

Zeina Dghaim

PhD Thesis

Appendix 4

Concept References

The following concept references inspired the aesthetics of the colouring book, animation, room of wonders, interactive map and prospectus.

Historical and Cultural References

- **La Salida de Boabdil**
 - *Description:* oil painting by Manuel Gómez-Moreno González, 1880. Museo de Bellas Artes de Granada.
- **The Book of Games (Libro de los juegos)**
 - *Description:* A 13th-century Spanish manuscript detailing games
- **Cantigas de Santa Maria**
 - *Description:* A collection of 13th-century songs/poems from Spain
- **Architectural Elements from the Andalusia Region**
 - *Description:* References include information and imagery of Andalusian architecture, such as the Alhambra and Medina Azahara de Córdoba
- **The Sarajevo Haggadah**
 - *Description:* An illuminated manuscript significant in Jewish history

Animation and Film References

- **Disney's 1959 Sleeping Beauty Animation**
 - *Description:* a full-length animated movie
- **Priletal lish' Odnazhdy**

- *Description:* A film directed by Lev Shukalyukov (1978)
- **Vladimir Pekar's Vasilisa the Beautiful**
 - *Description:* A film directed by Vladimir Pekar from 1977
- **Lev Atamanov's Ballerina on the Boat**
 - *Description:* A 1969 animated film choreographed by two Bolshoi artists

Classical Art Paintings

- **St Jerome in His Study**
 - *Description:* A painting by Antonello da Messina depicting St. Jerome in his study
- **Isabella and the Basil Pot**
 - *Description:* A painting by William Holman Hunt, 1868.

Animation Narrative Script

Title Scene: On a colourful stylized sky, slowly drifting.

Opening scene (daytime)

Shot 01

The camera slowly flies through a stylized, colourful sky/space.

Stars are visible as well as vague clouds, but then some dots as they fly closer, they become words. Some words have bird wings, others a trail like a comet, others wings like a bee. The word WONDER (as a comet) flies past the camera, very close and the camera follows the word as it starts to descend towards the earth. We can see the earth small in the distance.

Shot 02

Close up on the word WONDER as it drops through the air, it turns into a yellow ball of light flying in different directions leaving a trail of light and particles.

Shot 03

Daytime.

Wide shot of a boat (dhow) slowly navigating on a calm sea. The yellow ball of light playfully flying, skipping on the water, enters the scene towards the boat.

Shot 04

Medium shot of a sailor aboard the boat. While the ball of light flies about, he reaches and grabs it. The ball turns into the astrolabe in his hand.

Shot 05

Close-up of hand holding the astrolabe.

Scene 02 (daytime)

Shot 01

Continued close-up of hand holding the astrolabe. The hand and the backdrop fade to the same colourful sky as before, a bit different, while the camera spins and the astrolabe turns into the sun. The camera zooms out to reveal the same scene of the words flying about.

The word INSPIRATION (with bird wings) flies past the camera, very close and the camera follows the word as it starts to descend towards the earth. We can see the earth small in the distance.

Shot 02

Close up on the word INSPIRATION as it flies through the air, it turns into an orange ball of light flying in different directions.

Shot 03

Daytime

Wide shot of a palace/house in an Alhambra-like setting. The ball flies in the shot bouncing off a few times then flies into the house through one of the windows.

Shot 04

Medium shot of a woman sitting by the window. She's wearing a long dress and has a veil covering her hair (like a Muslim hijab) The ball flies around the girl then reaches her and she grabs it. As she does, the ball turns into a book (the 101 Manuscript)

Shot 05

Close up on the girl's hands holding the book.

Scene 03 (late evening)

Shot 01

Continued close-up of hands holding the book. The hands and the backdrop fade to the same colourful sky as before, a bit different though, while the camera spins the book turns into a cloud. The camera zooms out to reveal the same scene of the words flying about.

The word ART (with colourful butterfly wings) flies past the camera, very close and the camera follows the word as it starts to descend towards the earth. We can see the earth small in the distance.

Shot 02

Close up on word ART as it flies through the air, it turns into a blue ball of light flying in different directions.

Shot 03

Late evening

Wide shot of an Alhambra-like house setting late evening. The ball flies in the shot bouncing off a few times then flies into the house through one of the windows. There is a girl sleeping on a contemporary bed with a side table and plants around her.

