



# PRESS KIT **EXPO ISLAM**

IT'S **ALSO** OUR HISTORY !  
**EUROPE AND ITS MUSLIM LEGACIES**

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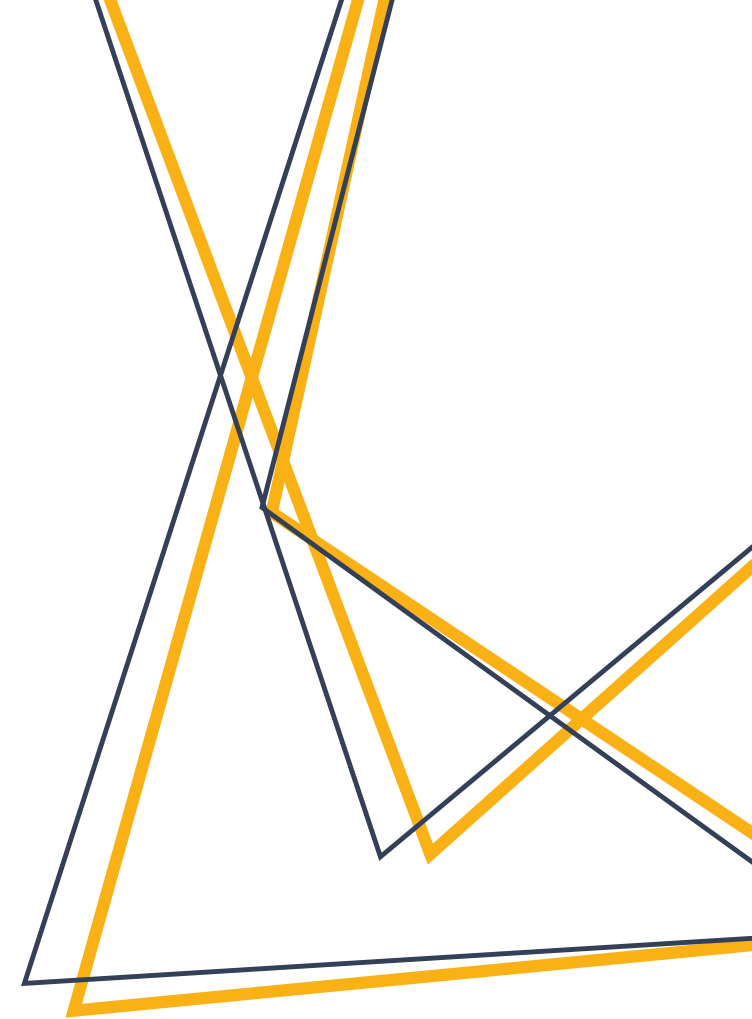
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15.09.2017 > 21.01.2018 BRUSSELS - VANDERBORGHT BUILDING

Brussels, Vanderborght building  
September 15<sup>th</sup> 2017 - January 21<sup>th</sup> 2018

Tempora/Museum of Europe  
and their European partners



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## 1. CONTENT

The exhibition 'Islam, it's *a/so* our history!' is a civilization exhibition which gives an insight into the legacy left by the Muslim civilization on European soil after 13 centuries of presence. It is therefore not an exhibition about the Islamic religion. Nor is it limited only to the presence of Islam in Europe today, even if, of course, this is included.

To help understand this Muslim presence on the European continent, we have grouped evidence of its impact into **three legacies** which cover very different historical periods and geographical zones even if, of course, overlaps and intersections sometimes occur.

### ◆ The Arab legacy

The Muslim conquest of Spain which began in 711 led to eight centuries of Islamic presence in Western Europe. Its imprint in every sector of learning was to be deep and long-lasting.

### ◆ The Ottoman legacy

From the 14th century onwards, the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans divided Europe into a Christian Europe in which there were virtually no Muslims, and an Ottoman Europe dominated by Muslim rule but mainly populated by Christians.

