

Islamic Art at the Metropolitan Museum of Art

Plans are being made to enlarge, renovate, and reinstall the Museum's Islamic Galleries in accordance with current thinking in the field and with modern museological practices. The Islamic Galleries are currently projected to reopen in 2011. While the permanent galleries are closed, outstanding objects from the collection can be seen throughout the Museum in various locations, as follows (map on reverse):

1 GREAT HALL BALCONY

The south end of the balcony contains a special installation of highlights from the holdings of the Department of Islamic Art. Objects in various media range in date from the seventh to the eighteenth century and in origin from Spain in the west to Central Asia and India in the east. Occasionally works are displayed thematically. Just around the corner, in the south-eastern part of the balcony, is a display of ceramics that shows the interrelationship between works of art from the Islamic world and from China.

2 Sasanian Gallery, Ancient Near Eastern Art

A significant selection of luxury objects such as silver vessels, textiles, and stucco wall panels belonging to the early Islamic Near East are displayed adjacent to Sasanian items to show the striking continuity in both iconography and techniques of manufacture that was sustained in the Near East before and after the Arab invasion. The display illustrates the strength and importance of Iranian heritage in early Islamic art.

3 Medieval Europe Gallery

Greek, Latin, and Arabic were all spoken in southern Italy during the Middle Ages and the arrival of the Normans from northern France in the eleventh century added another layer of cultural interaction. Muslim artists living under Christian rule created luxury items, such as carved ivories, specifically for European consumption. In the Medieval Europe Gallery ivory works of art made in Sicily are featured adjacent to objects produced in a Christian context illustrating the artistic and cultural interchange in the Mediterranean from the period of the Crusades to the fifteenth century.

4 Arms and Armor Galleries

The arms and armor gallery devoted to Islamic art shows a broad sweep of armor and weapons and some horse equipment from the various Islamic cultures of Turkey, the Middle East, North Africa, India, Persia, Nasrid Spain, and the Balkans, ranging in date from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Included are some great examples of the artistry of Islamic metalwork, as well as carvings in jade and rock crystal.

Visitors are reminded that a small selection of Islamic and related pieces may be viewed at the Cloisters in Fort Tryon Park. These objects include a luster-painted ceramics representing the Mudejar tradition (Islamic work produced under Christian patronage), shown in various galleries.

