

# THE ARTS OF ISLAM

## TREASURE HUNT



ART  
GALLERY  
NSW

HAVE FUN EXPLORING  
THE ARTS OF ISLAM: TREASURES FROM  
THE NASSER D KHALILI COLLECTION  
AND MAKE SOME ART OF YOUR OWN

**Collect**  
a pencil



**Go** on a journey  
through the  
exhibition



**Discover**  
the Islamic  
treasures

★ **Look, draw and have fun!**



## THE ARTS OF ISLAM TREASURES FROM THE NASSER D KHALILI COLLECTION

Discover the exquisite beauty and intricate detail of Islamic art  
on your own treasure hunt.

above: *Jonah and the whale* 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  
cover: *Mother-of-pearl-inlaid casket* India, Gujarat, 16th century AD, teak, mother-of-pearl,  
black lacquer, gilt metal, 20 x 33.4 x 19.7 cm

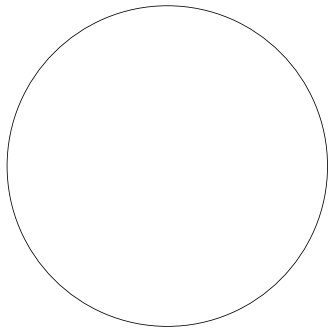
★ **Locate** these bowls and dishes.

They are over 1000 years old and would have been used for special occasions.

What animals can you **spot**?  
Are they **repeated** exactly around the dish?

**Look** closely at the decorations on these and other examples of pottery.

**Design** your own special bowl using a repeat pattern of your favourite animal.



top to bottom: Dish with lustre decoration Iraq, 9th or 10th century AD, buff-bodied earthenware, with monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque white glaze, 3 x 31.7 cm (diameter); Bowl Iran, Nishapur, 10th or 11th century AD, earthenware, slip painted under a colourless lead glaze 13.4 x 39.4 cm (diameter); Bowl with lustre decoration Iraq, 9th or 10th century AD, buff-bodied earthenware, with monochrome lustre decoration over an opaque white glaze, 8 x 26 cm (diameter).

**At home look** at examples of pottery your family owns. Are any of them similar to the ones in the exhibition? Draw your favourite one.



★ **Here** are some elaborate earrings made of gold wire.

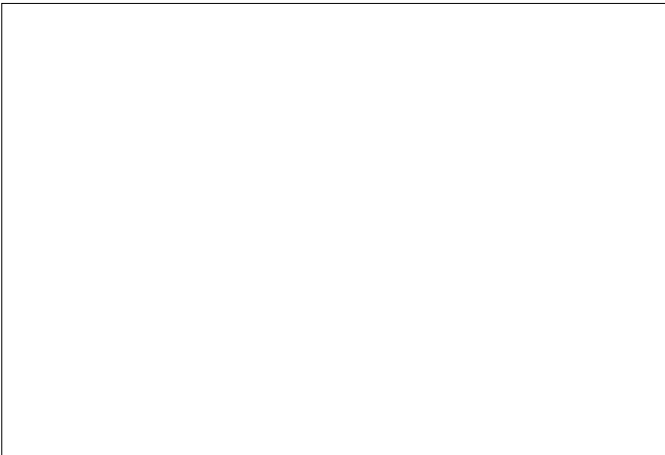
They are very old and rare.

**Observe** how thin gold wire has been **twisted** to make patterns and shapes. Do you think they would be heavy or light to wear? Why?

**Imagine** who might have worn these earrings and where they wore them. **Draw** a picture of them here.



*Pair of earrings with pendant chains Syria, 10th or 11th century AD gold filigree, 10 cm (height)*



**At home twist** together some pipe cleaners or thin wire to create your own delicate pattern to make a piece of jewellery.

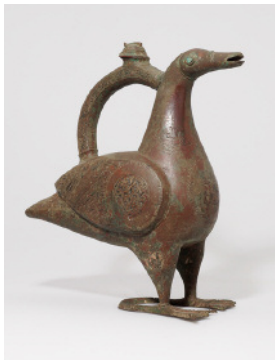


★ **Look** at this water jug in the shape of a goose.