### ◆ The colonial legacy

In the 19th century and the early 20th century, the Ottoman Empire was shrinking on all sides, replaced by the European powers. But it would soon be the turn of the latter to be forced to step aside faced with the desire for independence of the indigenous populations. The decolonization of these people groups that were often Muslim would also leave its mark on Europe as well.

A section dedicated to the contemporary period has also been added to these three legacies.

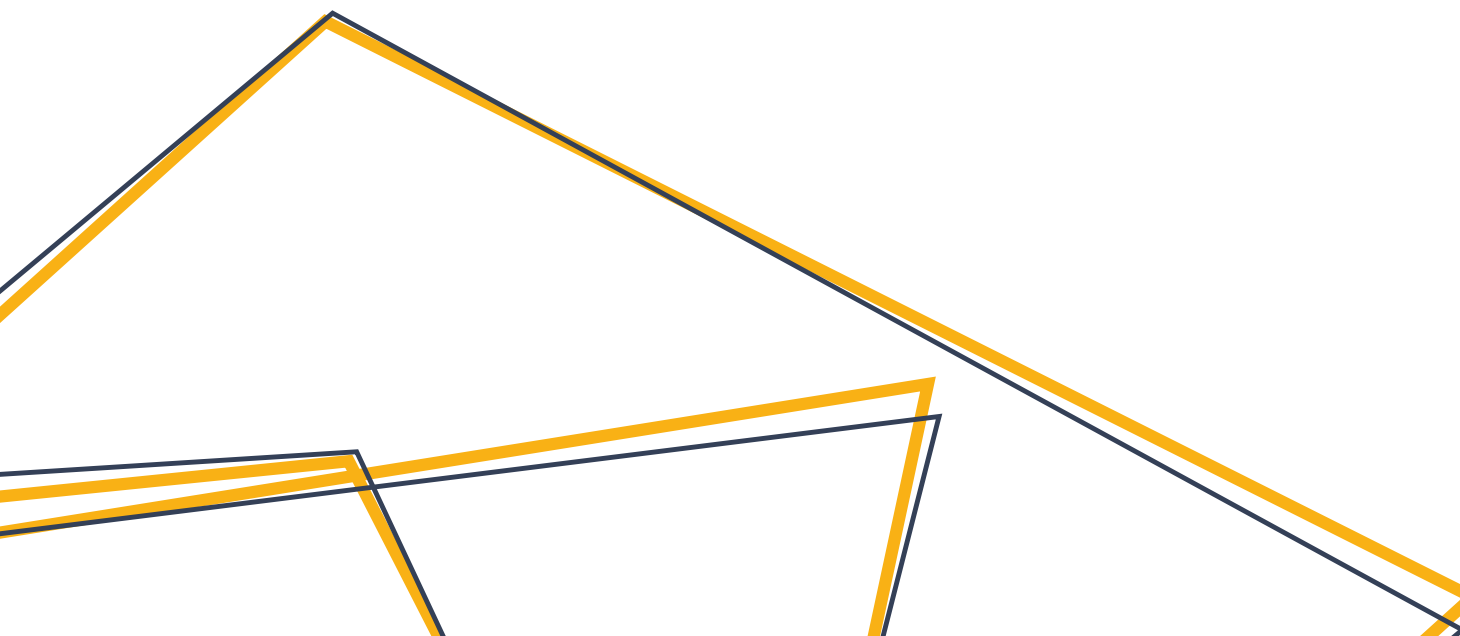
## 2. THE METHODS EMPLOYED

Each 'legacy' is presented in a **scenographic installation** that is deemed to be particularly representative: the perspective of an imaginary library for the Arab legacy, since it is in the fields of scientific and philosophical learning that the Arabic-Andalusian contribution was the most significant; life inside a tent illustrates the Ottoman legacy; and the setting of a quayside in a port symbolizes the colonial legacy. Within these installations, audio-visuals, historical objects or works of art immerse the visitor in the historical context.

