



The Contribution of the Abdul Jalil Family to the Establishment and Preservation of the Collections of the Contemporary Museum in Al-Hillah Guardians of Hillah's Heritage Authors pp(444-484)

M. Ali Obayes Hussein Ali Al-Mamouri - Maher Abbas Mah - di Meethaq Kazem Abdul Abbas Abdullah

The Contribution of the Abdul Jalil Family to the Establishment and Preservation of the Collections of the Contemporary Museum in Al-Hillah -Guardians of Hillah's Heritage Authors:

مساهمة عائلة عبد الجليل في تأسيس وحفظ مقتنيات المتحف المعاصر في الحلة - حراس تراث الحلة

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Abstract:

Museums are non-profit educational institutions dedicated to collecting and preserving human heritage for educational, cultural, and community purposes. Beyond storing valuable objects, they function as centers for cultural identity, intellectual development, and social engagement. Al-Hillah hosts four museums, the most prominent of which is the Hillah Contemporary Museum. Its collections include Babylonian and historical antiquities, folklore, art, political and military artifacts, currency, and documents. Established in 2014 through the efforts of Prof. Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabath and his family, the museum has received significant support from the Department of Antiquities and World Heritage, the Ministry of Tourism and Culture, and Babylon Governorate. It has become a key destination for local and international visitors. This study examines the role of the Abdul Jalil family in founding the museum and preserving its collections, highlighting their contribution to safeguarding Hillah's heritage for future generations

.Keywords: Museums, museum significance, Hillah, role of Hillah families, Abdul Jalil family.



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1. Introduction:

Museums play a significant role in strengthening national identity and fostering a sense of belonging among members of society. By showcasing a nation's civilization and heritage, they cultivate pride, honor, and collective memory. Museums also contribute to the development of artistic taste and cultural awareness.

Worldwide, countries establish museums for educational, cultural, historical, and economic purposes, as they attract large numbers of tourists and serve as spaces for interaction between visitors and local communities. In this way, museums act as mediators in tourism and cultural exchange. When managed effectively, tourism can revitalize museums, increase visitor numbers, and generate valuable foreign currency revenue.

Today, museums are regarded as scientific institutes, cultural centers, and educational spaces for the arts. They are no longer merely storage facilities for valuable objects; instead, they present information in accessible and engaging formats. Iraq, with its diverse environments and civilizations, can be considered an open-air museum. This diversity makes its museums important destinations for tourists and visitors. To maximize this potential, museums should actively use social media and digital platforms to raise awareness and promote their collections.

The practice of repurposing heritage buildings as museums has become widespread in the Islamic world. This approach has proven successful, including in Babylon Governorate, where a heritage building has been transformed into a museum that connects the past with the present and serves the local community.



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This study examines how museum institutions reflect both local and global societies, how they respond to audience expectations, and what interests their visitors. It also analyzes the role of local governments in supporting museums, including their administrative structures and exhibition spaces. Ultimately, the research explores the role of museums in the local community, recognizing them as centers of collective memory and expressions of social identity that depend on public engagement. Audience interests vary according to each museum's character and structure.

The Hillah Contemporary Museum serves as one of the key gateways to Iraqi history, particularly that of Hillah. Its significance is enhanced by its location in the former Hillah District Governorate building, which dates back to the 1920s.

Opened in 2014 through the efforts of its founders, especially Prof. Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabath, the museum comprises several halls. Some are dedicated to prominent Iraqi figures, such as the hall of the poet Muhammad Mahdi Al-Basir, which preserves his personal belongings. Other halls display valuable heritage artifacts that reflect Iraqi customs and traditions, all donated by local residents who safeguarded them for many years. A central feature of the museum is its library, which holds over 30,000 books across various disciplines. The museum also organizes artistic, literary, and cultural activities and events for the community.

Section One: Research Methodology, Aims, Objectives, and Administrative and Architectural Structure

The Second Topic: Museum Policy and Most Notable Collections

Conclusions and recommendations follow, along with a list of academic references.



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Section One: Research Methodology

First: Research Problem

1. There is a lack of studies linking museums to digital information networks to promote tourism culture, particularly in the museums of Babylon Governorate.
2. There is insufficient cultural awareness regarding the role of museums in attracting tourists to Iraq in general, and to Hillah in particular.
3. The government budgets allocated to museums suffer from deficiencies and require improvement and modernization.

Second: Significance of the Study

This research examines museums as a means of spreading tourism and cultural engagement through social media. It highlights their role in enhancing the attractiveness of tourism in Babylon Governorate. The study focuses on the role played by the Hillah Contemporary Museum within the local community, and on how this museum, along with other museums in the region, contributes to increasing both cultural and recreational tourism demand.

Third: Research Objectives

1. To understand the functions, importance, and objectives of museums.
2. To explore the current state of museums in Babylon Governorate.
3. To examine how museums in Babylon, especially the Hillah Contemporary Museum, attract tourists and promote tourism culture through social media, websites, public media, seminars, and courses organized by the museum.



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4. To document the prominent role of Professor Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabath, the museum director, in acquiring valuable artifacts and collections for the museum.

5. To assess the vital role of museum management in the success of this unique museum experience.

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5. To assess the vital role of museum management in the success of this unique museum experience.

Fourth: Research Hypothesis

The research aims to obtain reliable results through field visits and the collection of statistical data from relevant institutions. The central hypothesis of the study is: _"Museums of Babylon: A Study of the Collections of the Hillah Contemporary Museum." _

Sixth: Temporal and Spatial Boundaries

The temporal scope of the study is limited to the year 2024 AD.

The spatial scope includes the Hillah Contemporary Museum, given its prominent role in preserving the cultural and heritage legacy of the people of Babylon Governorate.