Can you **see** where you pour the water into this jug?

**Search** the exhibition for other examples of vases, jugs and vessels in the shape of animals and birds. Which one is your favourite?

**Invent** your own animal-shaped jug below.



*Aquamanile in the form of a goose signed by the Herati craftsmen, Abu'l-Qasim ibn Muhammad al-Harawi, Iran, Khurasan, 12th century AD, Quaternary copper alloy with surface engraving and traces of black compound, with inlay of turquoise-glazed pottery for the bird's eyes, 37 x 28,5 x 14 cm*

**At home sketch** your own pet or animals and birds from your imagination. Simplify into shapes and design a vase based on your sketches.



★ **Find** this crowned head.

Crowned head Central Asia, 8th or 9th century AD, limestone, carved and painted, 30 cm (height)



This head was once part of a carved stone frieze that decorated a palace wall.

**Imagine** what the body of this figure may have looked like.

**Look** closely at the shapes and patterns on this crown and other stone carvings in the exhibition.

**Design** a new crown for this figure using some of the patterns you found.

**At home find out** what Islamic palaces look like. Make your own palace out of cardboard and decorate its walls with Islamic-style patterns.



★ **Here** is Jonah being swallowed by a whale.

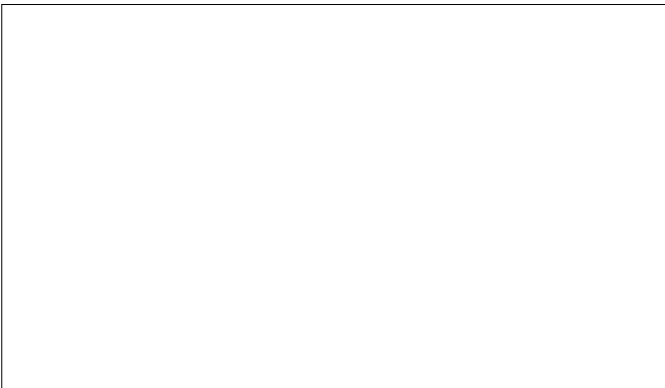
Jonah was a teacher of God's (Allah's) will and was sent to warn the people of Nineveh to change their bad ways. In the story, sailors believe Jonah is the reason for a big storm so he is thrown overboard and is swallowed by a large fish or whale.

**Observe** how the water in this painting swirls and curls to show the storm. **Describe** how you think Jonah might feel at this terrible moment.



**Find** other paintings near this one with boats in them. Use them to **inspire** you to draw Jonah in his boat just before he is thrown into the stormy sea.

*Jonah and the whale* 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



**At home find out** more about Jonah's amazing story and draw your favourite scenes.



★ **Meet** the mythical hero Rustam and his horse Rakhsh.

Rustam is a character in a famous Islamic storybook called *The Book of Kings*.

Rustam and Rakhsh have to go on a long journey and face many challenges along the way such as slaying a dragon.

**Find** these things and **tick** them as you find them:

- Birds
- A leopard-shaped helmet
- A feather
- Red flowers
- A hollow tree
- Calligraphy



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

**At home find** other stories that have dragons in them. Read some of them and discover what dragons look like. Are they always the same? Draw your favourite dragon or invent your own.



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ART GALLERY OF NEW SOUTH WALES  
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Written by Victoria Collings, designed by Karen Hancock  
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★ **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 the **shape** and **outline** of the animal you have chosen.



Calligraphic composition in the form of a lion signed by the calligrapher Ahmed Hilmi, Ottoman, Turkey, dated 12 Jumada 1 1331 AH (19 April 1913 AD), ink and colour on paper, 26.5 x 38.8 cm

**At home practice** writing your name in different decorative styles of lettering.



★ **Examine** this intricate casket.