Shot 04

Medium shot of the lampstand on a bedside table inside a room. The ball flies about and hits the lampstand into an explosion of light. Then, a burning flame appears on top of the lampstand. The lamp is lit.

Shot 05

Close up on the burning flame.

Scene 04 (daytime)

Shot 01

Continued close-up of the burning flame. The backdrop fades to the same colourful sky as before, a bit different though, perhaps more purplish in colour, while the camera spins the flame turns into a flying leaf. Camera zooms out to reveal the same scene of the words flying about. The word COLLABORATION (with bee wings) flies past the camera, very close and the camera follows the word as it starts to descend towards the earth. We can see the earth small in the distance.

Shot 02

Close up on the word COLLABORATION as it flies through the air, it turns into a green ball of light flying in different directions.

Shot 03

Daytime

Wide shot of the inside of a medieval scribe room. The scribe is there teaching a little boy how to read and write. There's a manuscript in front on him on a manuscript holder stand. The ball flies in the shot bouncing off a few times, then hits the empty basil pot, with a small explosion of light.

Shot 04

Close-up shot of the basil pot. A bunch of basil grows out of it.

The camera zooms in towards the pot while the backdrop fades out. The pot spins and disappears with the effect of revealing the same colourful sky as the beginning.

Final scene - The sky slowly drifts, fade scene.

Music Kalendar Prince: 1 second – 3:00 minutes.

Prospectus Narrative

Introduction

The Al-Andalus collection at the Aga Khan Museum tells many captivating stories about the power of nature, human achievements, and world cultures.

We invite you to explore this collection's many themes and innovations, such as jewelry and architecture, created by Christian, Jewish, and Muslim artists, scientists, and thinkers.

In this spirit of collaboration, we provide a space where everyone can see themselves reflected in these stories, highlighting our shared human experience.

To complement this storybook, we offer an interactive online platform designed to spark curiosity and inspire wonder. Additionally, you can enjoy our *Colour Our Collection* activities, available for download, to unlock your creativity while engaging with the artifacts.

We hope you enjoy the *Al-Andalus & The Universe* digital experience as much as we have enjoyed creating it.

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[Headings are in the centre as meditative words].

NAVIGATION

OBJECT: Planispheric Astrolabe

ORIGIN: Spain, Toledo (probably)

DATE: 14th Century

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: Bronze, engraved, and inlaid with silver DIMENSIONS:
Diameter, 13.5 cm

INSCRIPTIONS: Arabic, Hebrew, and Latin

QR Code:

[Planispheric Astrolabe, AKM611, The Aga Khan Museum](#)

TIME

OBJECT: Sundial

ORIGIN: Spain, Cordoba (probably)

DATE: 10th– 11th Century

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: Marble, copper, bronze and lead

DIMENSIONS: 48.5 x 34.5 cm

LIGHT

OBJECT: Lampstand

ORIGIN: Spain, Cordoba (probably)

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: cast in Bronze, engraved

DIMENSIONS: height, 52.5 cm

INSCRIPTION: repeated Kufic inscription is baraka 'Blessing'.

QR Code:

Lampstand, AKM593, The Aga Khan Museum

WATER

OBJECT: Jug

LOCATION: Southern Spain, Cordoba

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Metal-work Bronze

DIMENSIONS: Height, 20 cm

INSCRIPTION: "With good fortune, piety, and wealth"

BASIL

OBJECT: Basil Pot (Alfabeguer)

LOCATION: Southern Spain, Valencia (probably)

DATE: 12-13th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: metal-work, Bronze, cast with chased and punched decorations.

DIMENSIONS: H. 21.8 cm × Diam. (max) 20 cm

QR Code:

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/vase-alfabeguer-akm913>

PROTECTION

OBJECT: Pendant

LOCATION: Spain, Granada

DATE: 14th– 15th century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Silver, cloisonné enamel

DIMENSIONS: Height, 10 cm

QR Code:

[Pendant, AKM954, The Aga Khan Museum](#)

CALLIGRAPHY

OBJECT: Folio

ORIGIN: Granada, Spain

DATE: 13th -14th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Ink, colours and gold on parchment

DIMENSIONS: H. 27 cm × W. 22.3 cm

OBJECT: Folio

ORIGIN: Granada, Spain

DATE: 13th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Ink, colours and gold on vellum

DIMENSIONS: H. 26.4 cm × W17.9 cm

SYMBOLS

OBJECT: Chest

LOCATION: Spain, Granada (probably)

DATE: 15th- 16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Walnut inlaying, luxury woodwork

DIMENSIONS: 22 x 49 x 33 cm

QR Code:

<https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/chest-akm634>

IMAGINATION

OBJECT: One Hundred and One Nights and the Book of Geography

LOCATION: Spain, Granada

DATE: 1235

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUE: Brown ink and opaque watercolour on paper; red Morocco leather binding.

