000
Offenburger Tagblatt	12.07.10	25.000
Offenburger Tagblatt	17.07.10	25.000
Ruhr Nachrichten	09.09.10	133.000
Glauben und Leben	12.09.10	60.000
Arab Forum	01.11.10	30.000
Abendzeitung München	24.09.10	117.000
Süddeutsche Zeitung	24.09.10	152.000
München TV	29.09.10	200.000
München TV	30.09.10	300.000
Programm Gasteig	Sep 2010	70.000
Programm Gasteig	Oct 2010	70.000
Frankenpost	15.11.10	63.000
Pro Hof Magazin	11.10.10	15.000
VHS aktuell Hof	Oct 2010	10.000
Frankenpost	08.11.10	63.000
Frankenpost	10.11.10	63.000
Grafschafter Nachrichten	19.01.11	25.000
Grafschafter Wochenblatt	19.01.11	52.000
Wilhelmshavener Zeitung	08.03.11	23.000
VHS Magazin Wilhelmshaven	01.11.11	10.000
EANN Bamberg	01.06.11	5.000
Augsburger Allgemeine	05.07.11	100.000
Abendzeitung München	06.07.11	130.000
Süddeutsche Zeitung	06.07.11	120.000
Augsburger Allgemeine	12.07.11	100.000
Radio/TV Augsburg	15.07.11	220.000
total		2.983.500



Article in "Abendzeitung," March 05,2010, circulation 130.000

Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz“ bundesweit unterwegs

Die Schau zeigt unbekannte Facetten eines modernen Islam.



Kinder des Islam in Oman im Gesicht. Clüßleys Kinder vor einer Moschee.

Von Alex Moll, Solingen

Skaalen, in denen überwiegend Menschen mit islamischer Religionszugehörigkeit leben, haben im Lauf der Jahrhunderte unterschiedliche Entwicklungen und Ausformungen erlebt. In vielen Ländern ist der Islam eine Religion, die sehr weit andere neben sich duldet. Diese eher als „mild“ zu bezeichnende Haltung des Islam ist in den letzten Jahren durch die Medien und die öffentliche Diskussion immer mehr in den Hintergrund gedrängt worden. Gerade das Sultanat Oman ist ein besonderes Beispiel für einen liberalen Umgang mit der Religion. Das Ministerium für religiöse Stiftungen und religionsangelegenheiten des Sultanats Oman hat deshalb eine Ausstellung vorbereitet, die in Deutschland zeigen soll wie ein islamisches, liberales Land organisiert ist.

In der Ausstellung werden auch die Themen angesprochen, die uns christlich geprägte Europäer berühren: das Nebeneinanderbestehen verschiedener Religionsgemeinschaften, der gnädige Islam im Alltag und bei Festen sowie natürlich die Rolle der Frau im Islam. Die Ausstellung will für den Islam werben und genauso für das Sultanat Oman. Sie beruht auf einer tatsächlich im Sultanat Oman gelebten Kultur und Gesellschaft. Die Ausstellung

versucht, uns Europäern darüber hinaus den besonderen Wert des heiligen Buches der Muslime – des Koran – zu vermitteln.

Lange Tradition

Besonders wird die Situation der verschiedenen islamischen Religionsgemeinschaften im Oman angesprochen. Dort stellen die Ibaditen die Bevölkerungsmehrheit und leben gemeinsam mit Sunniten und Schiiten recht reibungslos in einem Land. Der Islam erreichte den Oman schon früh (ca. 610 n. Chr.) also bereits acht Jahre nach der Auswanderung des Propheten Muhammad von Mekka nach Medina und damit dem Beginn der islamischen Zeitrechnung. Die Ibaditische Religionsgemeinschaft zeichnet sich durch einen gewissen Purismus aus, der beispielsweise in der vergleichsweise schlichten Bauweise der Moscheen zum Tragen kommt. Damit ist aber weder eine Verschiebungspflicht für Frauen verbunden noch der Druck auf Angehörige anderer Religionsgemeinschaften, sich anzupassen. Die Omanis leben seit Jahrhunderten mit Hindu und Christen zusammen, ihnen und anderen nicht-islamischen Religionsgemeinschaften ist ihre eigene Lebensweise und Kultur gestattet, soweit sie nicht die allgemeinen Sitten und Gebräuche eklatant verletzt.



Alex Moll ist Vorsitzender der Initiative „Religiöse Toleranz“ in Deutschland.

Promotion for the exhibition in Dis.Kurs, the magazine of the Association of Adult Education Institutions in German-speaking Europe

RAHMENBEDINGUNGEN FÜR POTENZIELLE AUSSTELLER

Es muss Platz sein für 20 Tafeln im Format 70 x 100 cm, die von Stellwänden oder Aufhängungsleisten abgehängt werden, sowie für Böden von Büchern und Kamerschulterblättern. Einige Ausstellungstafeln müssen aufgrund ihrer Einzigartigkeit geschützt in Vitrinen gezeigt werden. Zwei Ausstellungswände zum Aufspannen gelten der Präsentation weiterer Volumes. Weitere Informationen gibt es unter www.religiose-toleranz.de und direkt beim Autor unter Tel. 0212/244 11 35 oder per E-Mail post@alex-moll.de.

Ein wesentliches Ziel der Ausstellung ist aber die verbindende Kraft des Korans vorzustellen. Der Ko-

zuerst ab Mitte April in der VHS Ludwigshafen gezeigt und steht nach bereits gebuchten weiteren Stationen anderen Weiterbildungseinrichtungen ab Ende September 2010 zur Verfügung. Alle Texte sind in deutscher Sprache.



Auch christliche Aussen sind im islamischen Oman nicht ungewöhnlich.

ran ist vom Alters her Grundlage für alle Bildung. Durch ihn haben die Menschen Lesen und Schreiben gelernt. Es wird verdeutlicht, wie der Koran durch Abschrift vervielfältigt wird und wurde und wie das Heilige Buch aufgebaut ist. Einige Ausstellungstafeln, die den Koran zum Thema haben, ergänzen die Informationssteine.

Ausstellung für VHS buchbar

Die Ausstellung wird bis Ende des Jahres 2011 für Weiterbildungseinrichtungen vor allem in Deutschland angeboten. Die Ausstellung wurde

Neben der Ausstellung gibt es für die Veranstalter Einladungskarten und Plakate mit einem Eindrucksfeld für die individuelle Beschriftung sowie eine begleitende Broschüre, die kostenlos verteilt werden kann. Vorträge werden zu diesem Thema zusätzlich angeboten. Zwei Dokumentarfilme mit dem Titel „Religiöse Toleranz“ und „Islamische Kunst“ wurden vom Grimme Preisträger Wolfgang Ertl in Oman gedreht, welche

im Rahmen der Ausstellung gezeigt werden. Der erste Film beobachtet das Leben der verschiedenen islamischen und nicht-islamischen Bevölkerungsgruppen im Oman und die Ausgestaltung ihres Alltags vor dem Hintergrund ihres Glaubens. Der zweite Film dokumentiert die Höhepunkte islamischer Kunst und Architektur im Sultanat Oman.

Die ersten Erfahrungen in Ludwigshafen haben gezeigt, dass die Ausstellung gut besucht wird und eine allseits beachtete Öffnung zu interessanten Diskussionen anregt.

Noch rund 300 Tage

bis zum XIII. Deutschen Volkshochschultag am 12. und 13. Mai 2011 in Berlin!



Herrenvorträge der Weiterbildung, 2010, 12. und 13. Mai 2011, 12. und 13. Mai 2011, 12. und 13. Mai 2011

Kultur: Ausstellung in der Volkshochschule

Sultanat Oman präsentiert sich

In die märchenhafte Welt des Sultans Sindbad und des alten Seefahrervolks der Omanis führt die Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz – Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“. Noch bis zum 14. Mai ist sie in der Volkshochschule (VHS) zu sehen. 20 Informationstafeln geben einen Einblick in den Islam in der modernen arabischen Gesellschaft. Dabei wird nicht nur ein besonderer Wert auf den Koran gelegt, sondern auch die Rolle der Frau erläutert.

„Das Sultanat Oman liegt in diesem Jahr 40 Jahre Renaissance. Unter der Führung des Sultans Qabus ist ihm eine beeindruckende Entwicklung gelungen. Moderne und Tradition miteinander zu verbinden und sich den neuen Anforderungen zu stellen. Oman ist ein modernes und zugleich traditionsbewusstes Land“, sagte Sozialdezernent Wolfgang van Vliet.

Nicht nur die Wanderausstellung startete in Ludwigshafen, auch ein Dokumentarfilm des Grimme-Preis-trägers Wolfgang Ertllich wurde erstmals gezeigt. Georg Popp, Generalsekretär der deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft, dankte der VHS. Die Ausstellung erfolgte auf Initiative des Ministeriums für religiöse Stiftungen und Religionsangelegenheiten. Zur Eröffnung kamen auch Vertreter der omanischen Botschaft.

„Wir wollen den Blick auf den Islam erweitern. Auf den Straßen sind zwar mehr Männer zu sehen. Dadurch haben die Frauen aber die Gelegenheit, zu Hause ungestört wichtige Entscheidungen zu treffen. Unsere Frauen haben alle Rechte“, meinte Mohammad Al-Mamari, Projektleiter im Sultanat.

i Die Ausstellung in der VHS ist bis 14. Mai zu sehen

Article in "Mannheimer Morgen," April 22, 2010, Circulation 84.000

Von Vorurteilen und Frauenwahlrecht

Wanderausstellung in Volkshochschule befasst sich mit religiöser Toleranz im Sultanat Oman

Nach der Marktbesucherinnen-Feststellung „Sultanat Oman“ vor drei Wochen ist die Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz – Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ in der Volkshochschule (VHS) eröffnet worden. Dabei werden an vielen Info-Dokumentarfilmen über das Sultanat in der Südpenninsule des asiatischen Halbkreises.



Zum Vortrag waren 30 der derzeit in Deutschland studierenden Omanis gekommen.

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Die Ausstellung, die bis zum 14. Mai in der Volkshochschule zu sehen ist, demonstriert die Verbindung von Islam und einer liberalen Haltung gegenüber unterschiedlichen islamischen Richtungen und anderen Religionen. Auf 20 Informationstafeln werden Themen angesprochen, wie das Nebeneinanderbestehen verschiedener Religionsgemeinschaften, der gelebte Islam im Alltag sowie die Rolle der Frau. Darüber hinaus vermittelt sie den besonderen Wert des Heiligen Buches der Muslime – des Koran.

Als „jahren besonderen Höhepunkt des VHS-Programms in diesem Semester“, wertet Sozialdezernent Wolfgang van Vliet die Premiere der Ausstellung und der Dokumentarfilme über den „Islam im Sultanat Oman“ in Ludwigshafen.

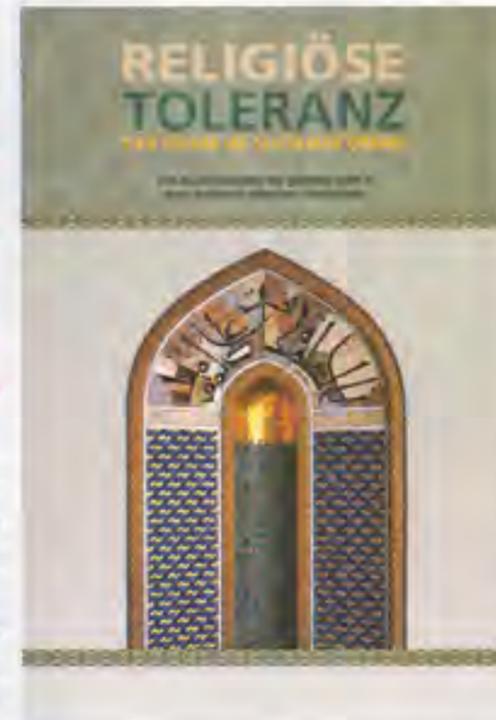
Article in "Rheinpfalz," April 19, 2010, Circulation 249.000

BILDUNG

TRADITION UND MODERNE

AUSSTELLUNG UND FILME VON GRIMME-PREIS-TRÄGER ETTLICH ZUERST IN DER VHS

PREMIERE IN DER VOLKSHOCHSCHULE LUDWIGSHAFEN: ZUM ERSTEN MAL ÜBERHAUPT WERDEN UNTER DEM THEMA „RELIGIÖSE TOLERANZ – DER ISLAM IM SULTANAT OMAN“ EINE AUSSTELLUNG UND ZWEI DOKUMENTARFILME DES GRIMME-PREIS-TRÄGERS WOLFGANG ETTLICH GEZEIGT. ERÖFFNET WIRD DIE AUSSTELLUNG AM 16. APRIL, 19 UHR, VON SOZIALDEZERNENT WOLFGANG VAN VLIET UND DER OMANISCHEN BOTSCHAFTERIN DR. ZAINAB BINT ALI BIN SAID AL QAEMIVAH.



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neuplu 3/4/2010

„Nach dem großen Erfolg der Fotoausstellung „Sultanat Oman“ im November 2006 mit über 1.100 Besucherinnen und Besuchern sind wir stolz darauf, dass der Generalsekretär der deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft, Georg Popp, mit dieser Ausstellung zuerst auf die Volkshochschule Ludwigshafen zugekommen ist“, ergänzt Sabine Heitgenital, Leiterin der Volkshochschule.

„Als ich von dem Vorhaben einer Ausstellung über den Islam in Oman erfuhr, stand für mich sofort fest, dass wir auch diese Wanderausstellung in Ludwigshafen starten sollten, denn niemand hätte bei dem vorberiterten Ausstellungspro-

Omans Geschichte ist eng verbunden mit dem Handel und der Seefahrt.

jekt auch nur ähnlich viel Engagement gezeigt, wie die VHS Ludwigshafen“, erklärt Generalsekretär Georg Popp.