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1. The Pharaonic Era

The ancient Egyptians were among the first to develop the idea of preserving objects in temples for religious and cultural purposes. Although they did not have museums in the modern sense, their temples functioned similarly, displaying art and artifacts that served specific religious and symbolic functions and left a strong impression on visitors. The concept of the museum as an independent institution has its roots in this early appreciation for objects of beauty and historical value, especially those associated with religious significance.

In Greece, the concept of museums began to emerge in cities and temples, where designated spaces housed statues and artistic relics primarily for display. Later, the Romans established exhibition halls within imperial palaces that functioned as museums. Private collectors also amassed artifacts and sculptures, many of which originated from cities such as Pompeii and other parts of Italy.

In this context, the Roman leader Agrippa noted in one of his speeches that the idea of establishing museums arose from the desire to preserve valuable artworks found in ancient temples. He also emphasized the importance of the museums of Alexandria and Pergamum during the Hellenistic period, as they were connected to libraries and centers of culture and scientific research, attracting prominent scholars and thinkers of the time. (Muhammad, 2002: 23; Haider Daa, Ali Abis, Museums, 2022, p. 44).

2. The Middle Ages

During the Middle Ages, places of worship such as churches and monasteries functioned as small-scale museums. Their architectural grandeur and the paintings, frescoes, and images that adorned their walls reflected their cultural and artistic value. These spaces also housed



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unique treasures, including finely crafted ornaments, icons, textiles, and relics brought by pilgrims from distant regions. (Muhammad, 2002: 27).

This period was marked by a strong interest in collecting the relics and personal belongings of saints, which were preserved in special compartments and regarded as both sacred and historically significant. Notable examples include glass artifacts made in the style of sacred rock crystal, such as the famous Hedwig glassware, of which about thirteen pieces are distributed among European museums and collections.

3. The Islamic Era

Muslims developed a tradition of collecting rare and valuable artifacts, particularly following their expansion into Persian and Byzantine territories. Although the early Arabs did not establish formal museums or treasuries for manuscripts and artifacts, the Abbasids showed considerable interest in collecting, acquiring, and preserving such objects in their treasuries. For example, Caliph Al-Radi maintained a treasury dedicated to crystal artifacts. The historian Al-Suli remarked that he had never seen a ruler who possessed more crystal or commissioned more exquisite works of art than Al-Radi.

However, many of these collections were looted and destroyed during the Mongol invasion and the fall of Baghdad in 1258 AD. Similarly, the caliphs of Andalusia collected valuables and artifacts in their palaces across Toledo, Granada, Seville, and Córdoba.

Over time, the Ottoman Empire inherited and preserved many of these rare artifacts.

Ottoman palaces in Istanbul housed extensive collections, the most prominent being Topkapi Palace, now the Topkapi Museum. It contains one of the most significant collections of Islamic



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artifacts, amassed since the reign of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror. (aBa Oktay Aslan, Turkish Arts and Architecture, Research Center for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul, Istanbul - 1987, p. 225).

The Renaissance Era:

During the Renaissance in Europe, kings, merchants, and consuls developed a strong interest in collecting rare and valuable artifacts brought back by sailors exploring the New World. This led to large-scale acquisition of heritage from the New World, often carried out under the justification of conquest, education, and civilization . . (Al-Quddus, 121: 2001)

This period also saw the establishment of museums as independent institutions. Their emergence resulted from several factors, including nostalgia for the past and the social and economic transformations driven by the inventions of the Industrial Revolution and their impact on human life (Marzouq, 42: 1981)

In the Arab world, the development of museums came later than in the West due to a number of political, economic, and religious factors (Marzouq, 1981:26). As a result, museums in Arab countries were not established until the late 19th and early 20th centuries . . (Asir, 42: 2003).

Although the origins of museums can be traced back to the 6th century BC, specifically to 530 BC in Mesopotamia, as shown by archaeological discoveries in Babylon, the modern concept of the museum as a public institution emerged in the 15th century AD with the Capitoline Museum in Rome. The museum began allowing the general public to visit and view its collections without discrimination in 1471 AD. The number of public museums increased during the 16th and 17th centuries. The defining characteristic of the Capitoline Museum was its declaration that the role of the museum is acquisition, preservation, and display for the



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public. Earlier collections were private and not open to the public . (Muhammad Jamal, 2020 AD, p. 27).

Second: The Concept of the Museum

The museum is defined as “a place where artistic, archaeological, scientific, and other artifacts are displayed”.

The American Association of Museums (AAM) defines a museum as “an institution that collects, preserves, and displays human and natural heritage for the purposes of education and culture. This can only be achieved when the museum has the necessary technical capabilities and trained expertise. Without original, scientific, or historical exhibits, the nature of the institution becomes irrelevant”. (Mendel 2011, 193 Steinberg)

The British archaeologist Hermann Bazin described the museum as “a temple in which time has stopped,” meaning that each exhibition exists within its own temporal environment. (Munir and Linda, 2016: 14)

Third: Museum Design Standards:

1. Components of the Museum Building:

The architectural and functional components should be planned to support the museum's educational and preservation roles.

2. Visitor Circulation:

It is essential to define and organize visitor movement paths within the museum to ensure a smooth and coherent experience.

3. Display Methods :



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Artifacts may be displayed in various ways: hanging on walls, placed inside glazed cases, mounted on stands against walls, positioned directly on the floor without a base, or arranged in fixed or mobile display cases.

4. Museum Lighting

Lighting plays a key role in highlighting the properties and details of exhibits. The type of lighting—natural or artificial—its intensity, and distribution must be carefully determined to suit the nature of the collections.

5. Security and Protection

Measures for protecting exhibits against theft, damage, and fire must be incorporated into the museum's design and operation. . (Naseeb 24:2017).

