



# International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science

e-ISSN: 2544-9435

Scholarly Publisher  
RS Global Sp. z O.O.  
ISNI: 0000 0004 8495 2390

Dolna 17, Warsaw,  
Poland 00-773  
+48 226 0 227 03  
editorial\_office@rsglobal.pl

## ARTICLE TITLE

HOW DOES ISLAMIC ART CONTRIBUTE TO ENRICHING ARAB-  
EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

## ARTICLE INFO

Mebarek Fadhila, Mohamedi Riahi Rachida. (2025) How Does Islamic Art  
Contribute to Enriching Arab-European Cultural Diversity?. *International Journal  
of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 2(46). doi:  
10.31435/ijitss.2(46).2025.3293

## DOI

[https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.2\(46\).2025.3293](https://doi.org/10.31435/ijitss.2(46).2025.3293)

## RECEIVED

22 February 2025

## ACCEPTED

30 March 2025

## PUBLISHED

21 April 2025

## LICENSE



The article is licensed under a **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0  
International License**.

© The author(s) 2025.

This article is published as open access under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0), allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

# HOW DOES ISLAMIC ART CONTRIBUTE TO ENRICHING ARAB-EUROPEAN CULTURAL DIVERSITY?

**Mebarek Fadhila**

*Dr., University of Ibn Khaldoun, Tiaret, Algeria*

**Mohamedi Riahi Rachida**

*Professor, University of Oran 2 Mohamed Ben Ahmed, Department of Philosophy, Algeria*

---

## ABSTRACT

Islamic art promotes understanding and cross-cultural exchange, which greatly enriches the cultural diversity of Arabs and Europeans. From the Middle Ages onward, its complex geometric patterns, calligraphy, and arabesques have impacted European art, architecture, and design, as evidenced by the Gothic and Renaissance eras. During the 12th-century Renaissance, Islamic scientific and philosophical texts were translated into Latin, which promoted intellectual exchanges and helped incorporate Islamic artistic ideas into European philosophy. Islamic art museums and exhibitions in Europe help to close cultural gaps and foster a sense of shared heritage. This artistic exchange promotes a greater understanding of diversity and commonality in modern multicultural societies by highlighting historical connections between Arab and European civilisations in addition to celebrating aesthetic beauty.

---

## KEYWORDS

Cross-Cultural Exchange, Geometric Patterns, Calligraphy, Gothic Architecture, Renaissance, Shared Heritage

---

## CITATION

Mebarek Fadhila, Mohamedi Riahi Rachida. (2025) How Does Islamic Art Contribute to Enriching Arab-European Cultural Diversity?. *International Journal of Innovative Technologies in Social Science*. 2(46). doi: 10.31435/ijitss.2(46).2025.3293

---

## COPYRIGHT

© **The author(s) 2025**. This article is published as open access under the **Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0)**, allowing the author to retain copyright. The CC BY 4.0 License permits the content to be copied, adapted, displayed, distributed, republished, or reused for any purpose, including adaptation and commercial use, as long as proper attribution is provided.

---

A problem such as this necessitates a thorough analytical examination on our part so that we can articulate it in the following manner: Is it meaningful to discuss Islamic art and can it be created? Do the arts of Islamic peoples have unique characteristics that set them apart from other cultures? If so, should these characteristics be explained by religious or social influences? Is it legitimate to refer to Islamic art instead of art specific to certain regions like Iran, Arab, Syria, Maghreb, or Turkey?

To define the problem in its fundamental form, we take this example, which is in the form of a text by George Marçais, one of the most prominent specialists in the subject. In his book "Islamic Art," he says: "Let us imagine a certain experience in an hour of wasted time, while you are browsing to enjoy beautiful pictures in a series of different art books. You see Greek statues, Pharaonic drawings, Japanese curtains, and the lower inscriptions of Indian temples. As you turn the pages, your gaze falls on a carved gypsum panel in one of the halls of the Alhambra Palace, then on a page of the Qur'an printed in Egypt, then on a decor carved in a vessel. From Persian copper, your simple artistic culture is immediately recognizable from these last three pictures as belonging to Islamic art, and without being able to decide which country or nation they belong to, you cannot be mistaken in the possibility that these paintings belong to a country other than the Islamic country."

