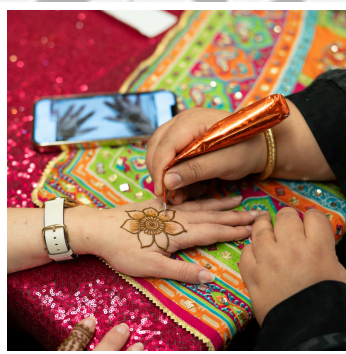




**Islamic ARTS Society**

# *Beauty* That Connects

**Islamic Arts Society**  
2025 Annual Report



# Letter from the Islamic Arts Society Board President,

*Shaheen*  
**RAHMAN**



## Dear Friends and Supporters,

Last fall, a first-time guest spent the entire day at our Festival, arriving with curiosity after accepting a friend's invitation. Throughout the day, he explored the diverse programs, experiencing music, art, and cultural activities as families, artists, and neighbors gathered together. As the performances and exhibits unfolded, something meaningful shifted for him. Later, he shared how deeply moved he was—not only by the artistry, but by the strong sense of connection he experienced. *"There's truly no other place where you can access and learn so much about Islamic art,"* he reflected, *"a meaningful and lasting contribution to the cultural life of our city."*

Another guest described the experience simply as *"outstanding... very important work,"* while a longtime civic leader called it *"an accomplishment of leadership and artistry—our city is better for it."*

These reflections echo what we strive to create every day at the Islamic Arts Society: moments of discovery, belonging, and shared humanity.

At the Islamic Arts Society, we believe that art is a universal language—one that transcends boundaries of faith, ethnicity, and background. By showcasing Islamic art, we aim to inspire curiosity, dialogue, and connection among people of all backgrounds. Our goal is not only to preserve Muslim artistic traditions but also to share them with the broader, diverse, and multicultural American community in ways that foster mutual understanding and respect.

Since our founding over a decade ago in 2014, the Islamic Arts Society has grown from a small gathering of passionate artists into a vibrant nonprofit organization and a hub for Islamic arts in the United States. What began as a modest initiative has evolved into a thriving community of artists, educators, volunteers, and supporters who believe in the power of art to bring people together. Through exhibitions, workshops, and our annual Islamic Arts Festival, we celebrate both tradition and creativity while inviting everyone to experience the richness of Islamic artistic heritage.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to expanding our reach and strengthening our partnerships so that more people can experience the depth and beauty of Islamic artistic traditions. Our work is made possible by the dedication of our artists, volunteers, partners, and supporters who believe in the power of art to build bridges and inspire understanding. Your support helps sustain these programs and ensures that Islamic arts continue to reach and inspire wider audiences.

I invite you to join us—whether by attending our events, supporting our programs, or becoming part of our growing community.