Fourth: Types of Museums:

1. Art Museums :

These museums collect, preserve, and display fine arts, including paintings, sculptures, decorative arts, fashion, and other artistic works. Paintings are among the most common and sought-after items. (Wasila, 24:2017).

2. Historical Museums*

- 1- These museums preserve, acquire, and display artifacts from various historical periods, ranging from prehistory and ancient eras to the Middle Ages and contemporary history. Historical museums emerged as a means of fostering national and patriotic pride. (Zohair, 49:2009)

3. Archaeological and Science Museums :



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Archaeological museums focus on artifacts from past civilizations, while science museums present scientific discoveries, natural phenomena, and technological developments. (Abu Ammah, 23:2008).

4. Open-Air Museums

These are systems that display antiquities, monuments, forests, wildlife, and natural phenomena in their original or reconstructed outdoor environments. The external setting is prepared to make it suitable for visiting and touring.

Fifth: The Importance, Goals, and Objectives of Museums

1. The Importance of Museums

- a. They function as scientific and cultural institutions and diverse sources of knowledge.
- b. They convey facts to visitors of all ages in a short time and in a simple yet effective manner.
- c. They provide opportunities for effective collaboration in the learning and research process.
- d. They develop in children specific tendencies, such as careful observation and critical thinking.
- e. They enhance visitors' understanding of their place within the local environment and of their country's artistic, historical, and cultural development in a global context.
- f. They serve as effective means of communicating ideas about the cultural achievements of other peoples, modern science, and the traditions of different societies.

2. Museum Objectives:

- a. To provide direct exposure to key historical experiences that led to significant achievements in culture and art.
- b. To meet the cultural and historical needs of citizens.



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- c. To promote equality of access to knowledge among individuals in all countries.
- d. To preserve antiquities and cultural heritage.
- e. To employ educational and guidance methods that explain the importance of artifacts and provide useful historical and artistic information to visitors. (Al-Bahnasi, 61:2004)

Note on Collections:

The museum's collections include artifacts representing Iraqi customs and traditions. All items were donated by local residents who preserved them for many years. The most important halls are:

Museum Halls and Collections:

The museum contains the following halls and collections:

1. Political History Hall:

Documents key political events and developments in Iraq and Babylon Governorate.

2. Popular Mobilization and Mass Graves Hall:

Commemorates the martyrs of the Shaaban Uprising and the Popular Mobilization Forces. The hall displays personal belongings and clothing of the martyrs, along with exhibits honoring the sacrifices of those who defended Iraq.

3. Dr. Muhammad Mahdi Al-Basir Hall:

Dedicated to the poet of the 1920 Revolution, Muhammad Mahdi Al-Basir, and his literary and national contributions.

4. Jewelry and Heritage Hall:

Presents traditional jewelry, ornaments, and artifacts reflecting local customs and heritage.



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5. Sports History Hall of Babylon: (Personal interview on 12/16/2024 at 12:00 PM at the headquarters of the Hilla Contemporary Museum).

Showcases the history and achievements of sports in Babylon Governorate.

6. Lawyer Mohammed Jaafar Ajam Hall:

Highlights the life and work of lawyer Mohammed Jaafar Ajam.

7. Fine Arts Hall – Artist Saad Al-Taie: childSaad Al-Tai
in Babylon Governorate/Hillah (1935)

Exhibits artworks by artist Saad Al-Taie and other contributors to the fine arts in the region.

Fine Arts Hall Staff:

1. Wasan Tariq Abdul Hussein – Hall Manager
2. Ziad Tariq Abdul Hussein
3. Iman Mohammed Hadi
4. Wassam Ali Hussein

8. Contemporary Hall and Hilla Library:

The library is the centerpiece of this section, holding more than 30,000 books on various subjects. The museum organizes artistic, literary, and cultural events, courses for school students, and workshops and seminars for the governorate's residents.

The Hilla Contemporary Museum is considered one of the most important (Muhammad Yusri, 2004, p. 31) museums in Iraq, and especially in Babylon. It is a newly established institution that houses heritage and historical artifacts belonging to religious scholars, professors,



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athletes, and academics from Babylon who contributed significantly to the intellectual, scientific, cultural, and sports movements.

The museum also incorporates the old Hilla Governorate building, constructed in 1973, and holds items donated by prominent jewelry houses and acquired through purchase. In addition to the library, the collections include a wide range of historical and cultural materials.

9. Hall of Professor Mohammed Abdul Jalil Shaabath:

Dedicated to Professor Mohammed Abdul Jalil Shaabath, born in Hillah in 1965. He completed a Master's degree in Business Administration and played a key role in developing the museum's collections.

10- Al-Abbas Holy Shrine Hall:

Presents artifacts and exhibits related to the Al-Abbas Holy Shrine and its cultural and religious significance.

11. Engineer Shawqi Jaber Ali Shaabath Hall:

Honors engineer and writer Shawqi Jaber Ali Shaabath, born in 1944 in Hillah, Jabran district. He came from a family with a long literary and cultural heritage and was known for combining knowledge, culture, literature, and humility.

Museum Guidance Unit

One of the key units of the Hillah Contemporary Museum is the Museum Guidance Unit. Its main tasks are:



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1. Receiving visitors from various Iraqi governorates, as well as from Arab and foreign countries.
2. Hosting delegations, schools, and universities from within and outside Iraq.
3. Introducing the heritage of Hillah through the display of copper, metal, and wooden artifacts.
4. Studying and documenting the history of Hillah in terms of families, notable figures, and local personalities.
5. Organizing lectures and heritage and scientific seminars related to the history and heritage of Hillah.
6. Managing all activities of the unit, including official invitations, daily and monthly programs, and preparing special schedules for events.
7. Safeguarding jewelry and collections against theft and damage, and preparing identification cards and certificates in Arabic and English.
8. Maintaining the cleanliness of the halls and heritage collections.