DIMENSIONS: Manuscript: H. 26.5 cm × W. 20.4 cm × D. 2.5 cm

Page: H. 19 cm × W. 26.5 cm

QR Code:

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/manuscript-mia-layla-wa-layla-akm513>

(UNDERSTANDING THE UNIVERSE IMAGE)

Let's continue this journey and discover more.

Islamic architecture revolves around simple exteriors and ornate interiors. Exterior structures are created with earthy colours as camouflage to become one with nature. The interiors evoke reflection, contemplation, and remembrance of the Divine. We see outstanding examples of ornate interiors using geometric patterns, floral designs, and calligraphy in the wooden beams, chest/box, muqarnas, squinches, capital, and corbels.

POWER OF WORDS

OBJECT: A Monumental Almohad Poetic Inscription

LOCATION: Spain

DATE: ca. 1160 –1250

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: pine, carved, painted, and gilded

DIMENSIONS: 313 x 30.8 cm

QR Code:

<https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/beam-building-akm631>

TRANSITIONS

OBJECT: Muqarnas

ORIGIN: Spain, Granada (probably)

DATE: 15th- 16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved and painted

DIMENSIONS: 86 cm × 73.5 cm

CONNECTEDNESS

OBJECT: Three Triangle Squinches

ORIGIN: Spain, Castile (probably)

TIME: 15th-16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved and painted

DIMENSIONS: Height (each) 151 cm

QR Code:

[Three Squinches \(ceiling panels\), AKM730.1-3, The Aga Khan Museum](#)

BALANCE

OBJECT: Capital

LOCATION: Spain, Segovia or Madinat al-Zahra (probably)

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Carved marble

DIMENSIONS: 28 cm

QR Code:

<https://collections.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/capital-akm663>

ELEVATION

OBJECT: Corbel

ORIGIN: Spain, Toledo

DATE: 13th-14th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved

DIMENSIONS: L. 72 cm

Interactive Map Narrative

Hot spots: two butterflies in the Basil Illustration.

1. **Butterfly 1:** The first butterfly hotspot text, placed on the basil pot illustration, will state: "*In Islamic tradition, smelling pleasant odours and looking at the greenery of trees and herbs were valued as beneficial for a person's general well-being*" - Shahina A. Ghazanfar, *Plants of the Quran*.

2. **Butterfly 2:** The second butterfly hotspot text, placed on the basil pot illustration, will say: *In Arabic, basil, known as al-Habaq, is sometimes referred to as Rayhan, which translates to 'a pleasant scent.'* The words for basil, spirit, relaxation, wind, ease, and comfort in Arabic share the common root word R-U-H, pronounced [ruuh], which also signifies 'spirit.'

Easter Eggs: Room of Wonders and Animation

1. **Room of Wonders:** The hotspot for the "Room of Wonders" will be positioned on the astrolabe illustration. The pop-up text for the hotspot will read, "Journey into the Room of Wonders." This concept aims to encapsulate the spirit of exploration and movement, illustrating how the astrolabe guides travellers, leading them to various destinations of discovery.

2. **Animation:** The hotspot for the animation will be located on the illustration of the wooden beam featuring a boy about to dive deep into the stack of books. The pop-up text for the hotspot will read, "Let's dive into an adventure through time and space," corresponding with the animation also begins with a ladder.

1. **NAVIGATION**

[The illustration consists of an image of the astrolabe juxtaposed with a background that shows the sea and the skies and its connection to heaven and earth.]

