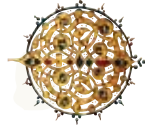


SECTION 2



WORKS IN PROFILE

THEMES:

SCIENCE & RELIGION
QUR'AN & CALLIGRAPHY
ANIMALS
PRAYER & PILGRIMAGE
THE GARDEN
SYMBOLS & FAITH
THE ART OF THE BOOK

SCIENCE & RELIGION

Key artwork

Planispheric astrolabe
North Africa, 9th century AD
brass, cast, with fretwork rete and surface engraving
18.5 x 13.2 cm (diameter)
(cat no 284)

Supplementary artworks

Planispheric astrolabe signed by the instrument-maker Muhammad Mahdi al-Yazdi
Iran, dated 1060 AH (1650–51 AD)
brass, sheet and cast, cut and engraved
14.6 x 11.4 cm (diameter), excluding suspension rings
(cat no 285)

Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik (the book of postal routes and kingdoms) by al-Istakhri
Iran, perhaps Isfahan, 706 AH (1306–07 AD)
ink, gold, silver and opaque watercolour on paper,
120 folios
25 x 15 cm
(cat no 157)

Combined qiblah-compass and sundial, or 'equatorial circle' (da'irat al-mu'addil), signed by its maker, 'Ali
Istanbul, dated 1161 AH (1748–49 AD)
brass, beaten, cast and engraved, attached to a wooden base
17.3 x 24.2 cm (diameter)
(cat no 287)

THE QUR'AN & CALLIGRAPHY

Key artwork

Two single folios from a Qur'an surah al-Baqarah
(II, 'The cow'), verses 120–27, and *surah Al-'Imran* (III, 'The family of 'Imran'), verses 55–64
North Africa or Spain, 10th century AD
gold on vellum stained royal blue, Kufic script, 15 lines to the page
28.3 x 37.7 cm; text block 18.9 x 29.3 cm
(cat no 3)

Supplementary artworks

Part 28 of a 30-part Qur'an from *surah al-Mujadilah* (LVIII, 'The woman who pleads'), verse 18 to *surah al-Talaq* (LXV, 'The divorce'), verse 11
northern Mesopotamia, Sinjar or Nisibis (Nusaybin), 1198–1219 AD
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper, 50 folios, 5 lines to the page
22 x 15.6 cm
(cat no 50)

Single-volume Qur'an copied by the calligrapher by Muhammad Shafi
Iran, Shiraz, 'ayd ghadir [18 Dhu'l-Hijjah] 1298 AH (12 November 1881 AD)
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper, 287 folios
50.5 x 31.5 cm
(cat no 202)

Fragment of a single folio from the so-called 'Baysunqur Qur'an' from *surah Luqman* (XXXI, 'Luqman'), verse 6
Herat or Samarkand, c1400–05 AD
ink on paper, giant muhaqqaq script,
1 line of 7
24 x 96.5 cm
(cat no 127)

ANIMALS

Key artwork

Incense burner or pomander in the form of a lynx
Iran, late 12th or early 13th century AD
copper alloy, cast, with engraved and openwork decoration
27 x 27 x 8.7 cm
(cat no 73)

Supplementary artworks

Pair of 'door handles'
Northern Mesopotamia (now south-east Turkey), early 13th century AD
Quaternary copper alloy, cast and engraved
33.7 x 39.5 cm; 33.5 cm x 40.5 cm
(cat no 86)

Bowl
Iran, Nishapur or the Caspian area (Mazandaran), 10th or 11th century AD
earthenware, slip painted with polychrome staining under a colourless glaze
15.5 x 31.8 cm (diameter)
(cat no 27)

Elephant aquamanile
Syria, 12th or early 13th century AD
moulded stonepaste ware, covered with a slightly opacified white glaze, with turquoise and cobalt-blue in-glaze staining
29.5 x 20.5 x 13 cm
(cat no 108)

PRAYER & PILGRIMAGE

Key artwork

Noah's Ark from Jami' al-Tawarikh by Rashid al-Din
Iran, Tabriz, dated 714 AH (1314–15 AD)

ink, translucent and opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper
11.5 x 17 cm
(cat no 149)

Supplementary artworks

'The encampment of the caravan of pilgrims from the Maghrib (North Africa)' from the *Anis al-Hujjaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali

India, possibly Gujarat, c1677–80
ink, watercolour and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
33 x 23.2 cm
(cat no 262)