There are two elements in this text whose face is specific to Islamic culture that are worth mentioning. The first aspect relates to a methodological point, which is comparison as a technique for discovering the visual specificity of art. Sometimes by going beyond and sometimes by confronting others, we get to know ourselves and discover what is authentic, or at least what constitutes hidden groups that are automatically separated from the other groups.

The art historian can always make comparisons, which is justified because all art is a set of ways of expressing the same thing, and it can only be understood and evaluated through comparison. The use of similes in Arabic texts is also found in Persian and Turkish. When discussing Arabic or non-Arabic poetry, or even publishing, it is taken for granted that there is a common language that is generally accepted by those seeking to understand a specific text, place it in history, or evaluate it. This common language has been recognized and accepted long ago, and it's not up for discussion because the effectiveness of each language has been refined.

The idols presented by George Marcy in relation to art lead to a similar acceptance according to which all visual arts or metaphors are linked to knowing and understanding a specific group of artistic masterpieces or architectural feats within the group of human creativity.

The second or other aspect of George Marcy's text that is worth noting is that the artistic works that he uses as forms of comparison are almost all non-European (Japanese, Indian, except Greek verification). Does the artistic production of Islamic peoples differ in themselves from other arts? Is it our knowledge of this art that dictates that we perceive it differently?

Let's try to reformulate these questions in a different way. The uniqueness of Islamic arts might have been influenced by individual or general conditions that became prominent in our findings. It is conceivable to consider and acknowledge a type of contextual determinism, indicating the presence of special conditions for the entire Islamic world that continually played a significant role in shaping its art during normal or challenging periods. Here are three examples of these conditions specific to Islam. Each of them, either individually or collectively, contributed to the originality of the art in Islamic countries.

The first example is monotheism, the universal unity urged by the absolute monotheistic doctrine of Islam. It is straightforward to highlight the persistence of monotheistic forms that transform all creativity into closed decorative frames, as in the Alhambra Palace's decorated paintings and the Taj Mahal's surfaces or the calligraphy paintings that extend in a rotation—amazing geometric shapes and colours.

The second example is the constant and often creative presence of nomadic Bedouins, Semitic Arabs at first, then Turks and Mongolians during the Middle Ages. Thus, we find that the oldest group of drawings sponsored by Islam, and the murals at the beginning of the eighteenth century in Qusair al-Hamra (Jordan), present authentic scenes of Bedouin life, and the same is true. Five centuries later, we find the medinan painters of shrines applying their acute sensitivity to observation to recall the life, people, and animals of the vast desert. It is easy to explain the importance of carpets and textiles in general, given the presence of nomadic sensitivity in all stages of Islamic history. The geometric abstraction that appeared in the early days of the Umayyad era can be linked to the cultural traditions and technology of the desert.

The third example of Islamic arts involves the framework that supported literature and the arts, established by the princely councils. This structure made it possible to create expensive artistic masterpieces used for decoration, which were imitated by Europeans from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century.

While I won't delve into the full history of studies related to Islamic art, it's important to have a basic understanding of its foundations to develop a new perspective that isn't restricted by the culture it originated from. Goethe and Hegel were among the first contemporary philosophers to specifically discuss the art of the arabesque, which they only became acquainted with through Renaissance drawings.

Victor Hugo referred to his century as "Orientalism" in the introduction to his book *Orientalism*, and Washington Irving transformed the spaces of Alhambra into places of desire and death in his writing. These authors were just a few examples of writers who created an imaginary Islamic world.

However, we can argue that when a work of art is removed from its original context and the circumstances of its creation, the observer has the right, and arguably the obligation, to interpret the forms presented to them based on their aesthetic preferences. I have interpreted Islamic art forms through a certain lens, but it is important to re-examine this approach. However, these art forms were created within a specific time period, independent of an Islamic aesthetic discourse. As a result, they have been detached from their historical context and are now accessible to people of all backgrounds.