Professor Ali Shaabath stated:

The Museum Guidance Unit is responsible for receiving visitors and researchers and introducing them to Hillah's heritage. Hillah has carried a religious and intellectual message for centuries. Evidence of this is the establishment of the religious seminary during the era of the great scholar Ja'far al -Hudhali, known as _al-Muhaqqiq al-Hilli_, in 676 AH [1277 AD]. His scholarly council continued for more than four hundred years.

Archaeological, cultural, and heritage sites are not merely static displays; they are means of preserving historical facts that might otherwise be lost. We now live in an era of openness, and



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we see the country through the eyes of the future. The city of Hillah is ready to open itself to the public. Through the Hillah Contemporary Museum project, we will reveal the treasures and secrets it holds, which tell the history of this distinguished city.”

Urban Structure and the Hillah Mutasarrifate Building: In studying the architecture of the Hillah Mutasarrifate building and its influence on Arab museum architecture, a clear impact can be observed on Al-Zahir Palace—now the Makkah Museum of Antiquities and Heritage—in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The architectural design of Al-Zahir Palace closely resembles that of the Hillah Mutasarrifate, which was built 17 years earlier. The Hillah Mutasarrifate was opened in 1935 AD, while the construction of Al-Zahir Palace was completed in 1952 AD.

The adaptive reuse of such heritage buildings is guided by the following principles:

1. Selecting a new function compatible with the building's architectural and artistic characteristics, without requiring substantial alteration of its original features.
2. Limiting any modifications to the building to the minimum necessary.
3. If new elements are required, they should be made of lightweight materials and be visually distinguishable from the original materials, to preserve the building's heritage identity.
4. When an old building is reused, restoration and completion of missing elements may be necessary. This must follow the standards established by the Venice Charter.

Similar examples exist internationally, such as the conversion of the Generalife Gardens in Spain into museum spaces for visitors (Imran Hazar Deborah George, Heritage Buildings:



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Restoration, Maintenance and Preservation, Ministry of Culture, Damascus 1996, 67;

Mahmoud Zein Al-Abidin, Museum Use of Historic Buildings: Topkapi Palace as an Example, 2.)

Hillah Contemporary Museum and Similar Buildings in Arab Countries:

The Hillah District Mutasarrifate Building, now known as the Hillah Contemporary Museum, was constructed between 1930 and 1935 and inaugurated on September 8, 1935, to commemorate the coronation of King Ghazi bin Faisal I (1933–1939). The building was completed during the tenure of Mutasarrif Ahmad Zaki al-Khayyat, who served from May 20, 1935, to December 19, 1936.

Al-Khayyat held several government positions throughout his career. He began as a translator in the General Telegraph Directorate, then served as Director of the Kufa Sub-District, Secretary of the Ministry of Education, and Qaim Maqam of the Hindiyah District. He later became Mutasarrif of Kut, Amara, and Karbala. He was also appointed to the diplomatic corps as Consul General of Iraq in Muhammarah and India. In 1935, he was assigned as Governor of Hillah while simultaneously managing the General Directorate of Posts and Telegraphs until 1941. In 1946, he became Consul General in Jerusalem and was later elected as a representative for Hillah.

The building was designed by Iraqi architect Rashid and executed by architect Abbas Shehda. (Ahmed Al-Khayat, 2017, p. 12). The architecture reflects the prestige associated with modern state institutions at the time, comparable to that of contemporary European public buildings. Its function as a museum also allows it to showcase and preserve art and artifacts from various periods and regions.((Handbook on Intangible Cultural Practices as Global Strategies for the



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Future Julius Heinicke, The Glocal Self: Cultural Policy Concepts Between Heritage and Future Using the Example of Berlin's Humboldt Forum, 448))

Administrative Structure of the Museum:

1-Director

Name: Mr. Ali Abdul Jalil Ali Hussein Ali Shaabet

Date of Birth: 1967

Job Title: Senior Manager

Academic Qualification: Bachelor of Fine Arts

Marital Status: Married

Residence: Babylon / Hillah

Responsibilities:

Director of the Civilization Revival and Modernization Authority in the Babylon Provincial Council since November 19, 2006.

2. Technical Assistant

Name: Mr. Fadhel Hassan Kassad Al-Karawi

Job Title: Technical Director

Museum Units :The museum comprises several units, the most important of which are:

1. Administrative Unit:

2. Media Unit – responsible for documenting the center's activities and presentations.



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3. Technical Workshop Unit – handles maintenance, restoration, and preparation of exhibits.

Main Exhibits Showcase [singular]: plural: showcases and showcases: showcase, a glass front of a store or shop in which sales are displayed, often with their prices written on it. "He stared for a long time at the displays in the showcases before deciding to buy." Ahmed Mukhtar Al-Omar, Dictionary of Contemporary Arabic 3: 561) and Displays in the Museum Corridor

A. History of Photography in Hillah

Includes an early camera used to photograph the sun by Mr. Mohammed Al-Moussawi.

B History of Bookbinding in Hillah

Displays tools and works associated with Hajj Al-Qayyim and the tradition of bookbinding in the city.

C. Heritage Ornamental Corridor

Features traditional items such as mills, mortars and pestles, mats, rugs, various types of gutters, shekels, and plasterwork.

D. Showcase for Judge Abdul Amir Al-Taie

Dedicated to the former Director of the Babylon Court of Appeal.

E. Honor Roll for Judge Abdul Hussein Al-Sabbak

F. Showcase for Dr. Mahmoud Ajami and Professor Khalil Ibrahim Nouri

G. Display for Youssef Karkoush

H. Window and Glazed Panel with Karbala Bricks

From the shrine of Imam al-Hujjah, may God hasten his reappearance.

