Mamluks: From slaves to rulers, art patrons

"Renaissance of Islam: Art of the Mamluks" at Detroit Institute of Arts through Sunday, June 20 conjures an Arabian Nights world of mosques, minarets and opplent palaces.

More than 100 examples of Islamic calligraphy, metalwork, ceramics and glass from the world's finest collections form a dazzing array of objects from the Middle East of the 13th-16th centuries.

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Climbing steps of turmoil, violence and conquest, the Mamluks, originally mercenaries from Central Asia bired to guard Aypublar ulers of Egypt and Syria, staged a military takeover and produced a succession of sudtans enthroned in Cairo from 1270-1517.

At this Eastern apex of wealth, travel and trade, ther Mamluks ruled from the mountains of Turkey to the sands of Nubia, from the eastern shores of the Mediterranean to Arabians sea. All forms of art flourished under this highly competitive patronage. Members of the ruling class vied in building spectacular palaces and meagen and demanded furnishings of sillary to the product of the subject of Islam' took place in the East while Western Europe was building the cathedrals of the Middle Ages.

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Ages.

The artists, recruited from all corners of the Mamluk empire, reflected both the spiritual and social laws dictated by the Koran in opulent, beautiful morks.

The exhibit presents elaborately illuminated oversize Korans, brass objects intricately inlaid with gold and silver, a variety of glass vessels delicately painted in polychgome enamel and gold, ceramics and tiles, often adormed with the blazons of their owners, carved woodwork, inlaid with diverse woods and ivory and outstanding rugs and textiles.

"Art of the Mamluks" was organized by the Smithsonian Institution Travel-ing Exhibition Service and sponsored by United Technologies Coporation. In Detroit, it is sponsored by the Founders Society with additional funding provid-ed by The Arab League, The Ford Mo-tor Company Fund, private and corpo-rate donors.

There are free films in conjunction with the exhibition every Saturday and Sunday (a different one each weekend) at 2 p.m. in the South Court screening room. There will be a lecture at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 2 "Mamluk Metalwork: Rich Legacy of a Slave Dynasty" and another at 8 p.m. Wednesday, June 9, "Light Upon Light: The Opulence of Mamluk Glass." There is a charge for the lectures.

The exhibit is open to the public without charge during regular hours at the Detroit Institute of Arts, 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tuesday-Sunday. Closed Mondays and holidays.

Rose show planned

spring rose show Saturday and Sunday, June 12-13, in Macomb Mall, Gratiot north of 13 Mile Road in Roseville.

Metropolitan Rose Society hosts its Show hours are 2-9 p.m. Saturday and noon to 5 p.m. Sunday. There is no ad-

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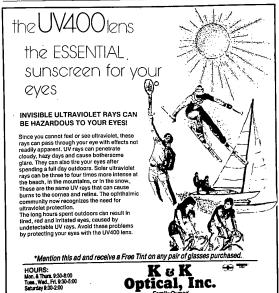






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