Die Darstellung über das Sultanat beruht auf einer tatsächlich in Oman gelebten Gesellschaftskultur. Neben den informativen Ausstellungstafeln sind Repliken von alten Schriften und Koranen, Säuren auf den Schutberknochen von Kamelen und anderees Bildmaterial zu sehen. Der Dokumentarfilmer und Grimme-Preis-träger Wolfgang Ertllich drehte begleitend zur Ausstellung zwei halbstündige Filme,

die im Rahmen der Veranstaltung gezeigt werden. Der erste Film bebrachtet das Leben der verschiedenen islamischen und nichtislamischen Bevölkerungsgruppen im Oman und die Ausgestaltung ihres Alltags vor dem Hintergrund ihres Glaubens. Der zweite Film dokumentiert die Höhepunkte islamischer Kunst und Architektur im Sultanat Oman.

Das Sultanat Oman – ein modernes und zugleich islamisch-traditionsbewusstes Land auf der arabischen Halbinsel – pflegt besondere Beziehungen zur Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Die Ausstellung erfolgt auf Initiative des Ministeriums für religiöse Stiftungen und Religionsangelegenheiten des Sultanats Oman (Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs of the Sultanate of Oman). Für die Inhalte der Ausstellung zeichnet ebenfalls dieses Ministerium verantwortlich. Ziel ist es, einen Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis der unterschiedlichen Kulturen und Sichtweisen zu liefern.

Ergänzend zur Ausstellung werden mehrere Vorträge über Oman im Spannungsfeld zwischen Tradition und Moderne gehalten.

Eine begleitende Informationsbrochure zur Ausstellung erhalten die Besucherinnen und Besucher kostenlos. Geplant ist, die Ausstellung danach in Offenburg, Duisburg, Berlin, Nürnberg und Dortmund zu zeigen.

Besichtigt werden kann die Ausstellung in der VHS, im Bürgerhof, von Montag bis Freitag, 9 bis 20 Uhr. www.vhs-ludwigshafen.de

INFO
Weitere Informationen im Internet unter www.vhs-ludwigshafen.de oder www.vhs-ludwigshafen.de

Announcement in the City Magazine of Ludwigshafen, issue April 2010
Circulation 170.000 households

AUSBLICK

AUSSTELLUNG

Film zu Ausstellung:
 „Religiöse Toleranz - Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“: Noch bis Freitag, 30. Juli, ist die Wanderausstellung in den Räumen der Volkshochschule Offenburg zu sehen. Die Informationstafeln vermitteln die Fortschrittlichkeit und die Mischung zwischen Tradition und Moderne dieses recht unbekanntem Lands und zeigen auf, wie gut das Miteinander der Religionen gelingen kann. Der gleichnamige Begleitfilm des Grimme-Preisträgers Wolfgang Ettlisch wird heute, Montag, gezeigt. Beginn 19 Uhr. Raum 101, Amand-Goegg-Str. 2-4. Der Eintritt ist frei.

Article in "Badisches Tagblatt," July 12, 2010, Circulation 35.000

Über den Oman

In der Volkshochschule, Kulturraum, Amand-Goegg-Straße 2, ist noch bis zum 30. Juli die Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz - Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ zu sehen. Die Präsentation vermittelt den Charme dieses wenig bekannten Landes zwischen Tradition und Moderne.

Aus der Stadt

Film zur Ausstellung über den Oman

Offenburg (red/zw). «Religiöse Toleranz - Der Islam im Sultanat Oman»: Noch bis zum 30. Juli ist die Wanderausstellung in den Räumen der VHS Offenburg zu sehen. Der gleichnamige Begleitfilm des Grimme-Preisträgers Wolfgang Ettlisch wird heute, Montag, gezeigt. Beginn 19 Uhr. Raum 101, Amand-Goegg-Str. 2-4. Der Eintritt ist frei.

Articles in "Offenburger Tagblatt," July 12, 2010 and July 17, 2010, Circulation 25.000

NR 17 • 12. SEPTEMBER 2010

GLAUBEN UND LEBEN

Religiöse Toleranz – Islam im Oman
AUSSTELLUNG Aufschlussreiche Einblicke in die Glaubenswelt der Ibadhis



Der kleine Kapsler in der Vitruve zeigt selbst unsere Aufmerksamkeiten auf sich. Untigebens ist er von Bildern der Sande und Kieselsteine. Teil einer Kamelchauri steht dort in der Ausstellungsbereitschaft. Man denkt an erdlose Karavane, grüne Oasen und fortwährenden Wüstenschmelz. Obereisigen Entwürfen führt auf ein Sandbad, den Seefahrt oder Hadshi Halat Oman aus der Welt Karl Mays. Tatsächlich führt uns die aktuelle Ausstellung in Dortmund der Beizelmann in das Mittelmeer. Es geht um das in Deutschland weitgehend unbekanntes Sultanat Oman. Das liegt in dem alten Kulturland, wo der Verehrte Gott in den indischen Oman derzeit und zugleich islamisch-traditionelles Land.

Auf der Tradition verweisen die rhytmischen Schritte und Linien auf dem Kunstwerkchen. Es handelt sich um arabische Schriftzeichen – so ist es erkennbar. Alle Weisheiten des Koran sind dort erhalten, die dieses ferne Land prägen. Denn der Islam erreichte Oman bereits acht Jahre nach der Auswanderung des Propheten Muhammad nach Mekka und damit dem Beginn der islamischen Zeitrechnung.

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Das besonnter bis heute. Die Mehrheit der Bevölkerung Omans sind, wiewol Scheikhs noch Sultanat Oman ist unbeschrieben, geprägt von islamischer, einer anständigen islamischen Glaubensrichtung, die in der westlichen wie auch arabischen Welt kaum bekannt ist. Die Philosophie der Ibadhis beruht auf dem Grundsatz des religiösen Toleranz, und über Vermeidung von Konflikten und Gewalt. Die Ibadhis leben in Oman auch schon immer in den, Clustern und Händeln – und so ist es auch noch heute.

Wer sich Zeit nimmt, erfährt: Muscovische Akzent sind grundsätzlich ableitbar, menschen im Sultanat Omans. Das ist auch die Grundpraxis der Ibadhis. Das gemeinsame Gebet zu Gott kennt keine Beschränkung.

Die Ausstellung ist von Donnerstag bis 1. Oktober in der Kulturraum 101, Amand-Goegg-Str. 2-4, Offenburg zu sehen. Der Eintritt ist frei.

Studien- und Begegnungstour Oman
 Vom 11. bis 21. November 2011 bietet das Ex-Event-Team die Ex-Event-Begegnung VVK Dortmund eine 12-tägige Studien- und Begegnungstour in das Sultanat Oman an. Ein Informationsabend am Donnerstag, 26. März (19 bis 21 Uhr), in der Kulturraum 101, Amand-Goegg-Str. 2-4, Offenburg. Tickets sind im Vorverkauf zu erwerben. Preis: 1.490,- € (inkl. Reisekosten). Anmeldung: www.ex-event.de

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Religiöse Toleranz – Islam im Oman
 Aufschlussreiche Einblicke in die Glaubenswelt der Ibadhis

schon Dignität. Darüber hinaus ist in Oman ein islamisches Ministerium, dessen Vertreter Mohammed Al-Masri am 1. September für die Ausstellungsbereitschaft in der Kulturraum 101, Amand-Goegg-Str. 2-4, Offenburg zu sehen. Der Eintritt ist frei.

alleiner regiert? Auf diese Fragen gibt die Ausstellung selbst keine Antwort.

Eine Idee könnte aber, jeder Kapsel geben, der direkt in Begleitfilm in den Blick gerät. Es handelt sich hier nicht etwa um einen hellen Text zum Vorlesen, sondern um eine Schreib- bzw. Lesebuch. Mit dem hellen Text lernt ein Mensch gerade das Schreiben und Lesen. Und über den Buch auch fleißig damit. Die Ibadhis verteilten ihm dazu, sich Bildung zu verschaffen und auf

Article in "Glauben und Leben", September 12, 2010, Circulation 60.000



Article in "Ruhr Nachrichten/Dortmunder Zeitung", September 09, 2010, Circulation 133.000



Flyer announcing Study Tour to Oman



Article in "Arab Forum," issue 02/2010, Circulation 30.000



Article in "Abendzeitung," September 24, 2010, Circulation 117.000

Das Jahr 2010 steht unter dem Motto „Annäherung der Kulturen“. Eine wichtige Grundlage für diese Annäherung von Menschen aus verschiedenen Religionen und Kulturen ist religiöse Toleranz und interkulturelle Verständigung. Die VHS Landkreis Hof hat ein ganzes Wochenende unter diesem Motto gestellt. Vom 11. bis 13. November bietet sie ein vielfältiges Programm.

Interkulturelles Wochenende an der VHS Landkreis Hof

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Article in "Pro Hof Magazin," November 2010, Circulation 15.000

Die Hauszeitung der Volkshochschule Landkreis Hof

vhs aktuell

Ausgabe
4/2010
November

Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz im Oman“

HOF – Die Wanderausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz – Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ ist vom 12. November bis 1. Dezember im VHS-Bildungszentrum Fabrikzeile zu sehen. Die Bilder und Exponate geben Einblick in die Kultur und Gesellschaft des Oman – einem arabischen Land, in dem Moslems, Juden, Christen und Hindus seit Jahr-

hunderten heimisch sind. Ergänzt wird die Ausstellung durch einen halbstündigen Film des Grimme-Preis-Trägers Wolfgang Ertlich, der begleitet zur Ausstellung einen halbstündigen Film mit dem Titel „Religiöse Toleranz im Oman“ zeigt, der im Rahmen der Ausstellung gesehen werden kann. Ein Besuch ist nach Voranmeldung werktags in der Zeit von 9 bis 17 Uhr möglich.



vhs

Zwei Meistertitel geholt....2

22 Konzerte bis Februar.....2

250 Jugendliche bei abH...3

Article in "VHS aktuell," November 2010

Ein ganzes Wochenende für mehr Toleranz

Interkulturelles Wochenende der VHS Landkreis Hof: Lesung, Ausstellung und Fest der Kulturen

HOF • Das Jahr 2010 steht unter dem Motto „Annäherung der Kulturen“. Eine wichtige Grundlage für diese Annäherung von Menschen aus verschiedenen Religionen und Kulturen ist religiöse Toleranz und interkulturelle Verständigung. Die VHS Landkreis Hof hat deshalb ein ganzes Wochenende unter diesem Motto gestellt. Vom 11. bis 13. November bietet sie ein vielfältiges Programm.

Lesung
Am morgigen Donnerstag, 11. November, um 19 Uhr mit der Autorensendung von Lea Heischmann im Gemeindehaus St. Lorenz in Hof. Heischmann, die 1979 nach Jerusalem auswanderte, ist eine authentische Vermittlerin der islamischen Kultur und der jüdischen Religion. In ihrem Buch „Heiliges Essen“ aus der Reihe „Das Judentum für Nichtjuden verständlich gemacht“ erläutert sie die Bedeutung der biblischen Speisegerbote. Im Anschluss an die Lesung haben die Zuhörer die Möglichkeit, Fragen zu stellen. Die Lesung findet in Kooperation mit dem Freundeskreis der Evangelischen Akademie Tutzing und dem Evangelischen Erwachsenenbildungswerk Hof statt.

Vom 12. November bis zum 1. Dezember ist die Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz – Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ im VHS Bildungszentrum in der Fabrikzeile

zu sehen. Der Besucher erlebt eine Bilder- und Informationsreise durch das Sultanat Oman. Hier leben überwiegend Menschen mit muslimischer Religionszugehörigkeit, gleichzeitig aber seit Jahrhunderten auch Angehörige anderer Religionen, wie Juden, Christen oder Hindus.

Die Bilder und Exponate der Ausstellung geben Einblicke in die tatsächlich gelebte Kultur und Gesellschaft des Oman und sie zeigen, wie ein islamisches, liberales Land organisiert ist. Der Dokumentarfilmer und Grimme-Preis-Träger Wolfgang Ertlich hat begleitend zur Ausstellung einen halbstündigen Film mit dem Titel „Religiöse Toleranz im Oman“ gedreht, der im Rahmen der Ausstellung gesehen werden kann. Ein Besuch ist nach Voranmeldung werktags in der Zeit von 9 bis 17 Uhr möglich.

Im Rahmen der traditionellen Fests der Kulturen der VHS Landkreis Hof wird die Ausstellung am Freitag, 12. November, um 9.30 Uhr feierlich eröffnet. Georg Pöpp, Generalsekretär der deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft, führt in einem Einführungsvortrag in



Schriftstellerin Lea Heischmann liest aus ihrem neuen Buch „Heiliges Essen“ und führt ein in die Geheimnisse der jüdischen Küche.

die Ausstellung ein und vermittelt interessante Hintergrundinformationen über das Leben und den Alltag im Oman. Umrahmt wird die feierliche Eröffnung der Ausstellung vom traditionellen Fest der Kulturen. Mitveranstalter und Kooperationspartner des diesjährigen Fests der Kulturen ist die Regierung von Oberfranken. Kastenleiter der VHS aus verschiedenen Nationen bereichern das Fest der Kulturen mit einem interkulturellen Programm und einem abschließenden multikulturellen Buffet, das Gelegenheit zu interkultureller

Begrüßung und interessantem Gesprächsaustausch bietet.

Abgerundet wird das Wochenende von zwei Seminaren. Unter dem Motto „Die großen Weltreligionen“ erfährt man am Freitag, 12. November, von 14 bis 17 Uhr, wie die Religionen entstanden sind und welche Regeln ihnen zugrunde liegen. Bei interkultureller

Kommunikation erfolgreich gestalten“ am Samstag, 13. November, von 9.30 bis 16 Uhr, geht es um die Sensibilisierung für kulturelle Unterschiede. Im Bereich Kommunikation, Teamarbeit, Konfliktbewältigung, Beziehungsgestaltung, Zeitmanagement oder im Problemlosungs-verhalten gibt es große Unterschiede, die leicht zu Konflikten führen können. Nähere Auskünfte dazu gibt es in der VHS Landkreis Hof bei Jenny Strobel, Telefon 09281/7145-21. Hier kann man sich auch für die Seminare anmelden.

