

Art Jameel

For Immediate Release

Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo expands programme to include international exchange

CAIRO, EGYPT | April 18, 2017 – The Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo – the institute for traditional arts located in Fustat, Cairo – has welcomed 11 students from The Prince's School of Traditional Arts in London, who travelled to Cairo to undertake a two-week visit as part of their study programme. The Prince's School – together with Art Jameel and the Cultural Development Fund of Egypt – jointly opened the Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo in 2009, where students enroll in a two-year programme to study the traditional arts. Students graduate from the programme with a deep understanding of both the principles and practical application of the traditional arts, furthering opportunities for careers in the arts, heritage conservation, architectural preservation and the creative industries.

During their stay, the group worked with twenty-two local students from the Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo on a co-designed project. In groups of six, they spent 5 days designing mihrabs, or prayer niches, using the techniques and skills they had learned.

“Having to work under a tight deadline to produce an artistic project with people you’ve never met was challenging, but a learning experience for both groups,” said Mamdouh Sakr, programme director at the Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo.

Over the course of those two weeks, the UK students also visited several iconic spaces that embody the tradition of Islamic art, including the Museum of Islamic Art, the Sultan Hassan mosque, and Muez Street. The sites of the students’ visits were carefully selected for their relevance to Islamic art, and the students’ course of study.

The Museum of Islamic Art in Cairo, recently reopened in 2017 after extensive repairs, displays close to 5,000 artefacts with special attention to woodwork and plaster. As the students received training in gypsum carving during their visit, a specialised local skill that is not part of their London curriculum, the tour of the museum was especially engaging. The visit to Muez Street - the one kilometer-long pedestrian avenue in the heart of Fatimid Cairo which contains the greatest concentration of medieval architecture in the Islamic world - as well as the tour of the Mamluk-era Sultan Hassan mosque (one of the largest worldwide) provided students the unique opportunity to examine, in close proximity, the wonders of Islamic architecture from which much of their curriculum is derived.

For local students, this visit gave them the opportunity to interact with international students with different backgrounds and skillsets, benefit from the advice of the tutors accompanying the group, as well as revisit sites of architectural relevance.

“Although these spaces are readily available to us, we don’t go very often because they are right there on our doorstep,” said Farida Swelim, a first-year student in the Jameel House’s two-year programme in Cairo.

Swelim also especially enjoyed the chance to exchange perspectives with students from an international background. “In the programme, the more we learn and focus on the details, the more we see these artefacts in a completely different way,” she said.

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Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo (JHTA/C)

Launched in 2009 by Art Jameel, the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the Cultural Development Fund of Egypt, the Jameel House of Traditional Arts / Cairo is a major educational institute teaching young Egyptians classes in traditional Islamic geometry, drawing, colour harmony and arabesque studies, as well as specialised training in ceramics, glass and gypsum, metalwork and woodwork. At JHTA/C, students are taught a two-year diploma programme, developed and delivered by the Prince's School, according to the same principles and standards as the postgraduate courses of the original London school. Located in the heart of the historic district of Old Cairo, at the Fustat Centre for Traditional Arts and Crafts, the JHTA/C programme focuses on the preservation of local cultural heritage, including through field trips to major monuments and practical design and make projects. JHTA/C also supports graduates seeking employment or to establish businesses in the traditional arts. Around 20 students graduate each year and join the many alumni who connect through the programme's alumni club and participate in the annual alumni exhibition.

Prince's School of Traditional Arts (PSTA)

The Prince's School of Traditional Arts is part of a group of charities which reflect HRH The Prince of Wales's profound interest in some of the most relevant and pressing challenges facing the world we live in today. The Prince's School has pioneered practical post-graduate degrees at Masters and Doctoral level in the traditional arts of the great civilizations of the world. The School teaches the importance of integrating the theoretical study of the traditional arts with their practical application. One of the School's main objectives is to encourage an awareness of the holistic nature of the traditional artist, whose inspiration derives from the highest sources and whose skill and dedication creates masterpieces which we can all recognise as part of our world heritage. The School's postgraduate programme based on the practice and research of the traditional arts has expanded to include the Open Programme, extending our teaching to a wider community; the Harmony Schools Programme, presenting an integrated view of the world to younger audiences; and an Outreach Programme active in more than twenty countries across five continents.

www.psta.org.uk

Art Jameel

Art Jameel is a non-profit organisation that supports artists and creative communities. Current initiatives include running heritage institutes and restoration programmes, plus a broad range of arts and educational initiatives for all ages. The organisation's programmes foster the role of the arts in building open, connected communities; at a

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time of flux and dramatic societal shifts, this role is understood as more crucial than ever.

Art Jameel's model is collaborative: major institutional partners include the Victoria & Albert Museum, the Prince's School of Traditional Arts and the Metropolitan Museum of Art; locally, the organisation works with individuals and organisations to develop innovative programming that embraces both ancient and new technologies, and encourages entrepreneurship and the development of cultural networks.
www.artjameel.org