**A cross-section of inheritances** – words, tastes, music, a variety of material or immaterial realities that have made the journey across time and space – have been installed in sensory chambers positioned between the legacies.

Throughout the exhibition, for each legacy, **witnesses** of their era, historical or fictional figures, share their experiences with us about daily life within unequal societies, but in which areas of intercommunal cooperation produced fruitful contacts.

Finally, the space devoted to the contemporary period, although it presents facts and figures about Islam in Europe, also places a significant emphasis on art. Indeed, it is via the **perspective of socially-aware artists** that we have chosen to explore the major questions raised by the coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims on European soil today, not only in the Balkans but also in Western Europe.



# FOREWORD

In current European thought, among both Muslims and non-Muslims, it is generally believed that the Muslim presence on European soil is a more recent phenomenon that coincided with successive waves of immigration in the second half of the 20th century. As a result, another preconceived idea has arisen: that these two civilizations, European and Islamic, are fundamentally foreign to each other and are constrained in an uneasy coexistence by the vicissitudes of history.

The exhibition "*Islam it's **also** our history!*" demonstrates that this is far from true. In fact, from the time it burst onto the world stage until the present day, Islam has always been present on the European continent and involved in its civilization. The Muslims arrived on the Western shores of the Mediterranean in the 8th century at the time of their conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and remained there throughout the following eight centuries. Then, when the fall of Grenada in 1492 put an end to the Muslim presence in Western Europe, the Turks had already been solidly established for over a century in the East, in the Balkans, which they incorporated into a vast empire. As such, in the same way that there is a North-African, Turkish, African, Indo-Pakistani, Arabic or Indonesian Islam, there has always been, and still is, a European Islam.

Which means that these two civilizations are not foreign to each other. They emerged from a common spiritual and intellectual root, hold to a similar Scriptural origin and acknowledge the same philosophical legacy. Their interconnection over thirteen years of secular history has resulted both in times of violence and of peace, but has always been richly influential for both parties. Without this interconnectedness, neither Europe nor Islam would be what they are today.

Breathing deeply as we explore the geographical twists and turns, flux and reflux, the exhibition invites us to revisit this history of which, for better or for worse, we are all participants and heirs.

## 1. THE ABRAHAMIC ROOT

### *Islam and Christianity, two branches of the same tree*

Islam and Christianity have common roots. They are first cousins, both heirs of the Greco-Roman and Judeo-Christian civilizations. For the Christians of Europe, Muslims are not strangers, as would be true of the Chinese, for example, but a branch of the same family: via Eastern Christians, the Greek heritage reached Islam; via Christians and Jews came the Biblical heritage. It is not by chance that they share the same spiritual ancestors. Abraham/Ibrahim, Moses/Mûsâ, Jesus/Isâ, Mary/Maryam. These pairs illustrate more than a first cousin relationship: there really is a common spiritual crucible for the three religions of the Book.

Islam places itself clearly in the footsteps of its predecessors. Although Mohammed is 'the last of the prophets' (Koran 33: 40), he does not erase those who preceded him.



## 2. THE ARAB LEGACY

*The Muslim conquest of Spain from 732 onwards gave Islam a presence in Western Europe that lasted eight centuries. Whether under Muslim rule or, as with Sicily, under Christian domination, its impact in all areas of knowledge was to be deep and enduring.*

From the conquest of Spain arose a civilization marked by the *convivencia*, the peaceful coexistence of the three cultures, Muslim, Christian and Jewish. However, coexistence is not equality, nor the assurance of longevity. Christians and Jews became *dhimmis*, subjects protected by Islam. The slow progress of the Christian Reconquista, lasting until 1492 with the fall of Grenada, would culminate in the eradication of the Muslim presence from Western Christian soil. But their expulsion didn't remove the trace of the Muslim presence in Spain – in architecture, science, philosophy or vocabulary...