Article in "Franken Post," November 10, 2010, Circulation 63.000

Religiöse Toleranz in Wort und Bild

Die VHS Landkreis Hof führt zur Veranstaltungsreihe unter dem Motto „Annäherung der Kulturen“. Mittelpunkt ist eine Ausstellung, die das Leben und den Glauben in Oman zum Inhalt hat.

HOF – Unter dem Motto „Religiöse Toleranz und Annäherung der Kulturen“ finden im Zeitraum vom 11. bis 13. November an der VHS Landkreis Hof verschiedene Veranstaltungen statt. Eine Autorenlesung zum Thema „Koscheres Essen“ im Judentum, das traditionelle Fest der Kulturen der VHS mit Kunstbühnen aus verschiedenen Nationen, eine interkulturelle Fortbildung zum Thema „Die großen Weltreligionen“ und eine mit dem Inhalt der „Interkulturelle Kommunikation“ stehen auf dem Veranstaltungskalender.

Dazu gibt es auch eine Ausstellung unter dem Titel „Religiöse Toleranz – Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“. Diese Wanderausstellung ist in diesem Jahr

erstmals in Deutschland zu sehen. Bisher war sie in größeren Städten wie Ludwigshafen, Oldenburg, Dortmund, München zu sehen. Die Ausstellung wird vom 12. November bis zum 1. Dezember im Bildungszentrum der VHS Landkreis Hof, Fabrikzeile 21, zu sehen sein. Ein Besuch ist nach Voranmeldung in der Zeit von 9 bis 17 Uhr möglich.

Die Vernissage findet am Freitag um 9.30 in der VHS statt. Den Einführungsvortrag hält Georg Pöpp, der Generalsekretär der deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft. Ebenfalls anwesend sein wird der Grimme-Preis-Träger Wolfgang Ertlich, der begleitend zur Ausstellung einen Film gedreht hat. Der Film wird bei der Ausstellungseröffnung ebenfalls gezeigt. Wünschenswert sind auch der Rotschaffler des Sultanats Oman zur Eröffnung der Ausstellung kommen, schreibt die VHS.

Die Ausstellung versteht sich als Beitrag zum friedlichen Dialog der Kulturen und der Religionen. Der Besucher erlebt eine „Bilder- und Informationsreise“ durch das Sultanat Oman. Hier leben überwiegend Menschen mit islamischer Religions-

zugehörigkeit, gleichzeitig aber seit Jahrhunderten auch Angehörige anderer Religionen, wie Juden, Christen oder Hindus. Das Zusammenleben ist geprägt von religiöser Toleranz, die im Sultanat Oman sehr offen gelebt und praktiziert wird. So zeigt diese Ausstellung auch auf eindrucksvolle Weise, wie gut das Zusammen-



Volleyballerin Habiba al-hanai hat 2008 das Olympische Feuer durch Oman getragen – als Zeichen für Frieden und Toleranz. Foto: dpa

leben der Religionen auf der Basis von religiöser Toleranz gelingen kann.

Vorbereitet hat die Ausstellung das Ministerium für religiöse Stiftungen und Religionsangelegenheiten des Sultanats Oman. Die Bilder und Exponate der Ausstellung geben laut Mitteilung Einblicke in die tatsächlich gelebte Kultur und Gesellschaft des Oman und sie zeigen, wie ein islamisches, liberales Land organisiert ist. Gleichzeitig möchte die Ausstellung auch informieren über den gelebten Islam im Alltag des Oman und bei Festen; auch geht es um die Rolle der Frau im Islam, um mögliche Vorurteile gegenüber dem Islam und dem friedlichen Dialog der Religionen.

Die Vielfalt der gezeigten Themen macht die Ausstellung laut Mitteilung besonders auch für Schulklassen interessant. Der Dokumentarfilmer und Grimme-Preis-Träger Wolfgang Ertlich hat begleitend zur Ausstellung einen halbstündigen Film mit dem Titel „Religiöse Toleranz im Oman“ gedreht, der in Hof gezeigt wird.

Article in "Franken Post," November 08, 2010, Circulation 63.000

WZ 8.3.2011

Männerquote an der Universität

AUSSTELLUNG Geschäftsführer der Deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft referierte

WILHELMSHAVEN /Ir „Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ ist der Untertitel der informativen Ausstellung, die von Oberbürgermeister Eberhard Menzel und dem Iman Mustafa Kaplan eröffnet wurde. Der Geschäftsführer der Deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft, Georg Popp, war extra aus München gekommen, um den zahlreichen interessierten Bürgern einen Einblick in die jüngste Geschichte des Sultanats zu geben. Religiöse Toleranz war laut Popp schon vor dem Amtsantritt des jetzigen Sultans ein Merkmal des bis dahin mittelalterlich anmutenden Staates. Bildung für alle, Männer wie Frauen, Muslime ebenso wie Christen und Buddhisten war und ist das Rezept, das helfen soll, den Staat in die Moderne zu führen, erklärte Popp. Inzwischen liege die Alphabetisierungsquote der jungen und mittleren Generation mit der in Deutschland auf Augenhöhe. An der Universität musste eine Männerquote eingeführt werden und der Anteil von Frauen in Führungspositionen ist deutlich höher als in Deutschland – auch die omanische Botschaft in Berlin wird von einer promovierten Frau geleitet. Neben der Bildung werde auch in großem Umfang in die Infrastruktur investiert – wer sich das heutige Verkehrsnetz ansehe, könne sich kaum vorstellen, dass es vor 40 Jahren gerade einmal zehn Kilometer asphaltierte Straße im ganzen Staat gab. Auch städtebaulich habe sich viel getan. Besonders beeindruckend: die große Moschee und die Neukonzeption der zentralen Städte. Die Ausstellung umfasst 20 informative Tafeln und eine Reihe interessanter Exponate wie beispielsweise einer Replik eines aufwendig gestalteten Korans. Außerdem liegt eine Begleitbroschüre aus und Gruppen und Schulklassen haben die Möglichkeit, einen Film zum Thema religiöse Toleranz anzusehen (Anmeldung unter Tel. 16 40 00). Die Ausstellung in der ersten Etage des Hans-Beutz-Hauses kann montags bis freitags von 8 bis 21 Uhr und sonnabends von 11 bis 17 Uhr besucht werden.

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Article in "Wilhelmshavener Zeitung," March 08, 2011, Circulation 23.000



Ausstellungseröffnung bei der Volkshochschule

„Religiöse Toleranz – der Islam im Sultanat Oman“

GW Nordhorn. Staaten, in denen überwiegend Menschen mit islamischer Religionszugehörigkeit leben, haben im Lauf der Jahrhunderte unterschiedliche Entwicklungen und Ausformungen erlebt. Der Islam im Oman ist geprägt von frühen islamischen Zweigen der Ibaditen. Er ist ein Islam, der so gar nicht in viele Vorurteile passt, ob es nun um religiöse Toleranz oder die Rolle der Frau im Islam geht. Das Sultanat Oman ist ein Beispiel für einen liberalen Umgang mit der Religion. Die Ausstellung „Religiöse Vielfalt – der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ ist die erste Veranstaltung unter dem Semesterthema der VHS „Der Vielfalt ein Gesicht geben“. Um eine Vorstellung von der Vielfalt und den unterschiedlichen Ausprägungen des Islam zu bekommen, stellt die VHS bis Mitte Februar als Beispiel den Islam im Sultanat Oman mit Fortsetzung auf Seite 11

Ausstellung: Religiöse Toleranz – der Islam im Sultanat Oman

Eröffnung der Ausstellung durch Georg Popp, Arabia Felix Synform GmbH, München

Städter, in denen überwiegend Menschen mit islamischer Religionszugehörigkeit leben, haben im Lauf der Jahrhunderte unterschiedliche Entwicklungen und Ausformungen erlebt. Das Sultanat Oman ist ein besonderes Beispiel für einen liberalen Umgang mit der Religion. Auf 20 Informations Tafeln werden in der Ausstellung Themen angesprochen, die auch uns christlich gepragte Europäer betreffen: das Nebeneinander bestehen verschiedener Religionsgemeinschaften, der gelebte Islam im Alltag sowie die Rolle der Frau. Die Ausstellung vermittelt darüber hinaus dem Besucher einen Einblick in islamische Städte. Die Ausstellung will dem Besucher den Islam näher bringen und für das Sultanat Oman werben. Sie beruht auf einer Replik eines aufwendig gestalteten Korans. Die Ausstellung ist bis zum 18. Februar in der VHS im Flur der 1. OG zu besichtigen.

Termin:
Freitag, 21. Januar 2010
19.00 bis 21.15 Uhr

Vorort:
Volkshochschule
Bernhard-Niehus-Str. 49
Nordhorn
Raum 114, 1. OG

Vorstellung:
VHS
Volkshochschule
Catharina Sommer

Article in "Grafshafter Nachrichten," January 19, 2010, Circulation 25.000

Sultanat Oman

Fortsetzung von Seite 1
einer Ausstellung sowie zwei Filme etc.
Auf 20 Informations Tafeln werden in der Ausstellung Themen angesprochen, die auch uns christlich gepragte Europäer betreffen: das Nebeneinander-Bestehen verschiedener Religionsgemeinschaften, der gelebte Islam im Alltag sowie die Rolle der Frau. Die Ausstellung vermittelt darüber hinaus dem Besucher den Islam näher bringen und für das Sultanat Oman werben. Sie beruht auf einer Replik eines aufwendig gestalteten Korans. Die Ausstellung ist bis zum 18. Februar in der VHS im Flur der 1. OG zu besichtigen.

Freitag, dem 21. Januar, 19.00 Uhr in den Vortragsräumen lädt die VHS alle Interessierten herzlich ein. Die Ausstellungseröffnung erfolgt durch Herrn Georg Popp, München. Er ist Projektleiter der Ausstellung sowie Vorsitzender der Deutsch-omanischen Gesellschaft.
Die Ausstellung selbst ist bis zum 18. Februar in den Räumen der Volkshochschule, 1. Etage, während der Öffnungszeiten zu besichtigen.
Weitere Informationen erhalten Interessierte bei der Volkshochschule Grafshafter Bentheim unter der Tel.-Nr. 05921/8365-0 oder im Internet unter www.vhs-grafshafter-bentheim.de
Foto: privat

Article in "Grafshafter Wochenblatt," January 19, 2010, Circulation 52.000



Cover and Article in "VHS Magazine Wilhelmshaven," issue 01/2011



Article in "Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung," July 05, 2011, circulation 100.000



Article in "Augsburger Allgemeine Zeitung," July 12, 2011, circulation 100.000



Report about the exhibition on Radio/TV Augsburg broadcast, July 15, 2011 at 04:06 PM, 220.000 viewers/listeners per broadcast

Islam Message exhibition opens

LONDON — "Islam Message" exhibition, which now reached its 49th destination, was launched at Cambridge University in UK yesterday. Launching the exhibition coincides with the annual Cambridge Inter-Faith Programme. The seven-day programme is organised in collaboration with the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate.

Professor David Ford delivered a speech during which he thanked the Ministry of Awqaf and Religious Affairs in the Sultanate for its efforts to promote tolerance and peaceful coexistence culture. — ONA



تنظيمه السلطنة افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في مدينة تارا جونا الإسبانية



السيابي يلقى كلمته

جولة داخل المعرض

السيابي: المعرض يرسخ التوجيهات السامية بأن يكون للسلطنة وجود في حوار الحضارات والثقافات والأديان أنا أريذفول: إرساء التفاهم الفعلي بين الشعوب وترسيخ التبادل الفكري

تارا جونا - أحمد الحارثي

افتتح في مدينة تارا جونا الإسبانية معرض التسامح الديني في عمان الذي تنظمه وتشرف عليه وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية الذي استضافه كرسى اليونسكو للحوار بين الثقافات والأديان بجامعة روفيرا فيرجيللي وذلك تحت رعاية سعادة الشيخ أحمد ابن سعود السيابي الأمين العام بمكتب الإفتاء ويحضر سعادة هلال بن سالم المعمرى سفير السلطنة في مملكة أسبانيا وقال سعادة الشيخ في الكلمة التي ألقاها في حفل الافتتاح أن وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية وتوجيهات مباركة وكريمة من حضرة صاحب الجلالة السلطان قابوس بن سعيد المعظم وأبنت على أن يكون للسلطنة وجود وموقع في حوار الحضارات والثقافات والأديان إيماناً منها بأهمية التعامل الإيجابي مع البشرية في حضاراتها وثقافتها وأديانها وكل أطيافها الفكرية والأدبية.

وأضاف سعادته أن المعرض يأتي لينقل تجربة السلطنة في التسامح الديني ولا شك أنها تجربة رائدة ورائعة ولاقت ترحيباً واسعاً وشادة كبيرة من العديد من الأقطار في العديد من الدول وذلك لأن العالم بشكل عام يشهد شحنات طاقاتها متساعداً نتيجة بروز بعض الأحداث المستوسية إلى المسلمين وغير المسلمين وأهتبت المشاعر وأثارت الخفايا ونبئت الأقطار بين الناس بعضهم مع البعض ومن المؤسف أن تلك الأحداث أثرت في مفاهيم دينية ومن المعلوم أن ذلك التأخير الدنيء تلك الأحداث منه ما كان عن حسن قصد ومنه ما كان عن سوء قصد، لذلك جاءت سلسلة معارض التسامح الديني في عمان الذي يكون هذا المعرض واحداً منها لتقول للناس وللعالَم أن الأديان لا تعرف العنف ولا التطرف ولا الإرهاب ولا تسمح بذلك بل هي أديان التسامح والتعايش والتفاهم والحوار.