Pilgrim flask

Mughal India or the Deccan, 16th century AD
cast brass
30.5 x 30.5 cm
(cat no 279)

View of the port of Surat, oriented to the south, and the ships carrying pilgrims' from the *Anis al-Hujjaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali

India, possibly Gujarat, c1677–80
ink, watercolour and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
33 x 23.2 cm
(cat no 258)

THE GARDEN

Key artwork

Flask
Ottoman Turkey, Iznik, c1560–80 AD
stonepaste body, decorated underglaze in black, blue, green and bole red
46 x 22.8 cm (diameter)
(cat no 292)

Supplementary artworks

Flat-woven carpet (kilim)

Turkey or Iran, 16th or 17th century AD
silk, with metal thread
212 x 84 cm
(cat no 301)

Panel of hexagonal tiles

Ottoman Turkey, Iznik, c1520–30 AD
stonepaste body, painted underglaze in black, blue and turquoise
80 x 52 cm
(cat no 294)

Pan-box (pandan) and tray

Mughal India, c1700 AD
gold, enamels
9.8 x 13.2 cm (box); 31.2 cm (tray width)
(cat no 323)

SYMBOLS & FAITH

Key artwork

Mosque lamp
Syria or Egypt, 15th century AD
glass, enamelled and gilt
33 x 25 cm (diameter)
(cat no 186)

Supplementary artworks

Four tiles from a frieze
Ottoman provinces, Syria or Palestine, c1550 AD

stonepaste body, stencilled in black under a bottle green glaze
70 x 70 cm (overall)
(cat no 295)

Stela

north India, late 17th century AD
white crystalline marble, carved on both sides
181 x 55 x 4 cm
MXD 104 (pictured front and reverse)
(cat no 337)

Calligraphic composition in the form of a lion, signed by the calligrapher Ahmed Hilmi
Ottoman Turkey, dated 12 Jumada I 1331 AH (19 April 1913 AD)

ink and colour on paper
26.5 x 38.8 cm
(cat no 218)

THE ART OF THE BOOK

Key artwork

***Futuh al-Haramayn* (handbook for pilgrims to Mecca and Medina) by Muhyi Lari, copied by the scribe Ghulam 'Ali**
Mecca, Jumada II 990 AH (June–July 1582 AD)

ink, gold, coloured wax and opaque watercolour on paper, 42 folios
21.6 x 13.9 cm
(cat no 219)

Supplementary artworks

'Rustam, aided by his horse, Rakhsh, slays a dragon' from the 'Houghton' Shahnamah

Iran, Tabriz 1520s
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper
47 x 31.8 cm
(cat no 231)

'The port of Jeddah on the Red Sea' from the *Anis al-Hujjaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali

India, possibly Gujarat c1677–80
ink, watercolours and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
33 x 23.2 cm
(cat no 267)

'Khidr giving cups of the water of immortality to the inhabitants of Paradise' from a *Falnamah*
India, the Deccan, probably Golconda c1610–30 AD

ink, opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper
41 x 28.4 cm
(cat no 243)

SCIENCE & RELIGION

In Islam, science and religion are often closely related. Science in Islam was at its peak between the 9th and the 13th centuries, and there was considerable scientific knowledge across many levels in society. Early Islamic scientists were extremely erudite, often being skilled physicians, mathematicians and astronomers, frequently trying to bring together religion and science. Many modern words in Western languages today have their origins in the Arabic language, including (in English) among many alchemy, algebra, calibre, chemistry, mummy, sugar and zenith.

Geometry and astronomy were both studied in depth by Islamic scientists, and scientific instruments crafted according to scientific studies. Particular examples of these include the astrolabe, an instrument used for navigation purposes to determine the position of the stars, and the qiblah a compass to determine the direction of prayer if one was unable to attend prayers at the mosque.

