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Textile Museum of Canada's Latest Exhibition Explores the Patterned Imagination of Contemporary Islamic Culture

TORONTO May 11, 2011 – This Spring, the Textile Museum of Canada will present *Magic Squares: The Patterned Imagination of Muslim Africa in Contemporary Culture* on view from May 18 to November 20, 2011. This exhibition connects contemporary cultural experiences with artifacts from the collection of the Textile Museum of Canada to highlight the dynamic nature of identities and beliefs.

A magic square is an array of numbers ordered in a square grid so that each row, column and diagonal adds up to the same sum. Today, magic squares are well-known in popular culture as mathematical games like Sudoku and Kenken, but when painted, woven or stitched onto textiles these symbols become culturally significant objects rich in spiritual power. *Magic Squares: The Patterned Imagination of Muslim Africa in Contemporary Culture* features a selection of archaeological and historic artifacts from the Museum's collection of African textiles in which magic squares are present in their most evocative forms.

Together with these artifacts, *Magic Squares: The Patterned Imagination of Muslim Africa in Contemporary Culture* presents the work of four renowned contemporary artists: Jamelie Hassan, Hamid Kachmar, Alia Toor and Tim Whiten. These artists engage with the meaning of the magic square through their unique perspectives on topics such as Arabic calligraphy, family and community history, and the power of repetition. Each work provides a contemporary lens through which to understand the history and relevance of an enduring symbolism, exploring the patterned imagination of today's Islamic culture.

A public opening reception for *Magic Squares: The Patterned Imagination of Muslim Africa in Contemporary Culture* will be held on Friday May 20, 5-7pm. This opening coincides with "Approaches to the Qur'an in sub-Saharan Africa", a two day program presented in partnership with Subtle Technologies and the UK Institute for Ismaili Studies. A scholars' workshop on May 20 and 21 from 9am-5pm will be followed by an artist panel discussion on May 20 from 7:30-9pm and a lecture and music performance on May 21 from 7:30-10 pm.

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For more information, contact Alexandra Lopes, Communications Officer at 416-599-5321 x2239 or by email at alopes@textilemuseum.ca

Museum Hours

Open 7 days a week 11 am – 5 pm
Wednesdays 11 am – 8 pm