وأوضح سعادته أن الإسلام يقول في القرآن الكريم الذي هو دستور المسلمين لغير المسلم، لَكُمْ دِينِكُمْ وَلِي دِينِ، ويقول لا إكراه في الدين، وهناك آيات كثيرة في القرآن الكريم تصب في هذا المعنى، والتي محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم عندما هاجر أي انتقل من مكة إلى المدينة أول شيء قام به هما أمران التان، تغيير اسم البلد الذي انتقل إليه من يثرب إلى المدينة كإشارة إلى تكوين أول مجتمع إسلامي قائم على المدينة والحضارة والمدنية والحضارة في الإسلام تقوم على السوك الحسن، والأمر الثاني، إنشاء دستور ينظم العلاقة بين الدولة والمجتمع بكل مكوناته من اليهود والمسلمين ذلك الدستور المعروف بصحيفة المدينة وهو أول دستور للمواطنة في العالم يحفظ حقوق المواطن من أي دين كان ومن أي عرق أو لون كان في المواطنة والعيش المشترك.

وفي ختام كلمته شكر سعادة الشيخ الأمين العام بمكتب الإفتاء إدارة كرسى اليونسكو للحوار بين الثقافات والأديان بجامعة روفيرا فيرجيللي بمدينة تارا جونا العربية والجميلة بمملكة أسبانيا على استضافتهم لإقامة هذا المعرض وهذا دليل على رغبةكم الصادقة وعلى توجيهكم الطيب في التواصل واللقاء والحوار كما شكر سعادته سدارة السلطنة في أسبانيا على الجهود التي بذلتها في سبيل إقامة هذا المعرض.

كما التقى إيريك أوليفي رئيس قسم اليونسكو للحوار بين الثقافات في البحر الأبيض المتوسط والمشرق على المعرض كلمة أوضح من خلالها الدور الذي يلعبه قسم اليونسكو في إرساء الحوار ومد جسور التسامح والتفاهم والتعايش السلمي ثم تود إلى أهمية منطقة البحر الأبيض المتوسط لتحقيق الأهداف التي ذكرها سابقاً ثم أشاد بالدور الذي تلعبه سلطنة عمان في منطقة الخليج في مجال الحوار وإرساء التسامح الديني بين الشعوب في ختام كلمته أصرب عن جزيل الشكر للسلطنة لإعطاء الفرصة لتطبيقه في أسبانيا لمعرفة الإسلام الحقيقي والسلمي مؤكداً أن الحوار هو السبيل لتعرف على الثقافات والحضارات الأخرى مشيراً إلى أن إقامة مثل هذه المعارض تشكل نقلة الانطلاق للمضي قدماً في مبادرات تساهم في تعزيز التبادل العلمي والأكاديمي بين الأساتذة

يتوقع أن يصل عدد زواره إلى خمسين ألفاً

افتتاح «معرض التسامح الديني» بمدينة نورنبيرج الألمانية



الأمير العام بمكتب الأوقاف وخلال رعاية افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان

نورنبيرج، أحمد الحارثي

افتتح في مدينة نورنبيرج الألمانية تحت رعاية سفارة الشيخ أحمد بن سعود السبيعي الأمير العام بمكتب الأوقاف معرض التسامح الديني في عمان الذي تنظمه وتشرف عليه وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية.

وفي بداية حفل الافتتاح التي المذكور بالمقر الرئيسي للشؤون الأوقافية للهجرة والشؤون اللاجئين بوزارة الداخلية الألمانية كلمة رحب فيها بالمشرف وشكر وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية على إقامتها هذا المعرض في مقر وزارة الداخلية الألمانية.

وأضاف، إن هذا المعرض يوسع من نطاق التواصل الحضاري الثقافي وذكر أنه يوجد داخله في وزارة الداخلية الألمانية يتناول العمل الحضري من الإسلام بهدف تعريف الشعب الألماني بالإسلام الصحيح، وأشار إلى أن الوزارة ستعبر من نطاق المعرض وإقامته في المقر الفرعي لوزارة جمهورية ألمانيا لتعريف الناس بالتسامح الديني في عمان وفي نهاية كلمته شكر سفارة الشيخ راعي الحفل ووزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية على إقامة مثل هذا المعرض وتبني التوفيق للمعرض.

ويعد هذا المعرض راعي الحفل كلمة تذكير فيها أن الإسلام والتسامح هما ترويضان لا ينفك أحدهما عن الآخر فالإسلام هو التسامح والتسامح هو الإسلام والقرآن الكريم يحث على التسامح في آياته كثيرة بل ويأمر المسلمين بالتعاون مع غير المسلمين كما أنه يذم الجور والظلمة الإسلامية.

وأشار سفادته إلى أن إقامة هذا المعرض يعكس إلى حد كبير توجه السلطة إلى التعريف بالإسلام ومدى التسامح الذي يعطى عليه وهو يتراجع لتوجهات بعض البلاد العنصرية صريحة صاعداً الجلالة السلطان قابوس من سعيد المعظم حفظه الله.

وذكر سفادته في ختام كلمته أن المحادثات المتفيدة التي يقوم بها بعض المسلمين من هنا وهناك لا تغير عن الإسلام وتبصر من الإسلام في قلبه وإنما هي تسمية أمر الإسلام

في سلام ووداد، وفي ختام كلمته أشار إلى أن السلطنة طورت لديها بشكل سريع حيث استقطبت صاحب الجلالة نظر السلطنة التي دولة عصرية متفتحة ومتسامحة إيجابياً وثقافياً وهي اليوم تشهد تطوراً عمرانياً كبيراً جداً وفيها مشاتل التسامح صلاقة بحسنا كلمته يشكر سفارة الشيخ راعي الحفل والتفكير بعد ذلك ثم عرض فيلم التسامح الديني في سلطنة عمان والتي قامت بإنتاجه وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية ثم تجول الحضور بين عيادات المعرض الذي يشتمل على ترحيبات تعال من التسامح الديني في السلطنة والبيئة المدنية والعمارة فيها بالإضافة إلى ترحيبات تعبر عن العمارة الإسلامية والتسامح في السلطنة الجدير بالذكر أنه من المتوقع حضور ما لا يقل عن خمسين ألف زائر لهذا المعرض.

والسنتين قبل شهرين عنهما كلمته يشكر الحاضرين ووزارة الداخلية الألمانية الأمانة على قبولها إقامة هذا المعرض كما التمس جوارح ليعود رئيس جمعية الصداقة العمالية - الألمانية كلمة رحب فيها بالمشرف وسفارة الشيخ راعي الحفل وذكر أن سفادته عمان لها خصوصية تتمثل في تسامحها الديني الذي يلاحظه كل من زار عمان ويعرف تاريخها الحضاري فمن منذ عتاجها يرحب بالأخضر ويرسي حقوقه فهدم الهدم والتي الآن كانت السفن العمالية تجوب البحار لتبشر السلم والأمان والتواصل الحضاري بين الشعوب والأمان والتسامح، إن العمانيين سعدوا ودعوا إلى التسامح الديني، فعان منذ أكثر من خمسة آلاف سنة وهي تعبر العرولة بين البشر وأعراسهم ودياناتهم لا تشكل عائقاً أمام التسمية التي تكهدها السلطنة فالجميع يعثر

سلسلة من المعارض التي تهدف إلى تعريف بالتسامح في الإسلام في عدد من الدول وقد كان لجمهورية ألمانيا الاتحادية التمسيد الأكبر منها نظراً لعلاقة الصداقة والتعاون بين البلدين ولا شك أن الترخيب المسؤول الألمان والجمهور الألماني يقدر التعريف بهذه العباد التي جعل سلطنة عمان تطعمي قديماً في إقامتها.

JEQUE AHMAD BIN SAUD AL SIYABI • TEJEFARIU Q. DEL MINISTERIO DE ASUNTOS RELIGIOSOS DEL GOBIERNO DE OMAN

‘Una mujer omaní puede ser ministra’



Exposición sobre el Islam en la URV

El Gobierno de Omán, a través del Ministerio de Asuntos Religiosos, ha organizado una exposición sobre el Islam en la URV. La exposición se inaugurará el día 10 de octubre y estará abierta hasta el día 15 de octubre. La exposición se realizará en el aula magna de la URV y estará abierta a todo el público. La exposición se realizará en el aula magna de la URV y estará abierta a todo el público. La exposición se realizará en el aula magna de la URV y estará abierta a todo el público.

PERFIL | Ahmad bin Saud al-Siyabi es el principal dirigente del Sultanato de Omán al través de Tarragona la exposición "Tolerancia religiosa". La exposición se realizará en el aula magna de la URV y estará abierta a todo el público.

¿Cree que una exposición puede contribuir a combatir prejuicios o estereotipos?

En Omán también ha habido revueltas populares. ¿Han hecho reformas?

¿Una mujer omaní puede ser ministra?

¿Cree que una exposición puede contribuir a combatir prejuicios o estereotipos?

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¿Cree que una exposición puede contribuir a combatir prejuicios o estereotipos?

Algunos cristianos y budistas conviven en armonía en Omán, con los mismos derechos.

¿Es la primavera árabe posible para el mundo musulmán?

¿Cree que el presidente Ali Abdull Saib debería dimitir como le pide el pueblo yemení y convocar elecciones?

Sultanate encourages co-existence

Religious tolerance hailed

MARCELONA — An exhibition titled "Religious Tolerance in Oman" was opened here yesterday under the auspices of Sheikh Ahmed bin Saïd al-Siyabi, Secretary-General of the Ifta Office, in the presence of Shaikh Hilal bin Salim al-Mantiri, Sultanate's Ambassador to Spain.

Al-Siyabi said that His Majesty Sultan Qaboos accorded special importance to religious tolerance, making the Sultanate an oasis of tolerance among religious, ethnic and cultural groups, a fact testified and commended by interna-

tional reports.

"This is not a strange thing in an Arab and Islamic country, like Oman, which derived its humanitarian approach from Islam's call for activating ethical and social values, including tolerance with non-Islamic groups," said Al-Siyabi.

Al-Siyabi pointed out that Omanis communicated in full transparency with all those who resided in the Sultanate's lands, offering them security and comfort in practicing their religious rites. There is historical evidence that Omani religious scholars exchanged views with people who belonged to other religions and respected them, Al-Siyabi added.

Speeches on the occasion focused on the need to promote shared values among people with different religions. They encouraged co-operation and peaceful co-existence and they stressed the importance of curbing clashes and violence.

The speakers said over the years, the image of Islam was tarnished by some sections of the media which tried to manipulate public opinion and its time to portray true values of Islam. — OMA (See also P2)

Article in "Oman Observer" November 27, 2011

عمان اليوم

3 عمان

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان بمدينة برشلونة ضمن محمته الثالثة عشرة

الأمين العام بمكتب الإفتاء؛ السلطنة تواجه الظلمة والأمنه للتسامح الديني والعرقى والثقافى والتقارير الدولية تؤكد ذلك

العمانيون تعاملوا مع جميع اصحاب الديانات بكل شفافية واحترام وولفروا لهم الامن والطعامية والراحة لممارسة عباداتهم وتجاراتهم

عمان - افتتح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان بمدينة برشلونة ضمن محمته الثالثة عشرة، بحضور الأمين العام بمكتب الإفتاء، الشيخ أحمد بن سعيد السيابي، وعضو المجلس الأعلى للإفتاء، الشيخ خالد بن محمد السيابي، وعدد من المسؤولين العمانيين والبرشلونيين.

وكان المعرض، الذي استمر لمدة ثلاثة أيام، يعرض مجموعة من التقارير الدولية والتقارير الثقافية والعرقية التي تؤكد أهمية التسامح الديني في تعزيز الأمن والطمأنينة والراحة لممارسة عباداتهم وتجاراتهم.

وقال الأمين العام بمكتب الإفتاء، الشيخ أحمد بن سعيد السيابي، إن التسامح الديني هو أساس التعايش السلمي بين مختلف الشعوب والأديان، وهو من القيم التي يعتز بها الشعب العماني. وأضاف أن التسامح الديني يساهم في تعزيز الأمن والطمأنينة والراحة لممارسة عباداتهم وتجاراتهم.

وذكر الشيخ أحمد بن سعيد السيابي أن المعرض يعرض مجموعة من التقارير الدولية والتقارير الثقافية والعرقية التي تؤكد أهمية التسامح الديني في تعزيز الأمن والطمأنينة والراحة لممارسة عباداتهم وتجاراتهم.

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Article in "Oman Daily," September 28, 2011

MEINERZHAGEN

Religiöse Toleranz ist kein frommer Wunsch

Ausstellung über das Sultanat Oman im Haus Nordhölzle eröffnet / Alex Mall berichtet über ein außergewöhnliches Land

Ein Mann vor dem Kultur der islamischen Welt (von Nordhölzle) und Christian Mall, philippinischer Leiter im Haus Nordhölzle, zeigen eine Broschüre über das Sultanat Oman im Haus Nordhölzle.

Das Haus Nordhölzle ist ein Ort der Begegnung und des Dialogs. Hier werden die Menschen aus verschiedenen Kulturen und Religionen zusammengeführt, um sich auszutauschen und zu verstehen. Die Ausstellung über das Sultanat Oman ist ein Beispiel für diese Begegnung und den Dialog.

Das Sultanat Oman ist ein Land der Vielfalt und der Toleranz. Hier leben Menschen aus verschiedenen Kulturen und Religionen friedlich zusammen. Die Ausstellung zeigt die Geschichte und die Kultur des Sultanats Oman und die Bedeutung der religiösen Toleranz in diesem Land.

Die Ausstellung ist ein wichtiger Beitrag zur Förderung der religiösen Toleranz und des gegenseitigen Verständnisses zwischen den Menschen. Sie zeigt, dass religiöse Toleranz kein frommer Wunsch ist, sondern eine Voraussetzung für ein friedliches Zusammenleben in einer globalisierten Welt.

Article in Meinerzhagener Zeitung, January 04, 2014

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Accepting the Other
Faith in Oman Episode 1 of 2

In the Islamically conservative Gulf region, Oman stands out for its religious tolerance. Members of other faiths – Christians, Hindus, Buddhists and others – enjoy freedom of worship, interfaith dialogue...