Astrolabes and other astronomical instruments

The astrolabe, an invention of Hellenistic Alexandria, was the principal Islamic instrument for telling the time, surveying and determining latitude. By the later 9th century it was used throughout the Islamic world, from Spain to India and later reached Christian Europe. By modelling the apparent rotation of the stars about the celestial pole, it solves a number of astronomical, and astrological, problems. Notably, the provision of a simple sighting device made it possible to calculate the elevation of a particular star, or of the sun, and thus determine both the time and the direction of the North Pole. Moreover, although an astrolabe does not show the movement of the planets, planetary tables enabled the astrologer to know the position of a planet relative to constellations of the Zodiac, which are generally engraved on the plates. The instrument consists of a solid body, the mater, into which fit a series of plates, and a revolving circular web-like star map, called the rete in Europe and the *ankabut* (spider) in the Islamic world. The various elements, supplemented by a sighting vane (the alidade) on the back of the instrument, were held together by a pin.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Look at the craft making and design work of the astrolabes. Consider the functional purpose and investigate the tools, size and estimated weight of these objects. How would they be carried? Do they remind you of anything in today's world? Create an astrolabe using layers of cardboard and develop designs based on the signs of the zodiac.
- Invent a functional object that can be used on a journey. Draw the image and describe its use. Consider the materials and techniques needed to create this object. How would it significantly help you in the journey that you are about to take?
- In what way has Islamic culture and science played a crucial role in the development of today's world? Investigate countries in Europe and Asia that have been home to Islamic dynasties in history. What influences of Islam exist there today? Consider the architecture, scientific inventions, mathematics and art practice of these cultures.
- Research significant artists from different cultures around the world that have played the multiple role of artist, inventor and scientist. Debate that their art practice has in some way pushed the boundaries of the way we view the world. How has their research into other fields embraced the meaning of the world around them? How has it informed their art practice?
- Many objects from history are found in major art collections around the world. At what time do these functional objects become considered as objects of fine art? Consider the audience of the time and the audience today. Does the audience determine the meaning of this object? Can a museum, art gallery or private collector redefine the way we view these objects in society? Develop an in-depth study on a particular object in the exhibition and discover its role from the time it was made to the present day.



ROOM 6

Planispheric astrolabe

North Africa, 9th century AD

brass, cast, with fretwork rete and surface engraving

18.5 x 13.2 cm (diameter)

(cat no 284)

The mater houses two plaques and is overlaid by the rete and, on the reverse, by the alidade. Also on the back is an undeciphered craftsman's signature. Apart from its early date, this astrolabe is particularly interesting because the star pointers of the rete give not only stars from the Babylonian-Hellenistic (and ultimately European) star lists but also individual stars with pre-Islamic Bedouin names. These, of course, remained important long after the coming of Islam for they were invaluable aids to navigation, and in many ways were of more practical use than the arbitrary division of the heavens into the classical constellations, which Islamic astronomy and astronomical instruments overwhelmingly favoured.

**ROOM 6****Planispheric astrolabe**

signed by the instrument-maker Muhammad Mahdi al-Yazdi

Iran, dated 1060 AH (1650–51 AD)

brass, sheet and cast, cut and engraved

14.6 x 11.4 cm (diameter), excluding suspension rings
(cat no 285)

ROOM 4***Kitab al-Masalik wa'l Mamalik* (the book of**

postal routes and kingdoms) by al-Istakhri

Iran, perhaps Isfahan, 706 AH (1306–07 AD)

ink, gold, silver and opaque watercolour on paper,

120 folios

25 x 15 cm

(cat no 157)

ROOM 6

Combined qiblah-compass and sundial, or 'equatorial circle' (*da'irat al-mu'addil*), signed by its maker, 'Ali

Istanbul, dated 1161 AH (1748–49 AD)

brass, beaten, cast and engraved, attached to a wooden base

17.3 x 24.2 cm (diameter)

(cat no 287)



THE QUR'AN & CALLIGRAPHY

The Qur'an, the Holy Book of Islam, was revealed by God to the Prophet Muhammad in the Arabic language, and subsequently written down. It is divided into 114 chapters, called *surahs*, and each *surah* has a number of verses, or *ayas*. The *surahs* are arranged by length, starting with the longest and most commonly quoted *surah*, *surah al-Baqara* (The Cow) and ending with the shortest, *surah al-Nas* (The People). Each *surah* begins with the words: "In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate", a phrase that in Arabic is called the *basmallah*.