I. Showcase of Dr. Sami Saeed Al-Ahmad



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J. Showcase for Sayyid Al-Allama Hadi Kamal Al-Din

K. Showcase Containing the Building's Collections

L. Showcase of Weapons

M. Showcase of Currency and Stamps

N. Handwritten Qur'an Showcase

Contains a Qur'an handwritten by Sheikh Muhammad Ali Al-Mutairi, nearly 200 years old, along with a manuscript Qur'an. Also includes materials completed by Mr. Hossam Al-Shalah related to the Torah and Bible.

O. Showcase for _Al-Hikma_ Magazine

Includes a pencil case and an honorary note presented to music teacher Mahdi Saleh.

P. Showcase for Captain Mohsen Al-Jilawi (A personal interview with Mr. Fadhel Hassan Kassad Al-Karawi, Director of the Hillah Contemporary Museum, at the museum headquarters on the day of the auction at one o'clock in the afternoon)Former captain and notable figure.

Q. Honor Roll for Abdul Amir Al-Asadi

R. The Ancestral Treasure Box

A carved and decorated wooden chest with compartments for a bride's personal belongings, used to store clothes, perfumes, and valuables. These boxes were often painted in attractive colors and intricately engraved. Red boxes of varying sizes were common, and the choice of material reflected social status.

Women would place images of _Bint Al-Mu'idi_—known as the “Mona Lisa of Iraq”—on the boxes to display their appearance and contents. The tradition dates to the late 18th century, after which demand grew significantly in Iraq.



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Initially, high-quality wood such as beech and plank wood was used, but these materials were expensive and scarce. This led to a shift toward imported aluminum. In the last century, the final transformation occurred with the widespread use of "fafon," a cheaper and readily available material.

Fafon boxes remain in use today, particularly in southern and northern governorates. In urban areas, they are less common due to changing lifestyles, and many have disappeared with modernization. However, some people still value them for their practicality and heritage significance. The craft of making these boxes is a traditional folk art now at risk of extinction. For older generations, especially mothers and grandmothers, these boxes hold deep sentimental value, tied to cherished memories and family stories.

The Second Topic: Museum Policy:

The Hillah Contemporary Museum aims to protect heritage in general, and works of art with heritage value in particular. Its policy also focuses on enriching this heritage and presenting it within a scientific and cultural framework that responds to the needs and requirements of society.

The museum institution strives to fulfill its primary mission: preserving artistic collections of public value within a framework of public service. The ultimate goal is to deliver information to a broad audience and to uphold everyone's right to education, culture, and heritage.

Director's Statement:

Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabet, Director of the Hillah Contemporary Museum and artist, states:



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"The museum's policy is to establish a gallery of fine arts that includes all artworks donated to the museum—painting, sculpture, calligraphy, decoration, ceramics, and photography."

The museum administration has worked to encourage residents of the city to display their creative works. Artists from Babylon have been central to the Iraqi art movement since its inception, including Mohammed Ali Shaker, Saad Al-Taie, Salman Daoud Al-Khalaf, and others.

Abdul Jalil adds: "One of the first donors to the museum was sculptor Sadiq Rabie, who donated three works. These include a large relief sculpture (1.50 × 1 m) on the theme of Jerusalem, executed in 1986, and a sculpture of the scholar Dr. Ali Jawad Al-Taher. We call on all sculptors in Babylon to support the museum with their creative production."

Activities and Vision

One of the museum's activities is holding specialized training courses in various fields, most notably Arabic calligraphy, with the support of local specialists.

We see it as necessary to establish similar museums in every Iraqi province to commemorate the history of all the cities of Mesopotamia. Such institutions play a key role in introducing citizens to their country's ancient history, fostering a sense of belonging to the homeland, and strengthening individual national identity.

private hall:

The museum director is invited Professor Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabat All artists in the province to support the museum for the purpose of documenting the creators to broadcast conclusive evidence that Babylon is the pillar of the Iraqi plastic arts movement. We also extend an



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invitation to the families of the deceased artists to support the museum with the products they have available to take their way to display in the museum halls and to complete the gallery of plastic arts, as the museum plan includes displaying the products in a special hall, and we now own 20% of the plan for the hall, most of which is for pioneering works.

Noting that the process of receiving the artistic collections is done by a committee that is replaced every 6 months, and the collections are delivered with a sealed receipt. There are several ways to receive them, including in the form of a trust deposited in the museum or by way of a gift. Pointing out that these controls are strict so that the Babylonian people can be reassured that there is an official body that preserves the Babylonian and artistic heritage, and we encourage everyone to bring their belongings to the museum.

Hillah Museum, the home of hearts and love of heritage:

As you wander through the museum's halls, you will discover the works of Babylonian artists displayed in a wonderful way. You will also notice that the people of Hilla have deposited their old belongings and paintings in the museum, adding to it everything they own, especially coins and paintings, household items and their personal belongings that they used. The museum is considered a large home for the people of Hilla, containing all the old possessions and artifacts. And the techniques of scholars, writers, sheikhs and works to preserve it from damage, the museum contains a maintenance workshop. All archives.

Private Hall and Collection Policy:



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The museum director, Professor Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabet, invites all artists in the province to support the museum by contributing their works. The aim is to document creators and provide clear evidence that Babylon has been a pillar of the Iraqi fine arts movement.

An invitation is also extended to the families of deceased artists to donate available works so they can be displayed in the museum halls and contribute to completing the fine arts gallery. Under the museum's plan, these works will be exhibited in a dedicated hall. Currently, 20% of the hall's planned collection has been assembled, consisting mainly of pioneering works.

Collection Receiving Process:

Artistic collections are received by a committee that rotates every six months. Items are accepted with a sealed receipt to ensure documentation and accountability. Collections may be received either as a deposit held in trust by the museum or as a direct gift.