Object: Planispheric Astrolabe

Origin: Spain, Toledo (Probably)

Date: 14th Century

Materials And Technique: Bronze, Engraved, And Inlaid With Silver

Dimensions: Diameter, 13.5 Cm

Inscriptions: Arabic, Hebrew, And Latin

"And He it is who has set for you the stars that you may guide yourselves by them in the darkness of the land and the sea. We have detailed Our messages for a people who possess knowledge"

Quran 6:97

Al-An'am (*The Cattle*)

The remarkable planispheric astrolabe instrument was employed to ascertain the positions of stars and planets for navigation purposes, as well as to determine the local time. This astrolabe embodies the quest for human knowledge and independence, narrating the profound connection

between humanity and the cosmos. It melds artistic expression with astronomical insight and practical utility, serving as a testament to its significance in daily life.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/planispheric-astrolabe-akm611> 2. **TIME**

[Showing the sundial in the sky along some planets, in a street scene with an abstract figure merging with it to showcase the contact between human and object.]

OBJECT: Sundial

ORIGIN: Spain, Cordoba (probably)

DATE: 10th– 11th Century

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: Marble, copper, bronze and lead

DIMENSIONS: 48.5 x 34.5 cm

“It is not for the sun to catch up with the moon, nor does the night outrun the day. Each is travelling in an orbit of their own”

Quran 36:40

Ya-Sin (Ya-Sin)

In the collection, we discover a Sundial, likely crafted in 10th-11th Century Cordoba, Spain. The sundial comprises a flat plate (dial) and a gnomon casting a shadow. It is engraved with Arabic initials for afternoon (asr) and noon (zuhr). When strategically placed, the sundial accurately reveals both the position of the sun and the time down to the hour and minutes.

3. **LIGHT**

[In the illustration, light will be shown in a niche as an energy source connected to the divine. The words “Light upon light” in Arabic also appear in the illustration.]

OBJECT: Lampstand

ORIGIN: Spain, Cordoba (probably)

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: cast in Bronze, engraved

DIMENSIONS: height, 52.5 cm

INSCRIPTION: repeated Kufic inscription is baraka 'Blessing'.

“Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth. His light is like a niche in which there is a lamp, the lamp is in a crystal, the crystal is like a shining star, lit from ‘the oil of’ a blessed olive tree,

‘located’ neither to the east nor the west, whose oil would almost glow, even without being touched by fire. Light upon light! Allah guides whoever He wills to His light. And Allah sets forth parables for humanity. For Allah has ‘perfect’ knowledge of all things”

Quran 24:35

An-Nur (The Light)

Can you imagine living in a world without light?

Light, described as generous, nourishing, transformative, and timeless, tends to our collective needs. It also elevates our surroundings and turns objects and buildings into contemplative living spaces and exquisite works of art. In Islam, Light, or An-Nūr, is among the 99 Beautiful Names of God.

<https://www.agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/lampstand-akm593>

4. WATER

[The jug is juxtaposed with a desert scene to show the contrast between land and sea, two important elements in our life.]

OBJECT: Jug

LOCATION: Southern Spain, Cordoba

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Metal-work Bronze

DIMENSIONS: Height, 20 cm

INSCRIPTION: “With good fortune, piety, and wealth”

“Have you seen the water which you drink?

Was it you who sent it down from the rain cloud, or did We send it?

Were it Our will, We could have made it bitter; why then do you not give thanks?”

Quran 56:68-70

Al-Waqi'ah (The Inevitable)

In the Quran, water is depicted as a divine provision through rainfall, the foundational element for all forms of life, a symbol to reflect on human humility at the beginning of life, a metaphor for personal growth, and an analogy for distinguishing between falsehood and truth. This jug, adorned with a Kufic inscription wishing for "good fortune, piety, and wealth," highlights several of these ideas. Additionally, water plays a crucial role in the ecosystem, supporting humans and numerous other species as well.

5. BASIL

[Highlighting its connection with nature and the divine in a bigger-than-life image where humans are relishing in the beauty and power of nature represented by the basil pot.]

OBJECT: Basil Pot (Alfabeguer)

LOCATION: Southern Spain, Valencia (probably)

DATE: 12-13th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: metal-work, Bronze, cast with chased and punched decorations.

DIMENSIONS: H. 21.8 cm × Diam. (max) 20 cm

“He laid out the earth for all beings.