So much so that Andalusia, Sicily, conquered by the Muslims who overthrew the Byzantines as they arrived from North Africa, then by the Normans, is the crucible of an original culture that is a mixture of Berbers, Arabs, Normans and Islamic Christianity. An unusual dialect of local Arabic would also originate from there, that would also give rise to present-day Maltese. *Maîtres de l'île au XIe siècle, les chrétiens* – the Normans then, from the end of the 12th century, the Hohenstaufen of Germany – respected the Muslims, integrated them into their administration and adopted many of their habits and customs. Sicily continued to live under a regime of tolerance and openness, concerning which one exceptional character who we will meet on our journey, Frederick II (1194-1250), made a way of life. Sovereign, polyglot, with an enquiring, open mind, Frederick, the Emperor in *djellaba*, truly personified this amazing time of *convivencia* (coexistence), Sicilian style.



Miniature illustrant une bataille de la Reconquista dans les Cantigas de Santa Maria (1260-1270)  
© De Agostini Picture Library / G. Dagli Orti / Bridgeman Images



Illustration d'un joueur de luth dans l'Histoire de Bayad et Riyad, manuscrit du XIIIe siècle conservé à la bibliothèque apostolique vaticane  
© akq-images / Maurice Babey



### 3. THE OTTOMAN LEGACY

*From the 14th century onwards, the Ottoman conquest of the Balkans divided Europe into a Christian Europe in which there were virtually no Muslims, and an Ottoman Europe dominated by Muslim rule but mainly populated by Christians and other minorities.*

The second phase of the Muslim expansion, this time under the aegis of the Ottoman Turks, brought Islam into Eastern and Southern Europe. The empire was a multi-ethnic State in which the Muslim minority dominated a vast mosaic of peoples administered by the system of millets (communities that enjoyed freedom of worship and great tolerance if they paid a special tax).

Between the conquest and the failure of the second siege of Vienna (1683) which blocked the Ottoman advance towards the West, contact with Christian Europe was a mixture of violence and cooperation, determined by the specific moment or where the encounters took place. On both sides of a changing boundary line, always seen as provisional, each side was seen as the ideological enemy to be defeated, and at the same time as an entity with whom commercial and diplomatic relations should be pursued, both generally being true at the same time.. More curious about the Ottomans than they were of their European counterparts, the latter studied the Ottomans, learned their customs and drew inspiration from their letters and arts. This was known as 'Orientalism'.



M. Levett et Mlle Hélène Glavany en costume turc - Jean-Etienne Liotard, ca. 1740  
© akg-images / Erich Lessing

## 4. THE COLONIAL LEGACY

*In the 19th century and at the start of the 20th, the Ottoman Empire was losing ground on all sides. It was the last phase of the Muslim decline, and also the last phase of European expansion, before decolonization brought it to a close. On receding, the colonial wave left behind it a legacy as rich as it was ambivalent.*

The Ottoman Turks, as early as the second half of the 16th century, entered into a lengthy period of decline. Three centuries later, Christian Europe gradually took their place. In the Europe of the Balkans, the void was filled by independent nation states; Eastern Europe and North Africa were taken by European colonial empires; the British, Italians and especially the French.

The colonisation of areas that were formerly Ottoman was accompanied by the introduction of a tutelage system which took various forms – nominal independence (Egypt), protectorate (Tunisia, Morocco), settlement colony (Algeria), colony (Libya), international mandate (Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Iraq).

In the second half of the 20th century, decolonization would leave behind it independent states whose frontiers were often artificial. But if colonial rule forever changed the lives of the colonized populace, the latter also exerted a significant influence on the non-city-dwellers – on the demography, the economy, the urban landscape, on art, on mindsets and lifestyles.

In broad outline, it can be said that the three major movements that defined the 19th and 20th centuries – the deliquescence of the Ottoman empire, colonisation and decolonisation – deeply impacted the whole of Europe, but in different ways: in the Balkans, it was geopolitical; in Western Europe it affected its demography, economy and culture.