Available now
29 minutes

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BBC World, April 08, 2014

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Ibadi Islam
Faith in Oman Episode 2 of 2

Ask members of any faith in Oman what it's like to live there, and almost everyone will extol the virtues of the country's absolute monarch, Sultan Qaboos.

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Oman's short-lived version of the Arab uprisings...

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BBC World, April 14, 2014

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني، في محطته الثالثة عشرة بمدينة برشلونة

السياسي: السلطنة الواحة الظليلة والأمنة للتسامح الديني والعرقى والثقافي

« وثيقة المدينة المنورة هي أول دستور لمواطنة والعيش المشترك بين المسلمين واليهود القرب مطاب بتفهم الإسلام وعدم لصاق تهمة الإرهاب بالمسلمين »



برشلونة - أحمد العازمي

بالتوازي مع ما يشهده العالم من تحولات اجتماعية وسياسية... افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني... في محطته الثالثة عشرة بمدينة برشلونة... « وثيقة المدينة المنورة هي أول دستور لمواطنة والعيش المشترك بين المسلمين واليهود القرب مطاب بتفهم الإسلام وعدم لصاق تهمة الإرهاب بالمسلمين »

السياسي: السلطنة الواحة الظليلة والأمنة للتسامح الديني والعرقى والثقافي... « وثيقة المدينة المنورة هي أول دستور لمواطنة والعيش المشترك بين المسلمين واليهود القرب مطاب بتفهم الإسلام وعدم لصاق تهمة الإرهاب بالمسلمين »

Article in "Al Roya" January 29, 2011

دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب

معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يبدأ محطته السادسة عشرة عشرة بمدريد

رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا



المعرض يشاركه على الصورة المنقطة في التسامح الديني

عمان - المصنوعات نسلات لجامعة كيمبوتنسي... دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب... معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يبدأ محطته السادسة عشرة عشرة بمدريد... رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا

بدأ محطته السادسة عشرة في مدريد

معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام



معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام

عمان - المصنوعات نسلات لجامعة كيمبوتنسي... دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب... معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام... رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا

Article in "Oman Daily," May 06, 2012

في محطته السادسة عشرة

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، بمدينة مدريد



معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، بمدينة مدريد

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، بمدينة مدريد... دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب... معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام... رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، بمدينة مدريد... دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب... معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام... رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا

افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، بمدينة مدريد... دعم التواصل بين الأديان والثقافات والشعوب... معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، يسعى لتغيير الصورة المغلوطة عن الإسلام... رئيس جامعة كيمبوتنسي: دور بارز للسلطنة في نشر الدين الإسلامي في شرق أفريقيا وغرب آسيا

Article in "Al Roya" May 06, 2012

OMAN
SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2012

THE Omani Religions Tolerance Exhibition opened at the University of Technology in the Etisalat capitol Tallinn with participation of academics and religious personalities. — OSA

VISITORS at an expo on 'Omani Religions Tolerance' in Tallinn yesterday. — See also P2

Focus on tolerance

TALLINN — An exhibition on Omani Religions Tolerance was opened at the University of Technology in the Etisalat capitol Tallinn with participation of academics and religious personalities.

The aim of the exhibition is to provide insight into the religious experiences of the Omani people and to promote understanding and respect for all faiths.

Speaking on the occasion, the Omani Minister of Education, Dr. Mohamed bin Said Al-Musallami, said that the exhibition is a significant step towards building a more inclusive and tolerant society.

He expressed his hope that the exhibition will lead to a better understanding of the diverse religious practices of the Omani people.

The exhibition features a variety of items, including books, artifacts, and photographs, which provide a comprehensive overview of the religious diversity in Oman.

Visitors are encouraged to explore the exhibits and engage in discussions with the experts and scholars present at the event.

Article in Oman Observer, September 22, 2012

OMAN DAILY
Observer
Saturday, September 15, 2012 Edition 20, 14:22 AM

Role in religious tolerance hailed

The Omani role in promoting religious tolerance and understanding has been hailed by international leaders and scholars. The exhibition in Tallinn, Estonia, is a significant step towards building a more inclusive and tolerant society.

6 عمان

عرض فيلم وثائقي عن الاسلام وسماحته افتتاح معرض «التسامح الديني في عمان» ببليجيكا

جانب من افتتاح معرض التسامح الديني في عمان، ببليجيكا

بروكسل - العاصمة - افتتح في العاصمة البلجيكية بروكسل امس الاول معرض التسامح الديني في عمان والذي لقيته وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية بحضور ممثل من سفارة السلطنة ببليجيكا وشخصيات دينية هي ببليجيكا وستمر لمدة ثلاثة أسابيع.

ويتميز المعرض العديد من المكونات المهمة فنيا وترويج رسالة المعرض بالإضافة الى عرض الفيلم الوثائقي التسامح الديني في عمان وكتب والفلام لتحدث عن الاسلام وسماحته.

وتحدث فيليب هيلمر الكلف بوزارة الثقافة وكتب محافظة مدينة أنتويرب عن فوائد السلطنة الإيجابية من أجل تحسين الصورة السلبية التي يسعها البعض عن المسلمين ورحب بالمعرض وشاهد بجهود السلطنة المتمثلة في وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية من أجل إيصال الرسالة الحقيقية للإسلام وهو دين السلام.

بعدها تحدث الدكتور كريس فولكو رئيس الجامعة البلجيكية حيث أشاد بالمعرض التسامحي الذي تنتهجه السلطنة تجاه الديانات الأخرى كما تمنى اليهود الكبيرة من أجل تصحيح الصورة النمطية المرسومة عن الاسلام والمسلمين.

وأضاف كريس أن أهمية إقامة المعرض وسعة الترويج للبلجيكية وهو مكان حيوي ونشطة تجمع ديانات لا سيما كنية مقارنة الأديان والتي تعتبر محركا للحضارة والتقدم والتعايش بالديانات... واعتبر كريس ان إقامة المعرض في هذا المكان

بعد تجمعها ثقافيا ومجتمع لتوثيق مختلفة الجسديات والأديان ويرتاد هذه الكلية العديد من الطلبة الأوروبيين الدارسين للديانات المختلفة والتي تعتبر الدين الإسلامي من أهم الديانات التي تدرس به.

بعدها ألقى كارل باومر وزير دولة كلمة تحدث فيها عن إيمانه بأن معرضنا هذا يعد إيجابيا من أجل الحوار والتعايش السلمي بين أصحاب المعتقدات الدينية المختلفة.

كما تحدث الدكتور محمد بن سعيد العمري المستشار العلمي بمكتب وزير الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية والمشرف العام على المعارض الخارجية حيث استقبل الكلمة بالترحيب بالمشروع وشكر جامعة

Articles Oman Observer and Oman Daily, September 15, 2012



Article in "Oman Daily," July 22, 2012



Article in Al Roya, January 12, 2013



Article in Oman Observer, March 16, 2013



Article in Al Roya, January 27, 2014

Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman

The Message of Oman



The intent of Oman's touring exhibition is to provide insight into Islam's role in the daily life of a modern Arab society. In Oman, Islam is a link among the various factions in the country and helps safeguard cultural identity in these times of great change. This exhibition demonstrates that progress does not necessarily go hand in hand with a loss of cultural identity – and it provides an impressive and memorable experience for the visitor

The Sultanate of Oman is a country with a rich and diverse cultural heritage. It is a country where the values of Islam are deeply ingrained in the daily lives of its people. The exhibition 'Religious Tolerance: Islam in the Sultanate of Oman' is a testament to the country's commitment to religious freedom and tolerance. It provides a unique opportunity for visitors to learn about the role of Islam in Oman and how it has shaped the country's culture and society. The exhibition is a must-see for anyone interested in the history and culture of the Middle East.



Arabien zu Gast an der Hochschule

Zur Ausstellungseröffnung

Bernd Feinger



■ Große Sultan-Qabus-Moschee in Oman

■ Poster zur Ausstellung

Im Juni 2013 wurde die Ausstellung „Religiöse Toleranz: Der Islam im Sultanat Oman“ von Rektor Ulrich Druwe eröffnet. Dazu waren hochrangige Vertreter des Oman aus dem Ministerium für religiöse Angelegenheiten angereist: Ahmed Al-Farsi, der Generaldirektor des Ministeriums sowie Mohammad Al-Mamari, Projektleiter und wissenschaftlicher Betreuer der Ausstellung, mit seinen beiden Assistenten Amer Al-Mamari und Mohammad Al-Malki. Von der omanischen Botschaft Berlin waren Botschaftsrat Nasser Al-Manwari und für die Deutsch-Omanische Gesellschaft deren Generalsekretär Georg Popp gekommen.



■ Der Generaldirektor des Ministeriums für religiöse Angelegenheiten Ahmed Al-Farsi (erste Reihe, Mitte) und Botschaftsrat Nasser Al-Manwari (am Pult) begleiten die Eröffnung.

Die Idee, das südostarabische Land mit seinem spezifischen Islam in Deutschland zu präsentieren, geht auf Mohammad Al-Mamari zurück. Als muslimischer Theologe studierte er mehrere Jahre an der Fakultät für Orientalistik der Universität Tübingen und knüpfte Kontakte zu Mitgliedern der Deutsch-Omanischen Gesellschaft. Das Konzept fand Unterstützung im

Religionsministerium. Inzwischen wurde die Ausstellung in zahlreichen deutschen Städten gezeigt, vorrangig in kommunalen Bildungseinrichtungen und Hochschulen. Bald hatte man eine europäische Version aufgelegt, die dann auch international erweitert wurde. Gleichzeitig läuft im Oman selbst eine Bildungsoffensive zur Fortbildung und Schulung der für die religiöse Unterweisung Verantwortlichen. Der Oman hat als altes Handelsland zwischen Indien und der Arabischen Halbinsel in Richtung Mittelmeer stark kosmopolitischen Charakter. Dies prägt seine kulturellen Tradi-



Report on CNN, September 2010



Report on Alhurra TV, USA, July 2016



العدد 12189 من 7 أغسطس 2014
Thursday 7 August 2014 Edition No 12189

بالتعاون مع وزارة الأوقاف

انطلاق معرض «رسالة الإسلام» بجامعة كامبريدج البريطانية في نسخته الـ ٤٩




جانب من حضور المعرض

من المعرض

تدركه من أثار إيجابية في نفوس الزوار والمتابعين وما نتج عنه من برامج تسع ونظرة أفرادها حول قضايا العرب والإسلام وما قام المعرض بتسهيبه منها خلال زيارته للجامعات والراكز الثقافية ودور العبادة والمدارس وغيرها من محاضرات الثقافة والتأثير. من الجدير بالذكر أن معرض «رسالة الإسلام» مشروع عالمي تشرف عليه وتنظمه وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية بهدف إلى نشر الوعي العالمي والفاهيم المشتركة والمسؤولية الفردية تجاه المجتمع والعالم. وقد أقيم المعرض في أكثر من خمسين مدينة عالمية وبمشردين لغة وحضرة الملايين حول العالم منذ عام 2009م.

كما ألقى من جانب الوزارة محمد بن سعيد العمري المستشار العلمي بكتب المعرض «رسالة الإسلام» كلمة عبر فيها عن شكره للجامعة كامبريدج على احتضان فعاليات المعرض مؤكداً على رسالة المعرض المتطلقة من تاريخ عمان الحضاري وأدوارها الريادية في العالم، وجهودها ومساهماتها الخيرية مشوأل تاريخها. منذ تكتفها رسالة الإسلام الأولى من قبل الرسول محمد صلى الله عليه وسلم. تم إيمانهم عن طواعية. تم دعاء النبي عليه الصلاة والسلام لأهل عمان. ومن جانبه قدم جورج بوب من جمهورية ألمانيا الاتحادية ملخصاً عن تأثير المعرض على الصعيد العالمي وما

جميع المشاركين في البرنامج من الأطلاع على محتوياته ومعلوماته الوفيرة، وبما يحتكه موضوع المعرض من أهمية في العالم. معبرا عن شكره لوزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية على مساعيها في مجالات نشر ثقافة التعايش والتسامح والعيش المشترك وتحسين الأمن والسلام.

البروفيسور ديفيد فورد عميد كلية اللاهيات بجامعة كامبريدج وعدد من مسؤولي الجامعة والمشاركين في برنامج حوار الأديان من مختلف دول العالم ويستمر سبعة أيام. بدأ الحفل بكلمة البروفيسور ديفيد فورد عبر فيها عن سعادته بإقامة المعرض في مانيجلتي هول حيث يتمكن

احتضنت جامعة كامبريدج البريطانية فعاليات معرض «رسالة الإسلام» في محطته التاسعة والأربعين والتي تأتي التزاماً مع البرنامج الدولي لحوار الأديان الذي يفتد سنوياً في الجامعة بالتعاون مع وزارة الأوقاف والشؤون الدينية والسلطة. وحضر حفل الافتتاح

Article in Oman Daily, August 07, 2014

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2014

4

Observer

Exhibition on Islam opens in Malta



VALLETTA, Malta — Oman's exhibition titled "Message of Islam" began in the Republic of Malta yesterday. The inaugural event was held under the auspices of Maltese Minister for Foreign Affairs, Dr George W. Vella, at the St. James Cavalier Centre for Creativity in the Maltese capital Valletta. The exhibition runs until November 9. The opening was also attended by Shaikh Ahmed bin Saud al Siabi, Muhi's office Secretary General, Joseph Mangion, Ambassador of Malta to the Sultanate and a number of ambassadors and officials. — ONA



Article in Oman Observer, October 27, 2014

TIMESOF
MALTA.COM

Monday, October 27, 2014 11:46

Exhibition on Oman's message of Islam inaugurated



Foreign Affairs, George Vella yesterday evening inaugurated an exhibition "Tolerance, Understanding, Coexistence: Oman's message of Islam" at St. James Cavalier in Valletta. It will run until November 9.