In it are fruit, palm trees with date stalks,

and grain with husks, and aromatic plants”

Quran 55:10-12

Ar-Rahman (The Beneficent)

The term "Alfabeguer" derives from the Arabic "Al-habaca" (sweet basil), evolving into "Alfabaga" in Valencia before becoming "Alfabeguer," signifying a basil pot. Basil, known for its fragrant aroma, served multiple purposes: it was used to refresh the air, repel insects during the warmer months, and for its medicinal properties. Often placed on windowsills alongside other planters, it highlighted the intricate artistry prevalent in medieval Spain.

The unassuming basil pot serves as a portal to myriad tales, offering entertainment, inspiration, and education through its diverse narratives. These stories range from its depiction in Antonello da Messina's 'St Jerome in his Study' to the dramatic tale in John Keats's "Isabella," where she tenderly interacts with her lover Lorenzo's severed head in a basil pot.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/vase-alfabeguer-akm913>

6. PROTECTION

[The amulet is placed on a woman neckline showing its power as an ornamentation piece while also as a protection device.]

OBJECT: Pendant

LOCATION: Spain, Granada

DATE: 14th– 15th century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Silver, cloisonné enamel

DIMENSIONS: Height, 10 cm

“This is a subtle truth. Whatever you love you are”

- Rumi

Jewelry has existed since ancient times, carrying significant meanings for its wearers from its inception. Pendants, in particular, were valued for their aesthetic and ornamental qualities and also for their meditative and protective properties. Among these, the apotropaic aspect, such as the khamsa or "Hand of Fatima" motif found in this pendant, is notable for dispensing blessings from its triangular upper section.

This pendant showcases the techniques, inscriptions, and iconography characteristic of the Nasrid Period (1232–1492) in Al-Andalus, serving as a splendid testament to the centuries of cultural exchange and technical evolution that have shaped modern jewelry making.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/pendant-akm954>

7. CALLIGRAPHY

[This narrative could depict a group of individuals or children gazing upwards, symbolizing wonder and curiosity about the heavens and the mystery behind the concept of receiving revelations. This scene mirrors our own search for meaning, perhaps even the inner child in us who is filled with awe and wonder: every discovery for a child feels like a revelation. The predominant use of blue in the medallion could be the main colour theme for the illustration. Set against a natural backdrop, the illustration highlights the power of words and the essence of faith, drawing parallels between our connection to the earth and the heavens while honouring the legacy of these manuscripts and folios.]

OBJECT: Folio

ORIGIN: Granada, Spain

DATE: 13th -14th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Ink, colours and gold on parchment

DIMENSIONS: H. 27 cm × W. 22.3 cm

“The calligrapher must assimilate all aspects of culture that relate to his art. Practice awakens the knowledge gradually stored up in the body and releases the expression of a myriad of nuance” – Hassan Massoudy

Arabic calligraphy, initially integrated into scripts for recitation and prayer, represents sublime beauty and precision for artists. It seamlessly blends aesthetic and spiritual dimensions, inspiring self-reflection and meditation. This folio features verses 23-24 from Surat Al-Nisa’ (The Chapter of the Women) in the Holy Quran, rendered in the Maghribi script. This script was prevalent in Al-Andalus and the Maghrib region, encompassing modern-day Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia.

8. IMAGINATION

[In the illustration, the Nights will be shown as a manuscript juxtaposed with a colourful background. The simple outline of the manuscript can be interactive allowing visitors to click on words to enter various portals and experiences.]

OBJECT: One Hundred and One Nights and the Book of Geography

LOCATION: Spain, Granada

DATE: 1235

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUE: Brown ink and opaque watercolour on paper; red Morocco leather binding.

DIMENSIONS: Manuscript: H. 26.5 cm × W. 20.4 cm × D. 2.5 cm

Page: H. 19 cm × W. 26.5 cm

“The debt we owe to the play of imagination is incalculable”

– *Carl Jung*

Centuries ago, our ancestors adopted storytelling as a method of documentation, entertainment, inspiration, wisdom, and persuasion. This art was handed down through generations, infiltrating various forms of expression such as music, drama, art, dance, literature, and poetry. Masterpieces like "One Hundred and One Nights" and the "Book of Geography" serve as testaments to the profound impact of storytelling, an influence that crossed geographical and cultural boundaries.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/manuscript-mia-layla-wa-layla-akm513>

9. POWER & WORDS

[We can envision the beam as a powerful conduit of meaning, hovering above an ocean of knowledge, with nodes connecting the beam to this vast sea. A young boy is about to dive into the ocean, symbolizing his exploration of the world around him, including the words projected on the beam].