The exchange was brutal, but rich. As with every area it reached, in other words, the whole of the planet, Europe imposed on Islamic soil its savoir-faire, its ways of thinking and acting, its institutions. What interests us here is what it imported: wealth and men, as well as literary and artistic influences that were banded together under the vague term 'Orientalism'.



Affiche de propagande britannique, Deuxième Guerre mondiale  
© Imperial War Museum, London



Affiche de propagande « Journée de l'Armée d'Afrique et des troupes coloniales », 1917  
© Collection MHFA, Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole

## 5. TODAY

### FACTS AND NUMBERS

In Western Europe, after more than four centuries of absence, Muslims are once again present. In Eastern Europe, which they never left, they have experienced dictatorships, then war and ethnic cleansing. In every region, the coexistence between Muslims and non-Muslims paints a contrasting picture, one that combines both tragedy and hope.

In the Balkans, history has woven a community mosaic of extraordinary complexity. Bosnians, Kosovars, Pomaks, Tatars and others are citizens of both the country in which they live, and members of their own ethnic group. The Communist regime severely repressed this proliferation; its disappearance led to an explosion of rival ethnic nationalisms. The wars in former Yugoslavia, the last on the European continent, were savage. Their end, orchestrated by the international community, resolved only the question of violence.

In Western Europe, forced out by poverty or persecution and lured by the promise of a better life, large numbers of Muslims arrived in successive waves. After the factories, emptied by the departure of men into the trenches of the First World War, came the need for reconstruction after the Second, followed by the reunification of families. Lastly, conflicts in the Near East added their quota of refugees.

How many Muslims are there amongst the five hundred million inhabitants in the European Union today? No one is quite sure. A conservative estimate indicates a figure of around 20 million. Their integration, often only partial and uncomfortable, is made difficult by the deficient economies of the host nations, by the prejudices of the local populations and by their own difficulties in adapting to the cultural codes of their adoptive country. All of which is further complicated by the progression of a fundamentalist and violent interpretation of Islam within their communities, an interpretation that is active across the Muslim world. But such generalised failures in integration mask the genuine success stories in every area of human activity.

# SCENOGRAPHY

The exhibition aims to provide a contemporary perspective on secular legacies, to evoke the atmospheres and the emotions experienced over different eras and geographical zones, and to explore the influences and exchanges between its proponents, Muslim and non-Muslim Europeans.

Each 'legacy' is presented with a decor that is considered to be truly representative: a library for the Arab legacy, since it is in the fields of scientific knowledge and philosophy that the Arabic-Andalusian contribution was the most significant; a tent, military or congenial, according to the occasion, illustrates the Ottoman legacy; and the docks of a port symbolize the colonial legacy.

The East-West inheritance – the words, tastes or music are just some examples of the material or immaterial realities that have traveled across time and space – these are displayed in sensorial rooms between the various legacies.

Presented throughout the exhibition, for each legacy, witnesses from their era, historical or fictional, recount, from their secluded alcoves, their experience of community life within inegalitarian societies, but in which places of intercommunal cooperation produced fruitful contacts.

Lastly, the space devoted to our contemporary era, although it presents factual data about Islam in Europe, also has an important secondary focus on art. Indeed, it is by considering the perspective of socially aware artists that we have chosen to explore the major issues raised by the coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims on European soil today, both in the Balkans and in Western Europe.

The configuration of the Vanderborght building, with its spectacular central atrium, provides a context for meetings and relaxation. Visitors will be able to wander around it as they would have done in caravansary lodges, or, if you prefer, the rooms of a large family home.