As the language of Islam, Arabic holds a special place in Islamic culture, and calligraphy is thus seen as a noble form of writing. Since early Islam, the pages of the Qur'an were often decorated using elegant scripts and expensive materials. Devoting one's time to the task of producing a Qur'an through the art of calligraphy is considered to be one of the most profound expressions of faith, as it is a devotion to the divine beauty of God's word. There are six main different styles of calligraphy; these are *riqa*, *naskhi*, *nastaliq*, *thuluth*, *muhaqqaq* and *kufic*. To become a proficient calligrapher, a student is expected to be able to execute each style effectively.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Define the word 'calligraphy'. How does a scribe acquire the skills and techniques to become a master calligrapher? How long has calligraphy been used in Islamic culture? Has the process of learning calligraphy changed over time?
- Research the development and the six main styles of calligraphy in Islam. Compare the shapes and lettering style, find examples and present your findings to the class in a PowerPoint presentation.
- Consider the use and purpose of calligraphy from different cultures including Islam and describe how the technique was influenced by the culture in which it was developed. What role does calligraphy play in these societies?
- Research the different flora, fauna and minerals that have been used throughout history to create dyes for clothing, papermaking and painting. What determines the status of the colours and their use? Choose one particular colour and, based on your findings, undertake an in-depth study to present to the class.
- Investigate the process of making the sacred text of the Qur'an. Why are particular materials used and what do they signify? Estimate how many people may have been involved in this process.



ROOM 2

Two single folios from a Qur'an
surah al-Baqarah (II, 'The cow'), verses 120–27,
 and *surah Al-'Imran* (III, 'The family of 'Imran'), verses 55–64
 North Africa or Spain, 10th century AD
 gold on vellum stained royal blue, Kufic script, 15 lines to the page
 28.3 x 37.7 cm; text block 18.9 x 29.3 cm
 (cat no 3)

The large size, dyed parchment and use of gold testify to the high cost of the complete volume. Whereas parchment dyed orange or yellow by saffron is fairly common in early Qur'ans, the Qur'an from which these folios come is the only one known to have been dyed indigo. The idea very probably derived from the Byzantine imperial codices, which were made from vellum stained imperial purple with the secretions of the famous Tyrian murex and may have been a conscious attempt on the part of the Abbasids to distinguish their chancery practice from that of Byzantium. No chancery

documents from this early period survive, but, significantly, the 9th-century Abbasid inscriptions of the Nilometer in Cairo (used to measure the height of the Nile flood and fix taxes for the following year) are in gold on a royal blue ground.



ROOM 2

Part 28 of a 30-part Qur'an from *surah al-Mujadilah* (LVIII, 'The woman who pleads'), verse 18 to *surah al-Talaq* (LXV, 'The divorce'), verse 11 northern Mesopotamia, Sinjar or Nisibis (Nusaybin), 1198–1219 AD
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper, 50 folios, 5 lines to the page
22 x 15.6 cm
(cat no 50)

ROOM 4

Fragment of a single folio from the so-called 'Baysunqur Qur'an' from *surah Luqman* (XXXI, 'Luqman'), verse 6 Herat or Samarkand, c1400–05 AD
ink on paper, giant muhaqqaq script, one line of 7
24 x 96.5 cm
(cat no 127)

ROOM 7

Single-volume Qur'an copied by the calligrapher by Muhammad Shafi Iran, Shiraz, 'ayd ghadir [18 Dhu'l-Hijjah] 1298 AH (12 November 1881 AD)
ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper, 287 folios
50.5 x 31.5 cm
(cat no 202)

ANIMALS

Animals of different kinds, as God's creation, are frequently used to decorate objects such as ceramics or metalware, and are often depicted in paintings. They have traditionally played an important part in the art and literature of Arabs, Turks, Persians and Indians, particularly during the Mughal times, often having their own personalities which mimic those of human beings. Certain animals, such as lions and lynxes, appear more frequently, as they were used to symbolise strength and power. These are frequently depicted overpowering animals such as gazelles or deer, and signify the victory of the strong over the weak. Objects shaped like birds were used as well, particularly for drinking vessels and incense burners, and may relate more to the spiritual side of Islamic art; an incense burner shaped like a bird may have related to the incense floating away on air, thus having positive associations. Other animals, such as hares, were also considered to be auspicious in medieval Islamic art, in this case perhaps being related to astronomy, where the hare and the constellation of Gemini simultaneously rose.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Investigate how animals are used as decorative motifs in this exhibition. Develop a plate design using an animal as your source of inspiration. Consider the animal's unique qualities and simplify, repeat and create a pattern, appropriating Islamic styles.
- Look at the water jug in the shape of a goose. Can you see where you would pour the water into this jug? Search the exhibition for other examples of vases, jugs and vessels in the shapes of animals and birds. Which one is your favourite?
- Invent your own animal-shaped jug. Sketch your own pet, or animals and birds, from your imagination. Simplify into shapes and design a vase based on your sketches.
- Animals play an important role in Islamic art. They are represented in functional and non-functional objects and carry with them spiritual meanings, and often depict human qualities such as bravery and loyalty. List a number of characteristics of your personality and consider which animal could represent you. Create an acrostic poem using each of the letters of your animal to start each line and draw yourself as this animal itself to illustrate your poem.
- Consider the different types of animals represented in this exhibition. Why are they portrayed and what do they symbolise? Does their symbolic meaning have global or cultural significance? Consider one type of animal to research and collect a variety of traditional and contemporary images showing the varying interpretations of this animal found in art practice around the world.

