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## Barjeel Art Foundation masterpiece on loan to Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation

SHARJAH, 25th October, 2014 (WAM)--Art Foundation has announced the long-term loan of one of its major artworks for display at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation, commencing in October 2014.

The two prominent cultural institutions have joined forces in order to honour the appointment of Sharjah as the Islamic Culture Capital of 2014 and to enrich the public's knowledge of Islamic history and Islam's contribution to science.

The painting that Barjeel Art Foundation is lending for long-term exhibition at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization is a remarkable masterpiece by Syrian artist Mahmoud Hammad, entitled "Islamic Scientists" and completed in 1988. It now has a prominent place in the Ibn Al Haitham

Gallery of Islamic Science and Technology at the museum.

Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi, the founder of Barjeel Art Foundation said, " We are very proud to be working with a museum so diligently dedicated to preserving and promoting Islamic culture and history. We are also very lucky to be presented with an opportunity to honour and celebrate Sharjah's appointment as the Islamic Culture Capital of 2014, by placing this beautiful and rare artwork in Sharjah's public domain." Manal Ataya, Director General, Sharjah Museums Department added, 'We are very grateful and happy to receive this wonderful loan from the Barjeel Foundation. The painting – with its wonderfully evocative depiction of outstanding Islamic scientists and scholars – is an important educational as well as artistic addition to the Museum's Science and Technology Gallery, particularly as it comes with extensive interpretation regarding their lives and contributions.' The large historic canvas in question depicts a selection of outstanding thinkers and scholars from the Islamic world, who have contributed enormously to the development of science and humanity globally. The exquisite painting bears references to significant developments in the fields of astronomy, geometry, chemistry, biology and geography among many others.

It is a testament to the huge leaps and progress Islamic scientists and intellectuals were making in the exploration and documentation of the physical world. Individuals portrayed in this work include the eminent Al Razi, Ibn Khaldoun, Ibn Al Nafees, as well as other Islamic scientists of an impressively high caliber. Al Razi, for example, was an important figure in the history of medicine and is known as an unprecedented pioneer in the fields of pediatrics and ophthalmology. Ibn Khaldoun was an Arab Muslim historian, regarded to be among the founding fathers of modern historiography, sociology and economics.

He is best known for his book 'The Muqaddimah', which records an early view of universal history. Ibn Al Nafis in turn was an Arab physician, born in Damascus and famous for being the first to describe the pulmonary circulation of blood.

Mahmoud Hammad, the artist behind this exceptional piece of work, was a pioneer of Syrian modern art and a prolific educator. Born in Jarablus, Syria, he traveled to Rome in the 1950s to pursue an art education at the Accademia di Belle Arti di Roma, returning to Syria in 1960 to become an art professor himself. He later went on to first head the art department and then serve as the dean at the Fine Arts Faculty of Damascus University from 1970 to 1980. Hammad won numerous prestigious awards during the course of his career, including the First Prize in Arts in a Naples Competition in 1957.

Barjeel Art Foundation was established as an independent, United Arab Emirates-based initiative to manage, preserve and exhibit the personal art collection of Sultan Sooud Al Qassemi. Part of this objective involves developing a public platform to foster critical dialogue around contemporary art practices with a focus on artists with Arab heritage internationally. By hosting in-house exhibitions, lending artwork to international forums, producing print and online publications, and fashioning interactive public programmes, the foundation strives to serve as an informative resource for contemporary art by Arab artists both locally and on the global stage.

The Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation was established in 2008 to stimulate knowledge, appreciation and enjoyment of Islamic art, history, science and culture. It covers Islamic culture with more than 5,000 artifacts from the Islamic world. Objects include calligraphy, carvings, ceramics, coins, glass, manuscripts, metalwork, and scientific instruments. The museum regularly organizes exhibitions relating to all aspects of Islamic art and culture, most recently their current show, 'Early Capitals of Islamic Culture: The Artistic legacy of Umayyad Damascus and Abbasid Baghdad (650 – 950)', open to the public now until January 17th, 2015.

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