

Ancient Islamic Civilisation: Print designs inspired by Ancient Islamic Art

Key Facts

Art from the Islamic Empire covers a wide range of forms and style. This reflects the large geographical area and wide variety of cultures included in the ancient Islamic empire.

Rather than use animals or people in their design, Islamic artists often used a variety of intricate designs and patterns. Artists felt that using figures of animals and people could result in idolatry (the worship of idols) instead of Allah.

Arabesque pattern is a common feature in Islamic art in wooden carvings, stone reliefs on buildings, textiles, and in decorated books. Islamic artists also often used tessellation and calligraphy.

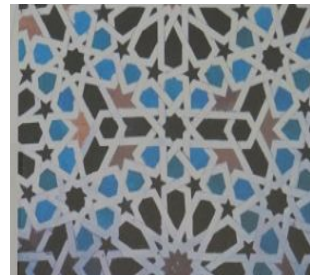
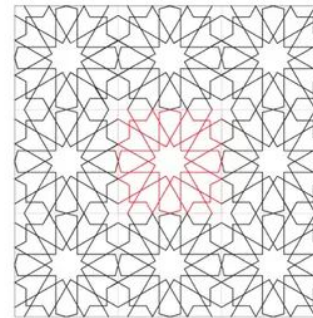
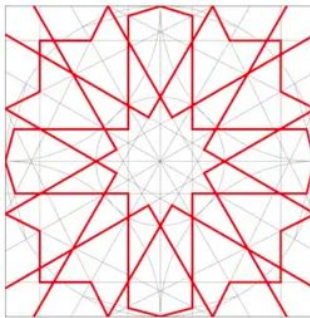
The most popular type of painting in the early Islamic world was 'miniature painting' (small paintings used in illuminated manuscripts). Contrastingly, these paintings often contained pictures of animals and people. This was because they depicted scenes from national stories e.g. Sleeping Rostam by Sultan Muhammad (1515-1522), recited by all levels of society on all sorts of occasions: from schools to celebrations, royal entertainment to gymnastic displays.

Weapons used in battle were sometimes decorated with patterns or calligraphy. Islamic artists also worked with glass and metal. The style and patterns used in Islamic art spread throughout much of the world as the Islamic empire expanded. The minbar in a mosque (a special place for the prayer leader) is often decorated with elaborate carvings.



Key Skills

Discuss an artist's work	Begin to think critically about the work of an artist. Be able to talk about choices made in art, likes and dislikes, and how these relate to the work of José Contreras Muhammad Hasan-e-Mema José Contreras, Stepan Krichinskiy St Petersburg Zaha Hadid.
Digital Media	Use a digital maths package to understand and use tessellation in a digital pattern design.
Composition	Think carefully about how elements are placed or arranged to create a final image.
Pattern	Make and use a stencil to create a repeating pattern or design.
Printmaking	Begin to use printing inks and rollers to make repeating prints which may include layers of more than one colour.



Key Vocabulary

pattern	A repeated decorative design.
arabesque	Surface decorations based on rhythmic linear patterns of scrolling and interlacing foliage, tendrils or plain lines, often combined with other elements.
calligraphy	The art of producing decorative handwriting or lettering with a pen or brush.
typography	Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable and appealing when displayed.
tessellation	An arrangement of shapes closely fitted together, especially of polygons in a repeated pattern without gaps or overlapping.
stencil	A stiff sheet of material with a design or image cut out of it. When ink or paint is applied to the stencil, the design is printed on the surface below.

What else was going on in the World?

975 -1025	Date on manuscript for epic poem Beowulf.
800-1066	Two periods of rich artistic culture flourished under the Anglo Saxons in England.