OBJECT: A Monumental Almohad Poetic Inscription

LOCATION: Spain

DATE: ca. 1160 –1250

MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUE: pine, carved, painted, and gilded

DIMENSIONS: 313 x 30.8 cm

“Raise your words, not voice. It is rain that grows flowers, not thunder”

— *Rumi*

A picture may indeed be worth a thousand words, yet the words we select wield immense power. They sculpt narratives, encapsulate beliefs, and convey deep emotions. Often, they serve as the foundation that stabilizes a structure, significantly influencing our environments and the spaces we inhabit.

Encased within this rare carved beam is a segment of a secular, pre-Islamic poem credited to Samaw’al ibn 'Adiya, a Jewish poet of the 6th century. The beam's length suggests it was intended to span beneath a ceiling or dome within a square room, more likely part of a palace than a mosque or madrasa, given the non-religious nature of the poem excerpt. The engraved inscription on this beam exemplifies how words can define the essence of the space they adorn.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/beam-building-akm631>

10. SYMBOLS

[The box is submerged underwater, with tools floating gently to the surface. Its location symbolizes the birth of new ideas, much like the way tools enable creativity. This imagery draws inspiration from childbirth, with water representing the womb, a source of new beginnings.]

OBJECT: Chest

LOCATION: Spain, Granada (probably)

DATE: 15th- 16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Walnut inlaying, luxury woodwork

DIMENSIONS: 22 x 49 x 33 cm

“We live immediately only in the world of images”

- Carl Jung

This wooden cabinet, once belonging to a scribe, served as storage for writing instruments. Among its notable characteristics is the eight-pointed star, created by two interlocking squares. Intriguingly, this eight-pointed star is believed to represent the fourth dimension of life, symbolizing a transition from one dimension to another. The star also serves as a shared symbol in various cultures, reflecting a collective spiritual quest to comprehend the intelligence underlying universal truths.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/chest-akm634>

11. **TRANSITIONS**

[The Muqarnas is "suspended" from an invisible ceiling, pointing directly downward toward the tip of the Squinch. Both tipping points symbolize the connection between entities, whether it be humans and objects, objects and other beings, or humans and other beings. Positioned parallel to the Squinch, the Muqarnas represents points of transition, both metaphorically and literally.]

OBJECT: Muqarnas

ORIGIN: Spain, Granada (probably)

DATE: 15th- 16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved and painted

DIMENSIONS: 86 cm × 73.5 cm

You lack a foot to travel? Then journey into yourself - that leads to transformation of dust into pure gold – Rumi

Muqarnas have been prominently featured in sacred spaces such as prayer rooms and royal palace chambers, enhancing these settings with their intricate beauty. These wooden structures facilitate a smooth and decorative transition, evoking a sense of spiritual aesthetics. When crafted with greater elaboration and size, muqarnas convey notions of power and luxury within architectural contexts.

The muqarnas in this collection, an inverted triangular-shaped architectural element made from interlocking wood, creates a series of niche patterns. It skillfully simulates an interconnected honeycomb arrangement, transforming two-dimensional geometric designs into captivating three-dimensional manifestations.

12. UNITY

[The squinches will be suspended in a forest scene above a rider, kind of guiding the traveller who's on a journey of spiritual discovery. Little moons are scattered everywhere guiding this path also illuminating the squinch like a portal of spiritual ascension about to open.]

OBJECT: Three Triangle Squinches

ORIGIN: Spain, Castile (probably)

TIME: 15th-16th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved and painted

DIMENSIONS: Height (each) 151 cm

In real existence there is only unity - Rumi

Historically, the ornate ceilings of the Iberian Peninsula were a symbol of sophistication and courtly culture. To enhance these intricate ceilings, squinches were strategically placed in the upper corners of quadrangular rooms, serving both as a visual transition from the walls and as support for domes. The naturalistic paintings within the hexagons bear a resemblance to other Castilian works, such as the beams from the Monastery of the Concepción in León. The incorporation of a nine-pointed star indicates that their sophisticated design likely developed towards the end of the 15th Century, highlighting the significance of unity and order in the geometric patterns prevalent in Islamic art.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/ceiling-panel-akm730>

13. BALANCE

[The capital rests on a pedestal, highlighting its role as a structural support in architecture. It is surrounded by the moon and other light features that draw inspiration from the collection's light theme. Abstract cityscapes in the background connect land, life, skies, the past and present. A

young boy on his bike gazes at the capital, marvelling at something that, for once, sits upon a pedestal].