These strict procedures are in place to assure the people of Babylon that there is an official body responsible for preserving Babylonian and artistic heritage. The museum encourages everyone to contribute their historical and artistic belongings.

Hillah Museum: A Home for Hearts and Heritage:

As visitors move through the museum's halls, they encounter works by Babylonian artists displayed thoughtfully throughout the space. Residents of Hillah have also deposited their heirlooms, old paintings, coins, household items, and personal belongings used by their ancestors.

The museum functions as a large home for the people of Hillah, housing old possessions, artifacts, and the works of scholars, writers, and sheikhs. To ensure long-term preservation,



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the museum includes a maintenance workshop and archival facilities for the care and restoration of all collections.

Selected Collections of the Hillah Contemporary Heritage Museum:

1. Flower/Rose Water Sprayer (Kalbadan or Qom Qom)

A handmade copper bottle with a long neck and rounded base, traditionally filled with rose water. It was used to perfume guests during occasions and also served as a decorative object.

2. Rescue Medal, 1954:

Issued during the reign of King Faisal II, this royal medal was awarded to individuals who contributed to rescue operations during the Tigris River flood of 1954.

Obverse: A relief depicting a man saving a woman, with his foot on sandbags symbolizing flood defenses. In the background are submerged palm trees, a boat carrying rescue supplies, and views of Baghdad's mosques and palm groves.

Reverse: Inscribed with "Rescue Medal" and "Iraq Floods 1954."

Material: Bronze medal with a silk ribbon, struck in Switzerland.

The medal belonged to Professor Halim Jawad Mahdi Al-Kawaz. His grandfather, Hajj Mahdi Al-Kawaz, helped form a committee with other residents of Hillah—including Ali Imran Al-Shalah, Abdul Razzaq Marjan, Naji Jabyour, and Jassim Hammadi Al-Hassan—to collect donations and mobilize volunteers. The medals reflect the generosity and reputation of Hillah's people in providing assistance across Iraq.

3. Map of Hillah by Nasuh Effendi, 941 AH / 1534 AD*



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Drawn by the artist and historian Nasuh Effendi, known as Al-Matraqi Zadeh, this map shows Hillah's fortified walls, painted white to indicate plaster construction. The almost square walls contain six gates of uniform design, distributed along the four sides. The Euphrates River divides the city, with the two sides connected by a floating bridge supported by eight wide boats known as _jisariyyat_.

4. Domestic and Craft Artifacts*

The museum holds a diverse collection of everyday objects, including metal, glass, and ceramic utensils, jewelry, woodwork, textiles, and carpets. These items reflect the level of creativity, refined taste, and craftsmanship achieved by the artists and artisans of Hillah.

5. Architectural Elements:

Doors, windows, iron doorknockers, keys, and other belongings from the heritage houses of Hillah.

6. Weapons:

Old firearms, swords, shields, and combat helmets.

7. Manuscripts:

A collection of handwritten texts and documents of historical and religious significance.

8. Early Electrical Appliances:

Radios, televisions, and other early electronic devices used in Hillah.

9. Ceramic and Metal Vessels:

Jugs of various sizes and colors used for storage and daily life.

10. Ottoman Cannonball:



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A metal, ball-shaped projectile used by Ottoman cannons to breach city walls. Its presence confirms that Hillah's walls were fortified and designed to withstand siege warfare.

Conclusion

The Hillah Contemporary Museum stands in the historic city of Hillah as a destination for those interested in heritage, collectibles, and the figures who shaped art, culture, and science. Its collections include rare books, manuscripts, artworks, and the personal belongings of local scientists, athletes, artists, and intellectuals. Together, these items reflect the city's history and cultural heritage.

Whether your interest lies in folklore, fine art, or seeking a distinctive cultural experience, a visit to the Hillah Contemporary Museum offers an unforgettable encounter with the heart of Hillah.

When foundations, museums, and cultural institutions collaborate, they can play a significant role in developing society, enhancing public well-being, and spreading knowledge. Such partnerships demonstrate how art and innovation can be used to introduce audiences to complex topics in accessible ways, fostering a more aware and participatory society.

Preservation and Education

Conservation is central to the museum's mission. Conservation specialists work behind the scenes to protect fragile and ancient artifacts, ensuring they are preserved for future generations. This meticulous care is essential, even though it often remains unseen by visitors.

Museums serve more than school groups. Through specialized lectures, seminars, and exhibitions, they also meet the needs of lifelong learners and adults seeking to expand their knowledge and explore new interests. In this way, museums support intellectual growth and personal development.



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In a rapidly changing world, museums remain guardians of cultural heritage. They reveal the past, safeguard collective identity, and promote education, understanding, and communication within communities. To ensure they continue this mission, these institutions must be supported and valued by both the public and responsible authorities.

A Shared Responsibility

Preserving cultural and scientific heritage is not the responsibility of museums alone, but a collective duty of society—particularly in Hillah and Iraq more broadly. By recognizing the vital role of museums and actively participating in their efforts, we can ensure that our shared history endures and that cultural heritage remains vibrant and accessible.

Although we live in an era of rapid modernization, it is essential to educate younger generations about the importance of museums in the country's cultural and educational life. While museums may not yield immediate financial returns, they broaden intellectual horizons and deepen understanding of ancestral history and achievements. Introducing children to the value of museums from an early age fosters a genuine sense of national belonging, which benefits society in the long term.

Building and Outreach

The rear façade of the building faces the main street leading to Al-Ray Street. It is currently used as a popular clinic affiliated with the Ministry of Health. I call on the relevant authorities to transfer this section to the museum for preservation and integration into its cultural function.

The museum employs modern display methods and digital documentation to record, preserve, secure, study, maintain, and restore its collections. It organizes temporary and permanent exhibitions within



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Hillah, and holds seminars, conferences, and cultural and scientific activities aimed at raising community awareness of Babylonian civilization and reviving traditional Iraqi crafts and arts.