## Thank you for being part of this journey.

Sincerely,

*Shaheen Rahman*

### Shaheen Rahman, Board President

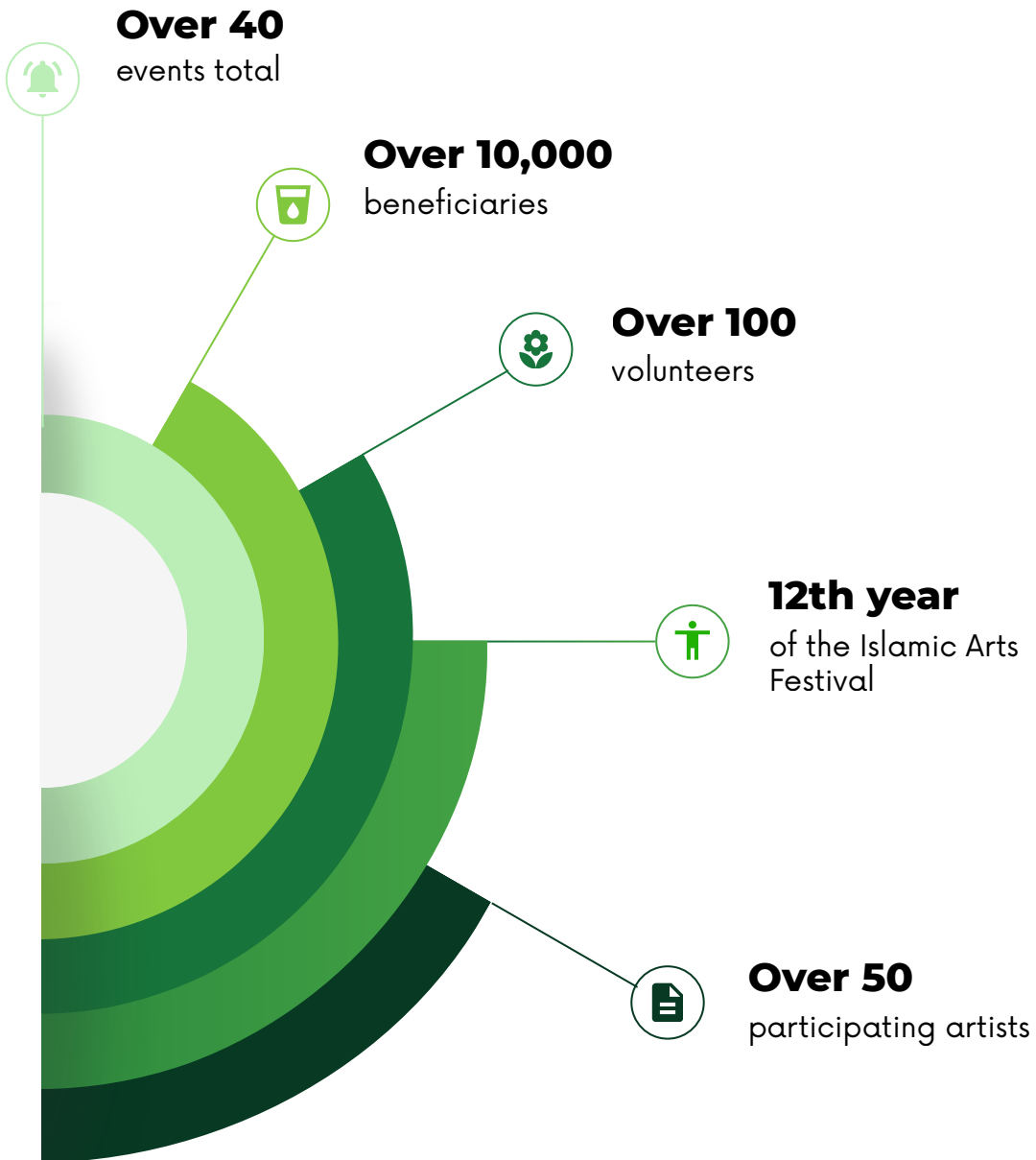
Islamic Arts Society

Houston, Texas



**Islamic ARTS Society**

# 2025 Impacts



# PROGRAMS

In 2025, the Islamic Arts Society hosted more than 40 events, reaching over 10,000 participants and beneficiaries. For more than a decade, our work has been sustained by a deeply committed volunteer base, including a fully volunteer Board of Directors and more than 100 volunteers annually who help deliver our programs and support our operations. Many of these volunteers are first- and second-generation Asian Americans, reflecting the diversity and strength of the communities we serve.



The Islamic Arts Society advances its mission through a dynamic portfolio of programs: year-round Building Bridges initiatives; the annual Islamic Arts Festival—now in its 13th year in 2026 and the largest and longest-running Islamic arts festival in the United States; a global arts prize; and a documentary and publishing project exploring Islamic architecture in Houston. Together, these efforts foster creativity, community, and meaningful connection across diverse and intergenerational audiences.

## Building Bridges

Through our Building Bridges program, the Islamic Arts Society brought Islamic art to more than 40 events and engaged with over a dozen media outlets in 2025. We believe that presenting Islamic art in public spaces and mainstream American media is one of the most effective ways to counter Islamophobia and challenge misconceptions about Islam and Muslims.

By encountering the beauty, depth, and diversity of Islamic artistic traditions, audiences often leave our programs with a renewed sense of curiosity, appreciation, and respect for Muslim cultures.