## A coproduction of



## With the support of the Culture programme of the European Union



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With the support of Miguel Ángel Moratinos, former Spanish Minister of Foreign Affairs and promotor of the 'Alliance of civilisations'

**L'Agence exécutive « Education, audiovisuel et culture » (EACEA) – Programme Culture 2007-2013, Bruxelles**  
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Prof. dr. Petko Hristov, Directeur  
Prof. dr. Nikolai Vukov  
Prof. dr. Iglia Mishkova  
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Aurélien Lemonier, Directeur du musée  
Marie Poinot, Chargée des publications  
Peggy Derder, Chargée de la médiation tous publics

**University of Aksaray** – Aksaray, Turquie (partenaire du projet de 2012 à 2016)  
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Prof. Yusuf Sahin, Recteur (depuis 2015)  
Prof. Ural Manço, Département de sociologie

**The association CuLTures** – Copenhagen, Danemark  
Ahmed Krausen, Photographe

**The association of Architects in Bosnia-Herzegovina** – Sarajevo, Bosnie-Herzégovine (2013-2016)  
Lemja Akšamija, Collaborateur scientifique  
Aida Cengic, Administration et finance

**Warm Festival** – Sarajevo - Paris  
Rémy Ourdan, Président  
Christopher Yggdre, Directeur  
Adnan Pavlović, Coordinateur local

**The Bosniak Institute** – Foundation Adil Zulfikarpašić – Sarajevo, Bosnie-Herzégovine  
Amina Rizvanbegović - Džuvic, Directeur



and also University of Aksaray, the association of Architects in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Bosniak Institute

## EXPERTS

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Henry Laurens, Historien spécialiste du monde arabo-musulman, professeur au Collège de France

Altay Manço, Directeur scientifique à l'Institut de Recherche, Formation et Action sur les Migrations (IRFAM), Belgique

Ural Manço, Professeur à l'Université d'Aksaray

Brigitte Maréchal, Professeur à l'UCL, directrice du Cismoc - Centre Interdisciplinaire d'Etudes de l'Islam dans le Monde Contemporain

Myriam Morel, Conservatrice émérite au MUCEM

Slimane Zeghidour, Ecrivain et journaliste spécialiste du monde arabe et musulman, notamment de l'Asie centrale, chercheur associé à l'Institut de relations internationales et stratégiques Paris

## CULTURAL AND ARTISTIC ADVISORS

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Coline Houssais, Commissaire et directrice de l'Agence Hustaza, Paris, Londres

Talheh Daryanavard, Institut des Hautes Etudes des Communications Sociales (IHECS), Bruxelles

