



# *‘So That You Might Know Each Other’*

**FAITH AND CULTURE IN ISLAM**

**COLLECTIONS FROM THE VATICAN ANIMA MUNDI  
MUSEUM, THE SHARJAH MUSEUMS AUTHORITY  
AND THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIA**

# Introduction

**Fr Nicola Mapelli**

*Director of the Vatican Anima Mundi Museum of World Arts and Cultures*

**Ulrike Al-Khamis**

*Former Senior Strategic Adviser, Sharjah Museums Authority*

**Carol Cooper**

*Senior Curator, National Museum of Australia*

This exhibition of Islamic art and material culture has been many years in the making. It builds on a previous exhibition held in Sharjah, in the United Arab Emirates (United Arab Emirates), in 2014, which evolved from the Vatican's wish to make its Islamic collection more widely known within the Muslim world and beyond. His Highness Sheikh Dr Sultan bin Mohammed Al Qasimi, Member of the Supreme Council of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Sharjah, wholeheartedly supported the idea, enabling the Vatican *Anima Mundi* Museum and the Sharjah Museum of Islamic Civilization to co-curate the exhibition, hand in hand.

Later, a similar project was proposed to the National Museum of Australia for a Canberra exhibition, and so a three-way collaboration commenced to bring this bold idea to fruition. Over the years, we have jointly discussed, selected, researched and prepared the objects for the show — a process that has established a lasting trust and warm friendship between colleagues on three continents.

The resulting exhibition keeps the same title as its 2014 counterpart: '*So That You Might Know Each Other*'. Inspired by a verse within the Holy Qur'an, it invites us all to reach out across religions and cultures in a spirit of positive curiosity, creativity, friendship, tolerance and peace. More specifically, from the Vatican's viewpoint, the exhibition demonstrates its respect for and appreciation of the Islamic world, not least by its efforts to preserve and cherish within its walls an extensive collection of Islamic art and material culture, which it treats with the same dedication extended to the masterpieces of Michelangelo, Raphael and Leonardo Da Vinci also in its care.

The experience of developing this exhibition has been a positive and creative one for all those involved, in the Vatican, in Sharjah and in Australia. We hope that this spirit of friendship and mutual commitment will shine through to all who visit the exhibition.