**Islamic ARTS Society**

# Teaching Islamic Art Library and College Programs



Islamic Arts Society is committed to both teaching Islamic art and expanding access to it through strong community partnerships. We believe that engaging the next generation and introducing broader audiences to Islamic artistic traditions are essential to preserving and sustaining this rich cultural heritage.

Over the years, we have cultivated partnerships with leading cultural and civic institutions, including the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Asia Society Texas; Children's Museum Houston; Houston Center for Contemporary Craft; Rothko Chapel; the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs; and Harris County Commissioners' Offices. These collaborations bring Islamic art into public spaces in meaningful and accessible ways.

We work closely with library systems across Harris, Montgomery, and Fort Bend counties, as well as Houston Public Library branches. Each year, we present dozens of well-attended programs, including month-long exhibitions, henna demonstrations, calligraphy workshops, and Ebru (marbling) sessions.

Our university partnerships—with the University of Houston, Rice University, and Sam Houston State University—extend this engagement to college students, introducing new audiences to Islamic art and its cultural and historical significance.

## Documentary Video & Book

### *Finding Islamic Art* in the Bayou City

This short video documentary highlights Islamic art sites across Houston, many of which remain underrecognized despite the city's extraordinary cultural diversity.

Produced by local artists, the film contributes to Houston's cultural narrative and promotes the city as a destination for those interested in art, architecture, and heritage. Houston is home to more than 250,000 Muslims from diverse backgrounds, representing a wide range of cultures and traditions.

The documentary was funded by Houston Arts Alliance's City's Initiative Grant.



### *History, Art, and Architecture* of Mosques in Houston

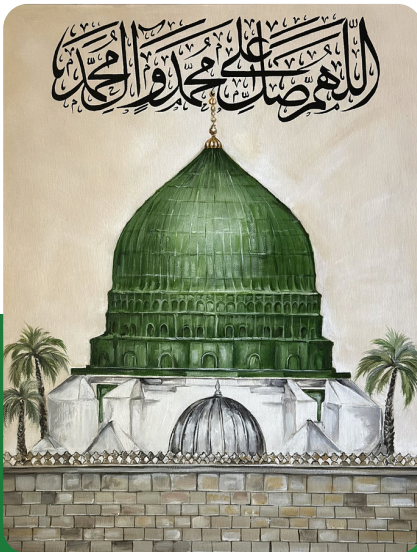
In collaboration with the World Cultures and Literatures Program at the University of Houston, Islamic Arts Society published a hardcover, coffee-table book documenting mosques across the Greater Houston area.

These spaces reflect a wide spectrum of Islamic art and architectural expression, contributing to the cultural fabric of the city. This publication serves as both a visual archive and a historical narrative, capturing the identity, evolution, and lived experiences of Houston's Muslim communities. It is the first publication of its kind to document this history in such depth and detail.



**Islamic ARTS Society**

# *Art for the Love of* Muhammad (PBUH) Global Art Competition



Originally launched in response to the 2015 Charlie Hebdo controversy in France, the Art for the Love of Muhammad (PBUH) prize has grown into a global platform for artistic expression.

In 2025, the competition received over 250 submissions from 21 countries across five continents. Artists from around the world expressed their reverence and love for the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) through diverse and powerful creative works.

Islamic Arts Society believes that the most meaningful response to hate is love—and that expressing this love through art honors the Prophet, who is described as a mercy to all mankind.



**Islamic ARTS Society**

# *Islamic Arts Festival*

## The Longest-Running Islamic Arts Gathering in the United States



The Islamic Arts Festival is the largest and most established festival of Islamic arts in the United States, bringing together people of all faiths, cultures, and backgrounds for a vibrant, two-day celebration of art, learning, and community.

The 12th annual festival took place on November 15–16, 2025, at the University of Houston, drawing record-breaking attendance and welcoming artists and visitors from across the country.

Houston Mayor John Whitmire inaugurated the festival and officially declared the weekend “Islamic Arts Festival Days.” The expanded program featured a film festival, storytelling workshops, an academic seminar, and a live Sufi music concert, offering a rich and immersive cultural experience.