**ROOM 3**

Incense burner or pomander in the form of a lynx
Iran, late 12th or early 13th century AD

copper alloy, cast, with engraved and openwork decoration
27 x 27 x 8.7 cm
(cat no 73)

This lynx seems to be pawing the ground, as if about to jump up and catch its prey on the wing, as is the habit of lynxes. The lines at the eyes indicate that the animal is smiling. The impracticality of using the tail as a handle and the inconvenience of replenishing the incense if it were full of hot coals make it more probable that this vessel was a pomander, filled with a paste of ambergris and spices to scent the air and only requiring occasional refilling.

**ROOM 3****Pair of 'door handles'**

Northern Mesopotamia (now south-east Turkey),
early 13th century AD

Quaternary copper alloy, cast and engraved

33.7 x 39.5 cm; 33.5 cm x 40.5 cm

(cat no 86)

ROOM 2**Bowl**

Iran, Nishapur or the Caspian area (Mazandaran),
10th or 11th century AD

earthenware, slip painted with polychrome staining under
a colourless glaze

15.5 x 31.8 cm (diameter)

(cat no 27)

ROOM 3**Elephant aquamanile**

Syria, 12th or early 13th century AD

moulded stonepaste ware, covered with a slightly
opacified white glaze, with turquoise and cobalt-blue in-
glaze staining

29.5 x 20.5 x 13 cm

(cat no 108)

PRAYER & PILGRIMAGE

Islamic belief consists of five core elements, known as the **Five Pillars of Islam**:

- The **shahada** (in Arabic meaning testimony or bearing witness) is the declaration of belief by Muslims that there is one God and that Muhammad is his prophet. It is said daily in the call to prayer and at the beginning of prayers.
- **Salat** are the obligatory prayers that are performed five times a day, and serve as a direct link between the worshipper and Allah.
- **Zakat** is the giving of alms. In Islamic Law, every Muslim is obliged to donate 2.5% of his or her wealth to charity. This includes both income and assets.
- **Sawm** is the fasting during the month of Ramadan, in the 9th month of the Islamic calendar. This involves abstinence from eating, drinking, smoking, drugs of any kind, sexual intercourse and unruly thoughts during daylight hours. The infirm, children and pregnant women may be exempt from the *sawm*. *Sawm* is intended to cleanse the body, physically and spiritually.
- **Hajj** is the pilgrimage to Mecca. During the *hajj*, Muslims travel to Mecca to perform a series of symbolic ritual acts of faith.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Pilgrimage is one of the five pillars or duties of Islam. Every Muslim who is healthy, free from debt and can afford the journey must make the pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in his or her lifetime, to visit the Ka'bah and other sacred sites. Collect information about the pilgrimage, its meaning and significance. If possible, interview a Muslim who has taken the journey to Mecca and share your research with the class.
- Where is Mecca, what does it signify and why is it religiously significant in Islamic culture? Research the objects that are needed for pilgrimage and for prayer and their functional purposes. Find these objects in the exhibition and record them in your visual diary.
- Research the architecture of the mosque. Visit a mosque and write a detailed description of what you see. As a class activity, create a miniature model. Consider the intricate details, scale and colour. Investigate its relationship to prayer and the rituals that need to be followed by worshippers of this faith.
- Investigate religious pilgrimages from other cultures and compare with the pilgrimage to Mecca. Create a map displaying the significant sites and display them as a group work.
- Define the difference between a journey and a pilgrimage. Visually record your journey from your home to school and compare this to a pilgrimage to Mecca. How could you turn your journey into a pilgrimage?