Jérôme Jacobs, Galerie Aeroplastics Contemporary, Bruxelles

Caroline Moussian et son équipe, Galerie Rouban Moussian, Paris

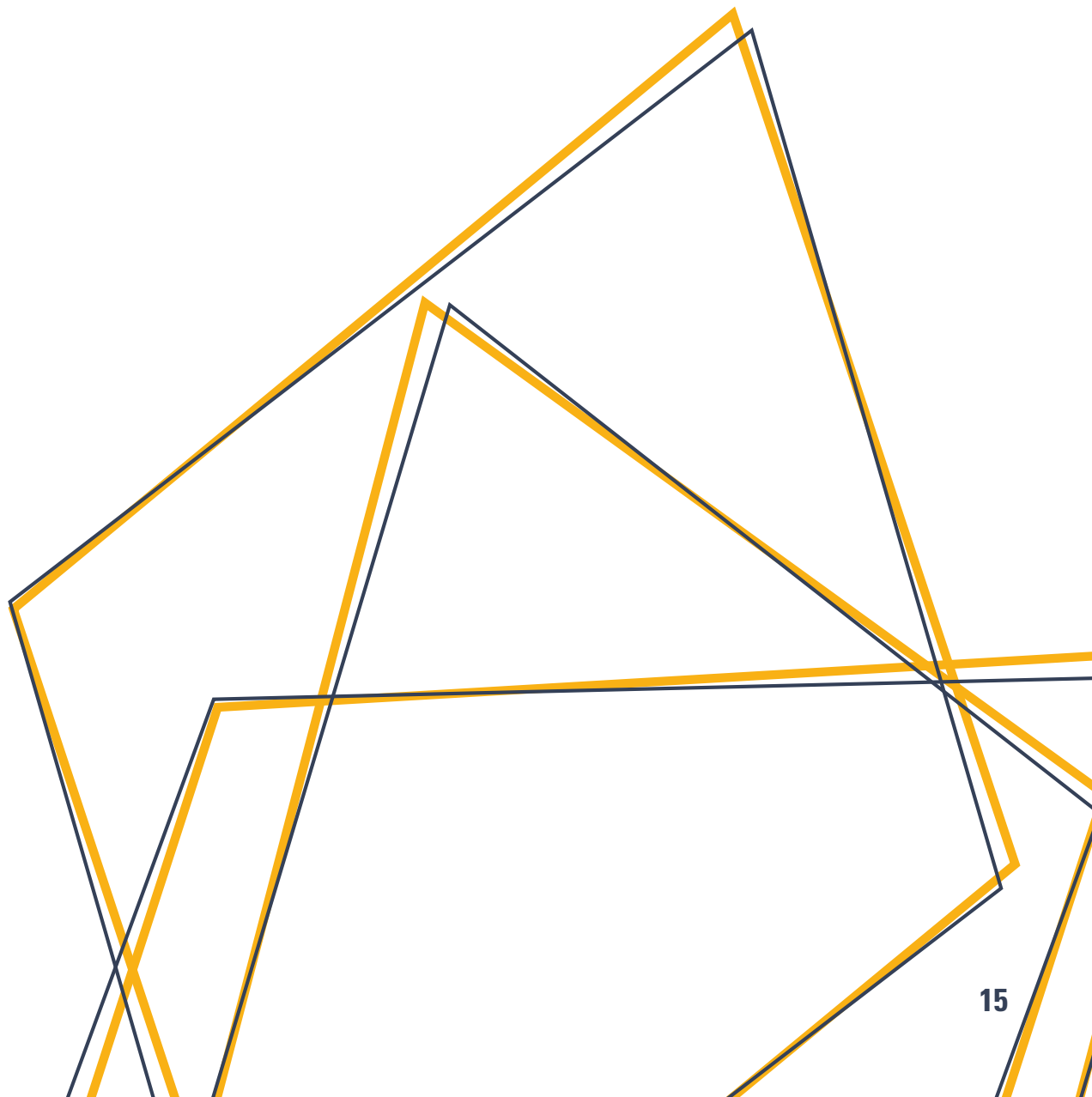
Chantal Crousel et son équipe, Galerie Chantal Crousel, Paris

Eric Dupont et son équipe, Galerie Eric Dupont, Paris  
Bert de Leenheer et Dirk Vanhecke, Galerie Transit, Malines



# ARTISTS

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François Curlet,  
Cédric Dambrain,  
Isabelle de Borchgrave,  
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Jörg Frank,  
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Yves Saint Laurent,  
Nebojša Šerić– Šoba,  
Djamel Tatah,  
Eric van Hove,  
Ari Versluis & Ellie Uyttenbroek,  
Vlaams Radio Koor,  
Kamel Yahiaoui



# LENDERS

Bibliothèque royale de Belgique, Bruxelles  
Bibliothèques de l'Université catholique de Louvain  
Collection MHFA, Histoire de France et d'Algérie,  
Montpellier Méditerranée Métropole  
Collection privée – Isabelle Benoit  
Galerie Circonstance, Nice  
Galerie Eric Dupont, Paris  
Galerie Italienne, Paris  
Galerie Tanja Wagner, Berlin  
Galerie Transit, Malines  
Institut du monde arabe, Paris  
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Studies with  
Ethnographic Museum, Sofia  
Kunstgewerbemuseum, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen,  
Dresden  
L'Agence culturelle Alsac – Frac Alsace  
Luc Freché  
Musée de l'Armée, Paris  
Musée de la céramique d'Andenne  
Musée de la Vie Wallonne, Liège  
Musée des Instruments de Musique, Bruxelles  
Musée national de l'histoire de l'immigration, Paris  
Musée Porte de Hal, Bruxelles  
Musées royaux d'Arts et d'Histoire, Bruxelles  
Museo Arqueológico Nacional, Madrid  
Museo Prasa, Torrecampo, Cordoba  
Olivier Châtenet  
School Gallery, Paris  
The Third Line, Dubai  
TreM.a. Collection Société archéologique de Namur  
War Heritage Institute, Bruxelles

