



Tromsø, Norway

May 2008

*“An Islamic Exhibition in the
Arctic Circle, in conjunction with
the northern most Mosque
in the World”*

Exhibition Islam



*“The world’s first Islamic
Exhibition in the
Norwegian
Language”*

LOCATION & VENUE

Tromsø, Norway

Tromsø is home to the Northernmost Mosque in the world, the Alnor center. Situated in the North of Norway, it lies within the Arctic circle and during the summer period experiences the phenomena of 'Midnight Sun' in which the sun does not set, with daylight for 24 hours a day.

During the winter months, the area is renowned for the mesmerising 'Northern Lights' caused by charged particles of the sun which enter into the Earth's atmosphere.

The city is a cultural hub, which is twinned with Gaza City of Palestine resulting in much sympathy for Palestinians.

Alnor Center

The exhibition had been organised by Sandra Maryam Moe and her husband Ibrahim Abu Ismael from the Alnor Center. It is apparent that they had been working tirelessly to translate all material and make all necessary arrangements for the event.

Almost all of the posters, labels and signage was in Norwegian and plenty of supplementary information was also available as well as activity packs for children.



A map of Norway with an arrow pointing to the location of Tromsø.



The Northern Lights. Tromsø is situated right in the centre of the Northern Lights zone.



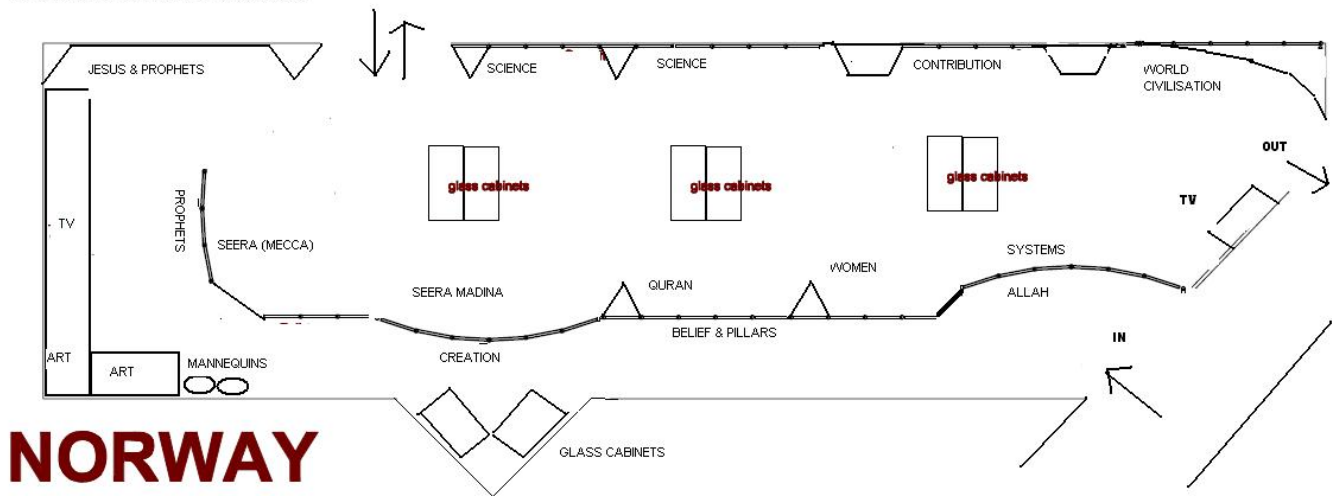
The Kulturhuset which hosted Exhibition Islam from Tuesday 20th May to Tuesday 27th May 2008.

A ground floor area was dedicated for the reception of visitors and for the distribution and sale of literature.

The second floor was dedicated to the exhibition.

DESIGN & LAYOUT

ALTERNATIVE ENTRANCE/EXIT WITH LIFT ACCESS



The layout design for Tromsø, Norway, May 2008.



The exhibition area before setup...



The Exhibition Islam team along with representatives from Alnor Center began the setup according to the above plan.



The entrance foyer of the Kulturhuset. The same area also contained literature and a welcome desk.



The entrance to the Exhibition area with a Welcome sign in Norwegian and a poster expounding the names and Attributes of Allah...

DESIGN & LAYOUT (CONTINUED)



The introduction area with the Islamic Belief and the Five Pillars in Norwegian...



...Following through to the Islamic understanding of Creation and the attributes of the Creator...



The next area contained mannequins displaying Islamic clothing and artwork...



... And a selection of translations of the Qur'an in a variety of languages including Norwegian and Braille...



...Leading to the section of the Prophets including Jesus (as) and the Call of the Prophets (as).



The next section was on the life of the Prophet Muhammed (saw) through Mecca and Madina ...