The following is an attempt to summarize the key ideas from Oleg Grabar's book "How Do We Think about Islamic Art?" Every art form and creative tradition is influenced by social, cultural, financial, or religious constraints, and is bound by explicit or implicit laws. It operates within a framework of economic or moral pressures, often shaped by power dynamics. This is true for art acquired from the Islamic world, which drew from the foundational elements of Islamic art and displayed unique communicative characteristics.

In his book, Oleg Grabar explores the challenge of discussing Islamic doctrine in the arts. He examines the first Islamic century, highlighting three key influences: divine revelation, the exemplary life of the Messenger, and a world filled with diverse and interconnected images. Despite this rich artistic environment, pious believers rejected

these visual representations, exemplified by Abd al-Malik's decision to strike a gold coin without any images around 690. As millions of Muslims converted to Islam, their previous beliefs continued to influence them, but the absence of a centralized religious structure would shape the arts of the future.

There has been a lot written about the early centuries of Islam in the West, especially before 1950, and then in the Arab and Islamic countries. They have been seen as a source of pride and originality. However, it's not accurate to say that the opinions and doctrines from this time remained unchanged over the following centuries. Unfortunately, there hasn't been a coordinated historical study of Islamic attitudes towards the arts after the eighth century. The author of the book gave three examples of research directions that could be explored in this area.

The first theoretical works on science, rhetoric, and poetry appeared alongside the Book of the Eye by Ibn al-Haytham, which was partially translated in Spain in the tenth century. This allowed for the understanding of aesthetic issues through vision. Although this text does not present an aesthetic theory, it reveals the initial features of the arts from a psychological perspective, distinct from their ancient counterparts. It alludes specifically to a thesis related to the pleasure that spectators or viewers experience, which involves measurements, sections, and colors. This theory about vision helps to explain the significance of geometry in the arts of Islamic countries. There is a wealth of literature in the three Islamic languages of the classical Islamic world that is related to geometric models, theories, and standards, as well as techniques and drawings for manufacturing. In the fourth century in Central Asia, Al-Jurjani developed a theory of language and its transformations, which also applies to the visual arts. In the seventeenth century, Sharaf al-Din al-Rumi provided a lengthy list of aesthetic epithets, approaching the topic from a mechanistic rather than an analytical perspective. It is worth noting that many writings about poetry have not explored their concepts and theories in the field of visual arts.

The notes on Islam and the arts present three main conclusions. First, the Islamic world developed a general theory of art from its early days, considering art as belonging to humanity rather than as a means of connection to God. Second, Islamic art should be understood in terms of its role in society. While there have been exceptions and differences over the centuries, the Islamic world, due to its history, has posed a fundamental question about all arts: What are they? The third conclusion is more specific. There is no fixed and definitive Islamic stance on art, but rather a general position with variations over the centuries that should be documented. It is suggested that detailed study is needed, particularly in philosophical, rhetorical, and scientific texts, to identify patterns of thought and understanding, and possibly elements of artistic criticism in Sufi thought and literature.

### **Density of Ancient Inheritance**

There are many ancient works, most of them vanished, juxtaposed with rich Christian creativity, and they are strongly present not in their local inspiration, but in the Holy Land and Sinai. The arts of these two regions, since the beginning of our era, and with prominent regional variables, reflect the classic experience of the Roman Empire restored by the Byzantine caliphs. This can be summarized. The experiment is as follows:

- An engineering technique used for stone, wood, brick, and cement that allows the construction of spaces in various dimensions and shapes. This technique is well known, especially in Syria.
- The organization of space is modular, designed to be adaptable for all parts and different societal groups. This modularity means that there is a standard model for both private life (houses) and public life (cities, shrines, baths). There is also a mechanistic tendency in the planning and organization of cities.
- The technique of representing people and things ranges from the tendency to fantasize, as seen in the Antioch mosaics, to the certainty of nascent Byzantine art. These varied forms are accompanied by a specific, temporal, and complex discourse about the image.
- Memories of the major principles of classical compositional aesthetics, whether in representation or architectural planning, make it difficult to ascertain whether these principles are known at a theoretical level or only at the level of practical observation. This efficient adaptation of existing technology to cultural variables is crucial.

