

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 Ceramics Investigate the Work of Art

In the late 15th century, the Turkish city of Iznik, south of Istanbul, became the center of production for one of the most distinctive types of ceramics in the Islamic world. Early Iznik wares, inspired by Chinese blue-and-white porcelain, employed blue as their primary color and reproduced motifs that were often drawn from Chinese visual repertoires while also testing new decorative patterns from the royal studios.

This tondino—an Italian plate type with a broad, flat rim and small, bowl-shaped center—is a superb example of Iznik production of the first half of the 16th century. The style of decoration, dominated by leafy spirals, is generally called “Golden Horn,” a reference to numerous fragments with comparable motifs found on the southern shore of the Golden Horn, an inlet dividing Istanbul. By the mid-16th century, green, turquoise, purple, and a thick, vibrant red paint were incorporated to the palette of Iznik wares, along with new decorative motifs dominated by floral bouquets.

Find this artwork in the **Caroline Wiess Law Building 112M Islamic Art Gallery**, or view an image of this artwork online at www.emuseum.mfah.org.

Unknown North African, Middle Eastern, and Near Eastern, Turkish, *Tondino*, first half of 16th century, Iznik, Turkey, stonepaste; painted in blue under transparent glaze, 2 x10 1/8 x10 in. (5.1 x25.7 x25.4 cm). Museum purchase funded by His Highness the Aga Khan Shia Ismaili Community of Houston, The Levant Foundation, Mr. and Mrs. Akbar Ladjevardian, The Francis L. Lederer Foundation, courtesy of Sharon Lederer; Marathon Oil Company, Mr. and Mrs. Omar Rehmatulla, Strategic Real Estate Advisors, London, Monsour Taghdisi, His Excellency Sheikh Sultan bin Suhaim Al Thani, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP, the 2007 Art of the Islamic Worlds Gala, the Brown Foundation Accessions Endowment Fund, and the Alice Pratt Brown Museum Fund, 2007.1304, The Caroline Wiess Law Building, 112M Islamic Art Gallery.

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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 are some symbols or motifs you recognize? Why would the artist choose to decorate the plate this way?**
- 3. Do you think this plate is functional? What type of meal do you envision yourself eating on this kind of plate?**

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

Find 3 artworks in the gallery that use motifs!

Motifs are recurring elements, symbols, or themes that appear in a work of art, often repeated in a pattern. There are many types of motifs, such as leaves, flowers, spirals, lines, or geometric shapes.

Write down three examples of motifs you find and the title of the corresponding artworks.

Artwork Title	Type of Motif
1.	
2.	
3.	

Sketch It Out

Design your own pattern made up of your favorite motifs!