



**JORDANIAN MASTERPIECES REVEALED:
AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP PRESENTS
RECENT CONSERVATION WORK AND DISCOVERIES AT
QUSAYR 'AMRA WORLD HERITAGE SITE IN JORDAN.**

Amman, 14 March 2012

Experts from around the world are meeting today and tomorrow, 14 and 15 March, at the premises of the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, to discuss the ongoing international conservation project at the World Heritage Site of Qusayr 'Amra and the outstanding progress this project has achieved so far.

Located approximately 85 kilometers east of Amman, Qusayr 'Amra is a small bathhouse built in the early eighth century during the Umayyad Caliphate and represents the principal remain of a larger Umayyad desert residence. The interiors of the main building are entirely covered with mural paintings, a rare surviving expression of Islamic Umayyad art. Because of its artistic and architectural features, in 1985 Qusayr 'Amra was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as an exceptional testimony of Umayyad civilization and figurative art. In 2008, Qusayr 'Amra was included on the World Monuments Watch to call attention to the importance of the site and its conservation needs.

The conservation project is supported by World Monuments Fund (WMF) and the Italian Government and started in 2009 as a joint collaboration between the Department of Antiquities of Jordan, the Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il restauro (ISCR) in Rome, and WMF. A team composed of international conservation specialists from the ISCR and of local experts from the Department of Antiquities has already carried out two campaigns at Qusayr 'Amra, in spring and autumn 2011.

In 2011, the project achieved the consolidation of the building and the conservation of part of the paintings in the main hall, including those on the southern wall of its western aisle. The natural decay of previous conservation interventions had partially obliterated the beauty of these paintings, which are now being enhanced through cutting-edge, international conservation techniques and standards. The ongoing conservation project is revealing previously unknown details and features of the paintings, including new inscriptions, shedding new light on the quality of this site as well as providing more information for scientific, historic, and iconographic research.

The workshop started this morning with the experts' visit to Qusayr 'Amra in order to assess directly the importance of recent discoveries as well as to discuss conservation strategies for the future preservation and presentation of this unique masterpiece of Umayyad culture.

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Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

Jordan's Ministry of Tourism is the governmental authority in charge of the promotion and management of tourism and the protection of archaeological and historic sites. The Department of Antiquities of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the technical body in charge of research and conservation activities at the more than 10,000 registered archaeological sites in the country.

ISTITUTO SUPERIORE PER LA CONSERVAZIONE ED IL RESTAURO

Istituto Superiore per la Conservazione ed il Restauro is a technical institute of the Italian Ministry for Cultural Activities and Heritage. The institute was founded in 1939 through the endeavors of Giulio Carlo Argan and Cesare Brandi with the aim of establishing a scientifically-based approach to the restoration of monuments, unifying the methodologies for treating works of art and archaeological finds, and training new conservators.

World Monuments Fund

World Monuments Fund is the leading independent organization devoted to saving the world's most treasured places. For over 45 years, working in more than 90 countries, its highly skilled experts have applied proven and effective techniques to preserve important architectural and cultural heritage sites around the globe. Through partnerships with local communities, funders, and governments, WMF inspires an enduring commitment to stewardship for future generations. Headquartered in New York, WMF has offices and affiliates worldwide. www.wmf.org, twitter.com/worldmonuments, and facebook.com/worldmonuments.

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