Appendices:

Image of the building of

Hillah Museum:



Director: Mr. Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabath:





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Technical Assistant to the Museum Director:



Hillah Contemporary Museum Library

Establishment:

Since its establishment, the management of the Hilla Contemporary Museum felt the need to have a place in the museum dedicated to a library that would house the works of the creative Hilli artist. Work on this project began in 2018.m, With the efforts of a group of individuals, including Ali Abdul Jalil Shaabath, Fadhel Hassan Kassad, Ammar Muhammad Al-Fatlawi, Hassan Al-Khafaji, Jaber Salal, and Zainab Muhammad Radwi. Museum Cadler Then the work developed so that everyone would head towards a larger project, the basic building block of which began with the donation of the family of the late writer and indexer Jaafar Al-Kawaz, his private library, which was then followed by generosity from the notables of our city, as the library shelves were decorated with a wonderful collection of prominent local figures, so that the number of personal libraries up to now is (37) personal libraries, in addition to the local library, whose number of books exceeded three and a half thousand books, with a wonderful collection of rare manuscripts. The administration was forced to move the contents of the library to the ground floor due to the lack of space, and the generous initiative of the honorable Professor Muhammad Qadi Jibran and Professor Hussam Al-Saffar to donate what the library needed in terms of



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shelves and decorations had a great impact.,What has been accomplished by the small library team is evidence of the effort they have made despite their lack of specialization in this field. The Hilla Contemporary Museum Library project has become a source of admiration for all visitors, especially research and studies students, who have been trustees since the library was established.(Jaber Salato and Hassan Jabbar Saeed and Ammar Mohammed Jassim and Zainab Muhammad Radwi Age of Tariq Abdul Hussein) Hilla Museum Library Staff Everyone who Wassan Tariq Abdul Hussein / Librarian, Mohammed Naji Shabib, Wassam Ali Hussein and Zainab Muhammad Radwi and Samah Sameh Jassim Weam Nehme Arabi and Iman Mohammed Hadi and Zainab Hadi Mohammed and Princess Saheb Hadi and Saad Saheb Hadi).

Library logo:

Libraries Which was occupied by the flags of Hilla:

Media who donated their libraries to the museum library:

1-Critic

Abdul Jabbar Abbas

2- The master calligrapher, Mr. Hussam Al-Shalah:

3- *The indexed writer Jaafar Al-Kawaz: Make an interview with the values:*

1- *Dr. Sami Saeed Al-Ahmad:*

2- Professor Jabbar Al-Kawaz

6- Saad Mubarak is a Babylonian plastic artist and sculptor of jewelry. He belongs to an artistic family famous for drawing and sculpting, and he inherited this talent from them. He is considered one of the most famous sculptors in Babylon and plastic artists in Iraq. His paintings are famous in many Arab countries. He was born in 1971 AD in the Jami'een neighborhood and is famous for his many works, including the Shanasheel. He is beloved and humble and donated many of his works to museums,



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especially the Babylon University Museum. His works are displayed on many Arab and international channels.

He participated in many exhibitions, including: (Art Exhibition of the Second International Conference at the University of Babylon, 2019) and (An exhibition and folkloric artworks in Nasiriyah Governorate, for which I was honored by the advisor to the President of the Republic at the time, Professor Sherwan Al-Waili, in the year 2020) and Al created a folklore mural in Mosul Governorate, and was honored by the Governor of Nineveh, Mr. Najm Al-Jabouri.). Three paintings For the exhibition In Jordan. and Artistic participation in a public exhibition in Baghdad, in the Olive Gardens. He has works that he will participate in. Two artworks, one to France and the other to Australia.



