

Museum objects: Representation, culture and identity - A case study of the 'Islamic Art' galleries at the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilisation

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This research project takes a broad approach in looking at museums and how galleries of 'Islamic art' use and represent their objects. Through an insight into the 'Islamic art' galleries at the newly opened Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization in the United Arab Emirates, the dissertation examines issues such as the different ways in which objects are represented, the meaning of 'Islam', and the culture of Muslims that is constructed as a result of the representation. As the museum is located in the Muslim world, the formulation of 'Islam' as an identity is a significant element that is considered, and the research observes how objects in the galleries allow for such an identity to develop.

Through the course of this research project, one will understand the various debates in the academic field of 'Islamic art' and its translation in the museum setting, and more importantly the 'aesthetic' mode of representation utilized in the galleries. The research particularly focuses on how objects of 'Islamic art' are used and interpreted in the museum in Sharjah to allow for an articulation of an 'Islamic' culture and identity for the emirate of Sharjah and the United Arab Emirates as a whole.

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