ROOM 4

Noah's Ark

from *Jami' al-Tawarikh* by Rashid al-Din (detail)

Iran, Tabriz, dated 714 AH (1314–15 AD)

ink, translucent and opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper

11.5 x 17 cm

(cat no 149)

Rashid al-Din Fadlallah (c645–718 AH/1247–1318 AD) was a Muslim convert from a Jewish family in Hamadan. His father was an apothecary and he himself trained as a physician, entering the service of the Ilkhan Abaqa (r1265–82). On Ghazan's accession in 694 AH (1295 AD), he gained an enduring position at the summit of state affairs, until rivalry provoked by the Mongol system of dividing power among viziers led to his disgrace and execution in 1318. Enormously rich, Rashid al-Din Fadlallah endowed pious institutions throughout the Ilkhanid domains. Among these, his multi-functional funerary complex, the Rab'-i Rashidi, at Tabriz, which included a scriptorium to produce and distribute copies of his works, was the most splendid. Yet he was not merely a great administrator: his interests included theology, agriculture, horticulture and especially history, and he was commanded by Ghazan to compile a history of his reign. This was presented to his successor, Öljeytü (r1304–16), who commanded him, as a memorial to Ghazan, to enlarge the work to provide a history of all the peoples with whom the Mongols had come into contact. This was the *Jami' al-Tawarikh* (compendium of chronicles), which was to be in four parts: (1) the history of the Mongols from Jenghiz Khan to the death of Ghazan, (2) a history of Öljeytü, followed by a long universal history from Adam, the biblical Patriarchs and the ancient kings of Persia

to Muhammad and the caliphs, (3) the 'Five Dynasties' of the Arabs, the Jews, the Mongols, the Franks and the Chinese, and (4) a geographical compendium.

The history of Öljeytü and the geographical compendium are lost, and the principal illustrated section appears to have been the universal history, now in two different fascicles (one in Edinburgh University Library, the other the Khalili manuscript), which were haphazardly rebound in the 18th century. Together they comprise about half a manuscript of 400 folios or so, recording the history of the non-Mongol peoples of Eurasia. The very possibility of its compilation reflects the cosmopo may not have been available. They made great use of chinoiserie motifs, and their use of wash and line rather than opaque watercolour gives a superficial similarity to recently excavated Yuan tomb-paintings in Inner Mongolia. However, their elongated figures, expressive features and mannered gestures are more in the tradition of later Byzantine painting. The use of silver (now oxidised) for the modelling of faces and their features is likewise very un-Chinese.



ROOM 6

The encampment of the caravan of pilgrims from the Maghrib (North Africa) from the *Anis al-Hujjaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali
 India, possibly Gujarat, c1677–80
 ink, watercolour and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
 33 x 23.2 cm
 (cat no 262)

ROOM 6

View of the port of Surat, oriented to the south, and the ships carrying pilgrims' from the *Anis al-Hujjaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali
 India, possibly Gujarat, c1677–80
 ink, watercolour and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
 33 x 23.2 cm
 (cat no 258)

ROOM 5

'Pilgrim flask'
 Mughal India or the Deccan, 16th century AD
 cast brass
 30.5 x 30.5 cm
 (cat no 279)



THE GARDEN

In Islam, as in Christianity, the garden symbolises Paradise. Medieval Islamic rulers lavished huge funds on building elaborate and beautiful gardens, often with large, ornate fountains and channels, to recreate a kind of earthly paradise. This is still a tradition today in royal palaces and the households of the wealthy. The garden is frequently a theme in the Qur'an, where it is said the faithful will arrive on Judgement Day.

Muslims view nature as a blessing, a gift from God, and the garden in Islam derives its spiritual symbolism from this concept. The garden was usually designed using an abundance of fruit and shade trees, with a channel of running water running through the centre, perhaps leading to a fountain. Although many of the medieval Islamic gardens no longer survive, a magnificent example still exists in southern Spain, in the Alhambra Palace in the city of Granada.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Design tessellated tiles using simplified garden motifs and limited colours. Consider the shapes of the tiles and how the complete pattern can be resolved. Create these tiles in clay or as cardboard shapes.
- Research the Alhambra in Granada, Spain and its relationship with Islamic culture. Find photographs and images of the Alhambra and create a three-dimensional model of a section of this place decorating it with Islamic patterns.
- Create a walled garden design with a central water feature. Draw aerial plans showing the location of plants, seating, walls and fountains. Research the types of plants that could survive the climate of your local area and note how the garden can survive and be maintained.
- Consider the link between the garden and religion. Define the significance of this theme and collect religious examples of the garden from a variety of cultural sources. Consider how they differ and how they are similar.
- Compare a variety of traditional and contemporary artists that use organic forms in their art practice. In what way has the garden been portrayed in art throughout time? Using *My_Virtual_Gallery* www.artgallery.nsw.gov.au/mvg develop an exhibition titled 'The Garden'. Choose the images from the Art Gallery of New South Wales collection and create extended text panels for each artwork in your exhibition.