OBJECT: Capital

LOCATION: Spain, Segovia or Madinat al-Zahra (probably)

DATE: 10th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Carved marble

DIMENSIONS: 28 cm

“As for the sky, He raised it ‘high’, and set the balance ‘of justice’”

Quran 55:7

Ar-Rahman (The Beneficent)

The capital played a pivotal role in offering structural support to architectural elements such as arches. This particular capital bears a resemblance to the reception room of 'Abd al-Rahman III in the 10th-century royal palace at Madinat al-Zahra, near Cordoba, Spain. The unique dimensions and cubic characteristics of this Corinthian capital are also similar to those originating from Segovia, Spain.

<https://agakhanmuseum.org/collection/artifact/capital-akm663>

14. SUSTENANCE

[The corbel is depicted as a carrier that welcomes people and supports their mission, whatever it may be. A scene shows a woman walking toward it, about to embark on her journey, accompanied by a raven, inspired by the etymology of the word. The setting is an earthy forest, connecting the skies and earth, with Arabic calligraphy subtly woven into the scene, alluding to the prominent theme of calligraphy throughout the collection.]

OBJECT: Corbel

ORIGIN: Spain, Toledo

DATE: 13th-14th Century

MATERIALS & TECHNIQUES: Wood, carved

DIMENSIONS: L. 72 cm

“It is Allah Who has made for you the earth as a resting place, and the sky as a canopy, and has given you shape and made your shapes beautiful and has provided for you sustenance”

Quran 40:64

Al-Ghafir (The Forgiver)

Traditionally, corbels serve to support elements above them, such as roofs, balconies, and overhangs. Beyond their structural function, corbels frequently feature intricate carvings and designs for decorative purposes. The term "corbel" derives from the Latin word for raven and the French word "corbeau," which means crow. This naming draws a parallel to the corbel's resemblance to the beak of a raven or crow, presenting an intriguing linguistic connection to these architectural features.

Colouring Book Narrative

1. Manuscript

- In context: The manuscript is in context held by a woman who anxiously awaits its discovery.
- Manuscript alone without context.

2. Lamp

- In context: The lamp is on a table in a home setting, highlighting its decorative function.
- Lamp alone without context.

3. Astrolabe

- In context: Astrolabe is held in a traveller's hand. He's looking at it or gazing at it.
- In other illustrations showing its plates and craftsmanship alone without context.

4. Box

- In context: The box is displayed alongside a scribe, contextualizing the action of using the tools and object-human contact.

- Box alone without context.

5. Capital

- In context: The capital is illustrated to show its utility supporting arches. - Capital alone without context.

6. Squinches

- In context: Squinches in context showcase how they help with the transitions in architectural elements.

- Squinches without context.

7. Muqarnas

- In context: Muqarnas in context showcasing how they help with transitions in architectural elements.

- Muqarnas alone without context.

8. Amulet

- In context: Amulet on a woman's neckline showing its utility.

- Amulet alone without context.

9. Jug

- In context: Jug in a woman's hand. She looks like she's serving it. - Jug alone without context.

Room of Wonders Narrative

1. 101 Nights: The manuscript is placed on a table.

2. Astrolabe: The astrolabe is placed on the table.

3. Amulet: Amulet is placed on the table.

4. Lamp: placed on the table.

5. Wooden Beam: The beam is placed in a scholar's study room, showing its decorative element.

6. Capital: The Capital is illustrated outdoors in a patio set to show its functionality and utility-supporting arches.

7. Basil: Basil is sitting on a window edge.

Setting: A scribe's room is across from a pool of water and a patio setting. The room resembles one of the rooms in the Alhambra palace, perhaps the Mirador de Lindaraja.

There's a large table enough to have four objects on it very comfortably. There are also some decorative tables or chairs. A window is necessary to place the basil pot on the ledge. The beam will be adjacent to the window. And the capital will be outside on the patio, though visible from the open arch entryway.