

Annual Artist Open Call 2026 - Caption Style Guide

Purpose of a Caption

If your artwork is selected for the exhibition, a caption will be displayed alongside it. The purpose of a caption is to help visitors understand and connect with your artwork. Different visitors have different levels of knowledge about Islamic art, the subject of your work, and your artistic practice, and so a good caption provides context, points out key features, and draws out important themes in your work. This is crucial to making your work more accessible to a wide range of visitors.

Parts of Your Caption

Your caption consists of two parts:

About the artwork: 75–100 Words

Try to cover the following:

Describe the artwork

Tell visitors what they are looking at or experiencing. You might describe the subject, materials, techniques, processes, colours, forms or other important details.

Provide context or meaning

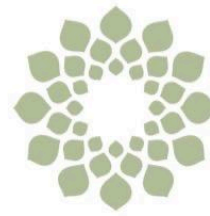
Explain what the work is about and what inspired or informed it. This could include personal experiences, cultural or historical references, stories, traditions, materials, symbols or ideas.

Connect your work to the Exhibition's theme

Explain how the theme of Harmony relates to your artwork. This could be through its subject, ideas, materials, process, composition or the relationship between different elements of the work.

About the artist: Up to 60 Words

You may look to include information about:



- Your artistic practice
- Your training or educational background
- Where you are based
- Your key inspirations
- Relevant cultural, artistic or professional experiences and/or achievements

Caption Writing Guidance

Formatting

Please submit your caption as a **Word document (.docx)** using the provided template.

- **Font:** Calibri
- **Size:** 14
- **Artwork caption:** 75–100 words
- **Artist information:** Up to 60 words
- Please save the file: FirstName_Surname_Caption.docx e.g.
Amina_Rahman_Caption.docx

Non-English terminology

If you use non-English terminology:

- Write the word or term in *italics*.
- Give a brief explanation in brackets immediately after the term.

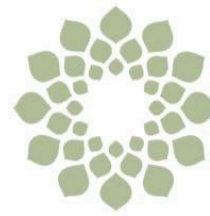
For example: *Thikr* (the remembrance of God) is a central theme in the artist's practice.

Writing Style

- Use clear, accessible language
- Your caption should be suitable for a **reading age of around 14**.
- Please use language that is straightforward and easy to understand, and avoid unnecessary academic language.

Active Voice

Where possible, use the active voice and clearly identify who is doing the action.



Instead of:

“The pattern was inspired by Islamic architecture.”

Consider:

“Islamic architecture inspired the pattern.”

Third Person

Please write your caption in the **third person**, rather than using “I” or “my”.

Refer to yourself by your **name** or as “**the artist**”.

For example:

“Amina Rahman created this artwork using hand-dyed cotton. She was inspired by Islamic geometric patterns.”

Or:

“The artist created this artwork using hand-dyed cotton, drawing inspiration from Islamic geometric patterns.”

AI policy

We recognise that AI tools can be useful for proofreading, checking spelling and grammar, and organising ideas. However, we want to hear your own words, ideas and understanding of your artwork. Please avoid using AI to substantially write or rewrite your caption. Above all, we want to hear your own voice and perspective.

Editing by the MIAH Curatorial Team

MIAH reserves the right to make **reasonable edits** to submitted captions to ensure they meet our gallery’s accessibility requirements and in-house caption style.

This may include:

- Correcting spelling and grammar
- Improving clarity
- Simplifying complex language
- Changing sentence structure
- Reducing caption length to the required word count
- Ensuring the caption follows the required format



We will aim to preserve your meaning and voice when making these edits. **By submitting your artwork, you confirm that you have read and agree to our approach to reasonable edits.** If substantial changes are needed to make your caption suitable for the exhibition, we will contact you when confirming that your artwork has been selected.

Caption Template

Please copy and use the template below for your artwork caption. Replace the text in [square brackets] with your own information as appropriate. Keep the headings and formatting as shown.

[Your full name / artist name]

[Title of artwork in italics]

[Year artwork was made]

[Dimensions (width x height in cm)]

[Medium / materials]

[Write 75–100 words describing your artwork. Include what the visitor is looking at, the context or meaning behind the work, and how the exhibition theme of Harmony connects to your artwork. Please refer to the caption style guide for more details.]

[Write up to 60 words in the **About the Artist** section introducing yourself and your artistic practice. You may include details about where you are based, your training or background, and your key inspirations. Please refer to the caption style guide for more details.]

Example Caption

The example below demonstrates how your caption should be formatted. You do not need to create or provide the QR code; this will be added by our team using the portfolio link you will provide in your entry form.

Mahnoor Sparas

Call to Prayer

2025

61 x 61cm

Acrylic on canvas

Call to Prayer honours the spiritual rhythm and timeless serenity of the *Athaan* (Islamic call to prayer). It depicts a mosque illuminated beneath a celestial night sky, its swirling movements of light capturing the Adhan's awakening energy. The composition balances radiant golds against deep blues, symbolising harmony between the earthly and the divine, while layers of textured paint embody both the stillness and movement that accompany the call to prayer. It is a meditation on faith, the universality of worship, and a visual remembrance of the Quranic verse: "*Remember Me; I will remember you.*" (Al-Baqarah 2:152)

Mahnoor is a contemporary artist based in Birmingham's historic Jewellery Quarter. Born and raised in Qatar and of Pakistani heritage, she later settled in the UK. Her works explore nature's shifting landscapes and luminous skies. In 2025, she received the inaugural Best Visual Artwork of the Year award from We Are Creative (B Events), affirming her growing regional presence.

Scan the QR code to access the artist's portfolio.

