

Arts of Islam: Middle East and North Africa

Objects in MIA Collection

Key ideas: Islamic Art and Culture

- European trade with Islamic cultures was widespread and desirable
- Objects made for religious practices and settings as well as secular purposes (public vs. private viewing)
- Objects made by and for Islamic peoples of many cultures; incorporates diverse traditions
- God is unique and cannot be represented in figural form; humans and animals can only be created by God
- No saints and little or no narrative in the Qur'an to depict with images
- Representation ensnares the mind; abstraction allows a contemplative state where the spirit can roam

Ceramics

Iran (Persia), Seljuk period, *Bowl*, 11th-12th c., white ground earthenware with transparent glaze, 50.46.445

Iran (Persia), Seljuk period, *Ewer*, 12th c., earthenware with molded décor under lapis-blue glaze, 50.46.429

Iran (Persia), *Bowl* (Kashan ware), 13th c., earthenware with underglaze black décor, 50.46.431

Iran (Persia), *Ewer/Pitcher* (Kashan ware), before 1220, earthenware with gold luster décor, 50.46.437

Iran (Persia), Rayy and Kashan wares, 12th-14th c., earthenware with black paint or molded décor under clear turquoise glaze, 50.46.430, 50.46.420, 50.46.451

Iran (Persia), Ilkhan dynasty, *Rectangular tiles*, 13th-14th century, earthenware with blue and turquoise underglaze and gold luster overglaze, 50.46.458, 459

Iran (Persia), *Bowl depicting a courtly scene* (minai ware), 12th-13th c., earthenware with overglaze polychromy and gold, 32.32.7

Iran (Persia), *Bowl with ladies on horseback* (minai ware), 12th-13th c., earthenware with overglaze polychromy, 50.46.432

Iran (Persia), *Bowl with lady riding an elephant* (minai ware), 12th-13th c., earthenware with overglaze polychromy, 50.46.434

Iran (Persia), *Bowl with birds and foliage design*, 14th c., underglazed earthenware, 50.46.439

Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, *Plate*, 18th c., ceramic with underglaze, 86.44

Syria, Ottoman period, *Hexagonal wall tile*, 16th c., earthenware with underglaze blue and turquoise, 17.55

Amal Abu'l-Ezz, Egypt, Mamluk dynasty, *Vase with handles*, 15th c., earthenware with cobalt blue underglaze, 84.45

Théodore Deck, France, *Vase in form of mosque lamp*, c. 1870, tin-glazed earthenware, 2000.9 (nov)

Woodworking

Egypt, *Door panel*, 14th c., wood and ivory, 83.79

Book Arts: Calligraphy and Painting

Iran (Persia), Abbasid dynasty, *Page from the Koran*, 9th-10th century, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 51.37.7 (nov)

Iran (Persia), *Page from the Koran*, 9th-10th century, ink on parchment, 51.37.3

Egypt, Mamluk dynasty, *Page from the Koran*, about 1350, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 51.37.21

Iran (Persia), Seljuk dynasty, *Page from the Koran*, 11th century, colors and ink on paper, 59.1 (nov)

India, Mughal dynasty, 16th-17th century, *Album page of Poetry*, opaque watercolors and gold on paper, 84.44a (nov)

Iran (Persia), Timurid dynasty, *King and Queen in a Garden*, c. 1431, ink, colors, and gold on paper, 51.37.30 (nov)

Iran (Persia), Safavid dynasty, *The Lovers*, 17th c., ink, colors, and gold on paper, 51.37.38

The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not
knowing how blind that was.
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere.
They're in each other all along. *Rumi*

Terms

Shi'ite/Shi'a Muslims

Sunni Muslims

Umayyad caliphs (661-750, 756-1031)

Abbasid, Nasrid, Seljuk, Mamluk caliphs (750-1570)

Reconquista

chahar-bagh – garden courtyard divided in four sections by waterways

masjid – mosque

madrassa – school

muqarnas – nichelike cells

iwan – vaulted open room

qibla wall – wall facing toward Mecca

mihrab – holy space/niche that identifies the qibla wall

minbar – pulpit/throne

minaret – tower from which “Call to Prayer” goes out (5 times a day)

Ilkhan dynasty (1258-1335) – Mongol rule in Persia

kufic, muhaqqaq script