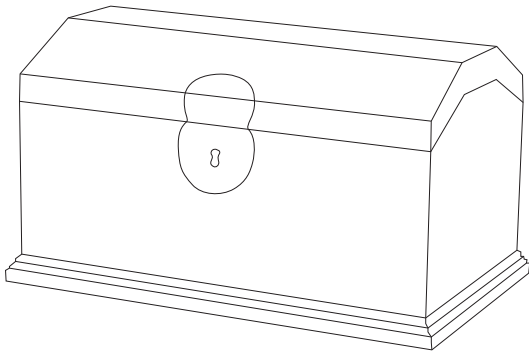
Caskets such as this one would have been treasured because their decorations were so complicated and precious. What do you think was placed inside them?

**Locate** other decorative boxes and chests in the exhibition and **compare** their designs.

**Decorate** this chest below with patterns from plants, flowers and shapes.



*Mother-of-pearl-inlaid casket India, Gujarat, 16th century AD, teak, mother-of-pearl, black lacquer, gilt metal, 20 x 33.4 x 19.7 cm*



**At home make** your own treasure chest out of a small box. Decorate it with sequins and jewels and use it to keep something special in.

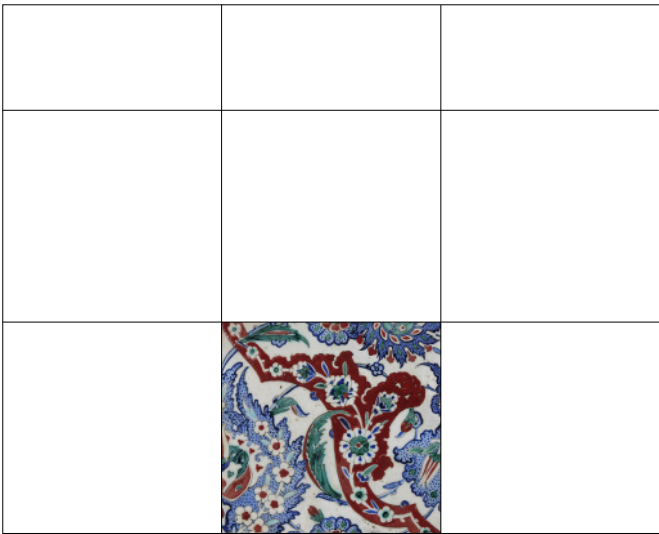


★ **Here** is a colourful ceramic tile.

Tiles such as this one decorated royal palaces, fountains and courtyard gardens.

**Visualise** what a whole wall of these tiles would have looked like.

**Extend** the pattern of this tile across the rest of these blank tiles and invent a border to go along the top of them.



*Tile from a frieze Ottoman Turkey, Iznik, c.1560–80 AD, stonepaste body, decorated underglaze in black, blue, green and bole-red, 26 x 27.5 x 1 cm*

**At home invent** your own design for a tiled courtyard garden, complete with a fountain and paint your idea.



★ **Look** closely at this beautiful carpet.

It was probably made for a king as it is so elaborate.

Can you **spot** the prowling lions **hidden** within the flowers?

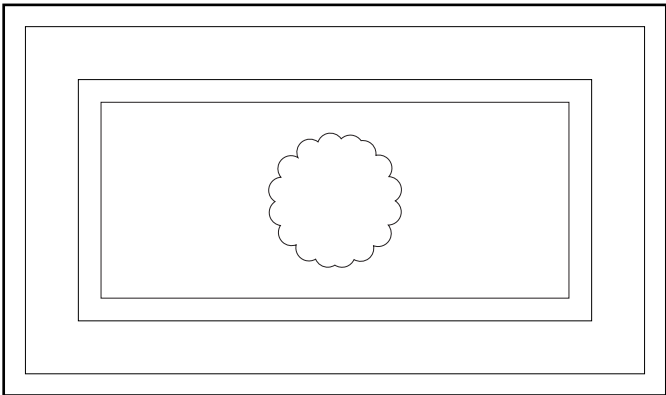
**Use** the template below to **create** a carpet fit for a king or queen.

**Imagine** this carpet is a magic flying carpet. Where could it take you?

**Tell** a tale about your adventures.



Medallion carpet Iran, perhaps Kashan, 16th century AD, wool pile, with metal thread on silk foundation 248 x 199 cm



**At home find** stories from *The Arabian Nights* and discover magical stories about adventures and flying carpets.