The Islamic conquest also had a significant impact on regions where memory, particularly in the form of architectural monuments, played a crucial role. This was especially evident in the areas dominated by the Parthian and Sassanian dynasties, such as Iraq, Persia, and present-day Uzbekistan. While these regions did not yield as many fossil discoveries as the Mediterranean and Central Asian regions, it is reasonable to assert that they were not lacking in historical significance. Artistic expression in these areas was largely influenced by the ruling elite. Rapid Islamic expansion in these regions necessitates a thorough understanding of their

unique characteristics, even though they may not be as easily explained as those of Syria and Egypt. In summary, the key characteristics of these regions can be outlined as follows:

- Construction Technology: In Iraq, construction mainly involved the use of bricks, similar to the construction of the grand Sassanian monuments.
- Planning: Although details about city organization and housing layout are limited, there are two main architectural forms. The "iwan" is a large, domed area that is open to the outside or to a courtyard. It is a complex architectural unit that includes a dome supported by four arches, which may stand independently or overlap with other architectural units.
- Sumptuous Iconography: Silver art objects and sculptures are prominent, such as those found in a royal garden in southern Iran, showcasing religious themes and royal images. The religious iconography of the Mazdin is still a topic of debate among experts.

### **Inheritance Hierarchy**

By hierarchy, the author means two different aspects of what the described inheritance offers in Islamic civilization, looking at it from an artistic angle. The first aspect relates to awareness of this inheritance. At this level, the Iranian past takes precedence over any other inheritance because the Iranian Empire was completely absorbed by Islam and adapted to the new civilization in a rhythm that has not yet been understood. Therefore, there was no competition to possess the Sassanian, or earlier, Iranian past. From it by the Abbasids or any other Islamic dynasty while the Mediterranean inheritance was shared with the Byzantines, and despite the artist being considered an immeasurable artistic value, starting from the fifth century with the ruling Iranian dynasties we began to notice a new interest in the exploits of the Iranian past before Islam.

It's important to note that the influence of ancient Egyptian art on Egyptian Islamic arts was limited, and official recognition of this influence was scarce. This could be typical in Egypt because the connection to ancient sources was within reach, and the cemeteries surrounding Cairo, consciously or unconsciously, likely impacted the construction of great cemeteries for ancient Egypt.

On the other hand, ancient forms can be found in all the arts for at least seven centuries, although this influence was rarely acknowledged in writing until the Umayyad period. There existed a conflict between the visual evidence and the recognition of these influences, which can be explained in various ways. One possible explanation is that the ancient forms took on a general character to the point where they lost their cultural identity. For example, the ruins of the city of Basra in southern Syria feature a mountainous Mediterranean city built by a Muslim prince, with its courtyard being an ancient theater. However, in the twelfth century, no one represented the latter in any depiction, as the theater simply served as an open internal space.

The second aspect of the hierarchy of ancient forms is the artistic geography of Islamic culture. The initial centers of new and authentic Islamic art were not in regions with strong Islamic heritage, but rather in areas lacking such historical connections, such as Iraq, Central Asia, and Andalusia. Subsequently, as new communities emerged, these artistic traditions became more established in some regions, but were not permanent. Nevertheless, new Islamic art found enduring roots in Syria and Egypt, where there existed a dense and rich ancient heritage.

These brief notes allow us to present three sets of conclusions and methodological reflections for understanding the history of arts in Islamic countries.

The first is local continuity. This refers to building techniques often associated with the availability of materials, such as the large stones in Syria and Egypt, and in Iran and Central Asia. In this context, solid cement techniques appear, which were invented by Rome and adapted by other regions for ease of transportation. The spread of dome architecture encouraged the adoption of these techniques, which can also be found, for example, in India. It is important to recognize that in the eighteenth century, techniques for transmitting and transforming architectural and artistic practices were established. These techniques encompass the use of various tools to express diverse ideas and memories, transcending direct material and ideological needs. Similarly, in contemporary plastic arts, the existence of this technology is necessary to express common tastes in regions far apart from each other.

The second conclusion relates to collective memory and includes judgments and impressions that can be formed about the other world that is not ours. In this context, the memory of the Islamic world includes multiple and sometimes fabricated elements. This was the case with the kings, who were the ones who ordered the construction of monuments and who collected and preserved wonderful artifacts that came from all over the world: Roman, Byzantine, Yemeni, Chinese, and Iranian.



