

SUNDAY NOW

# NYC celebrates the art of Islam



G. DUPRERE

BY PATRICK HUGUENIN

Last week, President Obama chose Cairo for his address to the "Muslim world," a speech delivered from a center of the world's second-largest religion.

This week, Islamic art and ideas will be celebrated across the city in a festival hosted by the Asia Society, Brooklyn Academy of Music and NYU's Center for Dialogues.

Yesterday kicked off the 10-day "Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas," which brings together dancers, actors, musicians, filmmakers, speakers and craftspeople from Asia, Africa, the Middle East and right here in NYC.

The festival investigates what NYU Center for Dialogues founder and director Mustapha Tlili calls "the divide between the United States and the Muslim world" that is "rooted in hard political issues such as the question of Palestine, the war in Iraq, relations with Iran and other



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points of contention," while offering up songs, sights and stories that transport attendees to countries as diverse as Kuwait, Morocco and Indonesia. Organizers hope the event paints a picture of the diversity of Islamic ideas and creativity in places around the world.

From a reimagined production of Shakespeare's "Richard III" to a fusion of New Orleans gospel with Southeast Asian praise music, here are the highlights.

**SOUK OUTDOOR MARKET**

(Today, noon-8 p.m., Ashland Place, between Hanson St. and Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, free)

The street around Brooklyn Academy of Music transforms into a souk — or open-air market — with outdoor performances and more than 150 vendors selling food and arts from Muslim cultures.

**'MAKING OF'** (part of the program Muslim Voices: Film)

(Tomorrow at 4:30, 6:50 and 9:15 p.m., \$11, BAM Rose Cinemas, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, 718-636-4100 or bam.org)

Director Nouri Bouzid's film-within-a-film tells the tale of a young, restless Tunisian break dancer who falls in with a fundamentalist group. The faux-documentary framework examines the cast's reactions to the "making of" a suicide bomber. The film snapped up multiple awards at the 2007 Tribeca Film Festival.

**'RICHARD III: AN ARAB TRAGEDY'**

(June 9-12, BAM Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn, \$25-\$45, 718-636-4100 or bam.org)

Director Sulayman Al-Bassam was educated in the U.K. before returning to his native Kuwait to found a theater company. His adaptation of Shakespeare's history play set in an unnamed Gulf state made waves at the Kennedy Center during its first U.S. run in March, and now heads to New York. It's performed in Arabic with English subtitles. The June 11 show features a postshow artist talk with Al-Bassam.

**'JOURNEY TO MECCA: IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF IBN BATTUTA'**

(June 10, 7 p.m., Lefrak Theater at the American Museum of Natural History, Central Park West at 79th St., \$17, 212-769-5200, amnh.org/programs)

Using the big-screen splendors of IMAX, "Journey to Mecca" swoops the viewer alongside a young traveler named Ibn Battuta as he makes a perilous 1,325-mile journey from Morocco to the sacred Saudi city of Mecca. Fly over vast swaths of the Sahara, and inside the Grand Mosque.

**PARISSA: AN EVENING OF PERSIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC**

(June 11 and 12, 7:30 p.m., Asia Society's Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium,

Clockwise from l., gospel singer Craig Adams (l.) will perform with Pakistan's Faiz Ali Faiz; a still from the film "Making Of," about a young Tunisian break dancer; and the Iranian classical singer Parissa.

725 Park Ave., \$35, (212) 517-2742 or [asiasociety.org](http://asiasociety.org)

Iranian classical singer Parissa puts the words of medieval poet Rumi to music, accompanied by tar — Iranian lute — and drum. For extra insight, catch the preshow musicology lecture both nights at 6 p.m.

**NEW YORK MASJID: THE MOSQUES OF NEW YORK CITY**

(Through June 28, BAM Natman Room, 30 Lafayette Ave., Brooklyn, noon-11 p.m. daily, free, bam.org)

Photographer Edward Grazda and CUNY architecture professor Jerrilynn Dodds documented New York City's mosques, large and small, to compile alternative images of American Islam.

**QAWWALI GOSPEL CREATION**

(June 13, 8 p.m., BAM Harvey Theater, 651 Fulton St., Brooklyn, \$20-\$35, 718-636-4100 or bam.org)

Gospel singer Craig Adams and the Voices of New Orleans mix with Pakistan's Faiz Ali Faiz and his ensemble for an evening of fusion between American gospel and the Sufi praise music popular in India and Pakistan.

**SARDONO DANCE THEATER OF INDONESIA: 'DIPONEGORO'**

(June 13 and 14, 7:30 p.m., Asia Society's Lila Acheson Wallace Auditorium, 725 Park Ave., \$30 nonmembers, 212-517-2742 or [asiasociety.org](http://asiasociety.org))

Founded by director/choreographer Sardono Kusumo, the Sardono Dance Theater uses movement and music to tell the story of 19th century Javanese prince/Muslim leader Diponegoro, who led an ultimately unsuccessful rebellion against Dutch colonial rule. ♦