

1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World at the Science Museum

By Graham Pembrey | 16 December 2009

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Exhibition: 1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World, Science Museum, London, January 21 - April 25 2010

While much of Europe slumped into the dark ages after the seventh century, countries in the East such as China, Persia and India were making massive scientific headway under the influence of Muslim culture.

The following 1,000 years of Islamic science and its influence are often neglected, say scholars – but an exhibition at the Science Museum will shed new light on this era.

1001 Inventions: Discover the Muslim Heritage in Our World will feature an array of artefacts, interactive displays and dramatisations, showing how



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modern inventions from fields as diverse as engineering, medicine and design can trace their roots back to Muslim civilisation.

"The 1,000-year period from the seventh century onwards was a time of exceptional scientific and technological advancement in China, India, Persia, Africa and the Arab world," says Professor Chris Rapley, Director of the Science Museum.

"This is the period in history which gave us huge advances in engineering, the development of robotics and the foundations of modern mathematics, chemistry and physics."

The show covers a 1,000-year timeline



The centrepiece of the exhibition will be a six-metre high replica of the Elephant Clock, a 13th century icon with a remarkably multi-cultural design.

"This engineering marvel featured an Indian Elephant, Chinese Dragons, a Greek water mechanism, an Egyptian Phoenix, and wooden robots in traditional Arabian attire," explains Professor Salim T S Al-Hassani, Chairman of the exhibition.

"It embodies cultural and scientific convergence of civilisations and is an appropriate centre-piece for an exhibition about the roots of science and technology."

Other displays will include models of an environmentally-friendly Baghdad house, a ninth century dark room – later called Camera Obscura – and medical instruments from 1,000 years ago, many of which are still used today.

1001 Inventions is a UK-based, non-religious project. It has previously held related exhibitions in Britain and worldwide, including a [previous show](#) at the Museum of Science and Industry in Manchester.

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