Finally, there is a model composed of the time and place where ancient Andalusia gained wide favour among the writers of Baghdad and where the Fatimid caliphs acquired from a little-known antiques dealer the saddles of Alexander the Great, who, along with Suleiman, became a legendary hero around whom the new world would weave its dreams and memories.

### **Architecture and Doctrine**

In addition to this axis, the book's author suggests addressing two other axes when presenting the main themes of Islamic arts: writing and engineering, as well as authority and legitimacy. He chose these three axes in particular because they enable the presentation of monuments where Islamic art is recognised for producing unique pieces and for showcasing the essential qualities of this genre. It should be noted that the author will merely make indications and not go into detail in the notes that will come after.

From the dawn of Islam until the fall of the Umayyad state, a number of factors have contributed to the formation of this image because of the significance of the struggle between the new values of the conquered cities and the traditional values and moral ideals of the great Arab nomadism. They are not insignificant in number, and the majority of them were constructed in the early centuries. It affects all of the major cities in Iraq, including Samarra, Baghdad, Al-Wasit, Kufa, and Basra. Ancient cities abound in Syria and Palestine. The only significant new construction is in Ramallah, Palestine. Egypt's Cairo was created as a result of multiple Islamic cities that were constructed largely from an old castle and village. The innovations of the first Islamic centuries gave rise to Kairouan, Mahdia, Mansouria in Tunisia, and all other cities in the West.

In Western Asia and the Mediterranean region, the number of new cities started to decline in the eleventh century. These are the historic cities that have been altered by the rapid expansion of this time. Not many cities were founded by the Ottoman Empire. Conversely, the Mughals in India founded a number of imperial cities, including Sikri, Delhi, Accra, and Lahore. The introduction of Islam to the western coast of Africa and South-east Asia was made possible by the establishment of new urban institutions.

It is a fact that iron cities were built in the first two or three centuries of Islam. Each city's unique qualities were praised in the new Arabic literature. There was less systematic reference to the monuments and events that occurred there, as if a city's memory depended more on its inhabitants than on its amenities and activities. Certain accounts of the earliest cities in Iraq, like Kufa, support the belief propagated by religious traditions that there was, at least initially in Islamic history, a sense or certainty of the presence of Muslims residing in a Muslim city, if not a distinct and unique urban outlook.

The idea was propagated by Orientalism in the twentieth century, and various articles by George Marcy, Louis Massignon, Claude Cahen, and Gustav Kuhn-Cronbaum proposed an ideal and theoretical view of an organised Islamic city. As a result, envisioning the existence of a model Arab-Islamic city only requires a decisive decision. Within neighbourhoods made up of clans, tribes, or groups, the centre houses a group that consists of a market, administrative buildings, and a mosque. This group of scholars intuitively confirms the existence of all kinds of local changes that are due to history or geography. We know, for instance, that Baghdad is a circular city that can be reshaped by texts. It has a mosque and a palace at its centre, with four gates that represent the city's four main points. The city is static and is arranged by ethnic groups into a ring around the centre, serving as a complex astrological and imperial symbol both in the planning and construction of the city. It was criticised from the time of its founding by Caliph Al-Mansur in 762 and only moved one generation.

The example of Baghdad could have been considered an exception, but evidence, for example, that nothing in Baghdad circles calls for an Islamic character, rather an imperial character, makes the idea of a complex Islamic architecture more than questionable. However, despite international seminars, which are often criticized, the theory it has settled into models that are sometimes euphemistic, and also appear in contemporary writings, including scientific writings, because this type of theory strengthens the contrast between two contemporary streams of thought and appears directly to explain some relatively objective observations about the Islamic world. Western thought, which is also imbued with a somewhat neglected outlook, rejects Every historical chronology is applied to the Islamic world and is considered valid for all eras, something that seems to be only a passing phenomenon of the seventh and eighth centuries. In addition to that, Arab national and originalist thought in particular sees, with nostalgia, in the cities of the first centuries a religious and social purity stripped of its nature later.