Dr Vella said the exhibition coincided with the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Malta and the Sultanate of Oman. Recalling his visit to the Sultanate of Oman last June, Dr Vella said that the diplomatic relations between the two countries will be strengthened and enhanced in the months ahead.

He underlined the presence of a significant number of Omani students at the University and said further discussions were envisaged to identify more avenues of cooperation in the educational sector as well as in the commercial and economic sectors.

Article in Times of Malta, October 25, 2014

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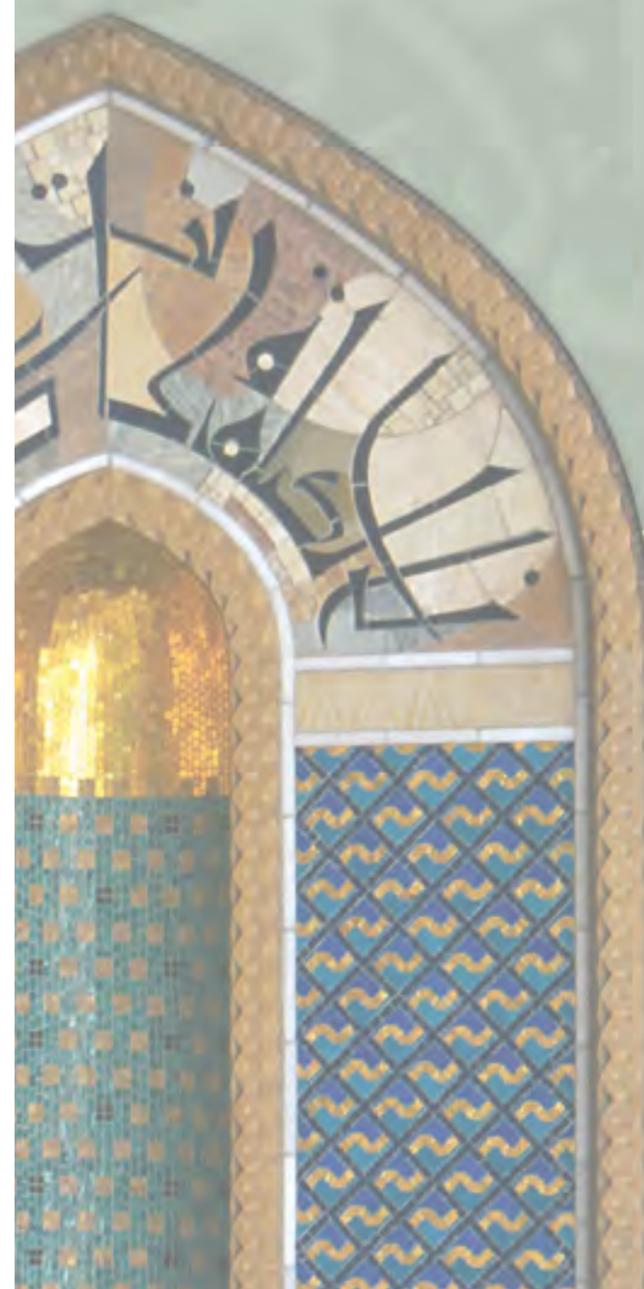
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9ZT17mz7NY>

Appendix III: The Exhibits

Panels
Facsimiles
Shadow Art
Calligraphies
Multimedia Displays



TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MESSAGE OF ISLAM

The Sultanate of Oman

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Geographical Context:
 The Sultanate of Oman covers the southeastern edge of the Arabian Peninsula. It shares borders with the Republic of Yemen to the south-west, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west and the United Arab Emirates to the north. Its surface area is 309,500 square kilometers, roughly the size of Poland or the US state of Kansas. The northernmost part of the country, the Musandam Peninsula, lies on the Strait of Hormuz and is characterized by its jagged Hajar Mountains, which reach elevations of 3000 metres. In the west the country is bounded by the great Arabian desert, which covers a quarter of the Arabian Peninsula and is sparsely populated, thus its name "Ar Rub al Khali" (the Empty Quarter). Along the east coast, south of Al Ashkarah, spread the dunes of the Wihbah Sands. South of the Hajar Mountains is an 800 kilometer long flat gravel desert stretching to southern Oman. From this dry plain the landscape rises into the 1800 meter high Dhofar mountain range, a limestone massif which borders a vast plain which ends in sandy beaches as it reaches the sea.

Climate:
 The 200 kilometer long stretch of coast in the south of Oman has a unique climate, which from June through August each year is transformed into a green paradise by the misty rain and fog of the Southwest Monsoon.

Historical Sites:
 - *Old fort in Musandam*
 - *Fort Jabal in the Hajar Mountains*
 - *Gold mines in the Empty Quarter*
 - *Shoal islands after rain*
 - *Southern hills during the monsoon*

TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING EXISTENCE

Sons of Sindbad

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Omani Sea Trading Routes

Era and Principle Goods Traded:

- 2000 BC: Copper
- 100 AD: Frankincense
- 850 AD: Luxury goods
- 1850 AD: Spices, ivory
- Historical spice routes

Historical Goods:

- Frankincense resin from southern Oman
- Dates from southern Oman
- Cloves from Zanzibar
- Cinnamon bark from Ceylon
- Pepper from the Malabar coast

Text:
 The Omanis are an ancient seafaring people. Stories of their adventures have been distilled into the tales of Sindbad the Sailor, and they describe the historical sea routes from Sohar in Oman via Ceylon and Indonesia to Canton. Already in the 8th century – long before the first Europeans came along – Omani traders sailed the "Seven Seas" as far as China, where dates were traded for silk and porcelain. Other goods which were traded include gold, ivory, and above all, spices. As early as 2000 BC the civilizations of Sumer and the Indus Valley procured copper via sea routes from the dealers of "Magar," which is now Oman. In the following ages the most important export was frankincense from southern Oman, traded primarily with the Egyptians and Romans. Frankincense was literally worth its weight in gold. The explorer Ibn Battuta noted that the trade on the Malabar Coast was dominated by various Arab communities, including Omanis and Yemenis, who were "well-honoured for their trustworthiness." By the 19th century, the island of Zanzibar had developed into the center of the Omani trade empire, trading mainly in ivory and cloves. Slave trade was common world wide in those days as part of the international economy. In 1822 slavery was forbidden by law by Sultan Said bin Sultan within his dominions in context of the international efforts to contain slavery. The first bilateral accord between a Gulf Arab state and the USA was with Oman in 1833. The first Arab diplomat accredited by the USA, Ahmad bin Na'aman, arrived in New York in 1840 aboard the Omani vessel *Sultamah*.

TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING EXISTENCE

Quotes of His Majesty Sultan Qaboos

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"Extremism, under whatever guise, fanaticism of whatever kind, factionalism of whatever persuasion would be hateful poisonous plants in the soil of our country which will not be allowed to flourish."

Arabia Daily News
18.11.1992

"The path we have followed in our foreign policy over the past decades has shown itself to be both sound and effective, with God's guidance. We are committed to this approach, which supports justice, peace and security, and tolerance and love; which calls for international cooperation in order to reinforce stability, promote growth and prosperity and tackle the causes of tension in international relations by producing just and permanent solutions to critical problems; which fosters peaceful co-existence between nations; and which generates well-being and prosperity for the whole of mankind."

Majlis Oman
14.11.2008

"The more thought becomes diverse, open and free of fanaticism, the more it becomes a correct and sound basis for building generations, the progress of nations and the advancement of societies. Inflexibility, extremism and immoderation are the opposite to all this and societies which adopt such ideas only carry within themselves the seeds of their eventual destruction."

The Council of Oman,
31.10.2011



The coat of arms of Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said



Political Development

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Since 1970 His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said has personally steered the development of the country by using social and political policies. His goal was and is to modernize the country without breaking with tradition.

Therefore the State Council initially was comprised mainly of tribal leaders. Since the mid-1990s there has been a bicameral parliament, the Council of Oman, consisting of the State Council (*Majlis ad-Dawlah*) and the Consultative Council (*Majlis Ash-Shura*).

The members of the State Council are appointed by the Sultan, the members of the Consultative Council are elected by the people and represent individual districts. All decisions in the Council of Oman are taken by majority. The State Council may not have more members than the Consultative Council. For women and men over 21 years of age, there is universal suffrage and anyone may hold public office.

The turmoil in the Arab world in early 2011 led to an awakening of political awareness in many segments of Omani society and throughout the population. Demands were made, abuses were denounced, but deep gratitude to Sultan Qaboos was expressed for the achievements of the past 40 years.

An open discussion on the future of the country led to a series of reforms:

- Expansion of the powers of the Council of Oman in the field of legislation and oversight of the ministries.
- Appointment of 13 new ministers primarily from among the elected members of the Consultative Council, the *Majlis Ash-Shura*.
- Reform of the Constitution of 1996.
- Guaranteed independence of the public prosecutor's office.



During the last 40 years the Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al-Said has personally steered the development of the country by using social and political policies. His goal was and is to modernize the country without breaking with tradition.



The Nation's Accelerated Development

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Progress and development stagnated in the 20th century until His Majesty Sultan Qaboos began his reign in 1970. However, the country was able within a few years to develop into an attractive modern state with an exemplary infrastructure, thanks to targeted investment utilizing the revenue from the petroleum business. According to the United Nations' "Human Development Report 2010" which charted global progress in income, health and education since 1970, the Sultanate of Oman ranked first among nations.



1970

- Road system: 10 km paved, 1700 km unpaved
- Education: 3 elementary schools
- Health Services: 1 clinic
- Life Expectancy: 49.3 years
- Political Relations: isolated politically
- Population estimated: 600,000



2010

- Road system: 23,340 km paved, more than 25,000 km unpaved
- Education: more than 1200 schools, 1 state-run university, 12 private universities
- Health Services: 58 hospitals, 933 polyclinics
- Life Expectancy: 74 years
- Political Relations: diplomatic relations with 135 countries
- Population: 1,967 million Omanis and 900,000 foreigners



Islam arrives in Oman

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Islam was accepted peacefully in Oman, without coercion, during the Prophet's lifetime. In the year 629 the Prophet Mohammed sent a letter to the two kings of Oman, Abd and Jaifar, sons of Julanda, living in Sohar, exhorting them to become his followers. Delegations were exchanged to study and consider this, and Abd and Jaifar became believers and converted freely.

The two kings of Oman united the Arab tribes and expelled the Persians, and political power remained in the hands of the Al Julanda dynasty until Oman was

annexed to Basra by the third caliph, Uthman bin Affan. It was the duty of the caliphs – first Abu Bakr, then Umar bin Al Khattab – to appoint the governors of the Muslims.

A bloody confrontation between the caliphs Ali and Muawiyah created a schism which led to the development

the Sunni and Shiite schools of jurisprudence. Abd bin Al Julanda decided that Oman would not follow either of these schools, initially keeping Oman largely independent of Umayyid rule. Eventually the Al Julanda dynasty was forced to relocate to Africa due to military attacks attempting to coerce submission.

As a result, a center of political resistance to Umayyad hegemony was created in Oman, which over time evolved into the Ibadhi school of thought.





Development of Islam in Oman

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While the Quran is the source of all Islamic jurisprudence, differing interpretations and beliefs have resulted in different schools of thought. Groups first diverged after the Prophet Muhammad died in 632, and his followers could not agree whether to choose bloodline successors, or leaders most likely to follow the tenets of the faith.

The Sunni branch contends that the first four caliphs - Mohammed's successors - rightfully took his place as the leaders of Muslims. They recognize the heirs of the four caliphs as legitimate religious leaders. They chose Abu Bakr, the prophet's adviser, to become the first successor, or caliph, to lead the Muslim state.

The Sunni imams are always chosen from among the members of the tribe of the Prophet Mohammed, the Quraysh.

Shites, in contrast, believe that only the heirs of the fourth caliph, Ali (Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law) are the legitimate successors of Mohammed.

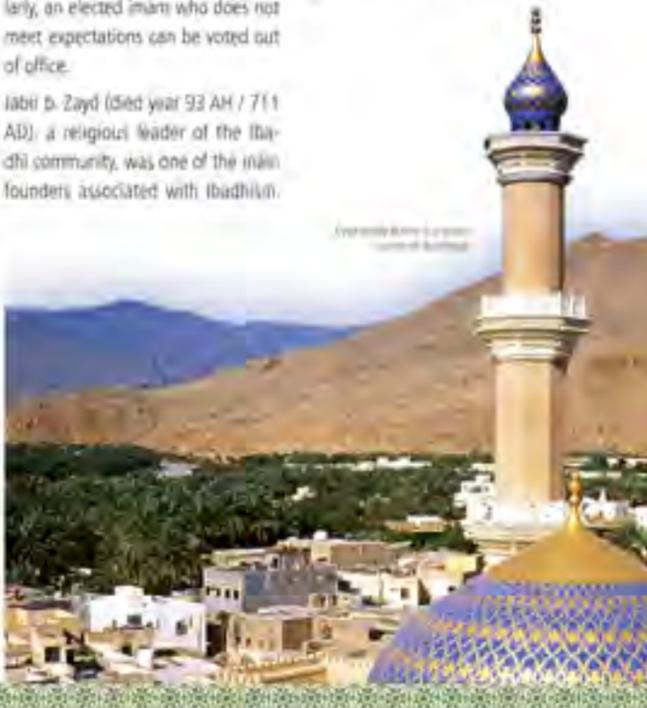
For the Ibadhis however, the imam's ancestry is irrelevant. The Ibadhis maintain that every faithful and theologically educated Muslim is a potential candidate for the office and can be chosen as imam. The imam is a religious and civic leader with full governmental power. He is "the first among equals" in the eyes of the Ibadhis, just as humans are first among God's other creatures. Therefore, the *umma*, the community of Muslims, selects from its ranks a believer who is best qualified for the office.

If no one can meet the high demands of the office of imam, the position remains temporarily unfilled. Similarly, an elected imam who does not meet expectations can be voted out of office.