Attendees engaged with over 5,000 works of art by more than 50 artists, alongside a film festival, spoken word performances, and academic programming. Children’s activities—including geometric art, lantern-making, and beadwork—created hands-on learning opportunities for younger audiences. More than 28 live demonstrations were offered, with Ebru and calligraphy sessions taking place throughout the festival. The event welcomed an estimated 6,000 visitors over two days.



## Islamic ARTS Society

# Fostering Community & Connection Among Artists



This year's festival convened some of the most prominent Islamic artists in the United States, creating a space for collaboration, exchange, and mutual inspiration.

Islamic Arts Society is deeply committed to supporting artists, many of whom have faced barriers to representation or recognition. We provide platforms, mentorship, and opportunities for meaningful engagement.

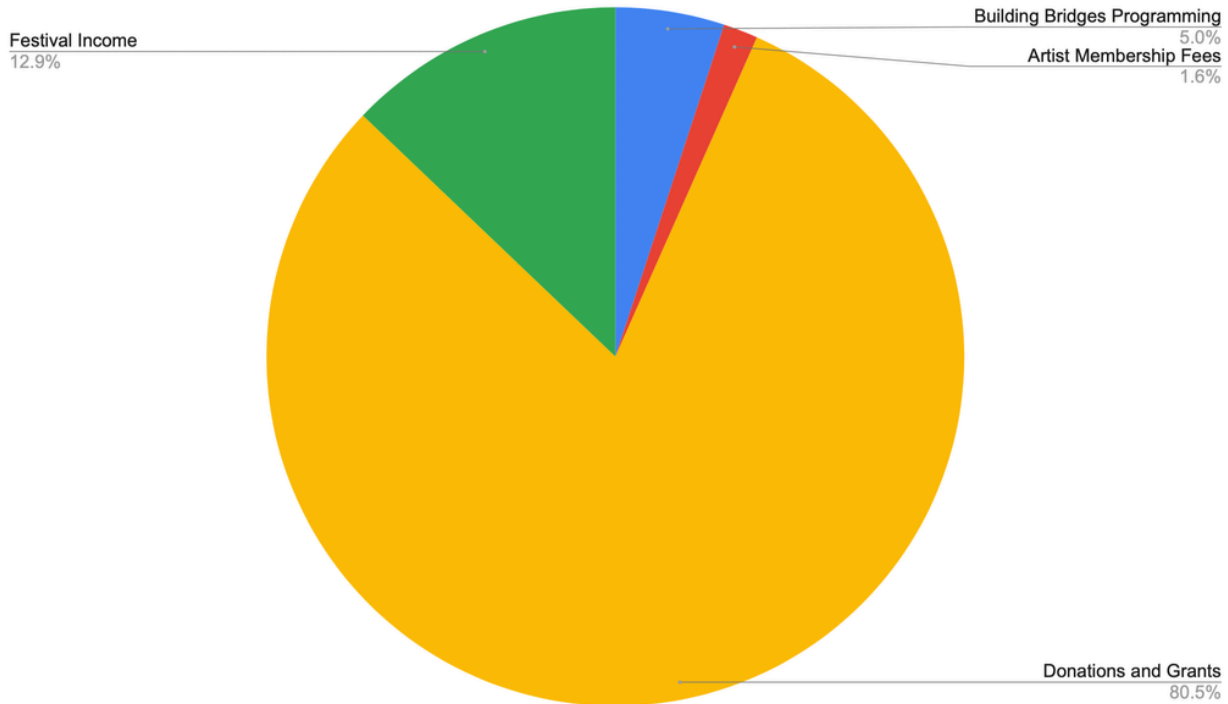
In 2025, we showcased the work of over 50 artists. For some, this marked their first opportunity to exhibit before diverse audiences; for others, it was the first time their work was fairly compensated. By empowering artists to tell their own stories, we help counter stereotypes and highlight the diversity within Muslim communities.

Featured artists included Elinor Holland, Aisha Changezi, Ism-i-Nur, Haidar Muhsen, and Harouth Bastajian, alongside many other distinguished contributors.