DESIGN & LAYOUT (CONTINUED)



The next area contained cabinets with ancient gold coins and other rare artefacts...



...And complete Qur'an manuscripts and various leaves including early first century parchments...



Followed by Astronomy, Embryology and Biology in the Qur'an...



The Amazing Qur'an poster was opposite the Islamic contribution to Civilisation...



...Closely followed by Women in Islam and the systems of Islam, both of which raised great interest and discussion...



Culminating in the world civilisation of Islam and Islamic Architecture. Many tours would then visit the Alnor Center which was a few hundred yards away.

OPENING, TOURS & VISITORS



Ole D Mjøs, the head of the Nobel Prize Committee, seen here with Sandra Maryam Moe and Ibrahim Abu Ismael, officially opened the Exhibition...



The opening was attended by the Deputy Governor of Tromsø ...



...And the Deputy Mayor of Tromsø, who was also presented the Islam Guide by Sr. Maryam...



A delegation from Sweden's Ar-Risala foundation also attended the opening...



There were over twenty tours for school children with some deep and thorough discussions...



Tours were conducted every hour or every 30 minutes during peak periods by the EI Team...



ADVERTISING & MEDIA COVERAGE



Advertising

Visitors to the town centre were given leaflets and during the weekend there was also a free hot dog stall to attract visitors.

The Exhibition was advertised by the Alnor center regularly in the largest local newspaper, Nordlys.

Two weeks prior to the event, a full page article and photo was published.

One week prior and every day during event, a 7.5 x 5 cm colour advert with photo was published.

Media Coverage

Nordlys also contained two articles covering the arrival of the exhibition to Tromsø and the opening.

A national TV station, NRK1 News, also covered the opening.

A Sheikh from Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Ahad, who was also invited to the event, wrote an article for the Rabita Ulema Magazine as well as their website.



FEEDBACK & OUTCOMES



Feedback

The discussions in most cases were very positive with many visitors genuinely interested in Islam. Although most people were classified as Christians, many admitted to being atheists or agnostics and enjoyed discussions on Creation and science.

The most discussed topic however was the status of women in Islam which was strongly represented by the female tour guides (Maryam and Amreena).

The only topic to be discussed in greater detail and with stronger emotion was that of terrorism in particular suicide in Islam. There was a general perception that Muslims are very intolerant and have a very violent belief, something which cannot possibly be sanctioned by a God.

Many were against Israeli and American actions in the world but saw Muslims as the same, if not worse, in their disregard for human life.

Outcomes

One person embraced Islam after visiting the exhibition. This was a great case of motivation especially for the delegation from Sweden who had financially assisted the Alnor Center.

Most visitors were thankful for the clarification of the Islamic viewpoint and many took further literature to facilitate their quest of discovery.



CONCLUSION & SUMMARY

The Muslim community in Tromsø were from a diverse cross-section with a strong sense of brotherhood who welcomed the EI team and gave full support whenever and wherever it was needed. Indigenous Norwegian converts assisted in many tours with explanations and clarifications wherever needed.

The administration for the venue conceded that the exhibition had been their most successful event, attracting the most visitors in their history.

Alnor Center received many calls even after the exhibition hoping that it was still available to view.

Future Plans

A representative from the Muslim community in Oslo also attended the opening and would like to progress the hosting of an exhibition there. Abu Marwan from Ar-Risala foundation in Örebro, Sweden has also expressed his desire to host the Exhibition in Sweden.

The Islam Guide

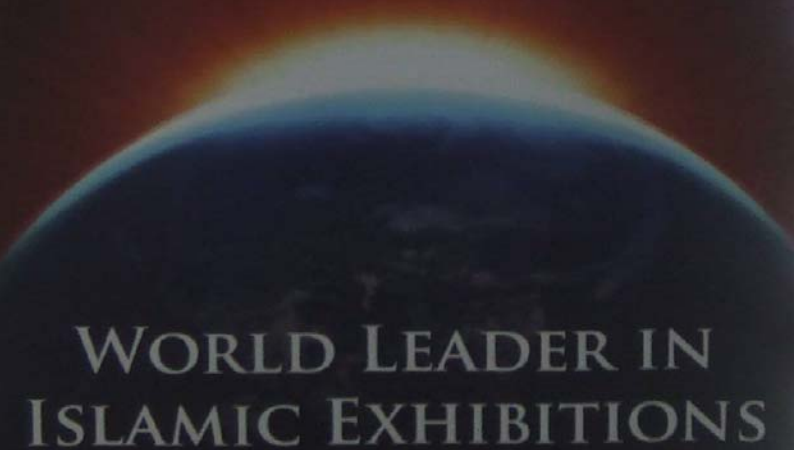
The Islam Guide was on sale and sold 69 copies.



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