ROOM 5

Flask

Ottoman Turkey, Iznik, c1560–80 AD

stonepaste body, decorated underglaze in black, blue, green and bole red
46 x 22.8 cm (diameter)
(cat no 292)

The shape and painted flutes at the base of the neck copy contemporary Venetian glass flasks, which were imported into Istanbul in large quantities at the time.

Ottoman Iznik pottery and tilework

Pottery and tiles had been made in Anatolia from the late 12th or early 13th century onwards. From the 1470s, however, a new type of blue-and-white pottery, known as Iznik chinaware (*chîni-i Iznîk*) was made for the sultan's table: its quality, largely the result of using a lead-soda frit for both body and glaze, was a distinct technical advance. A crucial development was the discovery that a slip known as Armenian bole, when applied under a glaze gave a rich tomato red. It was often used as a base for gilding and, in Ottoman palace kitchens as a remedy for indigestion. It was first used for tilework for the mosque of Süleyman the Magnificent in Istanbul (inaugurated 1557). For the next 50 or 60 years, the Ottoman court virtually monopolised the production of tiles for royal palaces and pious foundations.



ROOM 5

Flat-woven carpet (kilim)
 Turkey or Iran, 16th or 17th century AD
 silk, with metal thread
 212 x 84 cm
 (cat no 301)

ROOM 5

Panel of hexagonal tiles
 Ottoman Turkey, Iznik, c1520–30 AD
 stonepaste body, painted underglaze in black, blue and turquoise
 80 x 52 cm
 (cat no 294)



ROOM 7

Pan-box (pandan) and tray
 Mughal India, c1700 AD
 gold, enamels
 9.8 x 13.2 cm (box); 31.2 cm (tray width)
 (cat no 323)



SYMBOLS & FAITH

Symbolism is very strong in Islamic art, particularly of a spiritual and religious nature. The colour green, for example, is acknowledged as the colour of the Prophet Muhammad; although his face is normally covered, in many miniature paintings he is frequently depicted wearing a green robe. Green may be symbolic of Paradise, like the garden, and many flags of Islamic nations, such as Saudi Arabia or Pakistan, are predominantly green to reflect this importance.

The crescent moon is perhaps the most common and well known symbol that represents Islam; it almost always sits on top of the dome of a mosque, in a similar way as the cross on a church steeple. The crescent moon, known in Arabic as the *hلال*, is also significant because it marks the first day of Ramadan, the holy month of fasting for Muslims.

Light is also an important symbol in Islam. As in Christianity, it symbolises the divine, and that is why almost all Qur'ans are decorated using gold to illuminate their pages. Often, mosque lamps are also painted using gold as well as other colours, and inscribed with a verse from the Qur'an called *al-Nur*, or 'Light', to emphasise this importance.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Encounter this amazing lion. His body is made of special letters called calligraphy. If you were an animal, which one would you like to be? Write your name in this zoomorphic (animal-like) style using the shape and outline of the animal you have chosen. Practice writing your name in different decorative styles of lettering.
- Research the colour green and its symbolic significance in Islamic art. Find examples in the exhibition that use this colour and consider how it is depicted.
- The crescent moon is an important symbol in Islam and marks the first day of Ramadan. Find out about Ramadan, define its meaning and importance for Muslims. Discuss the elements involved in this holy month as part of your research.
- Develop a case study using the theme *Symbols and Faith*. Compare traditional and contemporary artists that have explored this theme. Respond to their art practice and the significance of this theme for the contemporary audience.
- Develop a case study on contemporary Islamic artists and the role of tradition in their art practice. Suggest how faith is still an integral aspect of their art making.
- Imagine being the curator of this exhibition. Write an article for *Art and Australia* magazine discussing its significance for the Australian audience. Include information about key works and themes and how symbols and faith play a key role in the design of the show. Discuss your reasoning for bringing this collection to the Art Gallery of New South Wales.

**ROOM 6****Mosque lamp**

Syria or Egypt, 15th century AD

glass, enamelled and gilt

33 x 25 cm (diameter)

(cat no 186)

During the Mamluk period, the various pious institutions founded by sultans and amirs brought a demand for elaborately enamelled and gilt glass vessels to light them. Suspended from their rims were beaker-like containers filled with oil. The rim of this lamp bears an inscription from the *surah al-Nur* (XXIV, 'Light'), verse 35, 'God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His Light is as if there were a Niche and within it a Lamp: the lamp enclosed in Glass'. This is broken by three roundels with the heraldic blazon of Sultan Barquq, the Circassian usurper of the Bahri Mamluk dynasty in 784 AH (1382 AD), in the form of an inscription. The body bears a more elaborate version of the same inscription in bold script.



