

Islamic Arts Family Experience Gallery Guide

Together with the Islamic Arts Society, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, is excited to host an Islamic Arts Family Experience showcasing modern and traditional Islamic arts. Use this guide to take a trip through the galleries, discover different Islamic works of art, and learn new ways to experience art. If you are using this at guide at home, you will find works of art in the MFAH Collection on your computer at <https://emuseum.mfah.org/>.



Explore Calligraphy Investigate the Work of Art

This circular Ottoman tile bearing a calligraphic inscription highlights the continuation of the Mamluk ceramic tradition after the region fell to Ottoman rule in the early 16th century. Tiles were often used to commemorate the construction of buildings and city landmarks. The inscription is the *shahada*, which states: “*La ilaha illallah wa Muhammad rasul Allah*” (There is no god but God and Muhammad is His messenger). This affirmation of faith declares belief in the oneness of God and acceptance of Muhammad as his prophet

Find this artwork in the Caroline Wiess Law Building, 111M New Acquisitions Gallery, or view an image of this artwork online at www.emuseum.mfah.org.

Unknown North African, Middle Eastern, and Near Eastern, Damascus, *Tile with Shahada*, 16th century, Damascus, Syria, stonepaste; polychrome-painted under a transparent glaze, 10 5/8 x 10 1/2 x 7/8 in. (27 x 26.7 x 2.2 cm). Museum purchase funded by the 2013 Art of the Islamic Worlds Gala, 2013.64.

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1. If viewing this artwork in person, walk up closely to the object. If viewing online, zoom in as much as possible. What details do you notice?
2. What do you notice about the size of the letters in relation to the size of the tile? Why would the artist choose this size?
3. In what kind of building do you think this tile was found? Can you think of any artworks in your school, place of worship, or other public buildings that incorporate words in them?

Discover the Islamic Art Collection

Let's start the conversation!

Discover the incredible Islamic artworks inside Museum's Law building. Use these steps to talk about art with your family or friends.

1. Spend a few minutes walking around and examining all the works of art in the space.
2. Share which work of art is your favorite and why.

Questions to ask yourself:

Which artwork made you stop and look a little longer?

From which materials is the artwork made?

What do you think the artist was inspired by when they created this work of art?

Scavenger Hunt

Calligraphy is the art of producing stylized or elegant handwriting or lettering. It can be considered the highest form of Islamic art as it transmits the word of God in the Qur'an. In this gallery, you can find many examples of calligraphy featured on various materials.

Write down three examples of artworks that feature calligraphy, and on what types of corresponding materials the calligraphy is found.

Artwork Title	Type of Material
1.	
2.	
3.	

Sketch It Out

Practice the art of calligraphy by writing your name in different styles and sizes!