The observations that led to support the idea of a Muslim city were made by contemporary ethnographers and travelers who were the first to record in writing their impressions of contact with the space inhabited by Muslims. When we enter a Muslim region coming from the northern Mediterranean, from central Africa, or

from China, we immediately recognize a distinct surrounding, even if the climate and construction tools are the same as those found in other places.

The conclusion that imposes itself in relation to the above is the visual and religious diversity at the same time to express the faith, but two additional observations can be made. The first is that the writer Oleg Krabar did not talk about architecture, and from here it seemed legitimate to him to conclude that through architecture the Islamic faith expressed Same in the most authentic way, why? He cannot propose hypotheses here. Thus, a religion imposes or requires the physical presence of the believer as a member of his clan and whose piety is judged based on his public actions. It prompts the creation of spaces resulting from this matter and creates distinct architecture. It is not about the places where the same person performs the act of prayer, for example, but also about the places where others can perform a similar act or a different activity at the same time. It is about creating an environment in which these activities are possible, if not inevitable. For this reason, it is not a theory or doctrine that is monitored, but rather a method that maintains a balance between various social, economic, or political pressures through a legal system and its users. There was no urbanism in the contemporary sense of the word, but rather an urban solidarity whose structure was monitored by right and not by judgment on forms. The result for the contemporary world is that every form is possible to express a Muslim life. Forms are what people make of them, and the urban space that is an Islamic reality lies in the human beings that occupy it and not in its buildings. The latter only represented an aesthetic or visually attractive function.

Does architecture represent the faith and spirit of Muslims better than any other form of art? It is simple to respond positively and cite instances of religious art or craftsmanship, such as the discovery of religiously themed Turkish and Persian manuscripts from the end of the thirteenth century; converting the religious story into visuals, a practice that is prevalent in Islam and is expressed in pictorial texts from books of divination in a very genuine manner; A more sophisticated form of Shi'i art found in certain Iranian ceramic subjects.

A different way to phrase this question would be: Was there a way to cover architecture and products with a religious mask so that, regardless of their uses, everyone would recognise them as Islamic, much like minarets or domes did at a certain point in time? The author believes that there is a single form and method that can address this query. It is connected to writing that is ubiquitous, has a wide range in quality, and whose legitimacy is not always assured, but whose existence is comparable to a subdued aspect of the Islamic character of the thing that serves as its foundation.

### **Art and Power**

Many studies have already been conducted on a more genuine aspect of Islamic city art. It is about the art of the urban bourgeoisie, which flourished in the two centuries before the Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century, almost everywhere. The subsequent artistic explosion in the cities defined three techniques. The practice of embodied metal art comes first. Particularly with copper inlaid with silver, which has a facade covered in engravings and images of various kinds and is appropriate for a variety of purposes. The personal narratives connected to the making of these objects were able to take on new forms because of the text that illustrated them.

Second, there is the craft of ceramics, which has brought attention to improved methods of colour fixation that enable everyday objects to be transformed into pictorial representations. Numerous sizable plates elicit historical or particular stage events. The fact that metal and ceramic techniques, like all other industrial arts techniques used at the same time, exhibit recognised variations in quality is, however, the most significant factor. The one-of-a-kind item is next to many manufactured items, demonstrating the clear existence of a genuine market for attractive goods.

The rise of the illustrated Arabic book is the third technology for this stage. The first illustrated art books appeared around 1200, for reasons that are not really clear. It contains short manuals for constructing mechanical toys, Indian animal tales that have been around since antiquity, like "Kalila and Dimna," and, last but not least, "Maqamat Al-Hariri," the magnificent book of Arab adventure that has been turned into linguistic fireworks that are harder to read today than they were in the past. the past, but bourgeois culture is infused with its knowledge. These manuscripts, the most well-known of which can be found in France's National Library, are notable for their vitality and realism and occasionally contain critical allusions to the world as they are portrayed. They show the social extension of the taste that gave rise to them because they differ so much from one another.

After the Mongol invasion, these twelfth-century techniques persisted, and we also come across exquisite Arabic manuscripts with illustrations from the Mamluk period and copper objects inlaid with images from Egypt. Most Arab countries lost their artistic traditions starting at the end of the fourteenth century, but

the craft industry continued to use technology. Big, distinctive objects became scarce, pictures vanished, and methods were not updated. Cities were no longer merely secondary to the arts in Iran and the later-established empires, where it appeared that the princes monopolised the energy of the patrons of creativity.

