Islamic Art

Islamic art includes all religious and secular artwork created over the last 1400 years in the Islamic world and countries that used to be part of the Islamic Empire.

Islamic art includes:



calligraphy



ceramics



textiles



metalwork

glasswork

architecture

Islamic art seeks to make objects beautiful and help people to reflect and think about the world, rather than recreate physical forms and real objects. Depicting people is not a part of the Islamic faith, so Muslim artists concentrate on the use of abstract forms, patterns and shapes in their work.

Aspects of Islamic art

Three main aspects of Islamic art are calligraphy, arabesque and geometric patterns. Artists have used these aspects to decorate the surface of many objects and buildings.

Calligraphy is the art of producing beautiful and decorative handwriting. Islamic calligraphy is used in art forms to reproduce the words of the Qur'an.

Arabesque is a floral pattern

based on the bindweed plant,

which is made up of entwined

Geometric patterns are made

by repeating, interlacing and tessellating motifs and

geometric shapes, such as

stars, squares and triangles.

When creating a pattern to

begin by creating a motif. A

use in Islamic art, an artist can

motif is a decorative image or

design that can be repeated

to form a pattern. Motifs can

Motifs

flowers, leaves and stems.





be different styles. Figurative motifs are realistic representations of living things or objects. Vegetal motifs represent plants. Geometric and abstract motifs consist of shapes.

Stars in Islamic art

Islamic art often features geometric star motifs because the star is believed to symbolise the light and perfection of Allah. Regular stars in Islamic art have 6, 8, 10, 12 or 16 points.

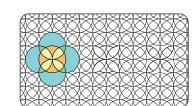


Islamic tile

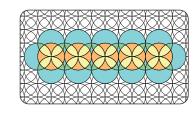
Designing patterns on a grid

Geometric motifs and patterns can be made on a grid. This motif has been made by colouring in shapes on a grid made from circles.

A pattern is created when a motif is repeated. Grids can be made from shapes, including circles, squares and triangles.



motif



pattern

Relief sculpture

Relief sculpture is any work where an image or pattern is raised from a surface. If only slightly raised, the sculpture is called low relief or 'bas-relief'. If the image or pattern is almost



relief wall decoration

three dimensional but is still attached to the background, the sculpture is called high relief or 'alto-relief'. Islamic architectural surfaces are often decorated with low and high relief sculptures.

Glossary

secular	Not connected to religion.
tessellate	To fit shapes together in a pattern with no spaces in between.