ROOM 1

Four tiles from a frieze

Ottoman provinces, Syria or Palestine, c1550 AD
 stonepaste body, stencilled in
 black under a bottle green glaze
 70 x 70 cm (overall)
 (cat no 295)

ROOM 6

Stela

north India, late 17th century AD
 white crystalline marble,
 carved on both sides
 181 x 55 x 4 cm
 (pictured front and reverse)
 (cat no 337)



ROOM 7

**Calligraphic composition in the form of a lion
 signed by the calligrapher Ahmed Hilmî**

Ottoman Turkey, dated 12 Jumada I 1331 AH
 (19 April 1913 AD)
 ink and colour on paper
 26.5 x 38.8 cm
 (cat no 218)

THE ART OF THE BOOK

Since early Islam, particularly with the commissioning of Qur'ans by rulers and wealthy merchants, manuscript production was popular. At first this was mainly in the form of calligraphic works related to the Qur'an, but as the arts of Islam developed and grew out of the various cultures and traditions it had absorbed, miniature paintings became popular. These provided visual images to the heroic and popular stories of ancient myths, legends and histories. Although miniature painting is said to have originated in Persia, it later became popular in the courts of the Mughals and the Delhi Sultanate on the Indian sub-continent, as well as in the arts of the Ottoman Empire. However, in addition to the Qur'an, the art of the book continued to include works of calligraphy in the form of prayer books and religious writings, as well as poetry, historical and scientific works.

ACTIVITIES AND ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- Discover magical stories about adventures and flying carpets. Illustrate your chosen story and present it in book form to the class. In your depiction, consider the cover and type of text that will best reflect the type of narrative you are representing.
- Create a page from your favourite story in the style of an illuminated manuscript. Consider the elements needed to develop this effect such as text and imagery, borders and margins, materials and techniques.
- Research the process of making a book. Compare historical and contemporary methods. Make your own books in class using traditional techniques.
- Develop a case study on particular artists that have designed books commercially and in their art practice. Consider the definition of design and art. Is there a need to separate these expressive forms? Investigate contemporary artists that blur the definitions.



ROOM 6

Futuh al-Haramayn (handbook for pilgrims to Mecca and Medina)

by Muhyi Lari copied by the scribe Ghulam 'Ali

Mecca, Jumada II 990 AH (June–July 1582 AD)

ink, gold, coloured wax and opaque watercolour on paper, 42 folios

21.6 x 13.9 cm

(cat no 219)

The *Futuh al-Haramayn* is a guide in Persian verse for pilgrims on the Hajj, slightly Shiite in tenor, listing and illustrating the stations of the Pilgrimage and the rituals to be observed, together with the customary prayers and offerings. It was the work of the polymath Muhyi Lari (d933AH /1526 or 1527AD) who later dedicated it to Muzaffar ibn Mahmudshah, the ruler of Gujarat. No early illustrated Indian copies are known, but later in the 16th century it was widely copied in Ottoman Turkey, both in Istanbul for the sultan's library and in the provinces. These all share one interesting feature: the use of a coloured waxed ground on the illustrations of Mecca and Medina. This is paralleled in scrolls of the period, issued to attest proxy pilgrimages, illustrated with the stations of the Pilgrimage and other shrines, where the waxing of the background was evidently an aid to mechanical reproduction.



ROOM 7

'Rustam, aided by his horse, Rakhsh, slays a dragon' from the 'Houghton' Shahnamah
Iran, Tabriz 1520s

ink, gold and opaque watercolour on paper
47 x 31.8 cm
(cat no 231)

ROOM 6

'The port of Jeddah on the Red Sea' from the *Anis al-Hujaj* copied by Safi ibn Vali
India, possibly Gujarat c1677–80

ink, watercolours and gold on paper, 23 folios with 20 illustrations, Persian text in nasta'liq
33 x 23.2 cm
(cat no 267)

ROOM 1

'Khidr giving cups of the water of immortality to the inhabitants of Paradise' from a *Falnamah*
India, the Deccan, probably Golconda
c1610–30 AD

ink, opaque watercolour, gold and silver on paper
41 x 28.4 cm
(cat no 243)