Ibn al-Zayd (Died year 93 AH / 711 AD), a religious leader of the Ibadhi community, was one of the main founders associated with Ibadhiism.

Born in Nizwa in Oman, he later settled in Iraq. In spite of the distance, he maintained close ties with his home country. The Al-Muhallab and Al-Azad tribes both supported him in the creation of the Ibadhi school.

Ibn al-Zayd advised Ibn Ibadh on most of his political activities. Together they refused groups like Qadarites, Mutazilites, Mu'jizites, and even Kharijites. The early Ibadhiyah were a moderate group, limited in numbers.



Ever ready to advise & guide
Ibn al-Zayd

TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
DIVERSITY RESPECT OF ISLAM

Peaceful Coexistence

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The philosophy of the Ibadhis is based on principles of religious tolerance and the avoidance of conflict and violence. Other religious views or models of interpretation must be respected. Prayers in the mosques throughout the country are conducted with Sunnis and Shites side by side with Ibadhis. Sunnis and Shites have always lived in harmony and accord with the Ibadhis, who have been and continue to be the majority in Oman.

The communal prayer to God knows no theological disputes. Everyone must answer for himself before God. As for the deciding of legal issues, scholars considered the following to be the basis for making judgments in cases before the Islamic community, in this order: the Quran, the Sunnah, the opinions of other senior men, and lastly, one's own judgment.

Ibadhiism is based on the effort to return to the purity of Islamic faith and society exactly along the tenets prescribed by the Prophet Mohammed. Ibadhis have always maintained their firm loyalty to the Quran, the Sunnah, and to their fellow Muslims, and have had an open attitude, inviting people to understand their views, and giving them time to decide, reconsider their opinions. The Ibadhis made it clear that they would not fight their opponents unless they were attacked first. Bloodshed due to theological differences is regarded as shameful.

Throughout history members of other faiths were found in Oman: Jews, Christians, Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and others. Due to the principles of religious tolerance their presence in the past centuries was accepted, and they were not discriminated against due to their religious affiliation even in the times of the religious state, the imamate.



TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE
DIVERSITY RESPECT OF ISLAM

Religious Tolerance throughout History

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Arab merchants and traders, such as Abdullah al Qasim from Bahla, Oman, were important members of the Arab community in 10th century Canton and contributed to the building of the first mosque in China.

There is evidence that a king of Kerala became the first-known convert to Islam from India. He went to Mecca to meet the Prophet Mohammed, and then settled down in southern Oman. He sent messengers and established the first ten mosques on the west coast of south India.

Oman's 5000-year-old history of trade has also left its imprint throughout the land, where there developed a unique climate of openness and tolerance, as noted in this quote from the Englishman John Ovington, captain of King James II, on his visit to Muscat in 1633:

"These Arabians are very courteous and extremely civil to all strangers; they offer neither violence or affront in any way; and tho' they are very tenacious of their own principles and admirers of their own religion, yet do they never impose it on any; nor are their morals evered with such furious zeal: as to divert them of humanity

and a ferule respect... In fine, these are a people naturally temperate and just, and imbued with those excellent qualities which Grecian philosophers and Roman moralists endeavoured to inspire into their subjects, tho' they missed their aim."

Minorities which were persecuted elsewhere found refuge and a home in Oman, where they were amicably integrated into society.

Carlton Niebuhr, a German traveler, visited Muscat on January 3, 1765. He reports:

"Banians from India are settled in great numbers in the commercial city. At Mokha they suffer many mortifications, but in Muscat, among the tolerant sect of the Beias, they are permitted to observe the laws, and cultivate worship of their own religion without disturbance."

In 1824, Captain George Keppel, a British traveler, visited Muscat while coming back from India to England. He characterized the Muslims of Oman as follows: "They worship no saints; and have neither convents nor dervishes. They have a great regard for justice and a universal toleration of other religions."

The American businessman and diplomat, Edmund Roberts, visited Sayyid Said in 1833 and reported about the ruler of Oman:

"All religions within the Sultan's dominions, are not merely tolerated, but they are protected by his highness and there is no obstacle whatever to prevent the Christians, the Jew, or the Gentile, from preaching their peculiar doctrines, or erecting temples."

Religious Ties in Zanzibar

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The Omani rulers who were based in Zanzibar were open and tolerant toward Christians in East Africa. In 1868 the Omani Sultan, Majid (1834-1870) bestowed a vast tract of land to the "Fathers of the Holy

Ghost" north of Bagamoyo on the mainland coast, in order for them to build the first mission in East Africa. The mission on this land grant is still active today.

Sultan Majid also strongly supported the work of the German linguist Dr. Johann Ludwig Krapf (1810-1885), who was sent to East Africa by the British Church Missionary Society. He compiled the first grammar and dictionary of the Swahili language, and translated the Book of Genesis into Swahili.

When the first printing press was brought to East Africa under the reign of Sultan Bargash (1837-1888), the missionaries used it to print Christian literature in Swahili to support their efforts on the mainland. They were helped in their translations by the local scholar Sheikh Abdel-Aziz bin Abd Al-Ghani Al-Amawi, who in 1872 co-authored the translation of the Catechism and the Bible.

Mutual Understanding

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Today a large number of followers of various religions are found in Oman, where the state guarantees freedom of religion for the country's nationals and residents. The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs is responsible for the various religious communities in Oman, which it provides with the facilities necessary to practice their faith. Christian churches of various denominations are found in Muscat and Salalah, with temples for Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists as well. The law prohibits public proselytizing by all religious groups. Oman is actively working to promote a true understanding of Islam to counter the spread of stereotypical and erroneous views of Islam which leads to bigotry. Within the framework of Oman's "National Plan for the Alliance of Civilisations," created in 2009, Oman is fostering religious tolerance, encouraging greater intellectual and cultural interactions between peoples, and creating a network based on the principles of mutual understanding, acceptance, and friendship.



Father, we sing to your name, Wonderful mighty are you, All of creation with us, Shout out your praise





TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MINISTRY OF ENDOWMENTS AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Bridges of Understanding

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Various religious institutions in Oman take responsibility for overseeing the practice of religion according to their own traditions, values and customs. These include the Protestant Church of Oman, the Hindu Mahajan Temple, the Catholic Diocese of Oman and the Al Amana Centre, established by the Reformed Church in America. In 1893 the Sultan of Oman, Sultan Faisal bin Turki, invited doctors of the Reformed Church in America to establish hospitals in the coastal towns of Muscat and Muttrah. This was at a time in Oman's history when many children and citizens of Oman were dying of diseases such as malaria and tuberculosis. Trachoma, a disease of the upper eyelids, and typhoid fever were also prevalent. The goal of the Reformed Church in America was to assist Oman in eradicating these infectious diseases and in developing Oman's medical sector, which in time would be staffed and managed by Omanis. The first doctors, staff and hospital administrators in Oman were educated in the hospitals of the Reformed Church. These succeeded only because of the collaborative effort between the people of Oman and those of many other nationalities and faiths, who worked side by side to serve the needs of the entire community. With the modern development of the country, the medical role it played was no longer needed, and a new vision emerged to respond to the challenges of today's world. It was then that the Reformed Church sought partners to create an ecumenical center - the Al Amana Centre - which would use its legacy to work internationally and build bridges of understanding and cooperation between religions and to work for the common good. The Centre now collaborates with religious, civic and government leaders in developing programs which enable people to learn about each other, from each other.





TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S MINISTRY OF ENDOWMENTS AND RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS

Mosques in Oman

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Mosques are an important part of Omani daily life. They serve as places of prayer, schools for the study of religion and as meeting places for the community.

Mosques which were built in the Ibadhi tradition are simple structures and have no minaret. The simple interiors are occasionally adorned by decorations and calligraphy in the prayer niche and on the wooden ceiling.

Before the act of prayer a ritual washing is necessary, thus mosques were usually built near water sources such as wells or the traditional irrigation system of canals, the *afay*. In this age of municipal water supplies, mosques are located everywhere – often with separate prayer rooms for men and women.




TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S BRIDGES OF FAITH

The Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque

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In 2001 the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque was completed in Muscat. The architecture of the mosque is subdued yet rich in detail and it succeeds in combining the diverse artistic traditions of various Islamic eras and regions in grand harmony. This principle of design is also symbolic of Omani society with its various Islamic traditions and orientations all harmoniously united under one roof.

The grounds of the mosque cover an area of 416,000 square meters. The main entrance is approached through three high arches aligned with the lines of dark marble sunken into the pavement which converge on the principle minaret. Its height of 91.5 meters is thus optically accentuated greatly due to the perspective. The entire mosque complex was erected on a rectangular base,

at the corners of which are another four minarets, each with a height of 45 meters, completing the enclosure. The wide prayer hall provides prayer space for 6600 believers. The floor is covered with a 4263 square meter carpet, a masterpiece of Persian carpet weaving. The optical counterpart to the fine carpet is the wooden ceiling, which is richly decorated with calligraphy and arabesques. The whole room is dominated by a 34 meter high dome. In its center hangs a magnificent chandelier made of Swarovsky crystal.

The Grand Mosque is not only a place for prayers, it is also a center of religious and cultural activities. The government invites many scholars of different faiths to the Grand Mosque, including Christianity and Judaism, to speak on tolerance and interfaith understanding.

TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
OMAN'S BRIDGES OF FAITH

The Role of Women in Society

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As Oman has developed into a modern, open state the changes in the way of life have contributed to changes in the prevailing practices and beliefs regarding women.

The government established literacy centers and made education compulsory for girls, and quite successfully. Since then the percentage of women studying has grown to the point that it became necessary to allocate quotas at the Sultan Qaboos University for men.

There are also a variety of clubs and associations which are concerned

with women's issues. These are entrusted with teaching, training and the expanding the number of possibilities for women. Whether or not a woman is married, she should be able to earn a living and contribute to the financial security of the family.

At many mosques one finds special prayer rooms especially for women. Women learn about religion and the Quran from other women who are specialized in these matters. To achieve this end the "Centre for the Religious Instruction of Women" was founded, where women also teach.








TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE

OMAN'S MINISTRY OF RELIGION



Women in Politics

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Whatever form of discrimination women may have faced in the past, Omani women today have the force of law protecting their full political rights. Women are as much involved politically in society as men. They have the right to vote and to run for election. Women hold ministerial posts in the Sultanate and have been appointed as ambassadors abroad. Female

members of parliament are present in both the *Majlis A'Shura* (Consultative Council) and the *Majlis A'Dawla* (State Council). Women hold official positions at all levels, serve in the military, and account for almost half of government employees.

In the private sector one finds women working not only as regular employees

but also in management and executive positions, and as CEOs and owners. No industry is closed to women. Omani law mandates maternity leave and equal pay for equal work.

All present laws and regulations in Oman give equal opportunities to women in trade, labor, civil service and social insurance.





TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE

OMAN'S MINISTRY OF RELIGION



Birth Rites and Rituals

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For Omanis the birth of a child is an important social occasion in which the whole family gathers, gifts are made and congratulations are conveyed. It is customary to put money into the swaddling clothes of the newborn. The young mother takes her infant on visits to her parents' house, where everyone gets involved in the happy event.

Some of the rituals surrounding the birth of a child are influenced by religious rites.

Immediately after the birth of the child, chewed dates are rubbed on the baby's gums, the call to prayer is whispered in the right ear, and a prayer for protection against the devil is whispered in the left ear, as instructed by the Prophet.

On the seventh day after birth the baby's head is shaved, the hair is weighed and a donation of silver is made of the equivalent weight. In addition, for a baby boy two animals are slaughtered; for a baby girl, one. On that day the child receives his or her name, and the family gathers for a special meal, the *naaka*.





It is on this day that Muslim boys should be circumcised. In Oman it is required that circumcision take place in a hospital. Female circumcision is prohibited by law.

Following an old custom in Oman, for each newborn son a date palm is planted. It slowly grows to become the child's personal tree. Because date palms live about as long as people, they can keep their owners from starvation. They are a traditional form of life insurance.




Funeral Customs

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The rituals for the burial of the dead are based on religious teachings and may differ slightly depending on the ethnic group and traditional practices. All are agreed, however, that the dignity of the dead must be respected, whether man or woman. The ritual begins with the washing of the body, which is then perfumed and wrapped in a white shroud. The funeral bier is carried on the shoulders to the cemetery where prayers

are held. The prayer includes asking for mercy and forgiveness for the departed and imploring for his or her entrance into paradise.

Then the body is carried to the grave, which is a simple pit dug in the appropriate size and depth, into which the body is laid. It is covered with stones so that the funeral bier is not sullied with dust and dirt. Only then is the grave filled with earth.

Usually there is no indication who is buried in a grave, but grave sites may be marked to provide information about the gender of the deceased.

A simple upright stone on either end of the grave marks the final resting place of a man; these plus a third stone in the center indicates that of a woman. On occasion someone may write the name of the deceased on a stone or a small table, which then fades with time.






Religion in Daily Life

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Omani Muslims, men and women, start their day with the *Fajr*, the morning prayer, which must be offered before sunrise, either in the mosque or at home. Afterwards they go to work.

During the day the *zohr*, or midday prayer, is performed in nearby mosques, or in special prayer rooms in the government and other buildings.

The Quran requires certain prayers to be performed five times per day.

Anyone who is unable to do so at the proscribed prayer times can make up for it at a later time. When traveling, two prayers may be combined.

During the holidays many families travel to Mecca in order to perform the *umrah*, the "little" pilgrimage.

During the month of Ramadan, Muslims fast from sunrise until sunset. During this time the usual daytime activities take place at night. One meets with neighbors, friends and acquaintances for a large repast, everyone bringing a dish.

Everyone prays together in the mosque and thereafter meet in groups to sit and chat outdoors.

On the many small floodlit sports grounds young people may play soccer or volleyball.

Ramadan is the time for communication and socializing. One makes new friends and reconnects with old ones. The focus is not on business and getting ahead, but on one's fellow man.



TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
MINISTRY OF RELIGION AND CHARITABLE AFFAIRS

Eid Days and Alms-giving

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Immediately following the fasting month of Ramadan is the feast of *Eid al-Fitr*, the festival of breaking the fast. It has a high religious and social significance, and is usually celebrated for three days. The children receive gifts from the parents, but not the other way around! It is a huge celebration and everyone wishes one another "*Eid mubarak*," a blessed fest.

The great Feast of the Sacrifice, *Eid al-Adha*, takes place on 10th day of *Dhu-l-Hijja*, the 12th month of the Islamic calendar. It is the traditional time of reflection and *Hajj*, the annual pilgrimage to Mecca which every Muslim should attempt at least once in his life.

During Eid it is expected of everyone to perform the Eid prayers and to offer support to the poor and needy. This kind of voluntary donation (*sadaqa*) is in addition to the *zakat*, which is a form of tithing and is obligatory.

The *zakat* (literally, cleansing) is the duty of every Muslim, but is only collected from those whose wealth is above a certain threshold, and may be up to 2.5 percent of annual income.

This historic form of social welfare is based on the Islamic imperatives of fraternity and mutual support. As a result the wealthy person's possessions are "purified" by the donated portion, which according to interpretations of the Quran does not belong to him anyway. The coordination and allocation of donations is handled by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs. They also advise whom is to be helped, and how. Often the donations are made of commodities such as rice, oil, sugar and wheat, which are then delivered in person by the donor directly to the recipient.

The needy may be large families with low incomes, for example, or families who have become impoverished through accident or illness.



TOLERANCE UNDERSTANDING COEXISTENCE
MINISTRY OF RELIGION AND CHARITABLE AFFAIRS

Legal System

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Oman's constitution designates Islam as the official state religion and Islamic Shari'a law as a basis of legislation. Legislation in the areas of marital status and family law, in particular, is consistent with Shari'a. Civil and criminal law and judicial penalties must also be fully in compliance with international laws.

The Sultanate has signed into laws adopted by the UN, in particular those relating to the protection of human rights, the protection of minorities, as well as the conventions against all forms of discrimination against women and to safeguard the rights of the child. The rule of law, the sovereignty of the state, and the independence of the

judiciary are among the most important principles that were established to protect the rights of every Omani citizen. Each defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty by a legal process. The use of physical and/or psychological abuse is prohibited. All penalties shall be in accordance with the law before which all citizens are equal.



**TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE**



Handing Down the Quran

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The Quran was revealed to the Prophet Mohammed over the course of 23 years and has since been handed down by succeeding generations of Muslims.

The Quran has remained unchanged since the time of the Prophet: it contains 114 surah of varying length, each containing verses. The total number of verses is 6236.

The Quran contains religious, social and political doctrines, moral teachings and stories of vanished cultures.

Muslims believe that the Quran should be preserved and hallowed, that items which have Quranic inscriptions must be honored, and that each page is to be cherished. If a page ever becomes detached, it is most often rolled up and buried

in a dry well, or plugged into cracks in the wall. The Quran is kept in elevated places and is thus protected from desecration and abuse.

Even today, many Omanis learn the entire Quran by heart. It is often copied in its entirety by hand.



**TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE**



Oman's Quranic Manuscripts

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Oman has some Quranic manuscripts which were produced by Omani calligraphers. They are characterized by simplicity and clarity. Some manuscripts were written with gold ink and embellished with religious ornaments. Drawings of living creatures, however, do not exist.

Even today valuable Quranic manuscripts are commissioned, even by His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said. Another such manuscript, referred to as "the Oman Quran," was commissioned by the Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs.

It was completed in 2006 after eight years of continuous work and is unique in its beautiful, inspired by the Sultan Qaboos Grand Mosque.




**TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE**
DINA'S PROJECT OF ISLAM

The Quran in Daily Life

www.islam-in-oman.com

The Quran is the sacred book of Muslims. Muslim men, women and children recite it daily in their prayers and other occasions. It is also available on CDs and cassettes in order to listen to the Quran at home, in the car or elsewhere. In Oman there are certain radio stations which broadcast religious programs and recitations of the Quran.

Additionally there are many Quran schools. Here the children learn the individual verses of the Quran by heart, and that the literal meaning should be interpreted based on the present time and place.

important in the curriculum of Quran schools is to convey the literary qualities of the Arabic language as well as to promote standards of good behavior and moral values in general. Every year there is a nationwide Quran competition, sponsored by Sultan Qaboos, which enjoys the participation of large numbers of men, women and children.

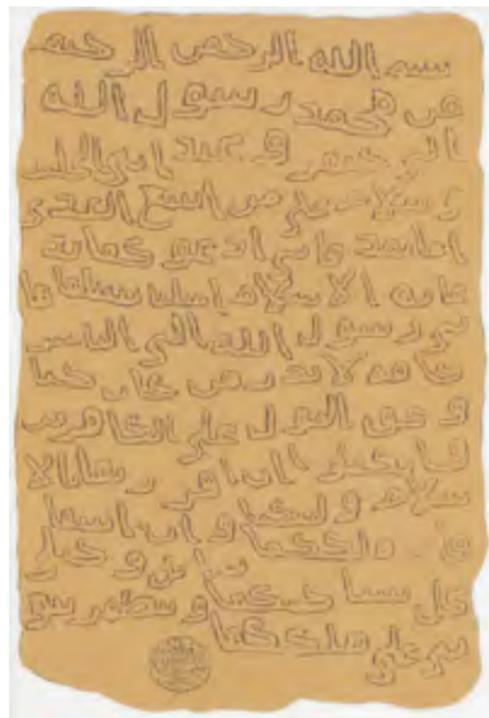


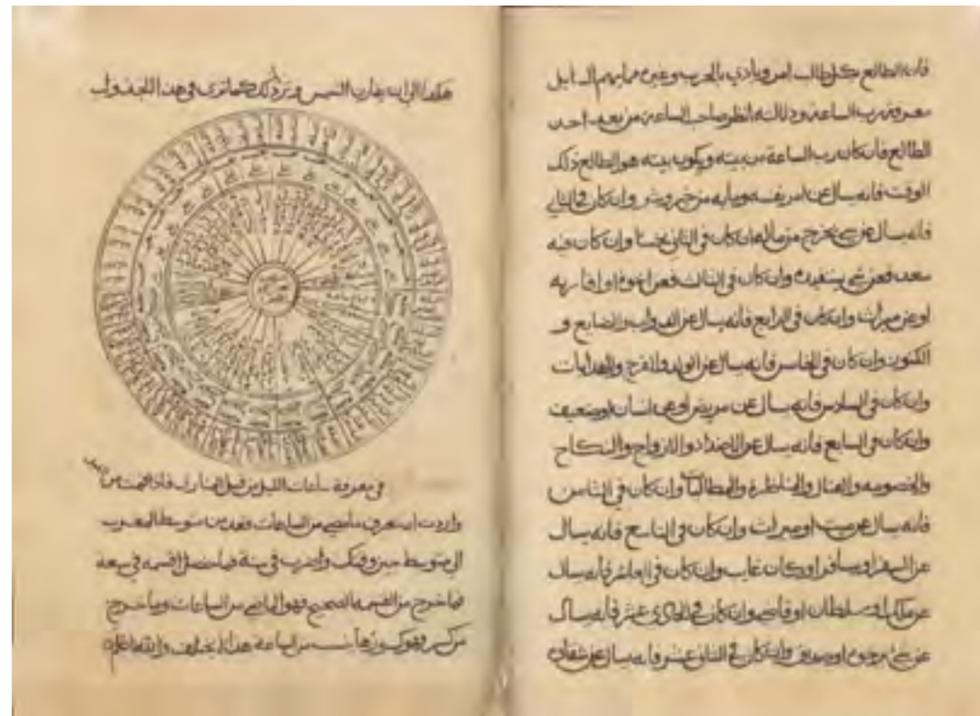
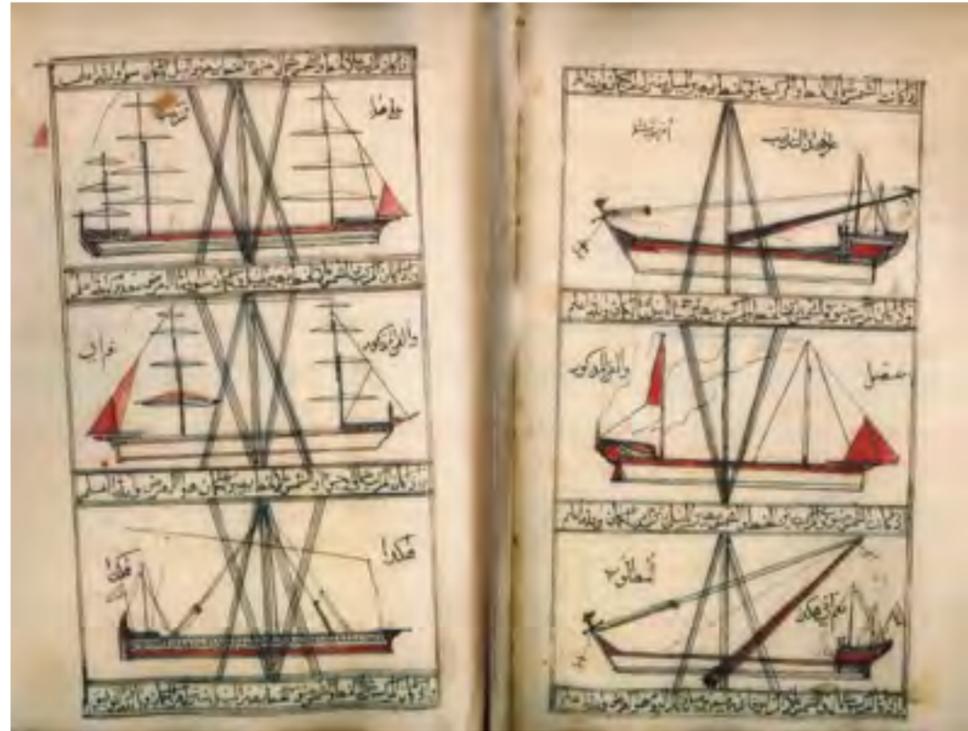

**TOLERANCE
UNDERSTANDING
COEXISTENCE**
DINA'S PROJECT OF ISLAM

The exhibits / facsimile prints



The exhibits / facsimile prints

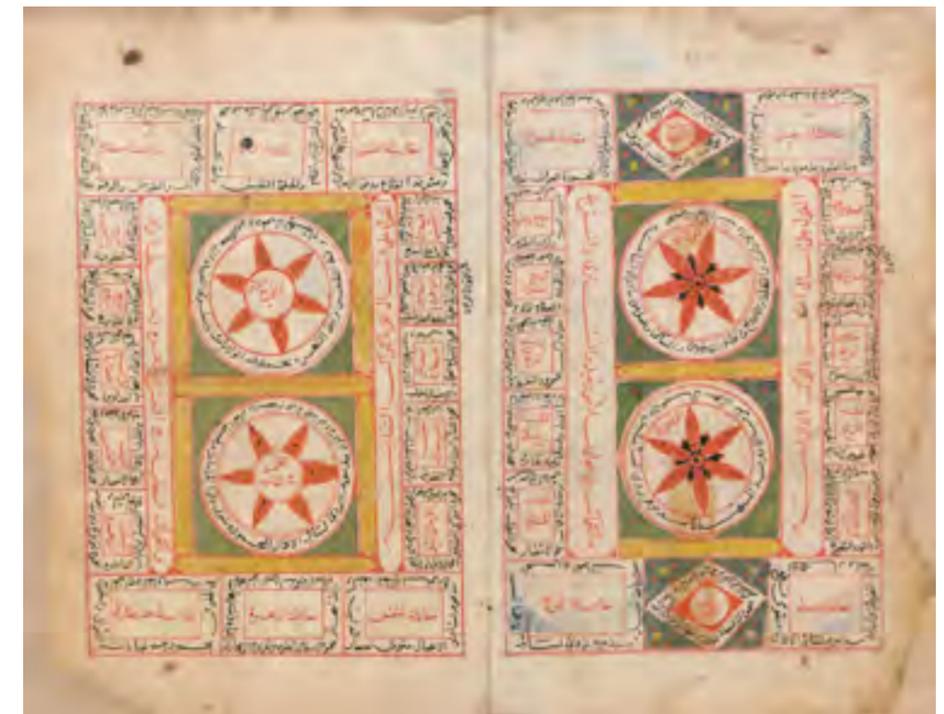




The exhibits / facsimile prints



The exhibits / facsimile prints





Ya ALLAH (oh God)



My Lord
Have your mercy on my
parents as they as they
did care of me when I
was little.



Glory to God



Thanks God



My God (prayer to God)



I ask your forgiveness!



All their affairs are a matter of council.



The decision is for ALLAH only.



Thy Lord is the Forgiver, full of mercy.



Mohammed, the prophet of ALLAH.



Those who believe and do good works are the best of created beings.



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www.islam-in-oman.com

This exhibition provides insight into Islam's role in the daily life of a modern Arab society, and is only one facet of an international initiative undertaken by Oman's Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs to promote interfaith dialogue.

The Ministry of Endowments and Religious Affairs is responsible for the various religious communities in the country. The head of this ministry, Sheikh Abdullah al-Salimi, has a clear vision of the world and his personal mission:

"We have three population groups on earth: the first, consisting of Christians, Jews and Muslims, who believe in one God and a holy book; the second, atheists, who have lost all confidence in religion; and the third group, representing a variety of religious and spiritual ideas. We endeavor to maintain a constructive and genuine dialogue with scholars and representatives of all these groups. The aim of exchange is to reflect on the foundations of our thinking, a common morality and a common sense of justice. For only when we are aware of these similarities and they form a basis for our actions, while accepting cultural differences, will we and our children enjoy a peaceful future."

In Oman, Islam is a link among the various factions in the country and helps safeguard cultural identity in these times of great change. This exhibition is intended to acquaint the general public with the openness, tolerance and religious acceptance found in Oman, where freedom of religion is guaranteed by the constitution.

