



## Calligraphy

Calligraphy, which means beautiful writing, is the art of elegant handwriting. Calligraphy was first used by Muslims when the Arabs began preparing copies of the Qur'an (the Muslim holy book). The words of the Qur'an were written in calligraphy because only calligraphy was considered worthy of the word of God. As a result, the calligrapher was honored above other artists, and calligraphy was considered the highest form of decoration. Verses from the Qur'an adorned the walls of mosques.

Calligraphy was also used to decorate textiles, ceramics, and metal works with inscriptions of worldly wisdom. In Muslim art, the words written in calligraphy are admired for their beauty. The art of calligraphy was taken to such a height because in the early period of Islam, the use of visual images to depict humans or animals was prohibited.

# Document E







## Geometric and Floral Design

Muslim art was mostly abstract, which meant that the pictures did not represent real subjects like humans or animals. It was believed that human images would distract worshipers from praying to Allah. As a result, Muslim artists turned to plant patterns or geometric designs as art subjects. During the Golden Age of Muslims, these arts flourished throughout the Islamic world. The most common was the arabesque, which was a winding stem of leaves and flowers that formed a spiraling design. The arabesque decorated everything from small objects—metal boxes, ceramic bowls, tiles—to carpets and entire walls. The use of geometry in Islamic art was an expression of the idea that unity and order exists everywhere and at all times. Interlacement, which was another type of arabesque, was made of geometrical patterns drawn inside a circle and repeated several times. Despite the religious guidelines, however, paintings of both humans and animals did exist. They could be found in private places like bathhouses, women’s apartments, and the living quarters of the ruling classes.

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