The most well-known palace is Granada's Alhambra, the formal part of a royal institution built in several stages over the course of the 14th century. Its decorations are what distinguish it from all other Islamic palace traditions: the remarkable contrast between the exterior's lack of any visual symbols and the interiors' extraordinary richness of colour and shape; the importance of the gardens and fixed water basins; the hidden passageways that connect the main structural elements; and the absence of obvious functional indicators that would indicate a range of uses for each built space. The Alhambra has special features as well. The Great Ambassadors Hall's geometric inlays and the magnificent domes in the halls next to the Square of the Lions are followed by the decoration's geometry. Delicate, poetic engravings can be found in these halls; in this instance, the artists' creativity serves the palace's purpose by providing context for the decoration and elucidating its connection to domes that symbolise the starry sky.

This is another example of a feat that simultaneously serves as a model for an entire class of monuments and is distinctive in small details that are meaningless to anyone outside the culture that created it—for example, the ability to read the inscriptions at the top of the ceiling.

The art of Persian miniature, which originated in the fifteenth century, is another form of art that is connected to power. It directly depicts the lives of princes and hunting expeditions, just as the illustrations of the Shahnameh epic, or the Book of Kings, do. However, princely life turned into a filter through which all lyrical and mystical poetry was turned into images, especially with the Mongols. It is an aristocratic picture of a bright life in elegant pedestrian palaces or flower-filled gardens, with only youthful characters acting out the roles. It alternates between being an image of a mystical dream and a possible reality. The princes' actual extravagance turns into the required spectacle for the poetic imagination to be expressed.

### **Decoration: Writing and Geometry**

Everyone agrees that Islamic arts, like the arts of the Far East, preferred calligraphic art. We easily talk about calligraphy, that is, beautiful writing, without wondering whether writing is specifically beautiful or whether there is a hierarchy between different types of writing. Moreover, we rarely wonder why the Islamic world changed the purely applied technique of presenting texts while the common alphabets preceding or contemporary with Islam, such as Greek, Syriac, Hebrew, or Latin, were not affected by these developments.

The story of this writing can be summarized in the following way: With the rapid expansion of the Islamic world in the eighth century, great chaos prevailed in the practice of writing from Andalusia to the borders of China. On the other hand, communication between distant regions and Baghdad, the capital of the empire, became problematic as long as the reading and interpretation of letters remained open. During the following centuries, several changes occurred that we do not know well, but in the thirteenth century a new codification of writing methods occurred that may have established customs adopted in circles or in mosques. It appears likely, therefore, that its goal was to embellish the text and provide it with an aesthetic feature that was not immanent to the writing itself. In this devoid of the project to talk about calligraphy, although in reality the term should, in my opinion, be reserved for the use of these methods in specific cases rather than being automatically assigned to each method.

Put another way, there is a chronology to writing styles, making a thorough history of their evolution over the ages seem imperative. The truth is that the early Islamic art employed writing in a more elaborate manner by applying it to objects made of copper or ceramics, the walls of buildings, or a multitude of chains of narration in general. In certain instances, the writing is entirely readable, but in other instances, we can only make out individual words or letters. These pointless writing mistakes are uncommon, but they can also be found in books and other common writing sources.

The phenomenon of illegible writing that we find in Far Eastern arts teaches us that writing serves two distinct functions, which occasionally overlap. On the one hand, there is the clear and precise function of passing the text and thus the function of mediation between the text and the reader. The other function is to be an end in itself that reduces or completely empties the function of reading. You are no longer reading, but watching.

Much has been written about geometry in Islamic art, from the first researches of Owen Jones at the beginning of the nineteenth century to the large number of modern publications. Geometry is therefore the primary driver for organizing most of the spaces that must be decorated with the help of all known techniques. Drawings on paper or ceramic plates have been known since the beginning of the fourteenth century, but they may have existed before that.

On the basis of the preparatory work already established in the previous century, the rules and drawings of all these engineering compositions can be rebuilt, and the principles that flow from them can be restored.