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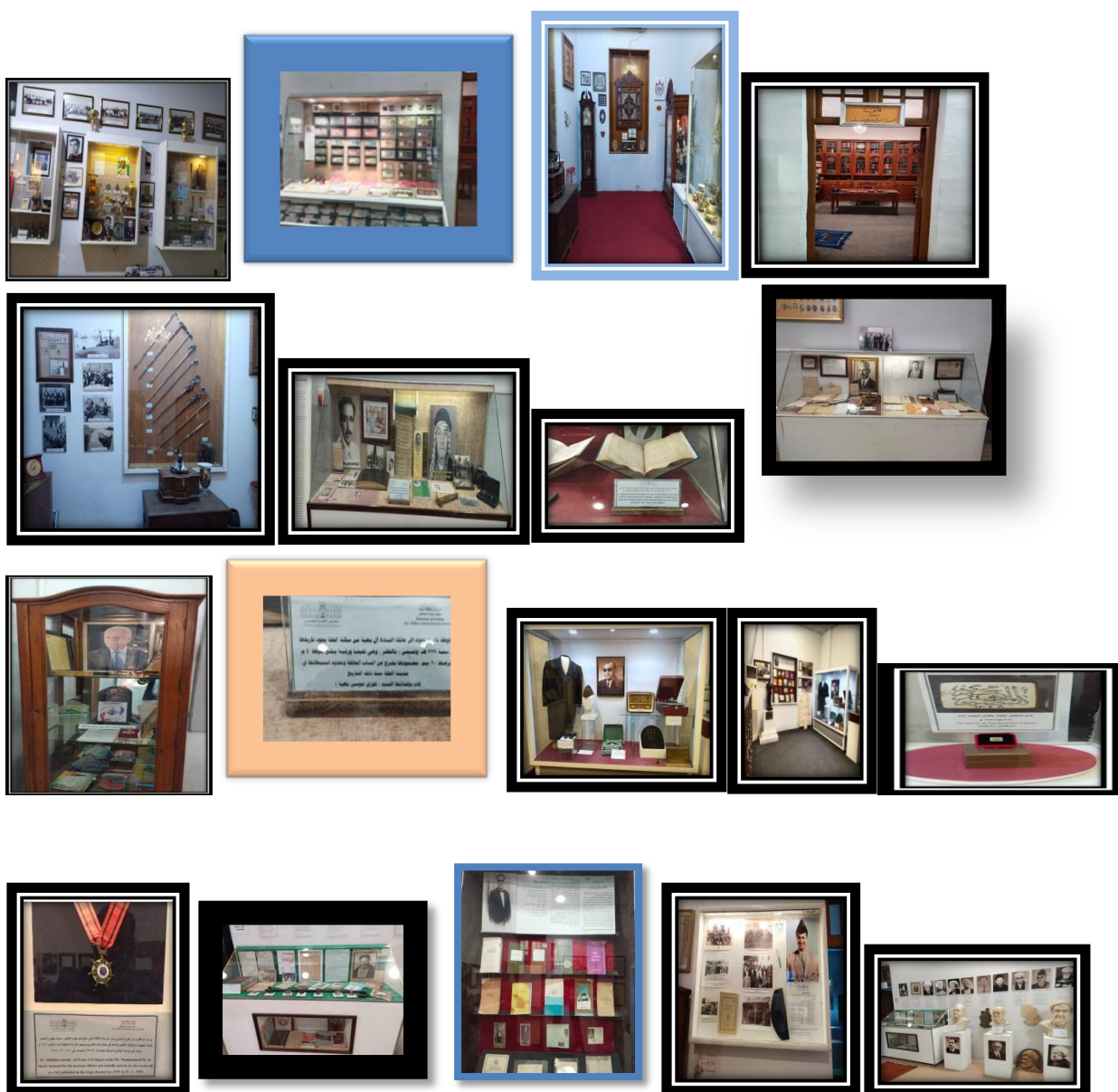
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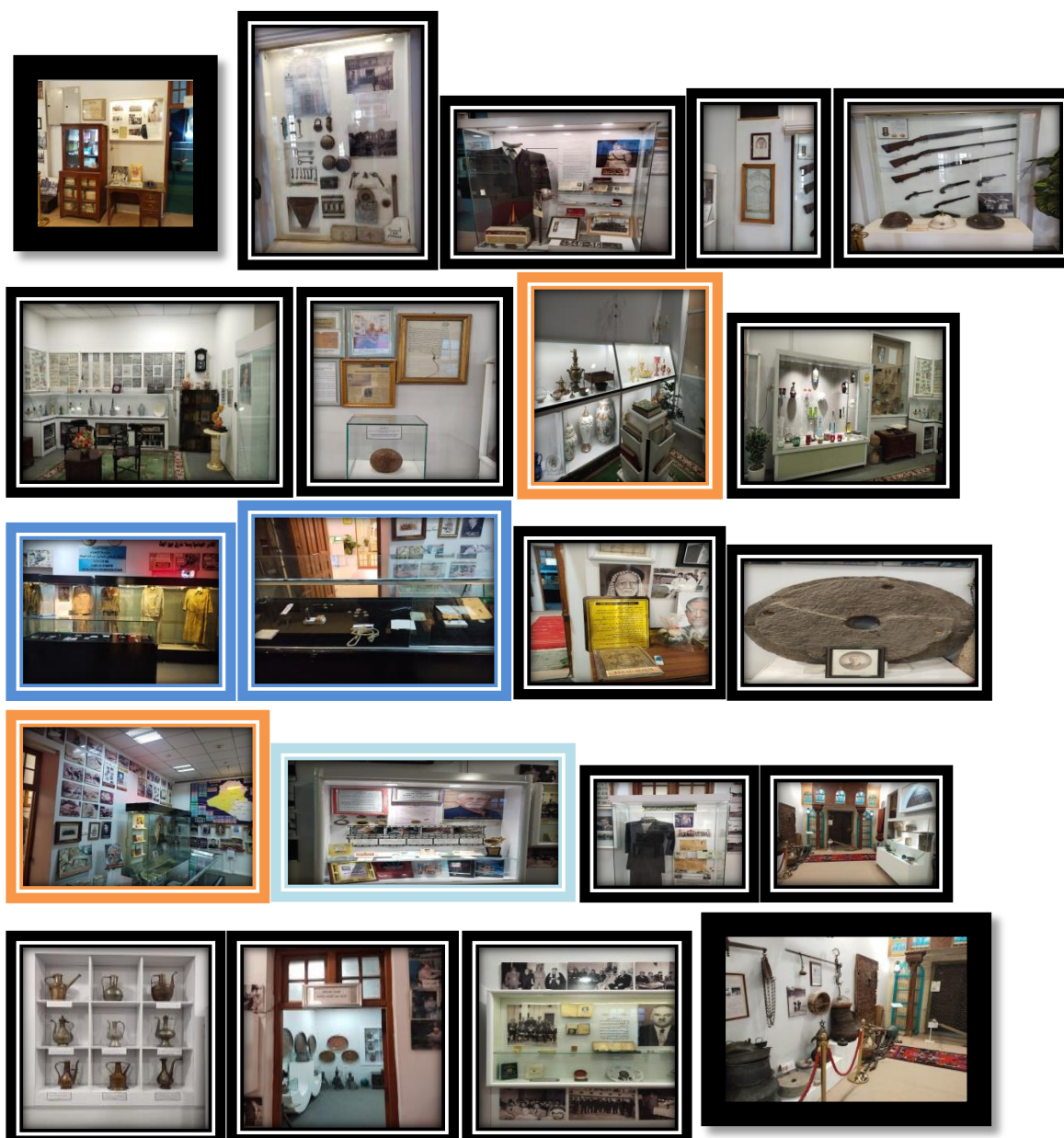
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