## THE MUSEUM OF EUROPE

Founded in 1998, the Asbl Musée de l'Europe has from the outset aimed at offering European citizens, through culture and history, the keys to their joint venture. In other words, to make them understand that the Europe that is being constructed before their eyes is more than a bureaucratic matter: a project anchored in a shared civilisation. The central idea is thus to contribute to the discovery of a European identity that does exist, without us citizens of Europe being always aware of it - an identity not exclusive to other identities, notably national, but inclusive and open to dialogue with other civilisations.

Since its founding, the Museum of Europe, in partnership with the Tempora company, has been creating, in both Belgium and abroad, identity exhibitions along two major lines: Europe in itself (*«Europe, It's Our History!»; «The Holocaust by Bullets»; «14-18, It's Our History»; «Kominiek, An Unrecognised Father of Europe»*); and Europe in its relation to other areas of civilisation (*«God(s), A User's Guide»; «America, It's Also Our History!», and today, «Islam, It's Also Our History! Europe and its Muslim heritages»*).

## THE MEMORIAL OF CAEN - TEMPORA GROUP

Partners for many years on various projects related to contemporary history, the Memorial of Caen and Tempora decided in 2016 to structure and strengthen their partnership in the form of cross-shareholdings.

Together, the two institutions welcome more than one million visitors per year in their permanent or temporary exhibitions.

Each of these two institutions has produced numerous temporary exhibitions and cultural events designed to shed light on contemporary historical processes. Their action is based on the same conviction: that ignorance engenders fears, which make life in society difficult, and uncertain its projection into the future. It is a bet on knowledge.

*«Islam is also our history! Europe And Its Muslim Heritages»* is the first fruit of this enhanced collaboration.


## OPENING HOURS

From Monday to Friday : 9.30am to 5.30pm  
Weekend, Belgian school holidays and public holidays : 10am to 7pm

Closed exceptionally on December 25th and January 1st

## RATES

Adults and senior citizens : 13,50€  
Groups (min. 15 pers.) : 11€  
- 26 years : 7€  
Schools and youth groups (6-25 years) : 6,50€  
Family package (2 adults + 2 children): 36€ + 6,5€ per extra child  
Child - 6 years : free

 : 1,25€

 : 2€

## BUY YOUR TICKET ONLINE

[www.expo-islam.be](http://www.expo-islam.be)

## GUIDED VISITS

80€/guide (max. 20 pers. / guide) for 1 hour 30  
Reservation only

## VISITING TIME

1h30 (last entrance 1h30 before closing time)

## LOCATION & RESERVATION

Vanderborght building  
Rue de l'Ecuyer 50  
1000 Brussels (center)

[info@expo-islam.be](mailto:info@expo-islam.be)  
[www.expo-islam.be](http://www.expo-islam.be)  
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Reservation for groups, for the disabled and guided visits

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## LEGACY

CAFÉ

Before or after your visit, take some time to discover our Legacy Café! Free access. Our café invites you to travel and provides catering from Lebanese and Moroccan flavours, ... to local specialities. A small insight into the menu: kefta with tomato sauce and ginger, quiche with broccoli and marinated cumin chicken, salad bar (hummus, tomatoes, briwat, ...), ...

Don't wait any longer to taste those mouth-watering dishes. The Legacy Café is accessible independently of the exhibition.

## BOUTIQUE

SHOP

The gift shop offers a wide range of items: books, handicrafts,...



# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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and also University of Aksaray, the association of Architects in Bosnia-Herzegovine, the Bosniak Institute