

NEW GALLERY

OLDHAM CULTURAL QUARTER DEVELOPMENT

The creation of a new home for the arts and life long learning in Oldham is on its way. The Cultural Quarter Development is going to provide exciting new facilities for everyone to use and enjoy.

Phase 1 - A new Art Gallery

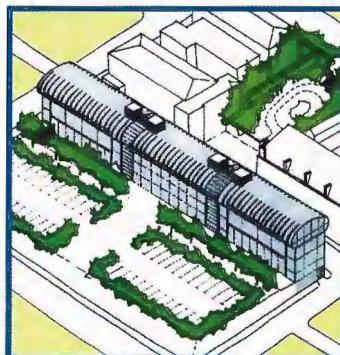
This 'unashamedly contemporary' building will house a brand new art gallery as well as providing improved storage for the borough's art collections. A special work space for education projects and the cultural industries, as well as a shop and café, have also been included. The doors will open to the public in Autumn 2001.

Phase 2 - A new Library

Phase 3 - Refurbishment of the existing Library & Gallery

Phase 4 - A new Performing Arts Facility

To find out more call 0161 911 4651
els.cultural.quarter@oldham.gov.uk



Oldham Cultural
Quarter Development

Why not also visit other current exhibitions at Oldham Art Gallery

Facing the Future until April 2000 **A Brush with the Past** 8 April 2000

Branching Out 15 April 2000 **F.Y.C (Fabulous Young Casuals)** 22 April- 26 June 2000

Homes of Football 22 April-26 June 2000 **Millennium Tapestries** 24 April-22 July 2000

ADMISSION FREE

Oldham Art Gallery, Union Street, Oldham 0161 911 4653
e-mail on ELS Museum Art Gallery els.art.gallery@oldham.gov.uk

OPENING TIMES TUESDAY 10 - 1pm WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY 10 - 5pm
SUNDAY & MONDAY (CLOSED)

OLDHAM 
Education & Leisure 



Sacred Beauty

ISLAMIC CALLIGRAPHY



18 MARCH - 10 JUNE 2000 OLDHAM ART GALLERY, UNION ST. OLDHAM 0161 911 4653

OLDHAM 
Education & Leisure 

Classical & Contemporary Islamic Calligraphy

Calligraphy was once called 'the Queen of the Arts' for its sacred beauty and skill. This exhibition shows examples of Islamic calligraphy from ancient times to the present day. It includes samples of religious texts, poems and exercise leaves, plus solitary words and letters.

Writing has special importance in Islamic countries. This stems from the very essence of the Islamic religion. The belief that the Koran is the literal word of God prompted the finest artists to devote their creative talents to the practice of calligraphy. In making the script beautiful, they made their work worthy of the Koran's divine revelation.

In the 7th century, it was the classical Kufic script that was used for these Koranic texts. Its simple and austere beauty had a huge effect on the art of calligraphy for 300 years.

Over the following centuries, new styles began to appear. By the fourteenth century, Indian and Afghan artists had developed the Behari style, whose heavy flat lines formed a striking contrast to the delicate upright strokes. A hundred years later



saw Persian monuments decorated with the new Ta'liq script, while for personal letters in Urdu and Persian a new broken style called Shikasteh was used.

Other styles evolved simply to delight and impress. These include the more recent art of diminutive writing - done with a brush with very few hair - which developed from the Ghubar script

It was in the mid twentieth century that calligraphy really began to change. Once a strictly defined art form, it now became a new kind of modern artistic expression.

In the 1950s many artists used calligraphy, Arabic script and Islamic ornamentation for political reasons, as symbols of their identity. Ten years later, the abstract quality of Muslim art and the Arabic script meant that Western abstract ideas could be easily embraced, and adapted, for calligraphy.

Sacred Beauty is about how artists have used the richness of calligraphy in their work. It shows how they turn the letter, word, line or text into more than just an instrument of meaning. Their work celebrates the importance, beauty and effect of the purely visual gesture.

As part of the Calligraphy season, Oldham Art Gallery will be working with mosques in the Glodwick area. Artists will be working with local residents on a variety of art projects. There will also be an opportunity for schools to become involved in an Eid card project. For more details contact Razia Mohammed on 911 3608 or Sarah Terkaoui on 911 4663.

Images: cover *Sad* ALI OMAR ERMES, bottom left *Numbers* RACHID KORAICHI centre, *Untitled* ENAYATOLLAH NOORI top right, *Covered Letters* AHMAD NASROLLAHI all taken from the collection of Rose Issa