The question of why engineering also developed seemed to be challenging to answer, particularly in light of the types of interactions it fosters—whether aesthetic or not—because engineering is frequently ambiguous. Therefore, even a clearly defined composition, like the pentagon-based composition in the Great Mosque of Isfahan, can be interpreted in two ways: either as continuous points placed on the perimeter that, when connected to one another, produce pentagons, or as a series of lines generated by the central pentagons. Similarly, we discover that the majority of the Alhambra's symmetrical shapes, which are identified by crystallography and derived from uncommon mathematical theories, appear to have nothing to do with the noble sciences and are merely the product of traditional craftsmanship.

Understanding muqarnas, which are thought to be a composition of tiny three-dimensional geometric elements arranged in chains and encircling every conceivable space—but particularly utilised around domes—requires an understanding of this paradox. Muqarnas looks to have originated in Baghdad in the tenth century, but its significance for the history of art comes from its dissemination throughout the Islamic world and its uniqueness within it.

A number of theories have been proposed to account for this form's innovation. This was interpreted, for instance, as a reflection of philosophical atomism, which is the practice of relating architectural forms to their fundamental components. However, it is hard to believe that the muqarnas of a major Iranian or Egyptian portal were created with the intention of spreading a philosophical theory, any more than it is hard to accept that the portals' technological and financial requirements are solely for aesthetic reasons. These geometric accents serve as visual cues for onlookers and users of constructed areas that need to know... Among them is stopping in order to go inward and become a unique person instead of acting out a scene as in Christian art. When the forms we see are at their most genuine, they guide the individual towards himself rather than pushing him into other realms.

According to Oleg Krabar's interpretation, rather than transmitting messages of power, doctrine, and faith, the artists and craftsmen of the classical Islamic world had an intrinsic and vital responsibility to establish a framework of acceptance, peace, and sensual pleasure around human activities. The latter was undoubtedly real, but it was not the most inventive of Islamic art forms, despite its lovely and occasionally moving expression. Her ability to demonstrate that light is brighter when it comes from Naqis wax and that water tastes sweeter when it is poured into a lovely cup set her apart. In the classical Islamic civilisation, all of this was made possible by a society centred and unified around a shared understanding that was rarely recorded in writing. It is an art that serves as a bridge between what is and what is not, not as a goal unto itself. Since it is not constrained by time or location, this art actually increases in value and becomes more aesthetically pleasing to all people.

This way of expressing visually is called a decorative style that reduces or completely eliminates the referential appearance of the arts. A creative thing, an architectural work or a product, is not an end in itself, but rather leads to a change in the appearance of the person it touches. What allowed this art to gain its aesthetic and practical originality is the existence of a social pattern of invisible balances between different social groups linked to each other by a legal system that is often passed orally within an idealized script. The expressible is expressed through the inexpressible, because expression directly requires the creation of a reality or reality that may become permanent and therefore unacceptable or even impossible according to the Islamic conception of divinity.

In order to better understand the importance of this decorative style, it is essential to leave the idea of secondary decoration and inlay where necessary on the major works of noble arts in the Western tradition. Rather, it is a matter of recognizing a fundamental aspect of people's relationship with art, which is the need for "mechanisms for approaching" intentional works. All arts use intermediary mechanisms that are suitable for making it possible to use and understand creativity in depth. Islamic art, like some contemporary art movements, focuses on media that may transform it into goals in themselves when the mechanisms of the approach affect the meanings and transform the creative product into a beloved product. This is because the relationship of the decorative pattern in reality is an emotional relationship.

The classical approach to art history is limited to reconstructing the original context of all artistic masterpieces, presenting their specific history and linking it precisely to its societal collection. In this perspective, Islamic artistic works, like all artistic works belonging to the Renaissance era, are works belonging to the past that we seek to explain and understand through its creative process.

## REFERENCES

1. Oleg Karabar, "How to Think about Islamic Art," first edition, Toubkal Publishing House, Morocco, 1996, translated by Abdeljalil Nazim and Saeed Al-Hansali.
2. Oleg Grabar - Reflecting Islamic Art - An Exclusive Ornament Style - Albert Michel