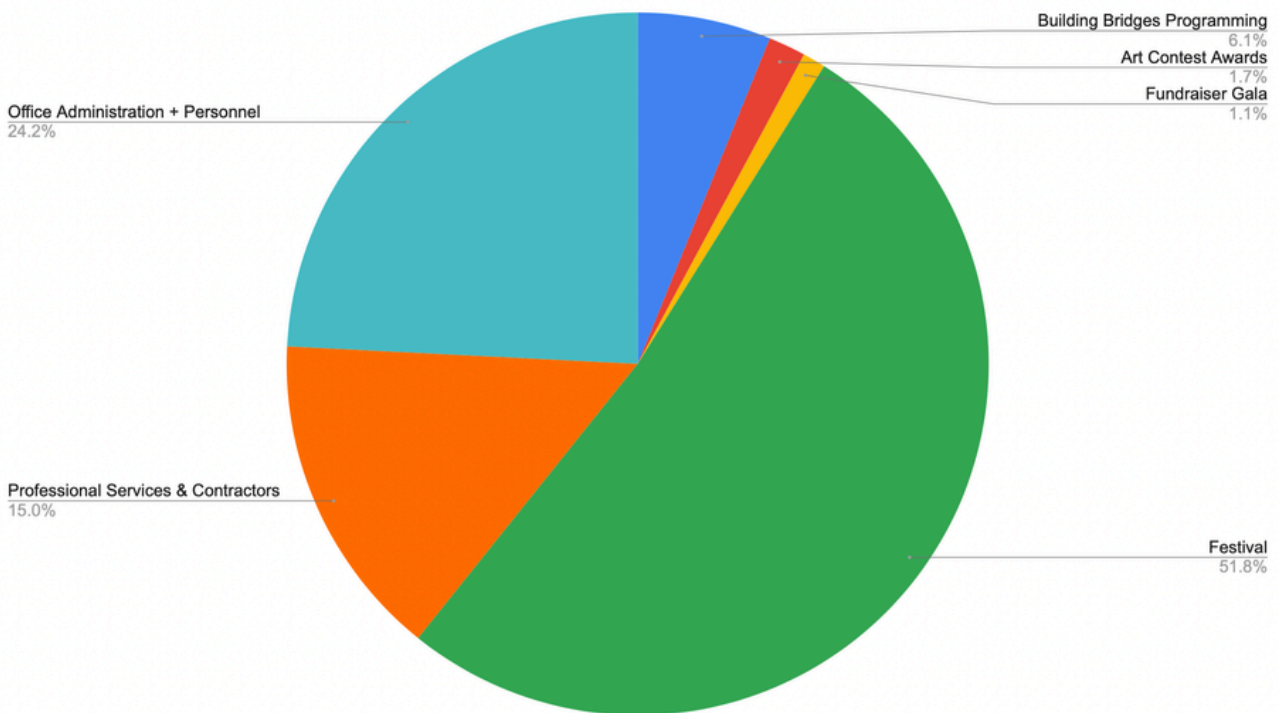
Through these efforts, Islamic Arts Society continues to strengthen the artistic ecosystem and nurture a growing community of creators.

# Budget

## 2025 Income: \$226,681



## 2025 Expenses: \$211,197





## Islamic ARTS Society

# Our Partners & Supporters

Islamic Arts Society is proud to collaborate with a wide network of arts and cultural organizations across the United States. Support from institutions such as Mid-America Arts Alliance, Cynthia Woods Mitchell Pavilion, BANF (BIPOC Artist Network Fund), and Houston Arts Alliance has been instrumental in advancing our mission.

Our partners also include the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Asia Society Texas; Children’s Museum Houston; Arab American Cultural Center; Houston Center for Contemporary Craft; Preservation Houston; Interfaith Ministries for Greater Houston; Rothko Chapel; and the Islamic Society of Greater Houston.

**These partnerships reflect a shared recognition of the importance of our work.**

However, demand for our programming continues to exceed our current capacity.





**Islamic ARTS Society**

# Demand for our programming continues to exceed our current capacity.

We invite you to support our mission. Your contribution—whether a one-time or recurring gift—helps us expand our reach and continue sharing the beauty and significance of Islamic art with broader audiences. All donations are tax-deductible.

**Help us carry Islamic Arts Society into its next chapter.**



**SCAN HERE**