



## Alina Abdullah

### Abstract

This presentation explores aspects of a project which seeks to enhance our understanding of the aesthetic forms of illuminated Malay manuscripts (hereafter IMIM), a category of Malay and Arabic religious writings, and, specifically, to determine their underlying geometrical structures. The subject of this study is manuscripts from the maritime world of Southeast Asia, sometimes referred to as the Malay archipelago or Indo-Malaysian archipelago, a region situated between the Indian and Pacific Oceans that includes the nation states of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Philippines and the southern Thai province of Patani. For the purpose of this study, only three manuscripts were selected, which is *Dalā'il al-Khayrāt*, *'Aqīdatul 'Awwām* and *Mir'at al-Thullab*. The preliminary study aims to analyse the architectural forms (frames and arches) and the compositional aspects (underlying visual structure proportions and the arrangement of individual elements on the page) of these manuscripts. Scholarly research has established the application of the geometrical and mathematical relationships as a standard means of studying the layout of books and manuscripts in general. By extrapolating certain geometrical principles lying beneath the surface or the design of these manuscripts, one can understand further decisions relating to visual composition and structure, the intention of which is to contribute to the documentation of the cultural and intellectual history of the Malay world as well. In achieving the research aims, the methodology approach used in this study is ethnomathematical approach using Euclidean geometry. Ethnomathematics is the study of relationship between mathematics and culture; its aim is to contribute both to the understanding of culture and the understanding of mathematics, and an appreciation of the connections between the two. By extrapolating certain geometrical principles lying beneath the surface or the design of these manuscripts, one can understand further decisions relating to visual composition and structure, the intention of which is to contribute to the documentation of the cultural and intellectual history of the Malay world as well.

### Bio

Alina Abdullah is a PhD candidate at the School of Modern Languages, Cultures and Societies, University of Leeds, United Kingdom. Her background is history of arts with an emphasis on Southeast Asia modern and traditional arts, predominantly in the context of mathematics and arts interdisciplinary. Currently, her research area is Islamic manuscripts, focusing on the underlying geometry in the design of the manuscripts of

the Malay manuscripts in particular. She is also a painter, and her works more or less acquainted with Neo-Impressionist techniques and theories: ideas such as working with serial imagery which would reflect on the purposes of art.